‘Secondary assessment for learning –
modern foreign languages’ transcript

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REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

Why do you think I’m going to ask you to perform to the rest of the class? What’s the rest of the class going to do, apart from laugh?

STUDENT: [LAUGHTER]

REBECCA POOLE: Jessica.

STUDENT: They’re going to pick out any errors or things you did good.

REBECCA POOLE: I think one of the things that maybe has changed in my teaching, that AFL has had a profound impact on is my use of English. I would have said no, no, no. No place for English at all. It can all be done in the target language.

And I’ve actually moved a long way down that road of saying, well, there is a place for English – really, to take them outside of their language, if you like, and to actually look in and say, OK, this is what we’re doing, this is why we’re doing it, and this is how I can get better.

NARRATOR: Hendon School in North London is a specialist language college. Their modern foreign languages department has helped lead the way with Assessment for Learning right across the school.

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

So I want you to think, while they’re speaking, of two things that you really like about their dialogue, and one thing that you think would make it even better. And I’m going to ask you at the end to tell me. OK? Jessica, you’re not allowed to put him off, because look. OK. No pressure.

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

REBECCA POOLE: It’s very difficult sometimes when you get two children performing. The big question is, what do the rest of the children do. So if you prime them in advance, you’ve got children buying in and really listening to what is going on, and dissecting it as well.

What did you think was really good? Because they were quite nervous. Jennifer?

STUDENT: Matteo’s pronunciation was very good.

REBECCA POOLE: It was very good, wasn’t it? Anything else?

STUDENT: They spoke as if it was in a conversation, and they didn’t just follow the structure.

REBECCA POOLE: Absolutely. Anything now you think they could improve to make it even better next time?

STUDENT: They were asking funny questions like, [SPEAKING GERMAN], straight away. You don’t ask straight away – you just ask their name first, so –

REBECCA POOLE: Exactly. OK. Happy with that, boys?

STUDENT: Yeah.

REBECCA POOLE: Excellent. Round of applause.

STUDENT: [APPLAUSE]

REBECCA POOLE: I really wanted to move the children from using guided dialogues into a more unguided situation. And I wanted them to be very clear about how they could move from one national curriculum level into the next.

[SPEAKING GERMAN]

NARRATOR: Rebecca uses a speed dating activity to help her year nine students practise their oral skills, and then set improvement targets.

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

REBECCA POOLE: They were assessing each other. They were feeding back to each other where they had the opportunity, as well, to practise, because by the time they hit partner two or partner three, they’ve actually become quite fluent in what it is they’re going to say. They’re referring to the assessment criteria.

STUDENT: I think that you used your connectives really well. But you should try and get a bit more connective in your vocabulary.

STUDENT: I think you should give more adjectives and describe your sentences more – so make it more complex – but I like your pronunciation.

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

Who can tell me one target that they have been set by their partner about how to improve?

STUDENT: The target was talk more in the future and improve my tense in the future.

REBECCA POOLE: Right. And can you think of a sentence that you can turn into future?

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

Exactly. So that’s a really good target.

EMMA KELL: [SPEAKING FRENCH]

NARRATOR: Emma Kell introduces Assessment for Learning to a year seven French class, familiarising them with self-assessment to build up their basic language skills.

EMMA KELL: [SPEAKING FRENCH]

STUDENT: Does it mean what we’re going to be using today?

EMMA KELL: I find that having an object to throw in the classroom takes away the slightly intimidating idea of picking on the students. It keeps students on the ball. Any student could have the monkey flying in their direction at any point. So I find it very inclusive and a way of making sure all children are on the ball all the way through the lesson.

STUDENT: Mysterious object?

EMMA KELL: Mysterious object we’ve never seen before. OK. You’re going to be shown 12 French words. How many do you think you will be able to work out on your own and without help? How many will you be able to do with the help of the person next to you? How many of you have you targeted yourself?

STUDENT: I target myself five.

EMMA KELL: Five. And why five?

STUDENT: Because I might not understand it, but it could look like a cognate to me in English.

EMMA KELL: Thank you very much. Now, if you had to set yourself a target with a partner –

STUDENT: I would think 12 because, first of all, there’s teamwork and you got a mind.

EMMA KELL: Teamwork and you’ve got a mind. Well, you’ve actually got –

STUDENT: Two minds.

EMMA KELL: Two minds. Good. Excellent. OK.

[SPEAKING FRENCH]

So strategies – how will you do it? How will you go about it?

STUDENT: Use a dictionary?

EMMA KELL: Use a dictionary. That’s one idea. Yep.

STUDENT: I would just see the word and see how it was related in English.

EMMA KELL: See how the word’s related in English. Excellent. I have found that Assessment for Learning has made me a lot less didactic in my teaching. It’s putting the onus on the students to work out the answer for themselves and to understand the process whereby they reach that answer.

Rather than giving me answers you’re absolutely confident on, I now want you to give me answers for the ones you found quite hard. Lalo?

STUDENT: [SPEAKING FRENCH]

EMMA KELL: [SPEAKING FRENCH] And what do you think it means?

STUDENT: Rubber.

EMMA KELL: A rubber. How do you know?

STUDENT: I looked in the dictionary.

EMMA KELL: You looked in the dictionary. [SPEAKING FRENCH] You now need to think about your original targets and your original ideas at the beginning of the lesson. And I need you to answer the questions on the pink sheet. And then you’re going to set yourself a target for next time. I don’t want targets which say, do better. I want you to actually say to me how you’re going to do better.

I wanted them just to have that quiet thinking time to process their thoughts, to actually think about what have I learned, how do I know I’ve learned that, and how did I go about learning that.

OK. [SPEAKING FRENCH]

If you think that you achieved as well as you possibly could this lesson, hold up three fingers. If you were kind of average brain power, hold up two. If your brain power, just for whatever reason, was below par today, hold up one finger.

The core question is what have our students learned and how do we know. I will look at their forms. I will look at their responses to the questions. And I will look at their feedback through the fingers. It’s just one more way of getting them aware of the way they’re learning.

REBECCA POOLE: Within the school we spent a lot of time looking, not so much at data – because quite a lot of Assessment for Learning is driven by data in a target setting like that. What we were interested in was how you can change activities in the classroom so that you give them an assessment slant.

NARRATOR: Four months away from their exams, Rebecca uses a diamond ranking activity with her year elevens, helping them to prioritise grammar points for the conversational element of their GCSE.

STUDENT: We need perfect tense at the top because that’s the tense we’re speaking the whole piece in because it’s all about the past – and opinions, because you can’t get higher than a C if you don’t give opinions and justifications.

STUDENT: Prepositions and adjectives are important for the sentence.

STUDENT: And to make it more conventional and give it spice. And then idioms in the future tense is last because it’s all in the past.

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN] I want to know from you what you put at the bottom of your pile and why.

STUDENT: A future tense because the narrator card is always in the past. So you’d never use it.

REBECCA POOLE: Excellent. Can I ask you what you put in on the second row down, and why?

STUDENT: Opinions because then you’ll show that you know how to use connectives and put you in a higher mark then.

REBECCA POOLE: Who can tell me what they put right at the top, and why?

STUDENT: You use the perfect tense because you’re always talking in the past.

REBECCA POOLE: You’re trying to get children to be challenged. And you’re trying to get them to give justification for every single thing that they come up with. And it’s the justification that raises the challenge. And that slots in quite neatly into the whole Assessment for Learning.

[SPEAKING GERMAN]

STUDENT: It’s a marking scheme for the narrator card.

REBECCA POOLE: Right. And why is it important that you have it?

STUDENT: So we know what we need to do to get A star

REBECCA POOLE: Exactly. OK. [SPEAKING GERMAN]

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

STUDENT: So the whole sentence would be, [SPEAKING GERMAN].

REBECCA POOLE: I’ve deliberately put them into certain groupings. I want all of my pupils to be at the level where they can tackle that card and get a really good grade in it, because I think it’s the key to them getting their B or their A grade. So it’s a good method of support for the more able children to support the less confident children with their German.

STUDENT: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

REBECCA POOLE: They all had a copy of their assessment criteria. They knew what they had to include to get the best grade possible. And they then send off their delegate to the next team. I realise that the children were improving as they went around the groups because they were becoming more confident. And they were actually taking on board the feedback – next time I need to include that, I need to include that.

STUDENT: But in narrator mark we gave you seven.

STUDENT: Yeah, it’s the second one. It’s seven and 19. Yeah.

STUDENT: I think that was really good. I gave you a seven for your narrator card and a 17 for your quality of language. All that you really need is like slight improvement in confidence because you can actually do it, but it’s just that you get worried that you’re not going to say it right, so you just mm and ah.

STUDENT: You should use more adjectives to describe things. You’ve used about two only. If you use more adjectives –

REBECCA POOLE: [SPEAKING GERMAN]

The AFL agenda has really made me teach in greater depth, rather than racing to get through lots and lots of content. And my whole questioning of that is why should you be able to just do it like that, that, that. Isn’t it more important to be able to actually work it out? And how do you give children the skills to work it out? Because if the children have the skills to work it out, they will be independent of you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]