

**SMEC 2014 | SAILS**

June 2014

***The Assessment for Learning Audit instrument  
(AfLAi)  
A Tool Developed to Guide  
School-Based Professional Development***

Michael O’Leary and Zita Lysaght  
St. Patrick’s College, DCU

# Presentation Roadmap

1. Definitions of AfL and synopsis of key research findings
2. Assessment for Learning Audit instrument
  - Description and Psychometric properties
3. Key findings and implications from our Irish study
4. Using the AfLAI for CPD in schools – a case-study
5. On-going development work

# Assessment for Learning (AfL)

The terms AfL and formative assessment are used interchangeably to refer to teaching and learning practices, the primary focus of which is to guide the ‘minute-by-minute’, ‘day-by-day’ interactions between learners and teachers in order to ‘close the gap’ on pupils’ learning.

“Any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils’ learning”.

(Black *et al.*, 2002, p. 1).

# 3 Key Messages from the Research on AfL

1. A Warranted Approach

Black & Wiliam, 1998; Crooks, 1988; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Natriello, 1987; Nyquist, 2003

2. Assessment as integral to 21<sup>st</sup> Century/Inquiry-Based Learning and Adaptive Expertise

3. Challenges highlighted in, for example:

KMOFAP (England)

AifL (Scotland)

KLOT (US)

NCCA (Ireland)

Lysaght/O'Leary

# AfL Audit Instrument (AfL Ai)

- Purpose and history

- Three Stage Development Process

- Pre-pilot: 5 teachers

- Pilot Study: 50 teachers ;

- Main Study<sup>+</sup>: 500+ teachers in 40+ schools

- Design – 4 scales

- 1. *Sharing Learning Intentions & Success Criteria*  
(16 statements)

- 2. *Questioning & Classroom Discussion* (16 statements)

- 3. *Feedback* (12 statements)

- 4. *Peer & self-assessment* (14 statements)

# 6-Point Rating Scale

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 6. | <i>Embedded</i>                                      | (happens approximately 90% of the time) |
| 5. | <i>Established</i>                                   | (happens approximately 75% of the time) |
| 4. | <i>Emerging</i>                                      | (happens approximately 50% of the time) |
| 3. | <i>Sporadic</i>                                      | (happens approximately 25% of the time) |
| 2. | <i>This never happens</i>                            |   |
| 1. | <i>I do not understand what this statement means</i> |   |

Embedded  
Established  
Emerging  
Sporadic  
Never  
Don't Understand

Happens 90% of the time  
Happens 75% of the time  
Happens 50% of the time  
Happens 25% of the time  
Never happens  
I don't understand what the statement means

Blacken one circle in each row like this



## Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

Embedded  
Established  
Emerging  
Sporadic  
Never  
Don't Under.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1. Learning intentions are shared with pupils at appropriate times during lessons (e.g., *Halfway through the lesson, the teacher might say: "Remember, we are learning to distinguish between 2D and 3D shapes"*).

2. Learning intentions are stated using words that emphasise knowledge, skills, concepts and/or attitudes i.e., what the pupils are learning NOT what they are doing.

3. Pupils are reminded about the links between what they are learning and the *big learning picture* (e.g., *"We are learning to count money so that when we go shopping we can check our change"*).

4. Pupils are provided with opportunities to internalise learning intentions by, for example, being invited to read them aloud and/or restate them in their own words.

5. Child-friendly language is used to share learning intentions with pupils (e.g., *"We*

# Main Study

- Purposive sample of 476 teachers across 36 schools in a range of classes – mainly primary.
- Profile of Respondents
  - 89% female
  - Early career (0 – 5 years): 37%
  - Mid-career (6 – 20 years): 33%
  - 20+ years: 30%

## *Teaching roles*

- Mainstream class teachers: 70%
- Special educators 30%



# Factor Analysis of AfLAI Scales

- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin for all four scales non significant ( $< .84 - .91$ )
- Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for all four significant ( $< .0005$ )
- Eigenvalues ranged between 4.4 and 7.1
- Main Factor Loadings
  - most items in each scale  $> .5$
  - average .67, .62, .60, .62

# FA and Reliability Outcomes

	Items	% Var	Alpha
Learning Intentions & Success Criteria	16	45	.92
Questioning & Classroom Discusion	16	39	.89
Feedback	12	37	.83
Peer & Self Assessment	14	40	.88

Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	N	Mean	Std. Dev
5. Child-friendly language is used to share learning intentions with pupils (e.g., “ <i>We are learning to make a good guess (prediction) about what is likely to happen next in the story</i> ”).	472	5.26	.91
3. Pupils are reminded about the links between what they are learning and the <i>big learning picture</i> (e.g., “ <i>We are learning to count money so that when we go shopping we can check our change</i> ”).	471	4.78	1.03
16. Pupils are given responsibility for checking their own learning against the success criteria of lessons.	474	3.44	1..16
8. Prompts are used to signal learning intentions and success criteria with pupils (e.g., <i>using WALTs and WILFs in junior classes</i> ).	459	3.29	1.52

Questioning and Classroom Discussion	N	Mean	Std. Dev
3. Questions are used to elicit pupils' prior knowledge on a topic.	463	5.44	.74
2. Assessment techniques are used to facilitate class discussion ( <i>e.g., brainstorming</i> ).	471	5.03	.89
7. Pupils are encouraged to share the questioning role with the teacher during lessons ( <i>e.g., the teacher routinely invites pupils to question their peers' contributions to discussions</i> ).	472	3.83	1.18
8. Assessment techniques are used to encourage questioning of the teacher by pupils ( <i>e.g., using hot-seating or a Post-Its challenge</i> ).	473	3.37	1.15

Feedback	N	Mean	Std. Dev
1. Feedback to pupils is focused on the original learning intention(s) and success criteria ( <i>e.g.</i> , “ <i>Today we are learning to use punctuation correctly in our writing and you used capital letters and full stop correctly in your story, well done John</i> ”).	473	4.82	.98
5. Teacher-made tests are used diagnostically to identify strengths and needs in teaching and learning ( <i>e.g.</i> , <i>identifying common mistakes in the addition of fractions</i> ).	472	4.82	1.04
7. Pupils are involved formally in providing information about their learning to their parents/guardians ( <i>e.g.</i> , <i>portfolios or learning logs are taken home</i> ).	471	3.64	1.32
9. Closing-the-gap-feedback is used to focus pupils’ attention on the next step in their learning.	467	2.96	1.57

Peer- and Self-Assessment	N	Mean	Std. Dev
3. Lessons on new topics begin with pupils being invited to reflect on their prior learning ( <i>e.g., pupils complete a mind map or concept map or brainstorm a topic</i> ).	464	4.42	1.20
4. Pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on, and talk about, their learning, progress and goals.	472	3.93	1.16
2. Pupils are encouraged to record their progress using, for example, learning logs.	472	2.82	1.00
12. Time is set aside during parent/guardian-teacher meetings for pupils to be involved in reporting on some aspects of their learning ( <i>e.g., pupils select an example of their best work for discussion at the meeting</i> ).	471	2.48	1.03

# How the AfL*Ai* Scales Compare

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
Questioning and Classroom Discussion	4.4	Emerging
Sharing Learning Intentions & Success Criteria	4.2	Emerging
Feedback	4.2	Emerging
Peer- & Self-Assessment	3.3	Sporadic

# Findings

- Questioning/Classroom Discussion most *Embedded/Established*
- Peer-and Self-Assessment least *Embedded/Established*
- All four scales highlight teacher AfL behaviours that are *Sporadic/Emerging*
- Many AfL techniques are not *Embedded/Established*



# Implications of these Findings?

- Teaching and Learning in Maths and Science?
- Inquiry-based learning?
- Junior Cycle Reform?
- Assessment of 4 Cs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills
- Teacher Professional Development
- Etc.



# On-going Follow Up Work In Schools

- Individual school data feedback (Primary and Secondary)
- Mean ratings rank ordered for each scale from most to least *Embedded*
- Facilitated data analysis with all staff using AfL strategies
- See Exemplar – Bloom Community College: Imagine you are a member of the teaching staff – what would you do with these data?

# On-going Development Work

- Measurement version for research purposes – AfL**M**i (O’Leary, Lysaght & Ludlow 2013)
- AfL**A**i translated into Norwegian (and Spanish)
- AfL**A**i adapted for use in South African school districts
- AfL**A**i adapted for use by *Teagasc* (Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland)
- Second and Third Level versions on the way
- Student AfL**A**i in development

# **Thank you**

Please direct comments/queries to:

**Zita.Lysaght@dcu.ie**

and

**Michael.Oleary@dcu.ie**