



Jill Willis

Accessible Assessment for Learning and Agency: How small classroom choices can create powerful possibilities for the future.

Jill Willis is a Professor of Education at [Queensland University of Technology](https://www.qut.edu.au/), Brisbane Australia. She researches the social structures of classroom assessment and learning spaces to make recommendations for improving teacher and student agency. Her research investigates how learners navigate performance expectations in assessment systems, so learners of all ages can be supported to experience greater success and agency. This interest has led her to teach about assessment for learning, leadership of change, learning spaces and middle leadership. Jill particularly enjoys working with teachers and school leaders who undertake higher degree learning and research. Jill is proud to have led research on accessibility in assessment, and student evaluations of vertical schools. She is a founding member of the Centre for Inclusive Education.

BBAF keynote description:

Assessment and agency go hand in hand. Agency grows when assessment is treated as a verb; that is the human process of working out what is valued and making judgements. Being someone who can assess is essential for how we make our way through the world. Questions like “Should I spend more time on this? Is this good enough? What are some next steps that help us become people who make choices about what matters to us and the lives we want to lead no matter if those questions relate to friendships, hobbies or work. As educators, when we teach students how to be assessors, we are helping them develop identities as people who matter and who make choices about what matters. This is the beauty and strength of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) set of practices that are well known in our schools—sharing learning intentions and success criteria, self- and peer assessment, dialogue, and feedback.

So why aren't all classrooms and school systems hives of student agency and AfL?

It isn't because teachers are not working hard enough. In this presentation I share some recent research about AfL in Australian classrooms. We will focus on the achievable “what” practices but also the sustainable “how” teachers can work together within system conditions. The potential of small classroom choices that prioritize student agency and accessibility is demonstrated through some stories of long-term impacts for schools. Importantly, the voices of students in the process of reform are highlighted as a catalyst for change.

