

AFL Looks Like Project – Mid-Project Summary

The purpose of the AfL Looks Like Project is to build capacity for teacher-level data use through assessment for learning. The Assessment for Learning Looks Like Project involves six classroom projects in four school boards in the GTA.

Afl “Looks Like” Projects

Board	Grade/Subject	Description of Project
Dufferin Peel Catholic DSB	Elementary- Grade 1 Mathematics – Number sense and numeration	Day-to-day assessment decisions in grade 1 mathematics
Halton DSB	Secondary – Grade 11 Chemistry (U) Grade 10 Civics (Open) Grade 10 English – Using the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)	The use of exit passes to increase student involvement and responsibility The use of RAFT (role, audience, format and topic) to improve student engagement Does the information from the DRA assist teachers in providing instruction that results in improved reading abilities for their students?
Toronto Catholic DSB	Secondary - Mathematics (Student Success) – Grade 9 Algebra Elementary- Grade 5 Language	The use of data to inform/change classroom instruction (activating prior knowledge, communication of learned concepts) Collaboratively developing language lessons and common assessments, match instruction to Language expectations
York Region DSB	Elementary/Secondary Teachers	Implementation of an online AfL course. Focus will be on how teachers use AfL methods to improve student learning.

Of the six working-sessions planned, three with Board consultants and three with classroom teachers and consultants, four have been held. At the December session, the group heard from each Board about the progress with their projects.

Successes So Far

Overall session successes

- Clarified common understandings for what is meant by “assessment for learning” and what it looks like in a classroom
- Created a safe learning environment and addressed inconsistencies and misconceptions about AfL
- Provided and debated the use of practical resources
- Reinforced the understanding that AfL is about student learning not teacher instruction
- Agreed on a revised set of properties of AfL for use with teachers

Individual board successes as identified in the Case Management Templates

- Used a wider range of teaching strategies to address the needs of struggling learners in grade 5 (ie. Drama) to increase motivation
- Increased student involvement in the assessment process
- Built competency for activating and recognizing students’ prior knowledge
- Developed common assessment tools for a unit (Grade 9 math)
- Developed time for collaborative assessments
- Learned that many of our assumptions about what students knew and understood were inaccurate
- Began the process of aligning the grade 7,8 and 9 expectations in mathematics to reduce repetition and omissions in instruction
- Increased the amount of written and oral feedback to students
- Reduced reliance on commercial texts for instruction and assessment purposes
- Matched theory of AfL (principles and properties) to actual classroom practices to determine existing strengths and gaps
- Increased confidence in own teaching methods based on student data

Future Goals

- Develop clear and practical classroom images of AfL in elementary and secondary classrooms in a format that can be shared with other GTA PNC boards.
- Document the process used in each board for building capacity so other PNC boards can benefit from the learning.
- Document the learning of the Board teams (by way of Case Management Templates, Activity Log, Board Sharing Session, Written Report)
- Share the learning with the GTA PNC Steering Committee and board leadership.