LEARNOVATE

Online Assessment and Feedback

During Covid-19 school closures, teachers adapted and innovated in moving their classes online. Building on this experience, teachers can now refine their approaches to online learning.

To help guide this process, Learnovate has compiled a three-part practical guide for post primary teachers to act as a support when preparing for online and blended teaching and learning. This second guide addresses the area of online feedback and assessment.

This guide focuses on **Assessment For Learning (AfL) - the on-going teaching and learning process to help students improve their learning through feedback** from the teacher, from their peers and from themselves. In a classroom, teachers can get a minute-by-minute sense of how the class is progressing by circulating to view work or using AfL strategies like traffic lights or exit notes. Online, it can be challenging to gather information about how your students are getting on but there are lots of opportunities for consistent and effective AfL online.
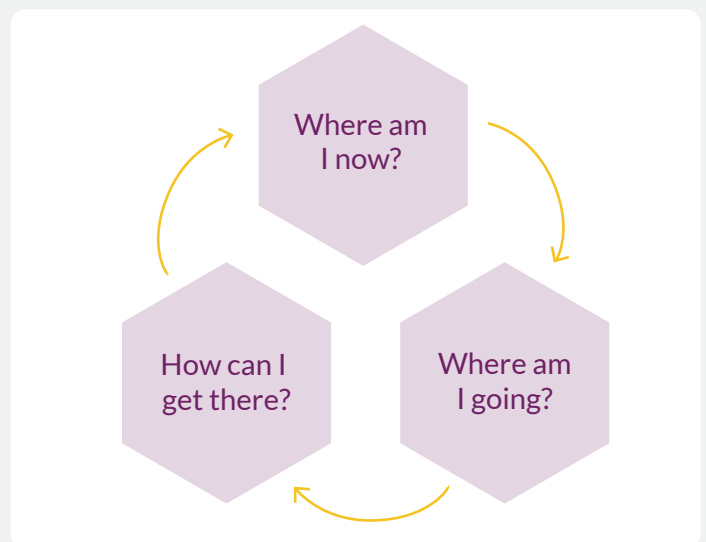
An AfL approach helps students to become more self-directed, set their own goals for learning and work out how to achieve those goals, with the support of their teachers and their peers. Many of the strategies below are effective in both online and a face-to-face settings, e.g. Kahoot quizzes or use of rubrics for assessment. If they are part of your normal classroom approach, it will be easier to transition to remote learning if necessary in the future.

The starting point for the teacher and the learners is adopting an AfL mindset, using assessment and feedback to answer the questions below:

An AfL mindset from the teacher's point of view

- Where is the learner now?
- Where is the learner going?
- How can I help the learner get there?
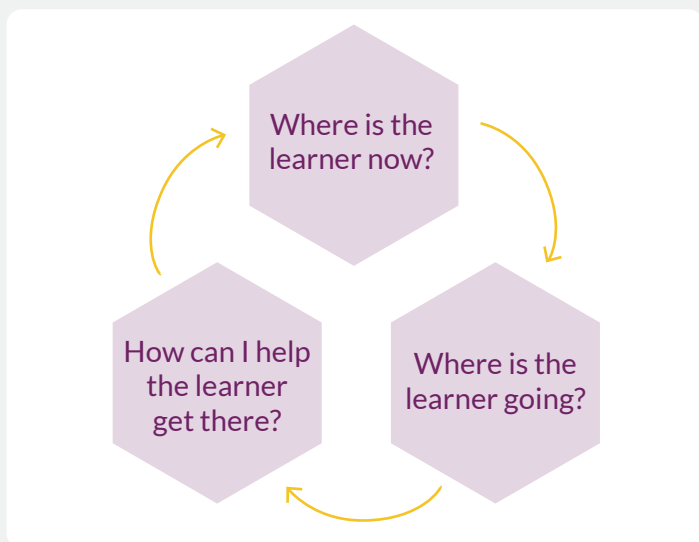
An AfL mindset from the learner's point of view

- Where am I now?
- Where am I going?
- How can I get there?

Where am I going?	Where am I now?	How can I get there?
Set clear learning intentions and success criteria	Get evidence of progress (what I know and can do now)	Identify next steps for progress

Online Assessment and Feedback

Setting clear learning intentions and success criteria

Teachers and learners need to **be clear** on what they are learning and why. This is even more important at a distance as there is less opportunity to ask classmates or the teacher. The PDST have some great guidance on defining learning intentions and success criteria. Valuable live online class time can be usefully used in **sharing and clarifying learning intentions**, unpacking tasks into skills and knowledge needed to be successful, **examining what successful learning looks like and defining success** criteria for work. **Exemplars of student work are a really valuable tool** to do this. If you have permission, you can use anonymised versions of student work from previous years or even your own attempts. CurriculumOnline has exemplars of Junior Cycle student work for a range of subject areas with defined success criteria.

You can also do this outside of live online class time by sharing the learning intentions in a document or recording and setting the students the off-line task of identifying good elements in examples of student

work and create a shared document of success criteria from their comments.

Any work to define success criteria with your students will pay off in the long run as you can **use these success criteria as a rubric for assessment for self, peer and teacher evaluations**. Clear task and learning-oriented success criteria allow for clear task and learning oriented feedback.

Getting Evidence of Progress

Assessing students online shouldn't be any more complicated than it is in a classroom but it can require doing things differently. Practice makes perfect: if you use forms of assessment in your face-to-face classroom that would also be useful online, then the transition to distance learning will be easier if it becomes necessary in the future. For all of the suggestions below, bear in mind the range of apps and tools and logins your students might be managing for all of the classes. Keep it simple and ideally take a whole school approach so your students are not overloaded.

What evidence do I have of their progress?

Informal in live online or off-line classes	Formal
- Thumbs up or traffic lights - Emoji response - Student-generated questions - Online quizzes (e.g. Kahoot, Socrative, JCQuest) - Question wall (e.g. Padlet) - Directions followed - Polling - Chat used - Exit notes (*Ticket to leave* question)	- Homework - Rubric marks - Skill progression tool - Attendance - Work completion - Self-assessment - Spoof assessment (students assess a sample assignment) - Peer assessment - Critiquing (writing sample) - Student screenshot of work done, student reflection/ summary videos

Informal evidence of learning

Observation in the moment: Formative assessment in the classroom can sometimes just be a quick observation of the students' work. This can be recreated to some extent when engaging with students through video conferencing. If your students are in break-out groups, you can drop in on them as you would circulate among the groups in a classroom. **Emojis and thumbs up/down signs** provide good feedback on learning. You can use the chat function as mini-whiteboards in the classroom for students to type responses to questions.

Quizzes: Share a screen quiz to assess where your students are at - at the start of the class after a quick revision to re-activate their learning on a topic, during class to consolidate learning or at the end of class to check what they have retained best in the lesson or even for homework. Remember that you can create a quiz yourself or access a quiz that has been already created for your subject(s). Other quiz websites include:Quia.com, Hot Potatoes, Socrative, Quizlet. Even better, get your students to create their own quizzes and test each other. You can transform any website or online video into a quiz with apps also (e.g. EdPuzzle or InsertLearning).

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Google or Microsoft forms are popular and free ways to send questions too. These can also be used for quizzes and can be used to ask and receive longer answers from students. In Google Forms, there is also an option to create **multiple choice questions** that can automatically grade the student's work. Use resources they can access easily and integrate well with the technology the school is using.

Question walls or exit notes are a useful way to get feedback from students about what they have learnt, what they are finding difficult, what they still have questions about. You can use something simple like a shared document or particular apps (Padlet, Mentimeter, etc.) or even social media (twitter hashtags, instagram, etc).

Formal evidence of learning

Homework, assignments and projects: Setting assignments is a great simple way to assess a student's knowledge. Moving online can actually allow students the opportunity to represent their learning in a much wider range of formats and modes than a standard paper-based classroom. Offer your students choice and they will be creative - video, audio, graphic, multimedia as well as text-based options. You can use valuable live online class time for students to present their work and get feedback from you and their peers.

Webwise provides advice on setting and collecting homework through a VLE and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the different ways to deliver homework online.

Presentation tools such as PowerPoint, Prezi and Google Slides are simple user friendly ways for students to present their work. Remember that a presentation can be in both an **asynchronous and synchronous** learning environment. Synchronous classes occur when both teacher and students are online at the same time. Asynchronous is when the work (or class) is not experienced all together at the same time such as when you have set online work for completion through your chosen format. The screen share option in video conferencing tools can be a great feature to get the student to present their work but they can also pre-record their presentation using screen capture on their laptop. Doing the presentation and sharing the content in a synchronous learning environment can be an ideal place for peer assessment.

Collaborative projects: Remember if your students have access to an online platform these assignments can be collaborative by creating shared documents, presentations or other outputs. Structure the work as you would in the classroom with a clear group task, specified roles if needed, shared and individual responsibilities, following Cooperative Learning principles can support this.

ePortfolios are a very popular and successful way to showcase your student's work online. The most popular and easiest format to access students' work is to create a website where all the students' work can be easily presented and accessed by the teacher. You can also do this through the use of folders, but a site can have bigger visual impact. Basically, each student creates a homepage to link to pages on each subject. These pages include pictures, word documents, presentations or any form of evidence of the student's work. This can be treated as a good format to continuously assess the students' work simply by checking the uploaded content when it is due to be added. Looking at all the content as a whole can also be an effective way of assessing the term or year's work. Google sites and Microsoft OneDrive are popular tools that are used to put an ePortfolio together in a school setting. Scoilnet has a great overview of ePortfolio software options and uses.

Reflective blogs are a similar concept to ePortfolios but focus on the learning itself and the student's experience of their own learning. Encouraging students to reflect regularly is a very positive practice for students and a good insight into the learning experience for teachers and student peers. Keeping this content in an online blog format gives the opportunity to access the reflective diary both in school and in a remote learning situation. Linking the learning intentions and the blogs can keep learners focused on where they are and where they are headed with learning. Edublogs, Wordpress, Weebly, Blogger.com, Tumblr are all examples of blog sites. It's worth researching the most suitable blog site for your students and also checking to see which blog sites are unblocked on your school broadband if applicable.

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Identifying next steps for progress: Feedback

Feedback encourages engagement, communicates to the student the progress they are making and gives them direction on what they need to do to progress or stretch themselves.

Feedback does not always have to come from the teacher, it can come from peers or the learner themselves. Develop learners' assessment and evaluation skills by using rubrics for assessment with clear success criteria, showing examples of useful feedback and letting them practice the skills regularly.

If your school has a **Learning Management System**, feedback should be a built in option for assignments in the tool. There are several online platforms that facilitate the logging of grades, monitoring of progress and communicating feedback directly to your student. Popular formats include Google, Microsoft and Apple Classroom and Edsby.

> "
> *I'm getting a lot of feedback instantly when I finish my homework or any tests which is good so I can learn from my mistakes and see where i went wrong right away.*
> "
> - Trinity Access Covid-19 Student Survey

Ways to give feedback

Online learning offers some challenges but lots of opportunities for providing feedback. The pointers below might help you and your learners provide effective feedback in a distance learning setting.

Providing good feedback can take a lot of time and during the lockdown this was a struggle for many teachers working from home. **Some time-saving ideas** include:

- use a clear rubric for assessment based on clear success criteria - a good rubric includes a clear indication of what was good and what could be improved at different levels
- record audio feedback (especially if you are not a good typist). This can work both ways as students can record their feedback too and their questions on feedback, if any, via audio also.
- give feedback only on specific aspects - even better, ask the student what aspects they want feedback on
- ask students to self or peer assess - this not only saves time but improves students' self-direction skills over time. Good examples from Geoff Petty here.

An asynchronous learning setting can come across as impersonal when giving students feedback. **Personalise feedback** by using the student name, addressing them directly ("you"), giving praise and showing you have engaged with their work. Make the feedback actionable for them in their context. Consider what you already know about your student. Does the student respond well to praise or will a push in the right direction help them? Use your professional judgement to give the right feedback.

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In a synchronous learning setting like zoom, google meet or Skype or an equivalent video conferencing tool you have the opportunity to recreate the face to face contact that is typical of a classroom setting. This is the most instant and natural way to discuss student work. Online live class time is valuable so you might want to focus on areas many students need to address. Online, as in the classroom, be mindful that when you are making a comment, especially with others from the class present, that the comment needs to be constructive and actionable and not a criticism.

> **"**
>
> *I think move online has led to some positive changes to myself as I can plan my own study and can catch up/revise what I need to revise.*
>
> - Trinity Access Covid-19 Student Survey
>
> **"**

Document annotation: you can add comments directly to student work with most word processing software (review function in word, comments in google docs or adobe, etc). You can email or share the document with your student.

Video feedback: The screencastify extension on chrome is a useful tool to record a video comment on the student's work. You can record your audio or video while simultaneously showing the student's work. The recorded video can be shared on YouTube, email or Google classroom and you can link the student directly to the video through a QR Code. You can also download the video as an Mp4 or an audio file and share it in whatever way you like. There is other similar software available but it's worth noting that any laptop with a camera has a 'screen capture' option to record yourself or audio while commenting on a piece of work.

Audio feedback: The quickest and most efficient way to send audio feedback is to record audio on your mobile phone and share it via the school email account or adding it to your chosen online learning platform. Remember that you need to make sure you have your school email address registered on your device or whichever platform you are using. Voice Memos (iPhone) and Voice Recorder (Android) are quick (free) and easy to use. The files are easily attached to an email or added online for a quick share.

vocaroo.com is also very practical and is easy to share content directly to the student. Vocaroo also has a useful feature that creates a QR code that can be sent to others to immediately link to a recording online, thus saving storage space on your phone or the student's phone. Alternatively, you could use Audacity or Soundcloud to make recordings, these offer more possibilities but do require more time.
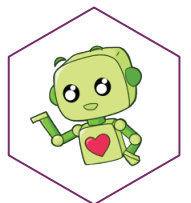
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