

Planning and Assessment in an Inclusive GCSE English Resit Curriculum

Important note

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Course details

Title of content	Planning and Assessment in an Inclusive GCSE English Resit Curriculum
Learning objectives	• Develop your understanding of assessment for learning so you can support GCSE English resit learners to monitor and track their progress • Consider how to plan effective assessment for learning activities for GCSE English resit learners.
Long description	This course will explore what assessment for learning (AfL) is and its importance to learners who're resitting their English GCSEs. You'll look at how to support learners to monitor, evaluate and track their own progress, and how this can interface with organisational tracking tools. Finally, you will explore how to plan learning with AfL at its heart and understand the principles of AfL-rich activity design. (This course is part of the 16–19 English GCSE Resit CPD offer, which aims to transform how English is taught and experienced in post-16 settings. The content is built on a foundation of research, practitioner insight and learner voices.)

Who's this course for?	Educators working with learners who are re-sitting GCSE English

Module 1: Understanding assessment for learning

Lesson: Welcome and introduction

Page: Welcome to the course

Welcome to 'Planning and Assessment in an Inclusive GCSE English Resit Curriculum'

This short on-demand course was funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and developed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

It's part of the 16–19 English GCSE Resit CPD offer, which aims to transform how English is taught and experienced in post-16 settings. The content is built on a foundation of research, practitioner insight and learner voices.

What will you cover?

'Planning and Assessment in an Inclusive GCSE English Resit Curriculum' is all about understanding the role of assessment for learning (AfL) and planning AfL tasks.

The course will provide bitesize advice and helpful links. It only takes 40 minutes to an hour to complete.

You should meet the following learning objectives:

- Develop your understanding of assessment for learning so you can support GCSE English resit learners to monitor and track their progress
- Consider how to plan effective assessment for learning activities for GCSE English resit learners.

As you move through the course and discover new information, ideas and perspectives, you can refer to these objectives and check your progress against them.

Resources and media

The resources in this self-directed resource are available to use under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#) except where otherwise stated.

Thanks are extended to everyone who took part in videos, audio clips and/or written case studies. (Please note: names and job titles were correct at the time of production – but some may have changed since then.)

Lesson: What's happening in this module?

Page: Welcome to Module 1

Welcome to Module 1

This module will help you to understand assessment for learning in the context of GCSE English resit courses, and support learners to monitor and track their progress.

You'll explore:

- AfL in the context of GCSE English resits
- AfL as a learning process
- supporting GCSE English resit learners to monitor and evaluate their own progress.

Lesson: Assessment for learning in the context of GCSE English resits

Page: Assessment for learning or assessment of learning?

What is AfL?

What do you think AfL means in GCSE English resit contexts? The term is used widely in the FE and skills sector, but it can mean different things to different people.

(If the term is new to you, don't worry – just give your best guess.)

Consider which of the following statements you agree with.

- AfL is an embedded and ongoing process.
- AfL is **not the same** as interim summative assessment.
- AfL is about knowing how well learning is happening in real time.
- AfL is a teaching and learning strategy, as well as being concerned with assessment.

Answer

All four statements are true.

In brief, AfL involves **activities and approaches that allow teachers and learners to know whether learning is taking place.**

AfL is important on all courses – but especially for GCSE English resit learners, who can lack confidence and self-belief in their abilities.

Assessment for learning vs assessment of learning

Assessment *for* learning (sometimes called ‘formative assessment’) is different to assessment *of* learning (sometimes called ‘summative assessment’).

- **Assessment of learning** is something that usually happens at the end of a piece of learning to gauge performance (eg an end-of-unit test).
- **Assessment for learning** is something that happens regularly during learning – not after it – to check whether learners are progressing.

Video: <https://youtu.be/09tpwkWcFkY?si=txzcfdyHNBNYyG8k>

If assessment *of* learning isn’t accompanied by assessment *for* learning, a teacher might only notice that a learner is struggling with a particular topic when they mark an end-of-unit test – at which point, they’re already planning to move on. If learning gets ‘blocked’ because a learner isn’t moving forward, the teacher and learner need to know this has happened ASAP so the learner can get back on track.

Progress checks can tell you whether learners are progressing towards their goals – but AfL is more than this.

Consider the following scenario.

Callum’s GCSE English teacher set a task: “Write an inspirational speech on bullying for an audience of school children.” Callum worked in a group to make a spidergram of ideas and the group talked about the problems children might have with bullying, but Callum wasn’t sure how to write a speech. When he received his work back after a week, he was disappointed because he got low marks. Callum’s teacher assessed his work but didn’t assess in real time if all the learners knew how to write a speech.

Waiting a week for negative feedback can be demoralising and demotivating. If Callum’s teacher had taken an assessment *for* learning approach, they might’ve noticed that he wasn’t sure how to write a speech and supported him with aspects like style, tone and format before he even started.

Page: Assessment for learning characteristics

The value of AfL in raising attainment was highlighted in the UK through the work of professors Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam – two education experts who have done some important research on assessment.

They outlined the following broad characteristics of AfL.

	The use of rich and challenging tasks
	The quality of classroom/group discourse and questioning
	The quality and use of feedback

															
<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">READING (50%)</th></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Read and understand a range of texts to:</td></tr> <tr> <td>AO1</td><td> - Identify and interpret explicit and implicit i - Select and synthesise evidence from diffe </td></tr> <tr> <td>AO2</td><td>Explain, comment on and analyse how writers achieve effects and influence readers, using r support their views</td></tr> <tr> <td>AO3</td><td>Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as v across two or more texts</td></tr> <tr> <td>AO4</td><td>Evaluate texts critically and support this with a</td></tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">WRITING (50%)</th></tr> </table>	READING (50%)		Read and understand a range of texts to:		AO1	- Identify and interpret explicit and implicit i - Select and synthesise evidence from diffe	AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers achieve effects and influence readers, using r support their views	AO3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as v across two or more texts	AO4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with a	WRITING (50%)		The sharing of learning criteria with learners
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WRITING (50%)															
	The use of self-assessment and peer-assessment														

(Black & Wiliam, 1998)

When done properly, AfL **promotes learning itself** and, therefore, can help learners to make progress. It also allows you and the learner to understand this progress.

You will explore how to design effective AfL activities for GCSE English resit learners in Module 2.

Pause and reflect

- Based on what you've read and watched so far, how would you define assessment *for* learning in GCSE English resit contexts?
- What makes it different from assessment *of* learning?

References

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998), 'Assessment and classroom learning'. *Assessment in Education*, 5 (1), 7–74 [online]. Available from: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/t4/learningandteaching/files/PGCTHE/BlackandWiliam1998.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2026].

Page: Linking planning and assessment

When GCSE English resit curricula aren't planned around assessment, learners may struggle to engage with sessions because they can't see the purpose of what they're learning.

Consider the following case study. It describes the experience of one GCSE English resit teacher called Mr. Thompson. As you read, consider what Mr. Thompson could do differently when planning his curricula and lessons. How might he link his planning to assessment?

(You might want to make notes, as you'll be revisiting Mr. Thompson's story later in the course.)

Case study: Mr. Thompson's experience

Background

Mr. Thompson teaches GCSE English resits at a large further education (FE) college. His classes are made up of 16–18-year-olds who didn't achieve grade 4s at school. Many arrive with low confidence and the attitude that "English isn't for me".

Although he's experienced, Mr. Thompson's lessons are not built around AfL. Instead, his teaching tends to focus on working through past papers and exam-style tasks, with the hope that repeated exposure will eventually boost learners' performance.

What his lessons look like

- Mr. Thompson's lessons often start with questions from past papers (eg descriptive writing or language analysis questions).
- Learners tend to complete the work individually, with little discussion or modelling beforehand.
- Feedback usually comes weeks later, once Mr. Thompson has had time to mark a full set of responses.
- Whole-class questioning is limited, and the same confident learners usually put their hands up to answer.

- There are no personalised targets – everyone is expected to attempt the same activities in the same way.

Challenges he's facing

- **Engagement**
Many learners quickly switch off. Tasks feel repetitive and too similar to the GCSE lessons they've already 'failed'. Without quick checks of understanding, learners who get lost in the task just stay quiet, and it's not clear to Mr. Thompson who is keeping up.
- **Confidence**
Tackling a whole exam question without smaller stepping stones is an overwhelming prospect for weaker learners. They don't get the chance to practise the necessary skills (like building stronger sentences or using specific language techniques) before being thrown into the deep end.
- **Differentiation**
Stronger learners often finish tasks quickly and get bored. Struggling learners feel stuck and demotivated. Because there's no formative assessment in the lesson, it's hard to adjust the pitch or support on the spot.
- **Progress tracking**
By the time Mr. Thompson marks a set of responses, it's too late – the class has already moved on. He notices the same errors cropping up (eg misreading the question, missing structure marks, weak vocabulary) but he can't address them immediately.
- **Results and outcomes**
Lessons are very task heavy but not always outcome driven. Learners don't see how today's activity links to improving their grade. Objectives like "do Question 5" are too broad, and learners rarely leave knowing what specific skill(s) they've improved.

The impact...

- **...on learners**
Motivation continues to drop. Some learners openly say that the lessons feel "like being back at school" and that they aren't learning how to get better.
- **...on the teacher**
Mr. Thompson is frustrated, too. He spends hours marking but doesn't see the payoff in class progress. He feels learners "don't want to engage" when in reality, they're not getting the feedback and support they need to move forward.

Pause and reflect

- How could Mr. Thompson incorporate AfL into his planning?
- What difference might that make?

Later in the course, you'll revisit Mr. Thompson's story and find out.

Lesson: Assessment for learning and the learning process

There is nothing wrong with assessment *of* learning (eg weekly progress checks) on GCSE English resit courses. It helps you to see how well learners are progressing.

However, assessment *for* learning stresses the importance of the **learning process**. In this way, learners can understand what they have done well and what needs to improve – and make those improvements in as close to real time as possible.

As you saw in Callum's example, activities like marking, feedback and even quizzing can become assessment *of* learning or interim summative assessments. This is because there can be a delay between a learner doing a task, knowing if they need to make improvements and having a chance to put those improvements into practice.

However, you can embed these activities in AfL, too.

Teacher-led marking	Teacher-led marking can be embedded in AfL for GCSE English resit learners as follows: • Encourage learners do some written work. • Circulate and (lightly) review learners' written responses before making a list of 'common issues' for the whole class – perhaps using a 'directed improvement and reflection time' (DIRT) marking grid. • Challenge learners to review their own work according to this list and then share ideas for personal improvements with their peers. • Get learners to make these improvements and note down what they have done – then undertake individual marking yourself, if necessary. (If the task was 'low stakes', you might not need to, as learning <i>has</i> taken place and learners can see their progress.)
Quizzes	There are many ways to embed quizzes as part of AfL. For example, 'hinge-point questions' can provide a great basis for class discussion and development. Here, the 'wrong answers' are carefully selected to represent common misconceptions or mistakes. Teachers can use quizzing technologies to see how many learners have particular 'wrong answers' then spend time exploring why this is the case (rather than focusing solely on the right answers). Punctuation and spelling are points which often need work within GCSE English resits and such quizzes can be a great way of developing the accuracy of these with learners. A useful website for quick quizzes is <u>Wordwall</u>.

The video below explores how AfL:

- runs parallel to the learning process
- is a process itself with four key stages.

Video: <https://youtu.be/Exby0iFhSNc?si=AaQ7BI4UURv2nIld>

Activity: teacher-led marking

Put these steps in the correct sequence for implementing teacher-led marking.

- Learners complete written work.
- Teacher identifies and circulates common issues.
- Learners review and discuss improvements.
- Learners make improvements and note changes.
- Teacher marks individually if needed.

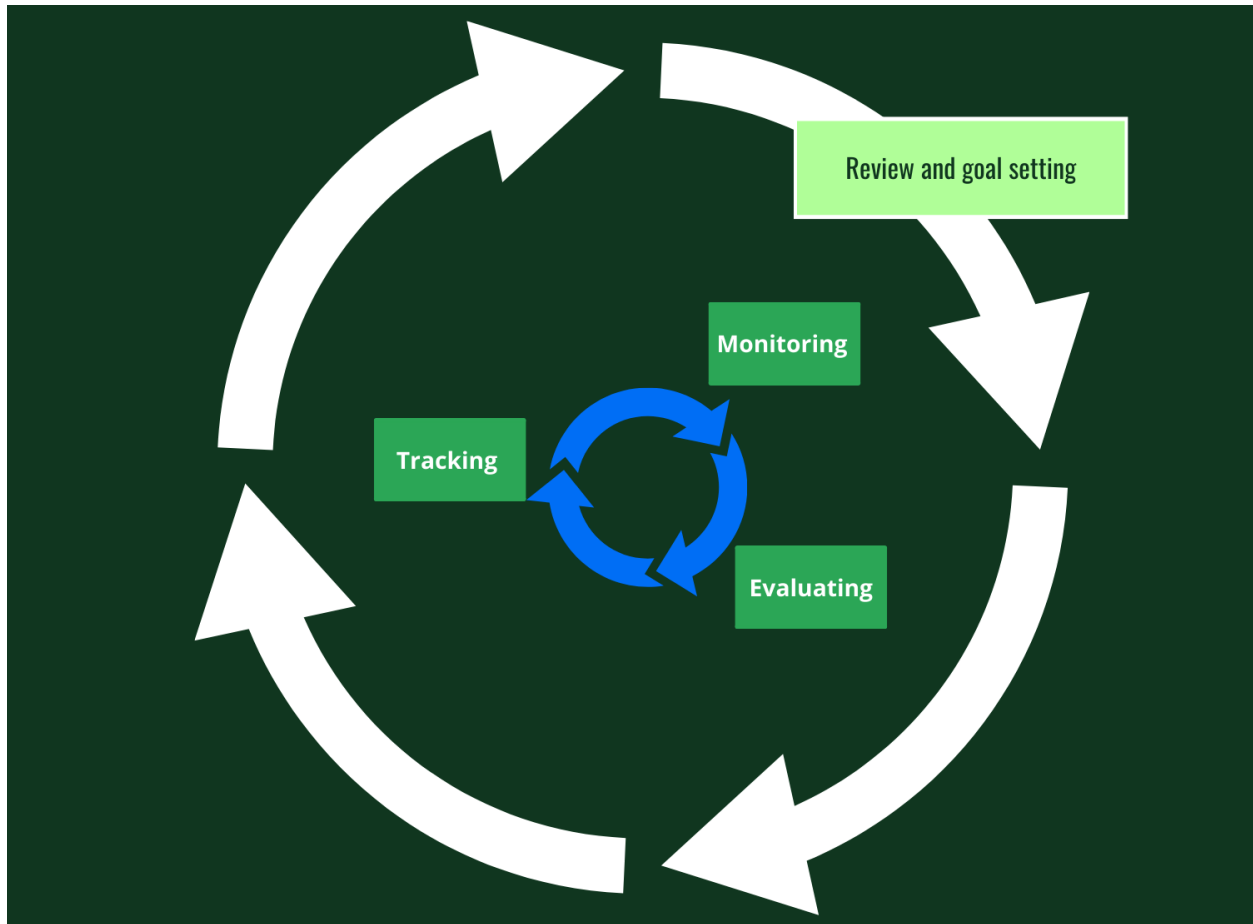
Answers

1. Learners complete written work.
2. Teacher identifies and circulates common issues.
3. Learners review and discuss improvements.
4. Learners make improvements and note changes.
5. Teacher marks individually if needed.

Page: The roles of teachers and learners

It can be helpful to think about learning as a journey in which teachers and learners play different roles.

- **Review and goal setting** = teacher-led and learner-supported process
- **Monitoring and evaluating** = learner-led and teacher-supported process



Roles of teachers and learners

Teacher-led and learner-supported process

- Reviewing – Reflecting on progress with guidance
- Goal Setting – Establishing learning objectives collaboratively

Learner-led and teacher-supported process

- Tracking – Keeping a record of learning progress
- Monitoring – Observing and assessing learning
- Evaluating – Judging the effectiveness of learning strategies

Pause and reflect

To what extent do you think learners are able to lead their own monitoring and evaluation?

You will explore this in the next lesson.

Lesson: Supporting learners to monitor and evaluate their own progress

Page: Affective factors in assessment and tracking

Bloom's Taxonomy – the educational framework used by many teachers – talks about three domain of learning. Among these are the cognitive (knowledge-based) domain and the affective (emotion-based domain).

Learning combines both of these (Brandes & Ginnis, 1986). In other words, it's important to remember that learners (of all ages) experience education emotionally as well as cognitively.

As part of your AfL process, consider working with learners to assess and monitor their engagement and motivation.

It's a 'belief thing'		It's a 'values thing'
<i>"Am I 'up to' this journey?"</i>	<i>"Will this journey get me there?"</i>	<i>"Do I actually want this?"</i>
<i>"What me?"</i>	<i>"Do what?"</i>	<i>"Why?"</i>
		

Case study

As part of an action research project, a team from an FE college in the north west of England introduced 'Expectancy/Value assessments' to help GCSE English learners monitor their engagement and motivation.

They asked learners to record 2 scores:

- From 0–10, how much do you **expect** to succeed?
- From 0–10, how much do you **value** what you are learning?

They then asked them to multiply the two numbers together and treat this as their 'level of motivation'.

Learners recorded their levels over time and reflected on how a low score in one area would pull the total down (eg 'I really like English but I'm terrible at it!' or 'I don't care about GCSE English; I want to work as a plumber.')

The process highlighted the levels of motivation in the participating classes. Some learners opened up about their negative prior learning experiences or fear of failure. The college team reported that having open conversations about motivation contributed towards improvements in learners' attendance and, ultimately, GCSE English grades.

Pause and reflect

Have you considered assessing for engagement and motivation as part of your GCSE English resit planning?

References

Brandes, D. & Ginnis, P. (1986), *A Guide to Student-Centered Learning*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Page: Learner ownership of monitoring and evaluation

Engaging learners in leading the process of monitoring and evaluating their own learning journey achieves two important aims:

1. It engages the learner more deeply in the learning process, and makes them more aware of progress and challenges to be overcome.
2. It 'frees up' the teacher to take a more facilitative role in guiding and validating the learners' own monitoring and evaluation of progress.

The video below explains the role learners have in monitoring and evaluating their own learning. As you watch, think about how this might apply to (your) GCSE English learners.

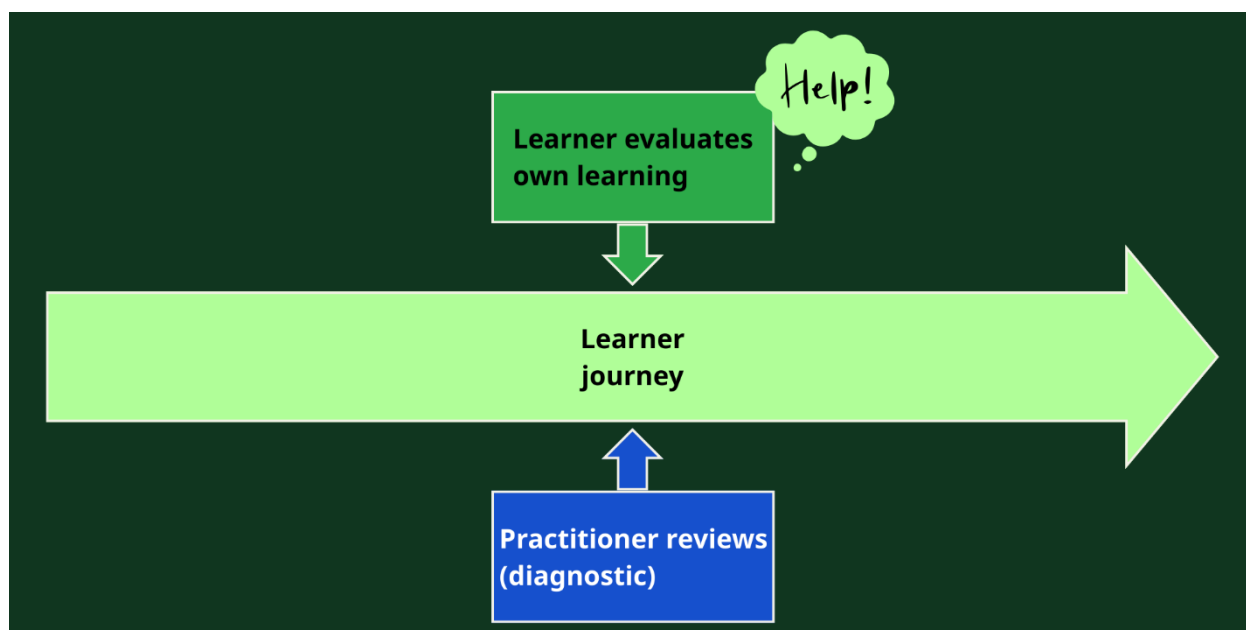
Video: https://youtu.be/FiT30Klc24E?si=_r4t5Nebl_YbyU8g

Learner ownership in GCSE English lessons

Here are two simple ideas GCSE English teachers have used to enable learners to take ownership of monitoring and evaluating. (You will explore this topic in more detail in Module 2.)

Exit tickets	Learners record one thing they learnt from the session and one thing that is still unclear. Focus on learners' active retrieval of information and individual reflection on what they've learned. This can help future session planning and teacher knowledge of learners' strengths/needs.
Emojis for self-reflection	Agree with learners at the start of a course what 'icons' (emojis) they will use to indicate how confident they feel about their work (or aspects of it) before they submit it. This can be done for single sentences or whole texts. The key is using a familiar, 'learner-controlled' language to open up discussions about progress.

In each of the examples above, learners are not expected to be *experts* in GCSE English – this is the teacher's role. Instead, they are asked to be responsible for identifying if they understand the task and are on track.



Page: Revisiting Mr. Thompson's story

Before you finish this module, revisit Mr. Thompson's story below.

Background

After reflecting on his learners' lack of progress, Mr. Thompson began to explore how AfL strategies could make his resit lessons more responsive. With support from colleagues and CPD training, he decided to move away from 'just doing past papers' and focus on building confidence step by step.

Changes in his teaching

- **Clearer learning objectives**
Mr. Thompson made his learning objectives more specific. Instead of saying "do Question 5", he started saying things like "today we're going to practise using three language techniques to build atmosphere".
- **Checking understanding throughout**
Mr. Thompson started using mini whiteboards and quick multiple-choice hinge questions to see who understood the task. This helped him to spot misconceptions straight away.
- **Smaller steps and scaffolded tasks**
Rather than launching straight into full exam responses, Mr. Thompson broke tasks into chunks (eg "write one strong opening sentence" or "improve this paragraph using sensory detail").
- **Formative feedback**
Mr. Thompson made his feedback more immediate and more focused. Instead of forcing learners to wait weeks for marked work, he started doing 'live marking' in class with quick verbal comments and peer feedback.
- **Individual targets**
Mr. Thompson encouraged each learner to keep a simple progress tracker to record their next steps (eg "use more precise vocabulary" or "embed quotations more smoothly"). This gave learners a clearer sense of how they were improving.

What the lessons look like now

- Lessons often begin with a quick recall quiz or retrieval task to check prior knowledge.
- Mr. Thompson models a short skill, then sets a scaffolded task where learners can immediately practise.
- Learners hold up answers on mini whiteboards or share with a partner, so Mr. Thompson can adjust the pace and address misunderstandings.
- Success criteria are made explicit – eg "By the end of this lesson, you should have written a paragraph with at least two pieces of language analysis and an embedded quotation".
- Feedback is built *into* the lesson, not merely given *after* it.

Improvements

- **Engagement**
Learners are more willing to take part because the tasks feel achievable and progress is visible. Even reluctant learners are more likely to have a go when they know they'll get quick feedback.
- **Confidence**
Breaking tasks into smaller skills gives learners a chance to experience success. They leave lessons knowing *exactly* what they've improved, which boosts self-belief.

- **Differentiation**
Quick AfL checks allow Mr. Thompson to stretch those who are ready (eg asking them to refine their vocabulary choices) while offering extra support to those who are still struggling.
- **Progress tracking**
Misconceptions are caught early and corrected straight away. Learners now build up a clearer sense of their own learning journey, instead of repeating the same mistakes for weeks.
- **Outcomes**
Lessons feel purposeful and outcome driven. Learners see a direct link between the skills they practise in class and the exam questions they'll face.

The impact...

- **...on learners**
Learners report that the lessons “make more sense” and feel less like a repeat of school. Many are more positive about English, saying they can “see how to improve”.
- **...on the teacher**
Mr. Thompson feels more in control. His marking workload is lighter because he gives feedback during the lesson, and he sees the evidence of progress more quickly. He also feels more positive about the resit groups, noticing their growing confidence.

Summary

By adopting AfL strategies, Mr. Thompson has made his resit lessons more engaging and outcome focused. Assessment is no longer just something that happens at the end of a unit – it drives the lessons themselves. Learners feel supported, progress is visible, and both Mr. Thompson and his learners have a clearer sense of purpose.

Lesson: Review your learning

Page: Well done

Well done – you’ve reached the end of Module 1

In this module, you explored:

- AfL in the context of GCSE English resits
- effective AfL processes
- how to support learners to monitor and evaluate their own progress.

On the next page, you’ll have the opportunity to review the tools recommended during this module – and some additional reading.

Links from this module

- [ETF Learning Videos | Assessment for learning vs assessment of learning \(YouTube video\)](#)
- [University of Glasgow | Black, P. and Wiliam, D.: Assessment and classroom learning \(PDF\)](#)
- [ETF Learning Videos | The assessment for learning process \(YouTube video\)](#)
- [ETF Learning Videos | The role of the learner \(YouTube video\)](#)

Additional reading

- Marshall, B. and Wiliam D. (1990), *English Inside the Black Box*. London: Kings College London.
- Hattie, J. (2012), *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Module 2: Planning assessment for learning activities

Lesson: What's happening in this module?

Welcome to Module 2

In this module, you will focus on planning effective AfL activities for GCSE English resit learners.

You'll explore:

- effective AfL task design
- example AfL activities for GCSE English resit learners
- useful AfL tools and techniques.

Lesson: Effective task design

Page: Assessment for learning tasks centred on monitoring and evaluation

As you saw in Module 1, many assessment tasks ‘punctuate’ the learning process to ‘take stock’ of what has been learnt. These are usually called summative (or interim summative) assessments.

AfL involves designing tasks with monitoring and evaluation at their core – but what does this mean?

AfL techniques that enable GCSE English learners to monitor their own progress

Read the list below. Which approaches have you tried?

- **Exit tickets**
These are quick activities at the end of sessions to check understanding or gather feedback. Example: *“Write one thing you learned today about persuasive techniques and one question you still have.”*
- **Emojis for self-reflection**
Learners can use emojis to express how they feel about their learning, or how confident they are. Example: *“Choose an emoji to show how confident you feel about analysing tone in a text: 😊 😐 😞”*
- **Co-creation of success criteria**
When co-creating success criteria, learners help to define what makes a piece of work successful. Example: *“Let’s list together what features make a persuasive text effective – emotive language, rhetorical questions, etc.”*
- **Self-assessment scaling**
In this approach, learners rate their confidence or understanding on a numerical scale. Example: *“On a scale of 1–10, how confident are you about identifying the writer’s viewpoint?”*
- **Medals and missions**
‘Medals’ tell the learner what they have done well. ‘Missions’ are individual targets to help the learner improve their work. Example: *“Medal: You used strong emotive language. Mission: Try to vary your sentence structure for impact.”*
- **Assertive questioning**
Here, the teacher withholds the ‘right answer’ to encourage deeper thinking and wider participation. Example: *“I won’t tell you the answer yet. Who else can build on that idea about the writer’s tone?”*
- **Hinge-point questions**

As you read earlier in the course, these are carefully designed questions asked at key moments to reveal common misconceptions and guide teaching. Example: *“Which of these is NOT a persuasive technique: repetition, metaphor, or statistics?”* You’ll explore hinge-point questions in more detail later.

- **Directed improvement and reflection time (DIRT)**
Dedicated time for learners to act on feedback and improve their work. Example: *“Use DIRT time to rewrite your paragraph using more precise vocabulary.”* You’ll explore DIRT in more detail later.

These are just a few examples. Make a note of any you haven't selected and consider carrying over to your action plan at the end of the course.

Next, you will explore the design of AfL activities for GCSE English learners.

Pause and reflect

What common features do the above ideas have?

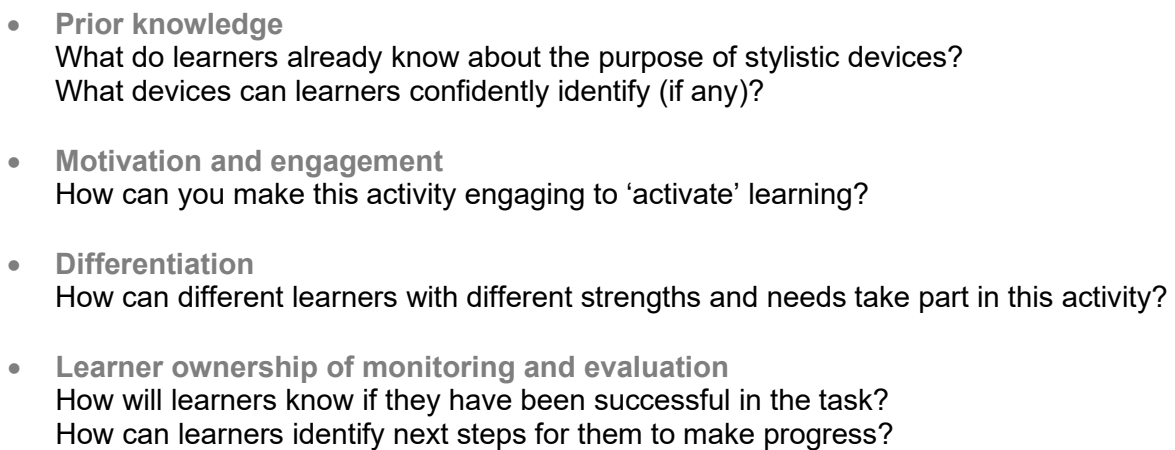
Remember, effective AfL involves, for example:

- the use of rich and challenging tasks
- the quality of classroom/group discourse and questioning
- the quality and use of feedback
- the sharing of learning criteria with learners
- use of self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Page: Task design

Imagine that your learners are struggling to understand stylistic devices used by authors in unseen texts, and you want to design an AfL task that focuses on this.

What do you need to consider?



Do you have any ideas for an activity that would work in this scenario?

On the next page, you'll consider an example.

Here is an idea for an AfL task focusing on stylistic devices.

Find an image that comes from or relates to your chosen text (such as the one pictured here, which accompanies a Charles Dickens novel.)

Point to the image and ask learners:

- What could be going on here?
- When might this be happening?
- What characters can you see?
- What do you expect to read about based on this?

2. Self-assessment of stylistic devices

Explain to your learners that they're going to self-assess their understanding of stylistic devices.

Create or source an online quiz on stylistic devices with built-in feedback – such as the one pictured. Then get your learners to complete it in pairs on their own devices. Encourage them to look up the meanings of any terms they are not sure about.

Note that you have stretched them here – they don't need to learn all these devices – but this will encourage them to increase their repertoire for critically engaging with texts.

3. 'Noticing' the author's techniques

Find or create a stylistic devices handout like the one pictured, then encourage your learners to note examples of stylistic devices found in the extract and the reasons why they think the author used them. (You might include a list of stylistic devices in the handout, just as this one does.)

4. Co-create success criteria (ongoing class task)

Learners can now use the handout as a template when writing responses for the English GCSE assessment objective "evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references" (DfE, 2013).

Tell them that they will use the handout to evaluate their own writing in a future lesson.

5. Exit tickets

Finally, get learners to record one thing they learnt from the session and one thing that is still unclear. Focus on their active retrieval of information and individual reflection on what they've learned.

Multiple-choice activity

Select the correct option to test your understanding of AfL approaches.

1. What is the benefit of using an image to begin working on analysing a text?

- A. It replaces the need to read the text
- B. It helps learners to guess the stylistic devices that the author might use
- C. It provides a way for learners to warm up to possible themes in the text

D. It ensures that learners memorise all literary terms

2. Why is it useful to co-create success criteria with learners?

- A. It saves time in marking
- B. It helps learners to understand assessment objectives and the marking criteria for reading and writing exams, and take ownership of their progress
- C. It allows teachers to avoid giving feedback
- D. It makes the lesson more entertaining

3. Which of the following best describes the benefit of 'low-stakes' self-assessment with the ability to check answers?

- A. To test learners and record their progress
- B. To make learning fun
- C. To support differentiation and aid memory recall
- D. To help learners practise exam skills

Answers

1	C - Discussing images and text titles helps to 'awaken' prior knowledge on a topic and motivate learners to want to read more.
2	B - Co-creating success criteria builds learner confidence and supports self-evaluation.
3	C - Low stakes self-assessment supports learners with different prior knowledge and is a great way to help learners remember things (and check their own knowledge). Within GCSE English resit classes, this can be particularly useful when covering punctuation, spelling, language features and grammar, as it can make these topics more engaging and allow the tracking of progress.

References

Department for Education (2013), *English language: GCSE subject content and assessment objectives* [online]. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7bfd7640f0b63f7572aa8b/GCSE_English_language.pdf [Accessed 24 August 2026].

Lesson: Example activities for GCSE English resit learners

Page: Assessment for learning examples

Before you move on, recap the list of AfL characteristics introduced in Module 1.

Effective AfL involves:

- the use of rich and challenging tasks
- the quality of classroom/group discourse and questioning
- the quality and use of feedback
- the sharing of learning criteria with learners
- use of self-assessment and peer-assessment

You are now going to look at three examples of AfL tasks that you could use with GCSE English resit learners to bring the above to life.

Co-creating success criteria	When you work with learners to develop criteria for assessment, drawing on authentic examples.
DIRT marking	Directed improvement and reflection time or 'DIRT' is an approach to marking and feedback that can support learners to evaluate their own learning.
Hinge-point questions	A hinge-point question is a diagnostic question that you ask to determine what you and your learners need to do next. The key is in choosing 'wrong answers' that allow you to identify and discuss learners' common misconceptions.

You'll now explore each of these in more detail.

Page: Co-creating success criteria

Involving learners in creating success criteria can be a very effective way of:

- ascertaining what they do and do not understand
- developing their knowledge on a topic.

Co-creating success criteria in GCSE English contexts involves the following steps (though there are other ways to achieve the same outcome).

Elicit	Elicit prior knowledge on the topic. A good 'low-stakes' way to do this is through anonymous, open-response polling, as learners are less likely to feel shame about misunderstandings. <i>Example: You could use <u>Mentimeter</u> for questioning and/or to gather anonymous feedback from learners.</i>
Review	Review an example or examples of the 'target language', 'text type', etc. and identify any features previously elicited. Then draw out features that make this 'typical' (eg the use of descriptive language in a factual account). <i>Example: Using a short quiz on audience, purpose and format to gamify the review process could help learners to engage with this.</i>
Agree	Agree what 'good' looks like in this text type or for using this target language. Ensure the criteria are clearly understood and check this by asking learners to work in pairs to discuss an example of each criteria and be prepared to share. <i>Example: Share some well-written texts and some less effective texts for discussion and review. You could generate these texts using artificial intelligence (AI) tools or find examples yourself.</i>
Use	Use the agreed success criteria for self-assessment, peer marking and teacher-led feedback. You could use it to create a 'DIRT' marking grid. (You'll explore this more in a moment.) <i>Example: Use the whole class to decide some success criteria which can then be individualised and applied by each learner.</i>

Pause and reflect

Imagine your learners need to know how to write more formally. Can you think of a way to apply the process above ('elicit, review, agree, use') and design an AfL task or series of tasks?

Page: DIRT marking

Directed improvement and reflection time or 'DIRT' is an approach to marking and feedback that can support learners to evaluate their own learning. It is an example of an AfL task.

During DIRT, you take the following steps:

1. Review learners' work but don't mark it.
2. Make a list of common errors and things people have done well on a DIRT grid (see below).

3. Answer questions learners might have about points on the DIRT grid.
4. Give learners time in class to work alone and/or in pairs to use the grid as per the instructions (eg find examples of things you did really well in your work and things you could improve).
5. If needed, collect in learners' work for individual marking.

Using a DIRT marking grid

Here is an example of a DIRT marking grid.

Strengths		Polaroid moments
Even better if	DIRT Use the list to: • identify one area in which you did really well and explain why • improve one area based on our discussions.	SPAG

'Strengths'	A list of things that some/many people have done well (eg effective identification of a text's theme with evidence)
'Even better if'	Things that would have improved some/many people's work (eg consistent use of tense)
'Polaroid moments'	Some examples (perhaps quoted) of things people did really well
'SPAG'	Some pointers to improve this with examples if possible (eg misuse of commas)
DIRT	Clear instructions for learners about what you want them to do

Benefits

- Feedback leads to more work for the learner than the practitioner.

- It's possible to magnify what 'good' looks like.
- Learners take responsibility for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, with scaffolds from the teacher.
- Learners get dedicated time in class to work on addressing feedback actively.

Page: Hinge-point questions

A hinge is a point in a session (or a series of sessions) when you need to check if your learners are ready to move on.

A hinge-point question is a diagnostic question that you ask to determine what you and your learners need to do next.

Here are some examples of simple hinge-point questions to help GCSE English learners develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG). The correct answers are in bold.

Which sentence has no mistakes in each of these examples?

1.

- A. *The children was excited!*
- B. *Can I help you finding this?*
- C. *What time are you arriving?*
- D. *Whens the next bus?*

2.

- A. *We should of booked an earlier train.*
- B. *If the bus wasn't late, we could have arrived on time.*
- C. *They never did done that!*
- D. *Whens the next train arriving?*

3.

- A. *The weather on Monday was beautiful.*
- B. *I had a honest conversation with him.*
- C. *Should we go out for a dinner tonight?*
- D. *I have an doctor's appointment tomorrow.*

Answers

- 1. C
- 2. B

3. A

Did you notice that the wrong answers above (everything apart from A in Question 1, B in Question 2 and D in Question 3) all contain examples of common SPaG errors made by learners?

How is this an example of AfL?

On its own, this is simply an assessment *of* learning task (so you, the teacher, can see how many learners know the right answer).

However, if you were to do this anonymously using a polling tool, you could set up a group discussion about why (for example) 20% of people think A is the right answer and elicit why not.

You could also ask learners to create their own hinge-point quizzes in groups with common errors they have made to test others.

For more info on hinge-point questions, watch this [video from Dylan Wiliam](#).

Page: End-of-course quiz

You can now reflect on the AfL activities you've considered in this module. Progress through the scenarios below and decide how you'd respond in your setting.

Scenario 1: Co-creating success criteria

You're teaching persuasive writing to your GCSE English resit group. You want learners to understand what 'good' looks like before they begin writing.

You decide to co-create success criteria using anonymised examples of learners' work.

What should you do?

Options:

1. Guide learners to identify key features in the examples of learners' work and build the criteria together, encouraging discussion and clarification.
2. Present a pre-written list of success criteria and ask learners to copy it into their books.
3. Ask learners to write their own success criteria individually without any examples or guidance.

Answers:

1. That's right. This approach helps learners to understand expectations and take ownership of the criteria.
2. That's not right. While efficient, this misses the opportunity for learners to engage with and internalise the criteria.
3. That's not right. This may be too challenging without scaffolding and could lead to confusion or inconsistent expectations.

Scenario 2: DIRT marking

You've just completed a persuasive writing task with your GCSE English resit group.

Instead of marking each piece individually, you decide to use a DIRT marking grid to help learners reflect on their work.

You've reviewed the class's work and created 'Polaroid moments.' You're about to begin the DIRT activity in class.

What should you do?**Options**

1. Ask learners to use the DIRT grid to peer-assess each other's work, without first reflecting on their own writing.
2. Explain the DIRT grid briefly, then ask learners to rewrite their entire piece from scratch using the feedback.
3. Introduce the DIRT grid. Learners use it individually or in pairs to spot strengths and areas to improve in their writing.

Answers:

1. That's not right. Peer assessment can be useful, but learners should first engage with their own work to build self-awareness.
2. That's not right. Rewriting may be overwhelming and doesn't allow for focused improvement on specific areas.
3. That's right. This encourages learner reflection and ownership of progress, with structured support.

Scenario 3: Hinge-point questions

You ask a hinge-point question to check understanding of rhetorical devices.

Several learners choose an incorrect answer that reveals a common misconception.

What should you do?

Options

1. Use the misconception as a teaching opportunity. Discuss why the answer is incorrect and revisit the concept with the class.
2. Move on with the lesson as planned, assuming most learners understood the concept.
3. Repeat the question with the same options and ask learners to try again.

Answers:

1. That's right. This helps to clarify misunderstandings and reinforces learning for the whole group.
2. That's not right. Skipping over misconceptions can leave gaps in understanding and hinder progress.
3. That's not right. Repetition without clarification is unlikely to resolve the misconception or deepen understanding.

Lesson: Review your learning

Page: Congratulations

Congratulations – you've nearly reached the end of 'Planning and Assessment in an Inclusive GCSE English Resit Curriculum'

Over the past two modules, you've covered the following learning objectives:

- Develop your understanding of assessment for learning so you can support GCSE English resit learners to monitor and track their progress
- Consider how to plan effective assessment for learning activities for GCSE English resit learners.

What next?

Remember: this course is part of the 16–19 English GCSE Resit CPD offer, which aims to transform how English is taught and experienced in post-16 settings. The content is built on a foundation of research, practitioner insight and learner voices.

Page: Further resources

Links from this module

- [DfE | English language: GCSE subject content and assessment objectives \(PDF\)](#)

Additional reading

- [Reflecting English | Tag: Articles on DIRT](#)
- [Timothy Scott | Dylan William Hinge Questions \(YouTube video\)](#)

Page: Action planning

Now that you have completed the course, what will you do next?

Use this page to set yourself short- and long-term targets relating to any part of this course.

Professional development is an ongoing process. Making time to reflect on and refine how you work can be really challenging – but it is time well spent. Creating a simple plan will help you to embed what you have learnt and set a timescale for your next steps.

Target	What will I do to achieve my target?	Who might help me?	When will I achieve it?

Target	What will I do to achieve my target?	Who might help me?	When will I achieve it?

Remember: this is a process for you. It might be helpful to share some of your thinking with colleagues, a mentor or a line manager at an appraisal – but, first and foremost, an action plan