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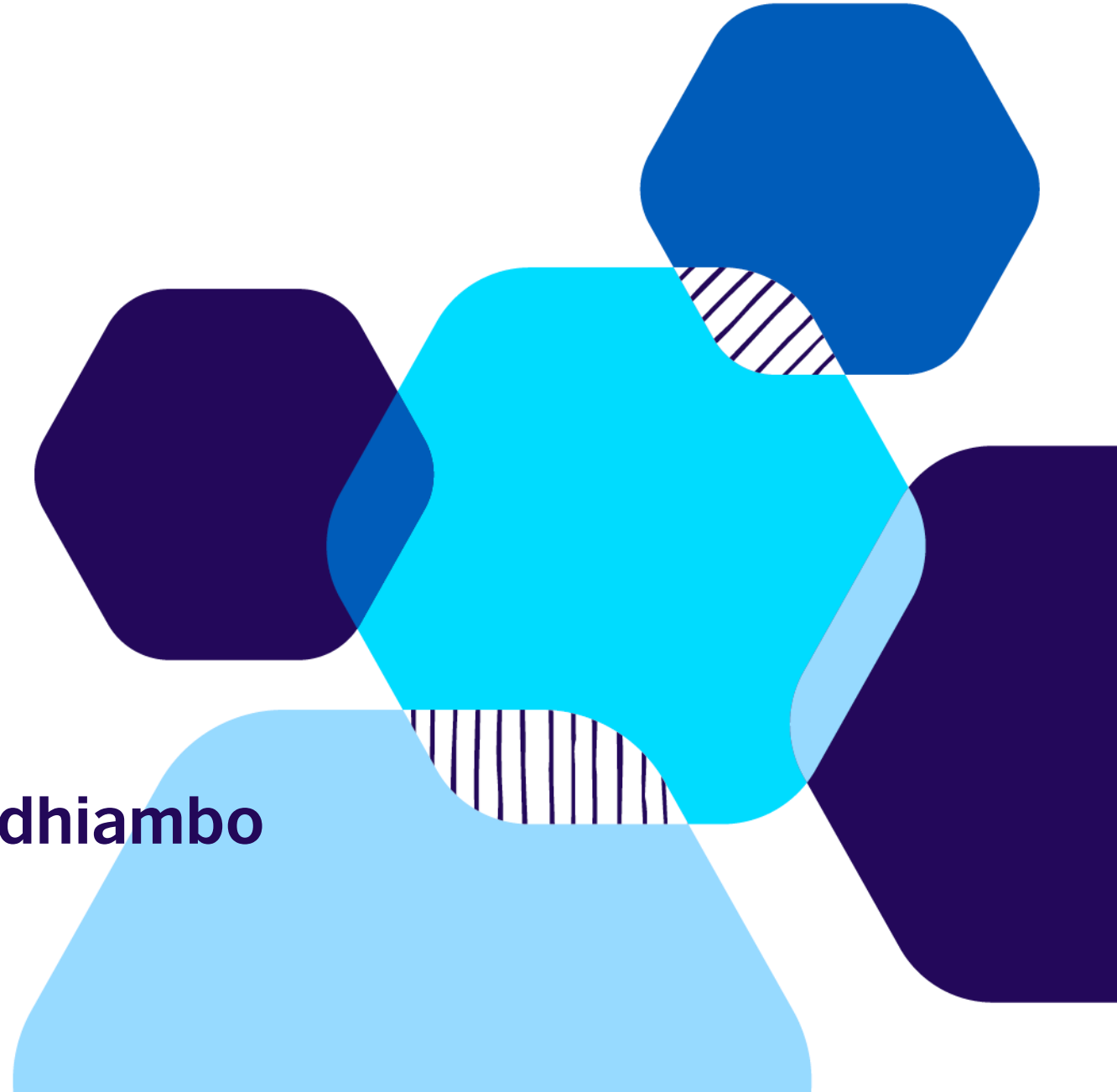
TeachingEnglish

Features and Evolution of Assessment: The role of ELPAK-British Council Project 2024/2025

Rukia Mohamed & Elizabeth Odhiambo

Saturday 22 February 2025

1/ What type of assessment do you do most?:
a) formative **80%**
b) summative **20%**
c) alternative

2/ What is your main challenge with assessment?
a) class size **69%**
b) Time **23%**
c) knowledge
about assessment **8%**

About the speakers

Rukia Mohamed: A facilitator with over five years in ELT, ELPAK-British Council 2024/2025 project co-coordinator, co-administrator and facilitator. Works on global and emerging issues with learners and community members through English Conversation Clubs, and holds various OPEN certifications in Teaching English as a Second Language. An advocate and facilitator of Trauma-sensitive classroom curriculum design.

Elizabeth Odhiambo: A teacher of English with over 13 years' experience in the Kenyan public secondary school system. An author of various English Language and Literature coursebooks for both the 8-4-4 and CBC curriculars and a holder of several OPEN certifications. An alumni of the 1 Million Teachers' program.

Objectives

1. To discuss features of assessment
2. To trace how assessment has evolved in Kenya
3. To share some impacts, successes and challenges of the ELPAK-British Council 2024/25 project
4. Get participants to compare with assessment in their teaching contexts
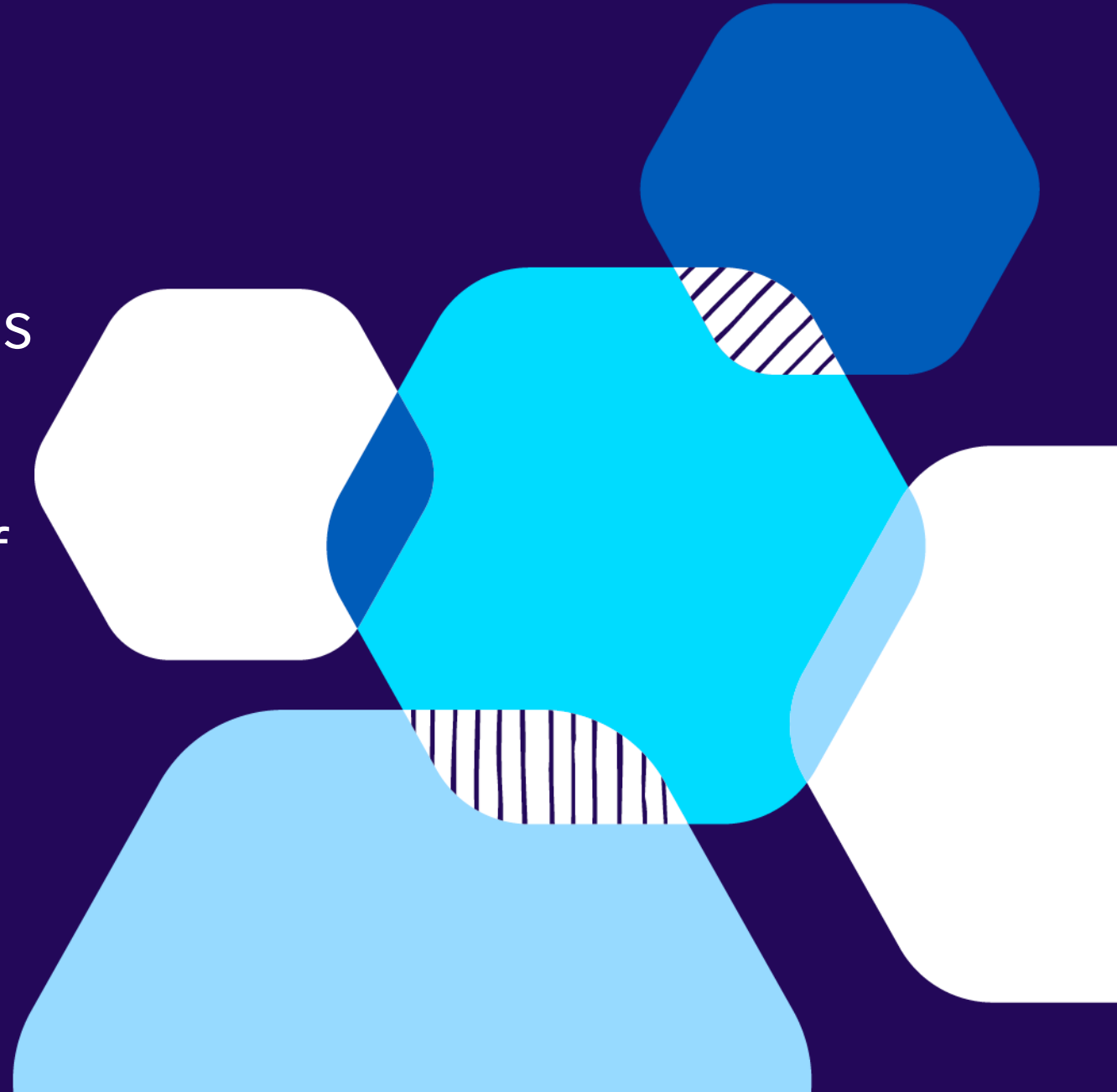
What is assessment?

What comes to your mind when you think of Assessment?

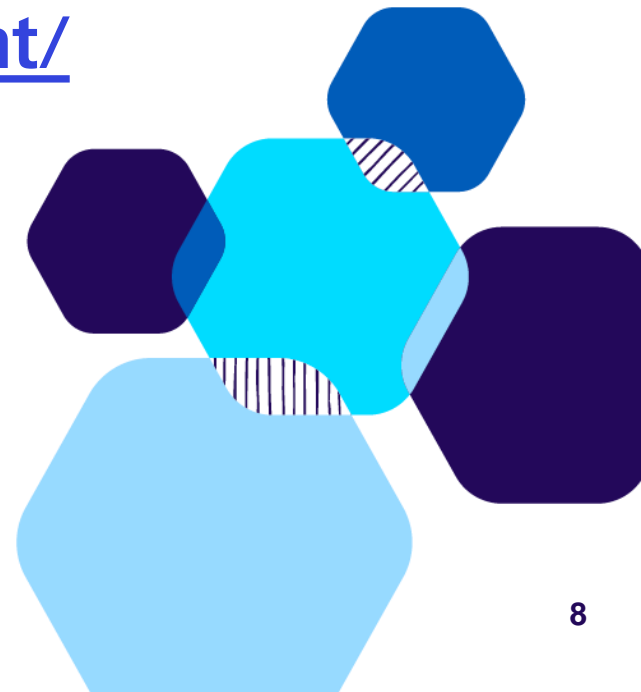Please write in the chat

"In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students."

https://www.edglossary.org/assessment/

Overview of different types of Assessment

Formative: Continuous, diagnostic tools like quizzes, class discussions, and peer assessments.

Summative: End-of-term exams and standardized tests.

Alternative: Project-based assessments, portfolios, and self-assessments.

Alternative Assessment

Self-Assessment- learners, rather than teachers, assess their language proficiency. It includes aspects such as checklists reminding them on including an introduction in a writing task.

Have you ever tried alternative assessment in your classroom?

If yes, which one? Type in the chat.

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/q-s/self-assessment

Features of Assessment

1
Transparency-
Alignment with
learning objectives
and clear of
expectations

2
Authenticity
(non-
discriminatory)-
Inclusivity and
cultural relevance

3
Washback-
positive impact,
such as the
integration of
21st-century skills
like critical
thinking and
collaboration

4
Reliability-Accurate
and consistent

5
Validity- Measures
appropriately what it
should

6
Practical in terms
of time and
resources

How reliable are tests in your country?

**KNEC –
Quality Assessment
&
Credible Exams**

IELTS™

GMAT™

What is the name of your national exams body and how reliable is it?

To What extent does the following apply in your context?

'Both teachers and parents have expressed concerns that the growing pressures exerted by national regimes of testing and examinations are leading teachers to focus too narrowly on the knowledge necessary to enable learners to pass the test, rather than developing in them an understanding of the subject and its context within the wider field of knowledge. Teaching in this way has become known as 'teaching to the test'.'(Wallace, 2009)

Please refer to this:
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/assessing-learning/articles/assessment-learning-toolkit

Disadvantages of teaching to the test

Poor collaboration among learners thus reducing opportunities to develop communication skills

Teacher-centred and heavy on textbook reliance

Reduced or lack of self-directed learning

Students learn to only appreciate exam directed content therefore building impatience with other useful content
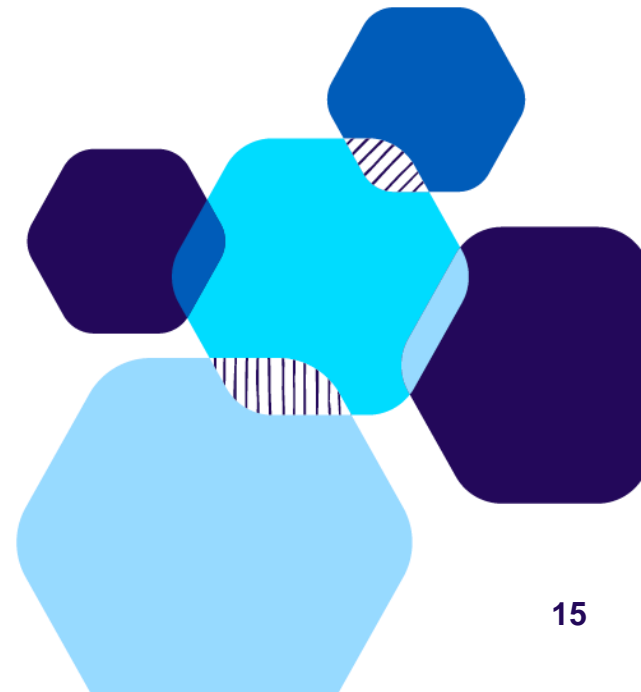
Which other disadvantages can you think of?

Other Concerns about Assessment

Bad Assessments or tests that lack features of a good assessment

Lack of knowledge on how to create and/ or adapt good Assessments

Which other concerns can you think of in your context?

How assessment practices in Kenya have changed

Transition from the 8-4-4 system to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), emphasizing practical skills over rote memorisation.

Localised Practices: Recognition of regional challenges (e.g. climate effects- Initiatives such as National tree planting days on March 6th) influencing assessment modifications e.g. essays or stories on learners' tree planting journey.
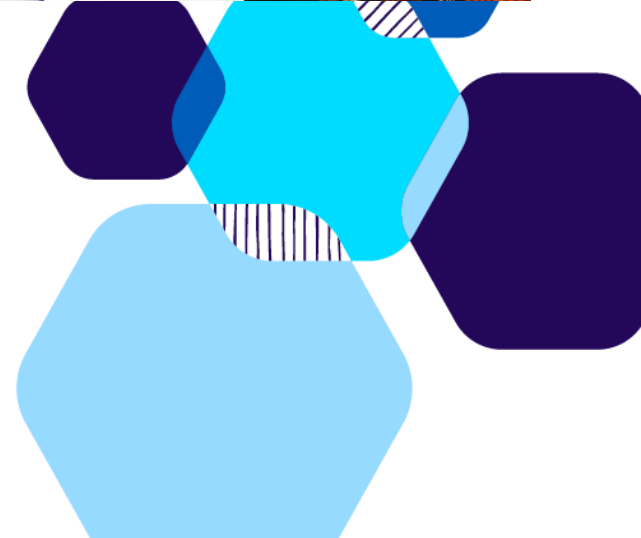
The ELPAK / BC Project: how has it helped teachers in Kenya with assessment?

- over 300 teachers of English through training and capacity building: workshops and webinars that equipped teachers with tools for formative and summative assessments @englishprofessionals5941 on **YouTube**
- teachers have developed strategies for assessing English language proficiency e.g. using **ChatGPT**

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/integrating-ict

The ELPAK / BC Project: how has it helped teachers in Kenya with assessment? (cont.)

- meaningful feedback to support both teacher growth and student learning, especially through formative assessment for learning strategies, e.g. use of technology and digital devices, collaborative practices, and reflective practices for teachers and learners through feedback

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/assessing-learning/articles/assessment-learning-toolkit
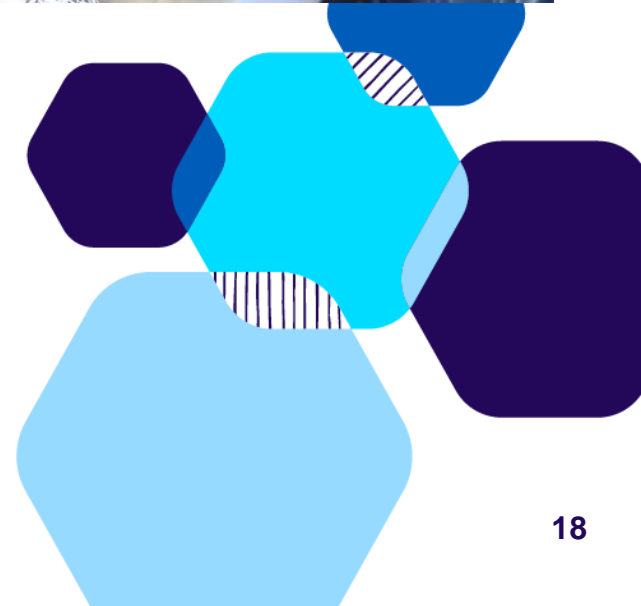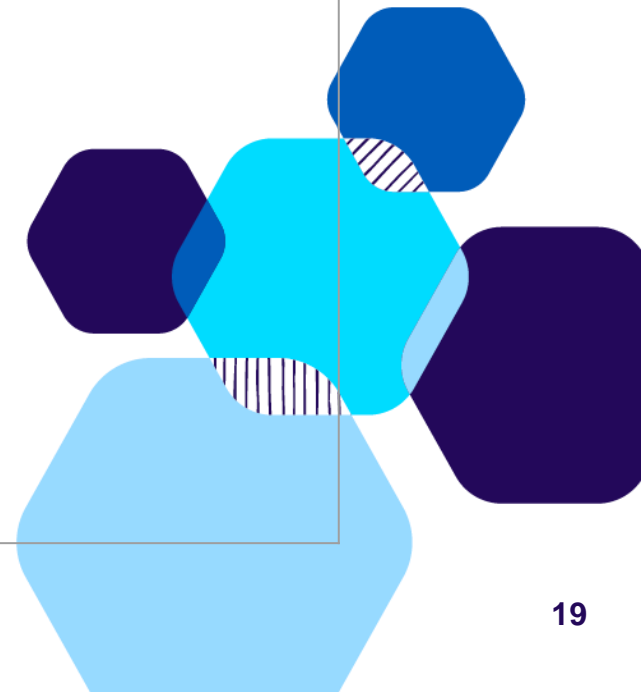
Feedback from Teachers on use of British Council Resources for Assessment

"I gave assignments in class to test on what the learners knew prior to teaching." **Hellen Ngige**	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/using-digital-technologies/articles/getting-started-ai-language
"I have shifted from summative to formative evaluation with student engagement taking center stage." **Violet Aura** They adapt the activities for in-person sessions instead of remote by recording Tik Tok videos while interviewing peers in campus (Pwani University)	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Maximising_speaking_in_online_lessons_0.pdf

Teachers' Feedback (Cont.)

"I used a reading race activity from the British council, I used chatgpt for preparation and text analysis, live question analysis during the game, real - time feedback for each time." **Khadija Ismael**	https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/default/files/reading_race.pdf
"I watched a video on speaking English which enabled me to understand why students are reluctant to speak in English. It helped to plan activities for teaching and assessing spoken language. I have also used digital tools to create assessments." **Nuru Said**	https://m.bilibili.com/video/BV1qu41127Mg?spm_id_from=333.999.0.0

Feedback Video

Members' feedback during an in-person workshop in Mombasa Kenya

https://youtu.be/lc5qMkqfsIY

Examples of new types of assessment in Kenya

Teaching reading using the staff room poster (Used with an exam class- form 4, 2024)

- worked well with literature classes especially when used with smaller portions of a bigger literary text
- allowed for in depth literary analysis with the learners on the forefront of the analysis.

Key characters in the story

Key themes in the story

Stylistic devices in the story

Plan:
- Group the learners and assign them a section of the text/ passage to work on.
- In pairs let them find and share vocabulary as directed or answer assigned questions.
- Allow for whole class discussion as a way of consolidating the work done in the smaller groups.
- Assess the improvement in comprehension, vocabulary use and meaning.

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/B127c%20A1%20TE%20Staff%20Room%20Posters%204.pdf

Assessment in CBC

The read aloud technique for teaching and assessing reading

- works well in conjunction with posters e.g. the poster on teaching fairy tales https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-primary/teaching-tools/classroom-posters-fairy-tales
- Learning Outcome(s) - What skill(s) will you address during your interactive read-aloud?
- Vocabulary - What words in the story will you teach?

Before Reading

1. How will you prepare students for the read-aloud session? (Activate prior knowledge)
2. Invite students to make predictions about the story
3. Share a synopsis of the book

The Read-aloud technique (cont.)
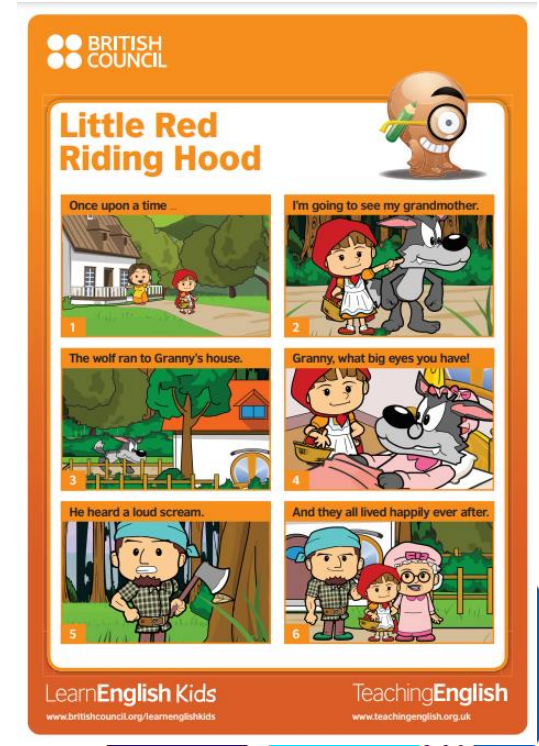
During the Read-Aloud
1. Where will you pause?
2. What questions will you ask?
3. Where will students turn-and-talk?

After the Read-Aloud
1. What virtues can you pick out from the above story?
2. How can you apply these to your life?

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/D150%20A1%20Poster_Fairy%20Tales%20v3.pdf

Successes and challenges faced by ELPAK teachers

John A.C. Hattie: *"The greater the challenge, the higher the probability that one seeks and needs feedback, but the more important it is that there is a teacher to provide feedback"*

Grant Wiggins: *"The more you teach without finding out who understands the information and who doesn't, the greater the likelihood that only already-proficient students will succeed"*

Robert Collier: *"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out"*

Share your thoughts on the above in the chats and mention challenges you have faced with assessment within the classroom

Challenges

1. Limited access to the internet or IT equipment

2. Inadequate knowledge on use of AI and tools like CHAT GPT, KAHOOT, PADLET and SURVEY MONKEY

3. Large classes with diverse learners in both language proficiency and abilities

The use of a laptop and a projector to cater for the deficiency.

The use of talking walls, the English corner or charts for feedback on discussion questions

(What are some of the solutions you would come up with for some of the challenges highlighted here?)

Take-away tips

Before our discussion in the Telegram English Connects group on <mark>Friday 28 February</mark>:

- Try using the posters we suggested
- Look at the 'Assessment for Learning Toolkit' here and try out something that works in your context: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/assessing-learning/articles/assessment-learning-toolkit

Assessment for Learning
A toolkit for teacher development

Connect with like-minded teachers

Join our vibrant community of teachers in Africa and stay updated on the latest trends in English language teaching.

https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/communities-of-practice
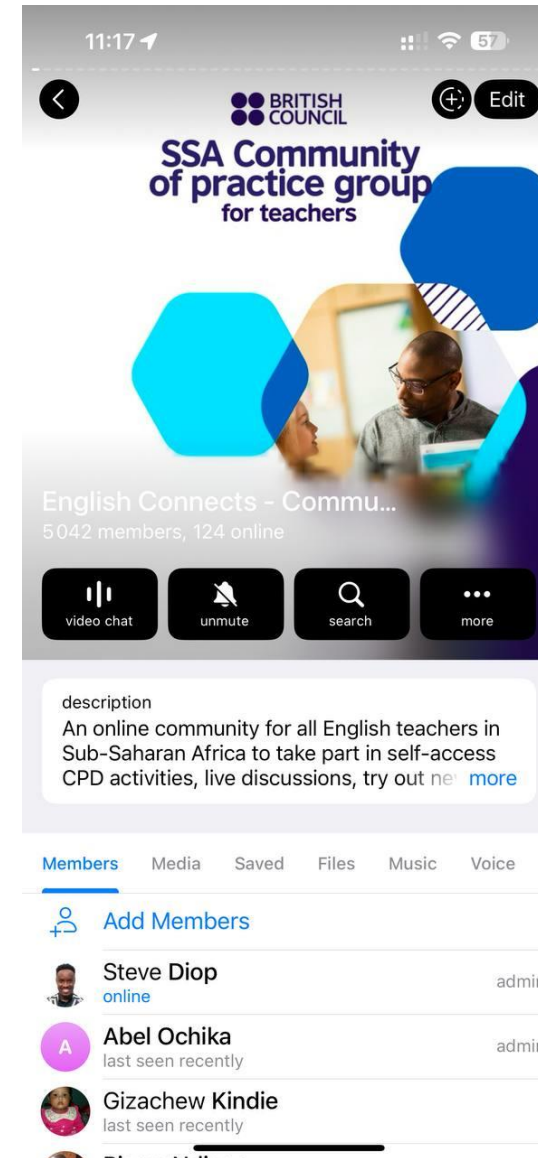
Sign up for our next webinar

Join us to explore how blogging can be a powerful tool for teachers to engage in climate action, share their perspectives, and influence their communities.

Date
Saturday 01 March 2025

https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/events/climate-action-through-blogging-how-engage-teachers