

Assessment for Learning: 6 Strategies

 Learning Intentions are clear statements of what students are expected to learn and be able to do.	Some Thoughts on Learning Intentions 1. Select key learning outcomes from curriculum documents for students to learn 2. Keep the number small enough for the brain to handle eg 3-5 for a unit 3. Talk with students about the importance of knowing the destination 4. Record and post learning intentions 5. Put each learning intention into a bigger picture of 'why' students might want to learn it 6. Keep bringing students' focus back to the learning intentions during the lesson/task
 Criteria is what's important or what counts in an activity/task. Students of all ages need a clear understanding of the criteria by which their work or performance will be assessed.	Some Thoughts on Criteria 1. Talk with learners about what criteria is and what's in it for them 2. Limit the number of criteria so the brain can remember what is important 3. Connect criteria to learning intentions in order to get to 'what counts' 4. Post criteria in the classroom and refer to it before, during and/or after the task 5. Make criteria easier to understand by getting concrete (through language, through student work samples, through concrete objects)
 Questions can be used to find out what students know or to help them think. Ask more questions to help learners think. Involve students more in asking their own questions.	Some Thoughts on Questions 1. Talk with students about types of questions eg questions to find out what you know? (measuring) questions to help you learn? (thinking) 2. Give learners a brief time to think and/or talk with a peer before inviting responses 3. Use ideas such as 'hands down' or 'all write' to encourage responses from students 4. Teach learners appropriate non-judgemental ways to build on, disagree, support responses of peers so that questions lead to effective classroom discussions

 Descriptive Feedback is non-judgmental information given to the learner about what is working, what's not working and what's next.	Some Thoughts on Descriptive Feedback 1. Talk with students about the differences between descriptive and evaluative feedback 2. Give students oral and written descriptive feedback in relation to the agreed upon criteria 3. Give at least double the # of strengths before focusing on an area(s) to improve 4. Make specific suggestion(s) for next steps that are easy for students to understand 5. Give students time in class to use the descriptive feedback to make changes 6. Teach students to use multiple sources of descriptive feedback such as self, peer, student created rubrics, anonymous work samples, immediate answers
 Peer and self assessment refers to students giving themselves and peers feedback to help support learning. The feedback required is descriptive rather than evaluative.	Some Thoughts on Peer and Self Assessment 1. Talk with learners about the importance of receiving descriptive feedback from themselves and from their peers to support learning 2. Teach students to use words from the class criteria to offer descriptive feedback to peers and self 3. Make it very clear to learners that their role is to offer useful information rather than making judgments that rank and sort 4. Establish a pattern for peer feedback such as identify two to three strengths before giving one suggestion for improvement
 Ownership is strongly connected to motivation and engagement. One way students demonstrate ownership is when they show and talk about their own learning with others.	Some Thoughts on Ownership 1. Give students clear information up front about what it is they are supposed to learn so they can take a lead role in monitoring their own learning 2. Increase ownership by involving learners in the development of criteria 3. Teach students self assessment skills so they can take more responsibility for their own learning 4. Have students collect concrete examples of their own learning so they can see their own growth over time 5. Establish times and routines where all students show and talk about their work with their families and other adults