Celebrating Mistakes: The Alignment of Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Motivational Strategy (MotS) in a Constrained Context

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Abstract: In education, the terms "assessment" and "motivation" seem paradoxical. However, a closer examination of the two terms leads to the understanding that the two terms can conceptually be aligned. Assessment for Learning (AfL) and teachers' Motivational Strategy (MotS) can be synergized using AfL pedagogical principles that purportedly foster students' motivation. The dearth of studies juxtaposing both constructs prompted us to examine the AfL practices of seven higher-education teachers in Indonesia, with the aim of providing empirical data on the convergence between AfL and MotS. Set against the backdrop of a low-motivation context, namely the emergency remote learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing, the teachers were interviewed regarding their AfL practices, and the data was examined using principally deductive qualitative analysis. The results showed that the greatest alignment occurred in the "maintain" stage of MotS, where teachers provided a supportive classroom environment where mistakes are a natural part of learning and involved students in self and peer assessment. On the other hand, the constrained context resulted in divergent conceptions in the teachers of what they perceived as motivating for the students. This implies the need for EFL writing teachers to integrate AfL and various stages of motivational strategies to lead to more engagement and help students improve their writing achievement.

Keywords: Assessment for Learning (AfL), Constrained Context, EFL Writing, Motivational Strategy (MotS), Pandemic, Writing Assessment.

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Introduction

Assessment for learning (AfL), including its subset Assessment as Learning (AaL), has been the thrust of assessment by scholars and practitioners worldwide owing to its grounding in student-centered learning and student-teacher partnership (Black & William, 2012). In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, AfL is likewise crucial for developing EFL students' writing skills, as it provides learners with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, identifies areas for improvement, and motivates them to continue learning (Lee, 2011). Despite the general approbation that assessment scholars accord to the benefits and values of AfL, recent research portrayed the struggles that instructors face in implementing AfL in practice, with challenges stemming from their personal beliefs to external aspects such as learners' factors (Wu et al., 2021; Xu & Harfitt, 2019) and institutional support (Arrafii, 2021). The aforementioned studies persistently advocated greater assessment literacy training in teaching institutions and professional development courses, as well as clearer assessment policy on the part of school management and education ministry.

It can be conjectured that the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent emergency remote learning have exacerbated the AfL implementation challenges. The shift to remote and hybrid learning compelled teachers to adjust their teaching methods and assessments to suit the online environment, which limits face-to-face interaction and poses threats to academic integrity (Delita et al., 2022; Ghanbari & Nowroozi, 2021; Mahanan et al., 2021). In EFL writing, many teachers encountered difficulties in conducting effective online assessments that accurately measure their students' writing skills and in motivating their students to engage with the writing process (Cheng et al., 2021; Pourdana & Tavassoli, 2022; Zou et al., 2021). On the other hand, other studies have shown that some aspects of AfL, such as peer- and self-assessment, promote writing motivation (Hinduja et al., 2020; Jafarigohar, 2020; Yao et al., 2021). Thus, even as the global health situation has now vastly improved and classes resume the face-to-face mode, it seems critical to investigate the intertwining of AfL and motivation to tap the full potential of AfL not only as assessment principles that promote learning and improve teaching (Lee, 2017) but also as deliberate and conscious motivational strategies (Lee, 2011), as has been envisioned by the Assessment Reform Group at the conception of AfL (Gardner, 2012).

In view of the above two-pronged challenges of assessment and motivation, we were prompted to study the potential alignment of AfL and teachers' motivational strategy, making

use of Dörnyei's (2001) taxonomy of Motivational Strategy (MotS) as the guiding framework for the latter. This study is situated within the context of emergency remote learning in order to explore the strategies employed by higher education teachers in conducting AfL in this challenging circumstance and to gain insight into how the assessment practices could conceptually be conceived simultaneously as motivational in moments when learning motivation might have been understandably low.

Before proceeding further, we would like to term the emergency remote learning enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic as a constrained context, as has been done by other scholars (Ajjawi et al., 2022; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Zhang, 2020). A constrained context has been understood as any condition that hinders the effective teaching and learning process, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Ajjawi et al., 2022), lack of institutional support (Zhang, 2020), or a particular condition arising from students' beliefs and the school's curriculum (Al-Seghayer, 2014). By naming it as such, we believe that the implication and relevance of this study can be projected beyond the pandemic to other moments or places where constraints in the educational context could potentially hamper, in this case, successful assessment and motivational practices.

Situated in such a constrained context, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do EFL writing teachers in higher education enact AfL during the constrained context?

2. Conceptually, how is the practice of AfL principles aligned with the teacher's Motivational Strategy (MotS) in the constrained context?

Review of the Literature

AfL and Its Practice in EFL Writing

The term *Assessment for Learning* (AfL) has gained prominence in recent years, primarily due to criticisms of the previously dominant summative assessment approach, also known as *Assessment of Learning* (AoL) (Dann, 2014; Earl, 2013; Lam, 2018). In contrast to AoL, AfL is viewed as a way to bridge the gap between assessment and learning (Baird et al., 2017), placing students at the center of the assessment process and providing teachers with a range of benefits. For EFL writing classes, AfL is considered the appropriate assessment approach as it emphasizes the process of writing over the final product. By involving students in assessing their writing, AfL encourages greater collaboration between teachers and students

in the teaching, learning, and assessment process and, in turn, increases students' motivation to engage with writing and improve their writing abilities (Black & Wiliam, 2012; Chong, 2018).

Lee (2017) posited five key characteristics of AfL in a writing class, including sharing clear learning goals, understanding the assessment standards, peer and self-assessment, teacher feedback, and a supportive classroom culture. Firstly, clear learning goals provide students with guidance for accomplishing tasks and can be established at the beginning of a lesson or course. These goals guide students' self-reflection at the end of the course. Secondly, assessing writing requires clear guidance on writing assessment criteria, as students need to understand the standards they are working towards. Teachers can assist learners in comprehending these assessment criteria by providing sample texts, mini-text analysis activities, and text enhancement assignments in which they use the assessment criteria to assess the quality of texts.

As AfL is a student-centered approach, students' involvement in assessing their own and their peers' work is emphasized in the assessment process, and this becomes the third element of AfL. Fourthly, teachers play a critical role in scaffolding the appropriateness of AfL implementation by providing helpful feedback (e.g., non-graded, selective feedback) to support student learning during the assessment process. Finally, the effectiveness of AfL in writing depends on a supportive classroom culture, where students are not afraid of making mistakes and feel supported in their learning (Lee, 2017). In a study subsequently conducted in response to Lee's (2017) work, Wu et al. (2021) developed an Assessment for Learning Strategy Questionnaire for Teachers (AfLSQ-T) to pave the way for more quantitative exploration of teachers' AfL strategies. Thus, a summary of Lee's (2017) five AfL principles with sample indicators taken from the AfLSQ-T is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. AfL Principles (Lee, 2017) and Sample Indicators Adapted from AfLSQ-T (Wu et al., 2021*)*

The AfL Principles	Sample Indicators
1. Sharing learning goals with students	Define and communicate learning goals, and encourage students to set their own learning goals
2. Helping students understand the standards they are working towards	Help students to understand assessment criteria through detailed descriptions, sample texts, mini text-analysis, etc.
3. Involving students in assessment (peer and self-assessment)	Encourage students to reflect, guide them to assess their own works and to comment on their works during

The AfL Principles	Sample Indicators
	lessons
	Teach students to interpret peer feedback and comment on their peers' works. Develop an atmosphere of safe feedback exchange.
4. Teachers providing feedback that helps	Give timely and specific feedback, guide students to revise their works based on the feedback, and give opportunities for students to discuss the feedback.
5. Creating a supportive classroom culture where mistakes are a natural part of learning and where everyone can improve	Foster motivation and emphasize progress, create a secure learning atmosphere, and give selective error feedback to avoid insecurity.

Recent research on AfL painted both its success stories as well as the manifold challenges faced by educators in implementing AfL, ranging from the lack of support from the institution to the deeply entrenched belief in the AoL paradigm held by the management, students, and even the teachers themselves. Xu and Harfitt (2019) outlined the obstacles faced by three teachers in implementing AfL in large classes and their strategies for coping with the situation. Overall, they compensated for the inability to provide individualized teacher feedback by involving students in peer- and self-assessment, leveraging technological support. Despite teachers' belief in the value and benefit of AfL, teachers in China did not put AfL into practice due to, among other things, time constraints and top-down relationships between teachers and students (Wu et al., 2021). Lastly, in the context of Indonesia where this study is situated, Arrafii (2021) mapped out the barriers and opportunities for assessment reform in Indonesia, as represented by 15 teachers' voices regarding the implementation of AfL in their classes. At the micro level, he identified teachers' lack of assessment literacy and students' mixed ability as considerable hindrances to effective AfL practice. Together with other factors at the meso and macro levels, he concluded that teachers in Indonesia are generally enacting a superficial approach to AfL.

During the recent emergency remote teaching caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers' ability, and perhaps also willingness, to practice AfL was again put to the test. Panadero et al. (2022) investigated the impact of emergency remote teaching on four aspects of assessment practice, namely assessment instrument, assessment criteria, feedback delivery and rubric utilization, and peer- and self-assessment. Among some aspects that underwent changes, the authors lamented the decline in involving students in assessment, namely peer-

and self-assessment. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) studied the change in assessment practices among EFL university teachers in China and categorized the changes into *planned* and *improvised*. In addition, they revealed that experiential factors (teachers' experience with assessment and technology) exerted a greater mediatory effect than contextual factors (schools and infrastructure). A different perspective is offered by Zou et al. (2021), who investigated the emotional, physical-cognitive, and social investments of three EFL writing teachers in the formative use of information communication and technology in writing assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic. They identified three types of teacher engagement in implementing online assessment, which ranged from resisting the use of technology in assessment to transforming assessment with technology. Overall, these studies offered enriching insights into the dynamism and complexity of the various contexts influencing EFL teachers' assessment practices during emergency remote teaching and therefore constitute invaluable references for this research.

Teacher Motivational Strategy (MotS)

Research on teachers' Motivational Strategy (MotS) in the setting of language learning was pioneered by the work of Dörnyei (2001), who postulated the taxonomy of MotS comprising 102 strategic components grouped into four step-wise stages from the beginning of the course to the end. The first stage, "creating the basic motivational conditions", is set as the premise of the subsequent three stages. This stage underscores the teachers' effort to demonstrate caring and supportive behavior to create a positive classroom atmosphere and strong bonding in the group. The second stage, "generating initial motivation", encompasses the teachers' attempts at making the course relevant to the students while promoting their values, attitudes, success expectancy, and beliefs about the language being learned. The following stage, "maintaining and protecting motivation", incorporates the whole gamut of practices to engage learners in the learning process, as well as strategies aimed at fostering learners' personal attributes such as self-esteem, image, and self-motivation. In the last stage, "encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation", teachers enhance learners' satisfaction in learning the language through positive attributions, feedback, rewards, and grades. The complete taxonomy of MotS is presented in Figure 1.
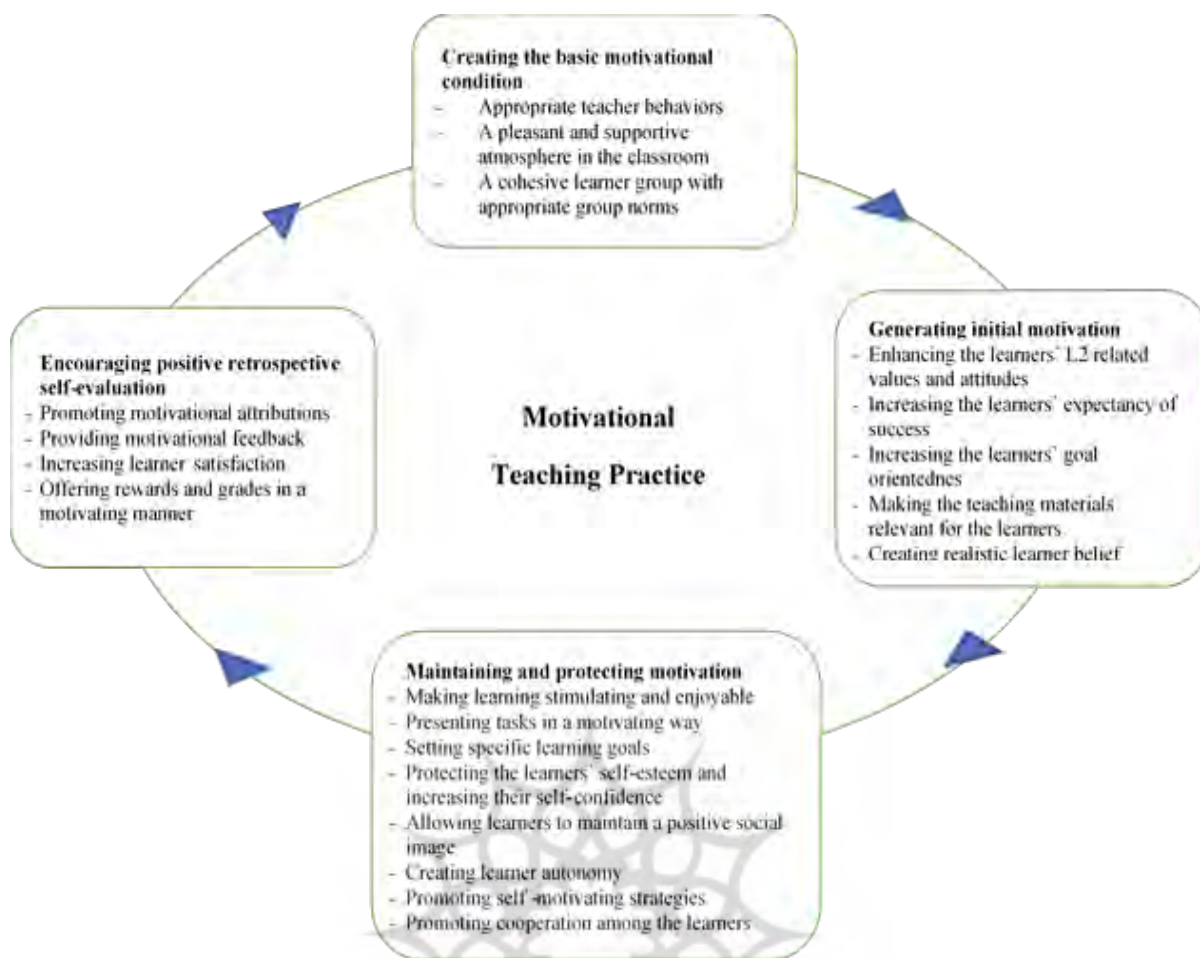
Figure 1. The Taxonomy of Motivational Strategies (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 29)

Predicated on Dörnyei's taxonomy, subsequent research endeavored to provide empirical validation to the taxonomy by studying teachers' preferred strategies, the MotS as perceived by learners, and the impact of the MotS on learners' behavior (Lamb, 2019). Supports for Dörnyei's taxonomy were reported in recent times by Astuti (2016) and Henry et al. (2018), providing qualitative data validating the taxonomy. Nonetheless, Astuti's (2016) study, set against the backdrop of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, included the use of L1 by the teacher as a motivating factor, while Henry et al. (2018) added the element of digital technology utilized by the teacher to sustain students' motivation. Studies on learners' preferred MotS were conducted by Lamb and Weddell (2014) and Wong (2014). Lamb and Weddell's (2014) work evidenced the influence of socio-cultural context (China and Indonesia) in the students' views of what they regard as motivating, while Wong (2014) pointed to the differences between the teachers and students in defining motivational behavior. Lastly, the effect of MotS on the learners was the focus of studies by Cheung (2018) and Lee et al. (2020). In the context of a writing class in Singapore, Cheung (2018)

revealed that the increase in the teachers' usage of the "generating initial motivation" strategy is in tandem with students' enhanced self-confidence and positive attitude. Lee et al. (2020) analyzed reflective journals written by students taking up English courses in a tertiary institution in Hong Kong and found that teachers' MotS impacted the learners as shown by more access to self-learning materials, the use of English outside of the classroom, effort to minimize errors, and greater classroom engagement (Lee et al., 2020). One future research agenda on MotS proffered by Lamb (2019) is to investigate instances of MotS in low-motivation contexts, such as learning a particular language or classes in areas with scant resources.

It can be conjectured that one such low-motivation context as indicated by Lamb (2019) is the forced closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent emergency remote teaching. Indeed, teachers' and students' motivation has been identified as one of the critical challenges facing the education milieu during the outbreak (Chiu et al., 2021; Ying et al., 2021). Despite the manifold orchestration of technology and pedagogy that teachers enacted during online learning, students admitted that what they valued most was a supportive atmosphere and motivational strategies (Yates et al., 2020). Consequently, a plethora of studies portraying teachers' endeavors to motivate students during remote learning have come to light, ranging from the use of gamification (Rincon-Flores et al., 2022), flipped-classroom model (Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles-Martinez, 2021) and synchronous meeting mode (Hernandez & Florez, 2020). Nevertheless, there appears to be a dearth of research investigating teachers' integrative motivational strategy, such as that illustrated by Dörnyei's taxonomy, during emergency remote teaching. Only one study (Sutarto et al., 2020) outlined teachers' general motivational teaching practices during the pandemic, such as emphasizing the need to continue studying despite all odds, providing learning materials and media that are brief, clear, and yet engaging, and administering frequent, formative assessment. Hence, more research is needed to respond to Lamb's (2019) call as previously described.

Assessment for Learning and Motivation

One of the ten principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as postulated by the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) in 2002 is that it "fosters motivation" (Gardner, 2012, p. 3), thus establishing the link between AfL and motivation. Despite the early linkage, the number of studies lending empirical support to the relationship is surprisingly low in recent times, with only several studies correlating only some aspects of AfL and motivation. Firstly, Lee and

Coniam (2013) investigated the implementation of AfL by Hong Kong's EFL teachers immersed in the context of the examination-driven educational system in the country. The results revealed that the teachers were unable to fully implement all of the AfL practices, specifically the peer assessment and multiple drafting. Statistical results did not yield a significant difference in the measure of students' motivation before and after the AfL classes, while interviews with the students presented mixed outcomes. Next, Jafarigohar (2020) investigated the impact of teacher, peer-, and self-assessment on the writing motivation and self-regulation of 95 female Iranian EFL learners. The one-way ANCOVA test analysis of the questionnaire result and the interview coding revealed the superiority of self-assessment over the other two techniques in fostering learners' motivation and self-regulation. Similarly, Yu et al. (2020) discovered that peer- and self-assessment encouraged writing motivation and engagement more than process feedback and written corrective feedback. Lastly, Hinduja et al. (2020) examined the effect of Assessment as Learning (AaL), a subset of AfL on Pakistani students' writing achievement and motivation. The result demonstrated a significant difference between the control and the experimental group on both the final scores of the students' argumentative essays and their intrinsic motivation.

Similarly, in a constrained context such as emergency remote teaching, only a few studies were found to examine elements of AfL, notably feedback practices, and motivation simultaneously. Urged by the need to motivate students during the assessment process within the context of the pandemic, teachers in China were reported to augment the design and frequency of their motivational feedback, coupled with greater sensitivity to the relational nature of feedback (Jiang & Yu, 2021). Secondly, Yao et al. (2021) conducted a short-term longitudinal study to examine the change in the language mindset and motivation of 520 Chinese students in an English major over a 15-week period. Students in the experimental group were exposed to peer-assessment activities assisted by the Automated Writing Evaluation tool. Their findings reveal that students in the experimental group exhibited greater growth in language mindset and a higher level of motivation, although the growth extent varied among students due to differing personal experiences and perceptions of the assessment activities. All in all, the dearth of studies in the field of AfL and motivation suggests that this particular area is still largely under-researched.

Methods

Research design

This study is a subset of a larger project (Fitriyah et al., 2023) employing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design (Creswell & Clark, 2017) with a questionnaire and an interview as the instruments. The present study then focused on the interview participants and the interview data collected. Hence, the design can be conceived as an interview study (Brinkmann, 2013). Qualitative interview design is able to provide rich data on the participants' lived experience, particularly in enacting the AfL during the constrained context, and hence is particularly apt to obtain answers for the first research question. Besides, an interview study also allows for an in-depth investigation of the context under study, which in this case is the teachers' assessment practice in a constrained context. We also carried out the interview design with both inductive and deductive approaches (Brinkmann, 2013). While the former was used to obtain information about the participants' overall AfL practice during the constrained context, the latter was used as a basis for analyzing the data, which were guided deductively by Lee's (2017) AfL principles and Dörnyei's MotS taxonomy.

Instrument

In line with the qualitative interview design employed in this study, a semi-structured interview with its interview protocol was the sole instrument utilized for data collection. The semi-structured interview is deemed most fitting to delve into the life experience of the participants in practicing the AfL during the emergency remote teaching, as it allows both pre-determined questions to be posed and further probes or clarifications to be asked depending on the participants' responses (Brinkmann, 2014). Accordingly, the authors developed three questions (Appendix A) informed by Lee's (2017) AfL principles to be used as the main line of inquiry, which essentially elicited the participants' description of how they incorporated those principles in the online classes and the challenges they faced. The questions were also deemed to yield sufficient data for both RQ1 (AfL practices) and RQ2 (alignment with MotS). The interview questions were tried out by having the first interview attended by two of the authors, with one acting as an observer while the interview took place. Subsequently, based on the suggestions from the interviewee and the author's observation notes, one of the question's formulations was revised and the final interview protocol was used for posterior interviews.

Participants and Context

Seven university teachers were selected on a purposive basis with regard to their experience and expertise in teaching EFL writing and their use of AfL in their classrooms. In addition, the participants were chosen in such a way as to comprise male and female teachers with varying types of institutions and educational backgrounds. The complete list of the participants and their profiles is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Profile of Interviewed Participants

Participant	Gender	Institution type	Teaching writing experience	Educational background	Students Level
P1	Male	Private	5 years	Master (Ph.D. candidate)	Undergraduate students
P2	Female	Public	10 years	Doctor	Graduate students
P3	Male	Private	4 years	Master	Undergraduate students
P4	Female	Public	3 years	Master	Undergraduate students
P5	Male	Public	5 years	Master (Ph.D. candidate)	Undergraduate students
P6	Female	Private	3 years	Master (Ph.D. candidate)	Undergraduate students
P7	Female	Public	3 years	Master (Ph.D. candidate)	Undergraduate students

The participants were invited to participate in the research in July 2022, shortly after the end of the even semester in the 2021/2022 academic year. In terms of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the education system in Indonesia, the even semester of 2021/2022 was a confused mix of online and offline modes. Some schools that attempted to resume face-to-face classes at the beginning of 2022 found themselves having to revert to online mode when the Omicron variant of the coronavirus spread rapidly in February-March 2022. Hence, emergency remote teaching was still a relatively recent event for the participants when this study was conducted.

Data Collection

The participants were first informed of the purpose of the study and were provided with the interview guide. Upon their preliminary agreement to take part in the research, they were given a written informed consent form and indicated their agreement by signing and returning the form. The participants were assured that confidentiality would be maintained and that the data collected would only be used for the sole purpose of the research. Then, approximately 60-minute semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded. All the interviews were

conducted via video conference, except one which was face-to-face. The participants spoke in a mix of English and the national language, *Bahasa* Indonesia, and in that way expressed themselves more freely. Each interview was recorded for later transcription.

For the purpose of data triangulation, we invited the participants to share their recorded online writing classes if available. Two of them, P5 and P6, provided us with the video files. Two of the authors watched one video independently and took notes of the evidence of AfL and motivational strategies enacted by the teachers.

Data Analysis

The audio files of the interviews were first transcribed and the national language was translated to English. To ascertain the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the transcripts were sent back to the participants as part of the member-checking procedure. The finalized transcripts were then used in the data analysis.

As previously mentioned, both the deductive and inductive approaches to qualitative data (Azungah, 2018) were adopted. Starting from the deductive analysis, a set of a priori codes was developed following the two frameworks used in this study, namely Lee's (2017) AfL principles and Dörnyei's (2001) taxonomy of motivational strategy (MotS). Following Pearse (2019), propositions were developed from the frameworks and subsequently turned into codes. Hence, to answer RQ1, which pertains to the practice of AfL in a constrained context, examples of the codes used were SLG for "sharing learning goals", SUS for "students understand the standard", and PSA for "involving students in peer and self-assessment." For the RQ2, the four stages of Dörnyei's (2001) MotS taxonomy were used as the parent codes, namely Basic, Initial, Maintain, and Retrospect, with the strategies within each stage guiding the choice of the parent codes. The complete list of codes for the deductive qualitative analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The List of Codes for the Deductive Analysis

AfL Principles	Codes for RQ1	MotS Taxonomy	Codes for RQ2
1. Sharing Learning Goals with students	SLG	Creating the basic motivational condition	BASIC
2. Helping Students Understand the Standards they are working towards	SUS	Generating initial motivation	INITIAL
3. Involving students in assessment	PSA	Maintaining and protecting	MAINTAIN

(Peer and Self-Assessment)		motivation	
4. Teachers Providing Feedback that helps	TPF	Encouraging positive self-evaluation	RETROSPECT
5. Creating a Supportive Classroom Culture	SCC		

Data were analyzed in four stages. Firstly, the codes for RQ1 were applied to the interview transcript to find evidence of teachers' AfL practice. Hence, excerpts from the interview that deal with "teachers giving scoring rubrics to their students" were labeled "SUS." In the second stage, the same interview transcript was subjected to the codes for RQ2 to determine if MotS elements were present in the data. Thus, the same example of "teachers giving scoring rubric to the students" as mentioned previously was also coded as "INITIAL" since it relates to teachers' effort in increasing learners' expectancy of success at the beginning of the course. Thirdly, data that contain both RQ1 and RQ2 codes were condensed and displayed together (Miles et al., 2014) to facilitate visualization and the analysis of the alignment between AfL practices and MotS taxonomy. Generally, the AfL categories were mapped into the broader MotS taxonomy, which subsequently guided the presentation of the Findings section. Lastly, an inductive qualitative analysis was performed on the condensed data to unveil aspects of the constrained context present in the data. Therefore, open coding (Saldaña, 2021) was utilized to highlight aspects related to the online setting and emergency remote teaching. A table showing a list of coded data under the "BASIC" theme is given in Appendix B.

To ensure the consistency of the coding process, two of the authors carried out the four stages of the data analysis previously described simultaneously on the interview transcript of one participant. Subsequent meetings were held to discuss any discrepancies in the data code. Upon satisfactory agreement of the coding concept and criteria, the two authors divided the coding process among them. The coding result was afterward reviewed by the other two authors. The analysis of the two video recordings also provided support to the participants' claim. For example, the recording showed how one participant implemented collaborative peer feedback online through Google Docs.

Findings

EFL Writing Teachers' AfL Practices during the Constrained Context

To answer RQ1, the results of the analysis of the interview transcript of each teacher were mapped according to the five principles of AfL to show the evidence of teachers' AfL

practice. The principles of AfL that the teachers engaged in were identified and indicated using the tick marks as shown in Table 4, while the "x" marks signify that the AfL principles were not evidently performed by the teachers.

Table 4. The Principles of AfL Enacted by the EFL Writing Teachers

AfL Principles	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
1. Sharing Learning Goals with students	x	√	√	√	√	√	√
2. Helping Students Understand the Standards they are working towards	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3a. Involving students in assessment (Peer Assessment)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3b. Involving students in assessment (Self- Assessment)	√	√	√	√	x	x	x
4. Teachers Providing Feedback that helps	x	√	√	√	√	√	√
5. Creating a Supportive Classroom Culture	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

As shown in Table 4, all participants admitted that they carried out the second and last principles of AfL, namely "Helping students understand the standards they are working toward" and "Creating a Supportive Classroom Culture" in teaching EFL writing. However, not all of the teachers enacted the other three principles of AfL, namely "Sharing Learning Goals with students", "Involving students in assessment", and "Teachers providing feedback that helps." Out of the seven teachers, only three (P2, P3, and P4) applied all of the principles of AfL in the online classroom. More details on the enactment of the AfL principles are given in the next section.

The Conceptual (Non)Alignment of AfL and MotS

Stage 1: Creating the Basic Motivational Condition

In this first stage of the MotS taxonomy, we found little evidence of alignment in the category of "a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom" of MotS and the "creating a supportive classroom culture" of AfL. In this aspect, P2 stated that she usually started a course by welcoming the students into the online class and emphasizing that they are a big family on a learning journey together. Interestingly, P1 revealed unusual strategies in making his students feel comfortable in online learning during the pandemic: He did not oblige the students to turn on their cameras, he allowed the students to eat while attending his online classes, and he encouraged them to ask questions taking advantage that they can still hide behind the screen.

There were some data on "forming a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms" in MotS which can also be regarded as "creating a supportive classroom culture." Here, both P2 and P3 created WhatsApp groups for their students as the media to ask questions, while P7 used the WhatsApp group to provide urgent, personalized feedback through tagging. On the other hand, we did not find convergence in the MotS category of "appropriate teacher behavior" from our data.

Stage 2: Generating Initial Motivation

Under this initial motivational strategy, several interview excerpts demonstrated alignment between "increasing the learners' expectancy of success" in MotS and "helping students understand the standard they are working towards" in AfL. All of the teachers in this study reported providing their students with rubrics, models, guiding frameworks, writing templates, or exemplars. Curiously, one teacher admitted that he purposefully did not provide his students with rubrics since, reflecting on his personal experience, rubrics might make students more nervous. He gave them writing models instead.

Similarly, teachers' motivational strategy of "increasing the learners' goal-orientedness" matches the AfL principle of "sharing learning goals with students." Almost all of the participants communicated and discussed the course outline, learning objectives, and the expected learning outcomes with the students at the beginning of the course. P2 expressed the rationale for this practice:

> *"All students should get the same conceptual understanding [of the course].*
> *The first reason is because, in my opinion, if not all the students understand the*
> *final goal of the course, then they would not know what strategy they will adopt*
> *to achieve the goal. Secondly, after knowing the goals of the course then they*
> *make a commitment on what appropriately needs to be done during our course."*

Other MotS elements in the initial stage, such as "enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes", "making the teaching materials relevant to the learners", and "creating realistic learners' beliefs", do not find evidence in the interview extracts. We also noted that the practices described above, namely providing the students with rubrics, models, and course outlines, were unaffected by the emergency remote teaching. One participant explained it by saying that those are standard teaching practices in her college and that it was simple enough to, for example, post the course outline in the Learning Management System (LMS) of the school and discuss it with the students during synchronous meetings or video conferences.

Stage 3: Maintaining and Protecting Motivation

From our data, this stage in the teachers' motivational strategies garnered the greatest number of evidence, which was also rather diverse depending on the contextual background and the beliefs of individual teachers.

Firstly, "protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence" as well as "allowing learners to maintain positive social image" seem related to "creating a supportive classroom culture where mistakes are a natural part of learning" in AfL. Several teachers encouraged their students to "just write first", and to worry later about other aspects of writing, such as grammar, lexical choice, coherence, etc. These teachers seem to regard those aspects as understandably anxiety-inducing for EFL students. Other teachers offered motivational talks, emphasizing that everyone is still in the learning stage and that students and teachers learn from each other because they form a family. As P1 said, "*I told my students, 'If you are experts, then you don't need to attend my class.'*" A few other teachers even encouraged their students to make mistakes and would otherwise suspect them of plagiarism if the work was error-free. This is exemplified by a quote from P5:

> "*That's why I want to see their mistakes in any unit, in any section of the course. I think making this kind of comfortable environment is important not only in writing but also in any instruction of a given language skill. That's why it's important to celebrate the mistakes.*"

While the preceding strategies appear to stem from the EFL context in which the students find themselves, other teachers created a supportive classroom culture through unique ways that seem to be driven by personal belief and experience. For example, P3 asserted that he practiced giving only error codes to students because he believed it was a face-saving strategy that would not hurt their self-esteem. P4 thinks that giving the students options to write whatever topics they like would make them feel more comfortable writing. Lastly, P1, who works in a private institution, encouraged his students by informing them that they are getting the same materials as those taught in more prestigious state universities. In addition, he opines that peer assessment is a form of creating an environment where making mistakes is natural since students will readily accept corrections from their peers, thus minimizing their fear of committing errors.

Secondly, there is a convergence between the "creating learner autonomy" of MotS and involving students in (self-)assessment, which is the fourth principle of AfL. Nevertheless, not all teachers professed to practice self-assessment for various reasons. Thus, P5, P6, and P7 did not manage to conduct self-assessment activities during online learning due to the heavy workload and distrust in the students' capability and disposition to do self-assessment.

On the other hand, the other teachers regularly invited their students to use various Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools such as Grammarly, paraphrasing, and plagiarism tools, or simply use the self-evaluation activities given in the reference books. In fact, P3 claimed that his use of error codes (instead of explicit error correction) is also a way of getting students to decipher the meaning independently.

Lastly, "promoting cooperation among learners" in MotS is closely associated with "involving students in (peer-)assessment" of AfL. From our data, it appears that this area is the one impacted most by the constrained context. Some participants admitted that they did not practice peer assessment as much during online learning as previously due to the technical difficulty in enacting it in an online setting and the inability to effectively monitor the students. Other teachers modified the peer assessment practices by, for example, not making it compulsory for the students to post their comments on others' works, allowing the students to choose the peers to evaluate, or limiting the peer assessment only at paragraph level or just the grammatical aspect. The remaining teachers left out peer assessment altogether. They claimed that peer-evaluation activity is too cognitively demanding and time-consuming, necessitates appropriate online media, and places an extra burden on the students during the pandemic.

For other MotS components in this stage, such as "making learning stimulating and enjoyable", "presenting tasks in a stimulating way", and "promoting self-motivating strategies", we did not find substantial evidence that supports the alignment of MotS and AfL.

Stage 4: Encouraging Positive, Retrospective Self-Evaluation

Finally, within the last MotS stage, we found only one aspect, namely "providing motivational feedback", that is congruent with the "teachers providing feedback that helps" of AfL. In this particular point, some traces of the effect of constrained context were palpable. For example, P3 lamented that the quality of his feedback during online learning deteriorated. On the other hand, P7 was able to provide different feedback modes depending on the nature and urgency of the mistakes. Thus, she pointed out inaccuracies in students' topic sentences through WhatsApp voice notes and tagged the students concerned. She believed the feedback was pressing since the topic sentence forms the basis of the entire paragraph. Subsequently, she posted her feedback for the paragraphs in the LMS of the school.

It is plausible that the pandemic affected the teachers' feedback practice indirectly in the form of increased workload and stress, and thus, some admitted that they were rather late in giving feedback to their students. P6 sensed that her delay in giving feedback might cause demotivation to her students, while P4 felt guilty about asking her students to do peer assessment since she herself rarely provided feedback to her students. On the other hand, P2 was able to provide selective feedback to her students, although she confessed that it truly demanded much time, energy, and motivation on her part. The pandemic notwithstanding, all participants affirmed that they practiced peer evaluation before the emergency remote learning, either individually by asking students to swap works or in groups and at the class level.

In this last stage, we did not find support for the other MotS elements, namely "promoting motivational attributions", "increasing learner satisfaction", and "offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner." In sum, our data suggest that many of the teachers' motivational strategies are aligned with Assessment for Learning principles. We then proffer a diagrammatic representation of how the AfL practices can be inserted into the MotS framework from the Basic to the Retrospective stages, as seen in Figure 2.
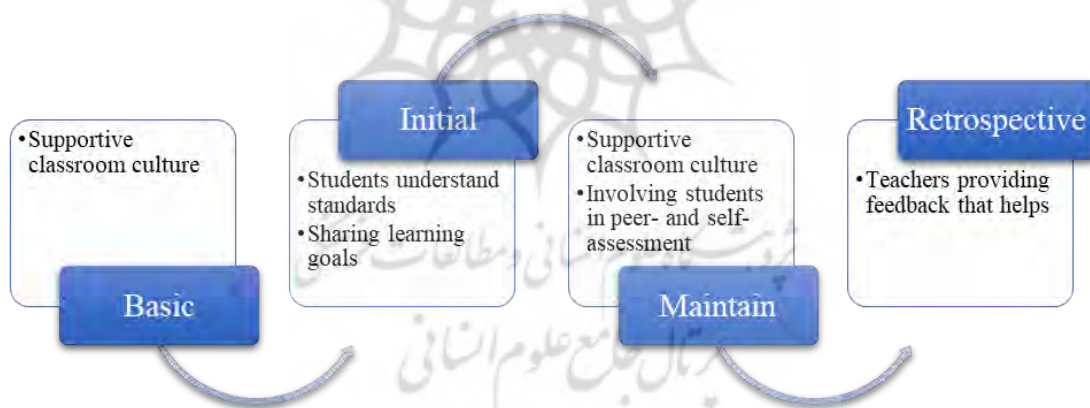
Figure 2. A Diagrammatic Representation of the Alignment between Assessment for Learning Principles and Taxonomy of Motivational Strategies

Discussion

This study aims at exploring the manner in which EFL writing teachers in higher education practiced the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as posited by Lee (2017) during the constrained context of emergency remote learning, as well as conceptually investigating

the potential alignment between the AfL practices and the taxonomy of teachers' Motivational Strategies (MotS) of Dörnyei (2001).

The Enactment of AfL Principles by EFL Writing Teachers in the Constrained Context – the Enhanced Practice of Creating Supportive Classroom Culture

In answer to the first research question, data from the interview with seven EFL university lecturers indicated that the teachers generally managed to enact most of the AfL principles during the constrained context, albeit in varying degrees due to the limitations imposed by the emergency remote learning and teachers' factors such as personal belief and teachers' assessment and digital literacy. Some practices remain unchanged, such as "helping students to understand standards and criteria", as well as "sharing learning goals with the students." Others experienced a decline or modification, namely involving students in peer- and self-assessment and teachers providing feedback. However, the constrained context seems to cause teachers to enhance the strategy for creating a supportive classroom culture, particularly so as to mitigate potential psychological harm to the students.

In general, our findings seem to mirror those of Panadero et al. (2022), who likewise reported little change in the use of assessment criteria and rubrics during the pandemic. Besides the reasons they proffered in their studies, such as positive teachers' belief in the rubric and its ease of distribution, we would like to add insight from our participants, who stated that sharing learning goals and assessment criteria is a customary procedure in higher education teaching and learning. Similar to the results of Panadero et al. (2022), our findings likewise demonstrated that peer- and self-assessment practices worsened during the constrained context. For self-assessment, Panadero et al. (2022) attributed the decline to the teachers' concern for the reliability and objectivity of self-assessment, as the teachers were unsure if the students truly and correctly self-assessed. Our participants, however, cited added duties related to online teaching and mistrust in students' capability for self-evaluation. In the latter aspect, our finding is aligned with Zhang et al. (2022), who similarly unveiled that EFL teachers in China hardly practiced self-assessment due to its time-consuming nature and students' low proficiency. In terms of peer assessment, our results are again in agreement with Panadero et al. (2022), as both our participants and theirs affirmed that the technical difficulties associated with forming groups for peer review and effective monitoring of the process were the main challenges for conducting peer-evaluation in an online setting. Besides this technical factor, which is perhaps unique to online learning, teachers' mistrust in the

students' capability to do peer assessment appears to mediate the decision to omit or lessen peer assessment practice, as evidenced by those who claimed that it is too cognitively demanding for the students. This phenomenon is aligned with the study by Wulandari et al. (2021), whose participants were also divided on the feasibility and utility of conducting peer assessment in the Indonesian EFL context. Besides, our participants who asserted that peer assessment constitutes an added burden for students during the pandemic seem to reflect teachers' general perception of the effect of assessment, perceived as stress-inducing, in students' lives (Zhang et al., 2021). This is also perhaps the reason behind the modifications to peer-assessment practices reported by our participants; making the peer-assessment optional, limiting the peer assessment scope, and allowing students to choose the peer reviewer seems to be seen as allaying students' anxiety level during the pandemic.

In addition, our findings with regard to the enhanced practice of creating a supportive classroom culture advance further discussion on the AfL enactment during the constrained context beyond what has been discussed in the extant literature. Besides the increased frequency, the variety of the practice among teachers is also noteworthy. Firstly, teachers seem to sense a greater need to motivate their EFL students to write during a globally challenging situation such as the pandemic, a concern shared by writing teachers worldwide (Sheerah et al., 2022; Sheppard, 2021; Tarrayo et al., 2022). Secondly, the diversity of teachers' strategies for creating a supportive classroom culture can be broadly divided into five categories of teachers' beliefs, namely about (1) attitude to writing, (2) role of error, (3) teachers' own identity, (4) role of peers, and (5) online learning condition.

In the first place, our participants appear to foster a more positive attitude toward writing in the students by emphasizing fluency over accuracy ("write first, errors later") (Michel, 2017) and writing on any topic of students' choice. Indeed, students selecting their own topic to write has been shown to exhibit greater fluency than those given teacher-controlled topics (Dickinson, 2014). Secondly, errors are seen as signs of progress (Wu & Garza, 2014) and proof of learners' writing authenticity. In other words, the teachers adopt an optimistic stance on errors and attempt to impart this same outlook to the students to overcome their fear of making mistakes. One teacher also believes that giving error codes is part of a face-saving strategy, which found support in some research (Ahmadi-Azad, 2014; Saukah et al., 2017). Thirdly, some of our participants also perceive their role and identity in class as head of a family, thus making it natural for family members to support and learn from one another. Similar to a case in Japan, a native English speaker attempted to close the gap between himself and the students by projecting himself as a co-learner of Japanese

(Cowie & Sakui, 2012). One of our teacher participants espouses the belief that peers also play a role as learning resources which are less fearsome for the students when compared with teachers' feedback. Past studies demonstrated the effectiveness of peer feedback in overcoming writing anxiety (Bolourchi & Soleimani, 2021; Yastibaş & Yastibaş, 2015). Lastly, a set of supportive classroom culture strategies pertains to emergency remote learning in particular. This is mainly seen in teachers exerting greater flexibility in classroom rules as a show of empathy to the students or making online learning more enjoyable. This strategy can be conceived as part of a pedagogy of care embraced by many teachers during the pandemic (Moorhouse & Tiet, 2021). Such care is appreciated greatly by students (Yates et al., 2021) and perceived to be equally important as the teachers' ability to orchestrate various pedagogical technologies during emergency remote learning (Gozali & Cahyono, 2022).

The Conceptual Alignment of AfL Principles and Teachers' Motivational Strategies in the Constrained Context

As for the second research question, our study might be the first to provide empirical data on the alignment between AfL principles and teachers' Motivational Strategies (MotS). AfL strategies are present in MotS, from creating the basic motivational condition to encouraging positive, retrospective self-evaluation. This alignment implies that teachers who practice AfL "kill two birds with one stone"; they also, consciously or otherwise, implement motivational strategies at the same time. It is also interesting to note that, although our interview questions did not mention the word motivation, some participants were cognizant of the impact of their (deficient) assessment practice on students' motivational behaviour, like P6, who intuited that her belated feedback might have had a demotivating effect on the students. Thus, teachers' tacit awareness of the relationship between AfL principles and MotS can now conceptually be concretized.

At the Basic motivational condition, our participants created a supportive classroom culture by relaxing online classroom rules and the use of humor pertaining to online learning. Informal learning atmosphere and teachers' humor have also been reported by Astuti (2016) and Wong (2014), respectively, as successful motivational strategies favored by the students. As discussed previously, the teachers in our study regarded sharing learning goals and assessment criteria as a common practice in any classroom setting, and this AfL strategy is thus unchanged even in a constrained context. However, what may not be readily apparent to the teachers is that this "standard procedure" is simultaneously a motivational strategy, as it

increases learner's expectancy of success and goal-orientedness. Similar to the finding of Cheung (2018), the teacher in her study encouraged the students by promoting the instrumental value of learning academic writing with an eye on future research paper drafting and publication.

The greatest convergence between AfL and MotS occurs in the Maintain stage, notably in creating a supportive classroom culture (protecting learners' self-esteem and self-confidence), involving students in self-assessment (creating learner autonomy), and involving students in peer assessment (promoting cooperation among learners). As discussed previously, the constrained context compelled the teachers to be innovative in creating a supportive classroom culture, particularly instilling students' confidence to write and be unafraid of making mistakes. Conducting self-assessment is congruent with creating learner autonomy (Gholami, 2016; Tassinari, 2018), and its association with motivation is consistent with Jafarigohar (2020). Lastly, peer assessment is considered motivating due to its socio-constructivist leaning in fostering cooperation and collaboration. In this respect, our result is in line with the finding of Astuti (2016), whose students reported preferring asking questions and being explained to by peers. Besides, this study supports the findings of previous works evidencing a positive association between peer assessment and motivation (Yao et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020).

Lastly, in the Retrospective stage, the teacher feedback of AfL aligns with providing motivational feedback in MotS. Although our participants struggled to give timely feedback during the emergency remote learning, they strove to make use of technology or to practice selective feedback to overcome the hurdle of a heavy workload. This is in line with the result of Astuti (2016), in which the teachers did not correct all of the students' mistakes so as not to discourage them from speaking in English. The academic writing students in Cheung's (2018) study likewise were inspired to write better after receiving positive comments from their teachers, ensuring they were on the right track.

Implications and Limitations

Overall, the findings of our study carry several implications. Firstly, this study contributes, at a conceptual level, to a more nuanced understanding of Assessment for Learning principles, seeing it from the lens of motivational strategies. While AfL has been traditionally perceived as reflective of teachers' assessment literacy (Arrafii, 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2022; Lee, 2011), it can now be recognized also as teachers' skill at motivational exercises. We then echo the exhortations of several assessment scholars on the greater provision of training

and professional development in AfL principles for pre- and in-service teachers, in view of its significance not only in assessment practice but also in promoting motivated learning. Secondly, our result extends scholarly discussion in the current literature on MotS, specifically those providing empirical evidence to Dörnyei's (2001) taxonomy (Astuti, 2016; Cheung, 2018; Henry et al., 2018). Our result provides a fresh perspective by providing evidence focusing on teachers' assessment practice. Lastly, from a pedagogical perspective, our findings provide insights to EFL writing instructors on the implementation of AfL in a constrained context, particularly the lessons learned in this situation as the educational world eases into the post-pandemic, endemic era. Specifically, the affordances of technology to provide feedback at scale and as automated writing evaluation should still be further explored, even when classes are in face-to-face mode.

This study is limited, firstly, by the small number of participants, which does not make the findings of this research readily generalizable. Despite our best effort at sampling, we acknowledge the lack of heterogeneity in our pool of participants; the doctoral students were quite familiar with the Assessment of Learning concept and their outlook might have been influenced by what they had learned in their studies. Lastly, this study relies on the participants' self-report on their AfL and, indirectly, motivational teaching practices. Future studies can investigate the impact of their AfL enactment on students' motivation, as was done in similar higher education contexts such as Cheung's (2018).

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the practice of Assessment for Learning (AfL) by seven EFL writing instructors in various Indonesian universities during a constrained context, namely the recent emergency remote learning, using Lee's (2017) AfL principles as the guiding framework. In addition, the AfL evidences were also studied conceptually under the lens of Dörnyei's taxonomy of teachers' Motivational Strategy (MotS) to see the possible alignment between AfL and MotS. Regarding the AfL enactment during the constrained context, there was a decline in the effort to involve students in peer- and self-assessment due to the technical and psychological challenges associated with forced online learning. However, teachers intensified the strategy of creating a supportive classroom culture for the students, particularly by fostering a positive outlook on writing and mistakes, seen as something to be celebrated and not frowned upon. The findings also provide preliminary corroboration of the conceptual alignment between AfL and MotS by showing the presence of all of the AfL

principles, from creating the basic motivational condition to encouraging positive, retrospective self-evaluation. The greatest convergence occurs at the stage of maintaining and protecting motivation, manifested through teachers' efforts at creating a supportive classroom culture and conducting self- and peer assessment. In sum, our study contributes to foregrounding the importance of the knowledge and practice of Assessment for Learning in teachers due to its potential impact on students' motivation as expressed by the increased expectancy of success, autonomy, self-confidence, and sense of collaboration.

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Appendix A

The Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the process of evaluating your students' writing during online learning, from giving learning goals, providing the model and criteria, to providing feedback?

2. During the online learning, did you do self-assessment and peer feedback? How did you create a classroom culture where mistakes are part of learning and where everyone can improve?

3. For your answers in no. 1 and 2 above, how different was your evaluation practice during the pandemic (online learning) and pre/post-pandemic (on-site)?

Appendix B

A sample of the coding result for the Motivational Strategy - BASIC

Mots - Basic	AfL Principles	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Appropriate teacher behavior								
A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom	SCC	Didn't force his students to turn on the Zoom camera						
		He allowed his students to eat during online class	Welcomed the students to the class. We are a family					
		Joked in class when encouraging them to ask questions						
A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms	SCC		Created WhatsApp group but students send works through email	Created a WhatsApp group where students can ask questions				

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