

Principle 5. Monitor and Assess Student Language Development

Prereading Reflection Questions

Reflect on these questions individually or with colleagues:

1. How do you check on students' progress in learning and using English?
2. How often do you assess your young learners? What do those assessments look like?
3. What are the ways you give your students feedback? How do you give corrective feedback?

To help children learn, teachers monitor their progress and assess them constantly. Monitoring and assessment are an integral part of the learning process. Most importantly, we focus on what learners *can* do and then provide them support to advance their learning. Students will make mistakes, a natural part of language development. As Paula from Brazil said in Principle 2, “Fail, fail, and fail better!” As we know, mistakes may be caused by a student’s level of English or interference from a student’s native language. Whatever the root cause of the mistake, teachers should take a supportive approach that won’t discourage students from participating in activities. Teachers will find they are continuously monitoring and assessing learners to inform their instructional practices and further children’s language development.

Monitoring Student Progress in a Maker English Class in Brazil

Carolina from Brazil describes how teachers monitor and assess students in the “Maker” English class, where children 3 to 10 years old learn and use English while learning by doing through collaborative projects, problem solving, experimentation, and design. “We mostly assess learners through observation and checklists. Teachers observe students using checklists based on the objectives. We also have some products from students to assess their learnings and progress. When they are old enough, we also encourage student self-assessment.

We assess for different kinds of objectives. We have some objectives for the attitudes that we want students to develop, such as: I will cooperate with my group. I will bring my own ideas to share with my group. We also have language objectives as well. We had a unit on design thinking, so children had to identify a problem and then come up with some ideas to solve the problem. But they had to go through the whole project of design thinking. Children self-assess based on these objectives: I can use design thinking. I can explain the steps in design thinking. They also self-assess their use of language: I can talk about the steps in design thinking. I can explain my process in the past tense.

After teachers have observed students, assessed their final products, and provided students time to self-assess, they have individual conferences with students to talk about their progress and share some of the results with parents.”

PRACTICE 5A Teachers monitor student progress.

With an optimal environment for teaching English to children, students engage in activities with classmates and try to use the new language for effective communication. Some teachers walk around the classroom to monitor students’ progress. They may utilize checklists to keep records of how students use English. Teachers can print out the checklists on paper or carry a tablet and record notes electronically. With this approach, they focus on what learners can do with language and how they are progressing, rather than focusing on errors and mistakes. In some cases, teachers

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may take note of common errors that students make to give timely, corrective feedback through a mini-lesson. Teachers should provide specific and appropriate instructional support for developing students' English proficiency through careful monitoring.

Examples of Practice 5a

Teachers keep track of student progress with checklists. Checklists are an easy way to keep track of student progress (see Table 3.6). This tool can be used periodically to see how students are improving with their oral language production over time. You can casually listen, so your students do not feel nervous, and make note of their best use of the language by putting the date in the appropriate box on your checklist.

Table 3.6 Checklist to keep track of students' progress across time

Progress in Oral Language Production

Student Name	Uses single words	Uses chunks	Uses phrases	Uses simple sentences	Uses complex sentences
Aisha	1/28/21				
Ali	1/28/21	1/28/21	2/11/21		
Amir	1/28/21	2/11/21			
Ibrahim	1/28/21				
Laila	1/28/21	2/11/21			

You might have a similar checklist that you use during one day of instruction to keep track of how well students are meeting the lesson objectives. In Table 3.7, students do an activity where they must ask and answer questions about their weekend using the past tense. Although they had some sentence starters and a word bank listing leisure activities, they had to form the past tense verbs correctly themselves. The teacher checked off every time she heard students asking and answering questions correctly in the past tense.

Table 3.7 Checklist to keep track of how well students meet a lesson objective during one class

Use past tense to ask and answer questions
Date: February 1st

Student Name	Asked questions in past tense accurately	Answered questions in past tense accurately
Caihong		✓✓✓
Li Wei	✓	✓✓
Meiling	✓✓	✓✓✓
Qiu	✓	✓
Shuwen	✓	✓✓
Zihan	✓	✓✓

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Teachers take note of errors to provide appropriate feedback to students. While monitoring students during an activity, you might want to keep track of errors using checklists or taking notes on a piece of paper. During this process, students benefit if you focus on the target language structures (like those shown in the checklist in Table 3.6). This is valuable information, which you can analyze to better understand the causes of the errors. Some errors are just careless mistakes or minor slips. However, others are actual errors that may show students have not mastered the target language in your lesson or some feature of the target language, such as the pronunciation of a difficult sound. Effective teachers notice whether only a few students or most students are making a certain target language error. To understand student language, teachers carefully observe when and how students make errors by focusing on their frequency, timing, and occasion. Keeping a record of student errors can give teachers useful ideas for providing effective feedback for students.

Teachers reteach when errors indicate that students misunderstood or learned the material incorrectly. Although making mistakes is natural in the learning process, teachers still need to identify whether students are on the right track to meet the lesson objectives. When teachers find that many students do not understand rules correctly and make common errors, they can reteach those rules to the whole class or provide a mini-lesson to specific students in a small group session. Usually, it is not helpful to explicitly correct individual students in front of other students, especially when you can reteach and scaffold all students' ability to meet your lesson objectives together.

PRACTICE 5B Teachers provide ongoing feedback strategically and effectively.

Feedback is an essential part of teachers' instruction. Teachers use it to encourage and advance student learning. By giving students feedback, teachers aim to help young learners become more autonomous learners. Sometimes teachers may try to get students to notice their errors by using feedback as a clue. Other times teachers may guide students to learn correct forms by giving direct feedback. With young learners, we want to be sure we encourage them throughout the process.

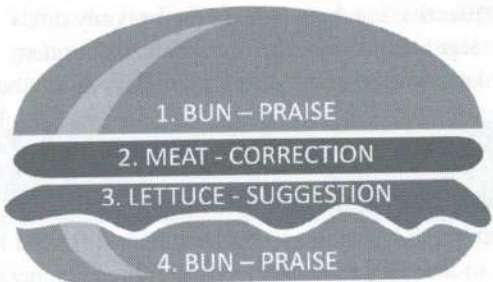
Examples of Practice 5b

Teachers use specific and timely feedback. We already learned about motivating students with positive feedback that is specific and meaningful. Instead of only saying "Good job" every time children do something well, you can be specific about what was good. For a very young learner, it could be: "Good job! A is for Apple!" This repeats the learner's answer to reinforce that it is correct. This feedback is immediate and timely, so children can connect it with what they are doing or saying. For young learners 8 years old and older, you can provide more detailed feedback. If you want to suggest some improvement, you can start with what you liked about a student's work and then follow with your suggestion. Children will respond well if you begin with some specific praise. For example, "Good paragraph about elephants. Your topic sentence is good. I love elephants too! Check your spelling. I see two words you need to fix."

A popular approach to give child-friendly feedback is the Feedback Burger. Young learners in primary school will enjoy receiving feedback in this form, and it ensures that you provide specific child-friendly feedback. You start with praise (bun), then correct the error (meat), which should be related to the target language and language objective. You can also give a suggestion for improvement (lettuce) that might not necessarily be connected to the lesson

objective, but it could be useful to a particular learner based on their individual needs. Lastly, end with praise (bun), so your learner can stay encouraged to keep learning. See the example in Figure 3.9. It can also be a veggie burger or a taco, depending on what your students will enjoy most!

FIGURE 3.9 Feedback burger with example



Teacher feedback to student:

1. Good paragraph about elephants. I love elephants!
2. Check your spelling. I see two words you need to fix.
3. You used the word 'big' three times. Can you find another word for 'big'?
4. Good topic sentence. All six sentences are well written. I especially like your handwriting. Great work!

Teachers deliver feedback according to the age and proficiency level of the learner. Teachers should consider students' characteristics, especially their age and proficiency level, when giving them feedback. Teachers need to provide young learners feedback in a short, simple, and repetitive way that children can easily understand. Studies with young second language learners show that using corrective feedback with communicative activities is effective. Young learners with higher levels of proficiency show positive results when the teacher recasts and prompts self-repair. Recasting is when teachers restate what the student said with parts of it modified to demonstrate the correct form. To help students notice the correct form, the teacher might emphasize the correction with a slightly raised tone or a gesture. Lower-proficiency learners also benefit from prompts for self-repair, but do not often make corrections based on recasts (Ammar & Spada, 2006).

The following is a typical scene from a primary school English class in which the student makes errors by transferring the word order and the plural form from Japanese.

Ayako teaches English to 5th graders by team teaching with a homeroom teacher. In today's English class, the children enjoy shopping activities. Some are role playing salesclerks, and others are pretending to be customers. Ayako asks Taiga, one of the students, who has many vegetable cards from shopping at the grocery store corner, about what he has.

Ayako: Wow, you have lots of cards! Did you enjoy shopping?

Taiga: Yes.

Ayako: What vegetables do you have?

Taiga: I have tomato two, broccoli one, carrot three.

Ayako: So, you have two tomatoes, one broccoli, and three carrots.

Taiga: Yes. Two tomatoes, one broccoli, and three carrots.

Ayako: Good job!

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Ayako knows that the student is capable of self-correcting his mistakes with this simple cue through recasting. Although corrective feedback is a powerful tool for teachers, they first need to know their students and select the best delivery method to maximize its effectiveness.

Teachers use a variety of types of oral corrective feedback. For young learners, corrective feedback does not have to be a scary experience. We want children to stay motivated to learn and use English, so we don't want them to associate it with embarrassment and negativity. Prompting children to correct themselves leads to more accurate output (Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013). The following are ways to prompt self-repair by children (based on TESOL International Association, 2018).

- **Repetition:** The teacher repeats the learner's utterance, often with exaggeration or inflection to indicate a problem.

Student: I have tomato two.

*Teacher: I have **tomato two**?*

- **Elicitation:** The teacher elicits the correct form by asking specific questions.

Student: I have tomato two.

Teacher: How do we say that in English? I have two . . .

Student: Ah, I have two tomatoes.

- **Clarification request:** The teacher uses a phrase to indicate that the learner's utterance was not understood.

Student: I have tomato two.

Teacher: You have what? I don't understand.

- **Metalinguistic clues:** The teacher asks questions to indicate that the form of the utterance is not correct.

Student: I have tomato two.

Teacher: You need to flip the order between the number and the noun.

- **Nonverbal cues:** The teacher's quizzical facial expressions or gestures may serve as prompts for self-repair.

Student: I have tomato two.

Teacher: (Shows gestures by hand to switch the words)

PRACTICE 5C Teachers use effective formative, classroom-based assessments strategies for young learners.

Formative assessment is an important part of teaching. The purpose of formative assessment information is to guide instructional decisions. Formative assessments can be informal and based on the observation of children performing a task or on their graded work like assignments and quizzes. Shin and Crandall (2014, p. 253) propose the following effective assessment guidelines:

- Mirror learning (what is taught is what is assessed)
- Contribute to learning (for both learners and the teacher)
- Motivate learners and build learner confidence
- Include a variety of techniques for learners' different learning styles and preferences

- Allow all learners to experience success while providing advanced learners opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency
- Be contextualized and reflect relevant tasks and language for young learners
- Take place over time

By regularly assessing young learners, teachers can monitor students' learning, provide feedback, and adapt their instruction as necessary.

Examples of Practice 5c

Teachers use classroom-based assessment to inform teaching and improve learning. Classroom-based assessment is a tool that allows teachers to gather information about student learning over a period of time (TESOL International Association, 2018). Teachers carefully observe and evaluate young English language learners, focusing on their activities in the classroom and how they are progressing. Using checklists, rubrics, and notes, teachers can keep track of student progress while students do all the typical language learning activities in class, including projects, role-plays and discussions. Teachers also use quizzes, papers, and other exercises that are collected and graded to assess students. All of these classroom-based assessments help teachers improve student learning by helping them plan their next lesson to focus on areas of language use students have not yet mastered or reteaching a language point that is particularly challenging.

Using Exit Tickets to Check Students' Progress in Mexico

Juan teaches English for grades K–6 in an urban primary school in Puebla, Mexico, and has large classes of about 40 fourth graders. He likes to use an "Exit Ticket" at the end of every lesson to see how well his students have achieved the lesson objectives. Before children exit the classroom at the end of his class, he will either ask them to hand in a worksheet they have been working on or give them a slip of paper to fill out. Today he passes out a 3-2-1 slip, which asks them to write down quickly: 3 things I learned today, 2 things I found interesting, and 1 question I still have. Then, students can exit the classroom, and Juan can get some feedback on the lesson.

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4. Used the past tense sentence.
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FIGURE 3.10 3-2-1 Exit ticket on a slip of paper

EXIT TICKET	
3 THINGS I LEARNED TODAY	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ _____ _____
2 THINGS I FOUND INTERESTING	1. _____ 2. _____ _____ _____
1 QUESTION I STILL HAVE	_____ _____ _____

For very young learners, the slip could have emojis to indicate how they felt about the class. The exit ticket could also be done orally with questions about the day's lesson with students showing their answers or feedback by hand gestures (e.g., thumbs up/thumbs down, three-finger responses).

Teachers use rubrics to align assignment expectations with assessments. Rubrics are a popular tool for assessing learners. They can be aligned with your learning objectives and provide both you and your students useful information about their progress. As a teacher, you will find rubrics useful as a scoring guide and the basis for feedback. As a student, rubrics can be helpful to understand the expectations for any given assignment. Rubrics are only useful if the language is comprehensible for your learners. Table 3.8 shows an example of a rubric for an upper-primary student's writing assignment.

Table 3.8 Analytic rubric for writing assignment

Teddy's Diary Writing Assignment

	1 pt <i>Needs help</i>	2 pts <i>OK</i>	3 pts <i>Good</i>	4 pts <i>Excellent</i>
1. Wrote 4 sentences about the photo.				✓
2. Started each sentence with a capital letter.				✓
3. Ended each sentence with a "." or "!"				✓
4. Used the past tense correctly in each sentence.			✓	
5. Worked well with the group (shared ideas, listened to others).				✓
Total: 19 /20			3	16

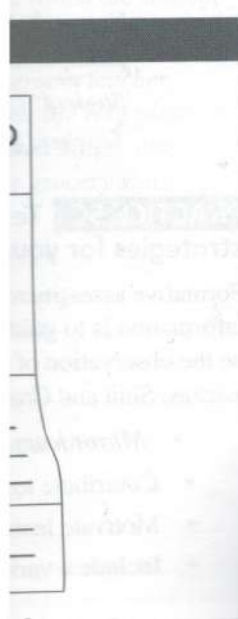
Teachers involve young learners in self- and peer-assessment activities. Teachers can find ways to engage young learners in the assessment process. Children will become aware of their learning and even motivated to achieve more. You can create child-friendly rubrics, such as the one previously presented in Figure 3.9, to help learners self-assess their performance. In addition, you can pass out copies of your assessment rubric at the beginning of the assignment and read through it, so learners know what your expectations are. For very young learners in preprimary school, you may only be able to provide emojis or use hand gestures to guide their self-assessment.

Peer assessment is a great way to give your students extra feedback and for students to become aware of other ways to get feedback. One way is to give age-appropriate rubrics for the peers to complete for their classmates. While peer assessment with very young learners can be tricky based on their developmental level, you can do something simple and fun like the Feedback Burger to encourage peer assessment.

Teachers use portfolio assessments to show student growth and progress. Portfolio assessment is a collection of a students' work throughout their learning. Teachers or students select their work, including drawing, writing samples, posters, journal entries, videos, audio clips, and materials from their projects, and put them into a portfolio as a record of their progress.

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These portfolios can be paper-based and kept in a folder or electronic and posted with the help of parents in an electronic storage application (like Google Drive) or in a content-creation application (like Flipgrid or Padlet). Teachers need to support students in the selection of work by giving some criteria. Through regular selection and reflection of their work, young learners can increase their “motivation and enthusiasm for learning” (Becker, 2015, p. 269), helping them develop into independent learners.

Postreading Reflection Questions

Reflect on these questions individually or with colleagues:

1. What are three new things you learned about monitoring and assessing young learners?
2. What are two ways you can encourage children to be involved with assessment? Explain why this is important.
3. What is one new monitoring and assessment tool you are eager to use with young learners? Explain why you chose it and how you can adapt it for your context.

Principle 6. Engaging and collaborating for success.

Prereading Reflection Questions

Reflect on these questions:

1. Who do you collaborate with in your region, your school, or your district?
2. Are there any challenges or questions with collaboration in your region, your school, or your district?
3. Do you engage in any professional learning or mentoring opportunities in your region, your school, or your district?

Engaging and collaborating for success. With a global world, there is much to be learned. Participating in a community for language learning can provide support for teachers in a school or educational setting or mentoring opportunity.

English Coach

Last year, Ayako (an English learner) by her school district. She expects. Regarding her attitude toward English, she says, “It’s impossible to see such reluctance in an English coach at those schools. I feel. Ayako shares with them how sure that both whenever they have an attitude toward English.”

Together, Ayako and her coach sometimes have conversations using similar strategies to how to engage and motivate.