Evaluation Report for the
Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning
Professional Learning Program
at
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

Prepared by
The Assessment and Evaluation Group
Queen’s University
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Section 1: Background

Introduction

An enduring challenge for education systems is to enact policies, programs and practices that will optimize the likelihood that students will be successful in meeting valued goals. When the goals of interest are academic, measures of achievement are typically targeted to provide an indication of both student success and organizational accountability. This practice has led to continuous research into the pedagogical strategies most likely to foster increased student achievement.

In 1998, Black and Wiliam captured the imagination of educators when they summarized evidence that a) systematic formative assessment enhanced student achievement – especially for those typically labeled lower achievers; b) the practice of formative assessment could be significantly improved, and c) trustworthy examples of how to improve the practice of formative assessment were already available. At the same time, they identified a significant problematic in using assessment to promote learning: “We acknowledge widespread evidence that fundamental change in education can be achieved only slowly—through programs of professional development that build on existing good practice” (p. 2).

In an effort to enhance the integration of formative assessment practices with teaching and learning in Ontario schools, the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB) engaged in a professional learning project entitled, Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning (BCAfL). This partnership represented a concerted effort by the Ministry of Education and the school board to support shared and complementary goals; namely, purposeful professional learning about Assessment for Learning (AfL) including the effective implementation of AfL in Ontario classrooms (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

The BCAfL project merged the practice of AfL with an instructional rounds approach to professional learning. The overarching aim of the BCAfL project was that:

- Principals, teachers, and students will use an assessment for learning approach to promote their own and others’ learning.

Based on this overarching aim, the following explicit aims were identified for teachers, students, and principals in KPRDSB:

- Teachers will integrate an assessment for learning approach to plan and inform their learning and instruction to support students’ becoming self-regulating learners.

- Students will develop the knowledge and skills to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

- Principals will integrate an assessment for learning approach to plan and inform their leadership practices.
An instructional rounds approach was selected as the central professional learning structure to achieve these aims. This structure involved collaborative learning amongst teachers and principals through defining a focus of learning and following the protocol of instructional rounds to make descriptive observations, to analyze evidence, and to determine the next level of focused learning. Professional learning for principals was based on Stiggins' assessment competencies that were mapped to Ontario's School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) and the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012. This collaborative approach was thought to support the development of a culture of learning with shared values (City, Elmore, Fioran & Teitel, 2009: Marzano, 2011).

At a classroom level, teachers selected specific AfL learning goals and supported one another in planning for and implementing these goals to support student learning and student adoption of AfL strategies. Through peer-observations and assessment consultant debriefing, teachers collaboratively engaged in learning about AfL within their local teaching contexts. Participating principals were asked to use AfL strategies to support their leadership of teacher learning, with principals meeting regularly to observe each others’ AfL-based leadership strategies. Both principals’ and teachers’ learning in this project were shared and mutually supportive. This professional learning approach was unique because it engaged both teachers and principals in collaboratively using AfL strategies to support students’ and teachers’ learning.

Specifically, KPRDSB teachers and principals engaged in the following activities as part of the BCAfL professional learning project:

- Professional learning days: Facilitated the Ministry of Education and/or by Jennifer McIlmoyle – Parsons and Dr. Lynn Kostuch,
- Teacher instructional rounds days: Facilitator Lead: Jennifer McIlmoyle-Parsons and Dr. Lyn Kostuch,
- Principal instructional leadership rounds days: Facilitator Lead – Ontario Ministry of Education, PVNCCDSB, KPRDSB

The Ontario Ministry of Education and the school board’s Instructional Leadership Consultant and Superintendent supported these activities. The Ontario Ministry of Education commonly facilitated the professional learning days and initial instructional rounds days, guiding teachers and principals through various learning experiences about both AfL and the instructional rounds process. The project began during the 2012/2013 school year, but due to labour disruptions, large portions of the project were delayed. Hence the initial project carried on into the 2013/2014 school year. This created challenges for continuity and data collection.

In order to collect evidence on teacher and principal learning in the BCAfL project, the school board partnered with the Queen’s University Assessment and Evaluation Group to engage in a developmental evaluation. Evaluation planning (i.e., development of evaluation questions and methodology) and data collection followed a collaborative model between the school board, AEG and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Data were collected throughout the BCAfL project to support in-situ program developments and program results. The aim of
the program evaluation was to support the school board in its development of a culture of learning that values assessment-informed teaching, learning, and leadership.
Section 2: Evaluation Questions

Formulating Evaluation Questions

Rarely can a single evaluation answer all of the questions that stakeholders have about a program’s implementation and effectiveness. In formulating evaluation questions, it is critical to consider the importance of each evaluation question in light of the decisions that need to be made, the expectations of stakeholders, and the resources available for the evaluation. These considerations help put boundaries on the evaluation, leading to focused evaluation that responds to stakeholders’ informational needs.

Evaluation questions for the BC\textit{AfL} project were developed through a collaborative approach between the school board, the Ontario Ministry of Education, and Queen’s University Assessment and Evaluation Group. Through several meetings, evaluation questions were formulated in conjunction with articulating program aims and intentions (i.e., program theory). Each of the stakeholder groups also created a logic model to guide and modify their questions. As a result of this iterative process, evaluation questions were developed, and these guided data collection throughout the evaluation.

\textbf{BC\textit{AfL} Program Evaluation Questions}

The following three evaluation questions were identified to guide the program evaluation in KPRDSB:

1. How might collaborative implementation of an instructional rounds model support the use of assessment for learning practices in classrooms and amongst teachers and principals?

2. What is the impact of this professional learning program on developing a collaborative culture of learning that values assessment for learning?

3. How might teachers’ use of assessment for learning in their classrooms influence the quality of student learning and specifically their self-regulation skills?
Section 3: Evaluation Method

Program Evaluation Methodologies

Program evaluations can serve multiple purposes and use a variety of methodologies to gain information on program developments and results developmental, transformational and cause and effect. In this evaluation, the evaluation team explored different kinds of evidences to respond to the evaluation questions. These methodologies can provide for different types of evidence, with each having strengths and weaknesses given the focus of the evaluation.

- **Developmental.** These data are selected because they can track the changes in teacher partners, assessment partners, principals and students over time. In these cases data need to inform you about possible sequences, stages or rhythms in the process. They also need to make it possible to connect these changes to particular behaviors, dispositions, contextual conditions, activities or unanticipated events. Both quantitative and qualitative data are appropriate for understanding development.

- **Transformational.** Data for this purpose have to be able to capture individual and organizational values. They access regenerative and ‘ah-ha’ moments or episodes and instances where there was significant insight or re-direction. Transformations are best captured through narratives, open-ended surveys, case studies and other qualitative methods.

- **Cause and Effect.** Often referred to as ‘hard evidence’, descriptions, performances, practices, and the presence (or absence) of physical evidence are captured in order to learn what happened to those who experienced the program. It is important that this information be collected from a number of sources, and in a consistent manner so that it might be compared. Ideally, comparisons are made between those experiencing the program and those who are not, but other methods can support such reasoning. All collected data are transformed into numeric form in order to get a more precise estimate of the strength of the relationships that may exist among the various program processes and outcomes. (Adapted from Grove, Kibel, & Hass, 2012)
Data collection and analyses strategies were selected based on their abilities to:

- Answer the set of questions that have been chosen to shape and bound the evaluation

- Provide stakeholders and evaluation audiences with information that they deem to be both accurate and trustworthy. Program evaluations tend to use data collected from both objective and responsive measures. Programs are complex where the whole typically reflects more than the sum of its parts.

Based on our meetings and discussions with Ministry and school board staff, the evaluation primarily used a developmental evaluation methodology.
Program Evaluation Plan

Given the identified evaluation questions and the nature of the project, the evaluation team used a collaborative evaluation design based on a two phase process that provided: (a) time for the KPRDSB to develop a logic model that explored the effectiveness of instructional rounds, collaborative learning cultures, and efforts to integrate an AfL framework into classroom instruction; and (b) an evaluation process to collect evidences on the effectiveness of the BC AfL project to meet its intended aims. The first phase, Building the Logic Model, largely occurred between September and December of 2012. The second phase, Exploring the Impact of the Project, largely occurred between May and November of 2013.

Phase 1: Building a Program Theory

One of the more difficult tasks for a program committee is to represent their program in a way that is both comprehensive and useful to initial program development and evaluation planning. The development of a program theory can address this dilemma. There are typically two components to a program theory. The theory of action, describes the assumptions underpinning program operations. The theory of change captures the processes intended to bring about the changes in individuals, organizations and communities (Rogers, 2011). Together these two aspects of a program theory can be used to first create links between the underlying framework for an initiative (program), the intended and enacted actions and the expected results and changes that may occur as a result. In order to operationalise a program theory it is useful to develop a logic model amongst the theory, actions, and expected products and outcomes. There are many advantages to representing the complete program theory in a logic model:

- It provides a baseline from which to compare the program-in-theory with the program–in–action. Discrepancies can be used to either change the theory or improve the implementation.
- Identifying the intended effects of a program also sensitizes evaluators and program personnel to unintended effects. In understanding how a program is working, these are just as important to track down.
- If it is not possible to test the program model against a comparative or control group, a program logic model allows evaluators and program personnel to begin developing defensible causal arguments (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and offers a framework for continued program developments (i.e., developmental evaluation).

Phase 1 of the BCAfL evaluation focused on using the fall of 2012 to build a program theory for the evaluation. The overall framework for this program theory was provided during the initial meeting that occurred on August 15, 2012, although the contents of the program theory were largely incomplete at that time. The purpose of Phase 1 was to begin to “fill in” the theory of action and change that underpinned the BCAfL project. The development of the program theory was an iterative process amongst the evaluation team, KPRDSB, and Ministry of Education. The logic model was also shaped by initial project activities including
central professional development days and initial instructional rounds. The program theory helped guide initial the evaluation questions and design.

Phase 2: Exploring the Impact of the BCAfL Program

Phase 2 of the evaluation involved collecting data on the effectiveness of BCAfL activities to meet the project’s initial aim as stipulated in the program theory. The BCAfL project evaluation used a collaborative, developmental methodology to guide its data collection and analyses. Data were collected from multiple stakeholders including: teachers, principals, and school district leaders (i.e., instructional leadership consultant and superintendent). Data were collected at the beginning and during the BCAfL project to track participants’ learning and practices. In addition, data were obtained during project activities (i.e., instructional rounds days and professional learning days) as well as in-between project activities to determine immediate and sustained value of project activities on professional learning and practice.

The BCAfL project initially involved 18 teachers and 5 principals from 5 different schools. Since the inception of the project, the number of teachers has grown to 28 teachers. KPRDSB staff also supported program implementation and delivery. Data were primarily collected through qualitative methods including in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations (Patton, 2002). In addition, a post-project survey was used to gain additional quantitative evidence on teacher learning through the BCAfL project. These multiple data collection methods were used in order to triangulate findings and to established trustworthy results. All data tools (i.e., surveys, interview protocols, and reflection forms) are presented in Appendix A. The following table details data collection activities per stakeholder group.

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>BCAfL or Data Collection Activity</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
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<td>Central PD Days</td>
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<td>– Observation</td>
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<td>– Document Collection</td>
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<td>– Survey</td>
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<td>Instructional Rounds</td>
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<td>– Observations</td>
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<td>– Teacher Reflection</td>
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<td>– Document Collection</td>
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<td>– Survey</td>
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<td>Principals</td>
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<td>– Observation</td>
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Data Analyses

Qualitative data were analyzed using a standard thematic coding process (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008; Patton, 2002). Data were analyzed in relation to each stakeholder group: teachers, principals, and school board leaders. From an initial analysis of data, a code list was generated and then codes were grouped into broader thematic categories. Codes with a high degree of co-occurrence (i.e., two or more codes used for same data) were collapsed into broader categories if they represented similar themes. Themes were then clustered based on their relation to: (a) learning about AfL, and (b) learning through an instructional rounds approach. In addition, specific anecdotes highlighting salient themes and learning experiences were identified and described. These anecdotes are represented in the presentation of results through ‘spotlights’. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. These data provided contextual information on participants and general trends in teachers’ and principals’ learning. Results from the BCAfL project evaluation are presented in the next section. Taken together these findings provide the basis for recommendations for next steps of the BCAfL project, presented in Section 6 of this report.
Section 4: Findings

Evaluation findings are presented in relation to three stakeholder perspectives: teachers, principals, and school board leaders. The three stakeholder groups offer varied responses to the professional learning program. However, consistently across all perspectives was a valuing of the BCAfL professional learning program because it (a) supported teachers’ practices and learning through job-embedded professional development, and (b) provided teachers and principals with an opportunity to collaboratively reflect on and learn about the integration of assessment to support learning.

The Teachers’ Perspectives

*It is surprising how everything really connects.*
*Before last year I saw everything separate.*

The teachers we interviewed and who completed the survey articulated the value of participating in the BCAfL project. The overarching themes of “ownership” over their learning and an increased sense of professionalism and professional practice provided convergent points of focus for this project. The sense of ownership was articulated through teachers’ own professional practice with AfL in their classroom practice, and their observations of students’ work in the classroom and their learning. Teachers noted that students “are really enjoying understanding how to help themselves produce better work and improve in the areas they need to improve in.” Teachers spoke most often about their students’ work with AfL and students’ improved attitudes and abilities. From these comments about student learning, references and supporting points were made about teachers’ knowledge of AfL, the value of the professional learning model, and challenges with AfL. Based on their experiences to date, teachers expressed a desire to continue with the BCAfL project and were committed to learning more about formative assessment practices.

AfL as a Learning Process for Students

Teachers often commented that their students were seeing the value of AfL. Students were seeing learning as a process rather than just an end product. “I think there’s a shift that they know that I’m not marking every single thing they do, so there’s the element of well, I can take risks… learning as a process as opposed to I do the work I get a mark.” Teachers commonly spoke about students taking greater care in their work because students collaborated and co-created success criteria. Hence these students were aware of what they were learning and why they were learning specific content. Teachers observed students being less dependent upon teachers for every step in an activity, and for moving ahead with a
classroom task. Students were observed to be more reliant upon themselves and peers. As one teacher stated, “students have developed a critical eye when assessing the work of others and can connect achievement to the success criteria.” Student input in the co-creation of success criteria also seemed to increase the rigour of success criteria. Across classroom observations, teachers and students were consistently referencing and using learning goals and success criteria, which was a primary focus of learning for teachers in the project.

Certainly, the use of AfL by students was neither quick nor easy. Teachers spoke about the gradual process of learning and of challenges students experienced as they engaged with AfL. Sometimes “the feedback they are giving to each other is very surface level.” Teachers recognized the range of students’ abilities to give and receive feedback. Teachers noted that students who exhibited lower motivation for learning were often more hesitant to engage in AfL in the classroom. Those students who were not as engaged as other students were slower to use AfL strategies in their learning and were often still passive participants in AfL activities. One teacher identified a “readiness gap” in which the learning curve for students who were passive and not as engaged was greater, but that this gap lessened over time.

Through continuous teacher efforts with AfL (e.g., prompting students to apply feedback), one teacher noted that “students are asking more questions, so that if they don’t understand something I find that they’re willing to ask questions because they know it’s an opportunity to really develop, it’s not one shot.” Another teacher said, “at the end they were conditioned to it and success criteria were just firing off, the feedback and the self-assessment all wrapped in nicely together.” Overall, teachers observed students using feedback more effectively and becoming more comfortable using learning goals and success criteria through persistent attention to these AfL strategies. Teachers noted that increases in students’ independence and ownership for their learning and the changing nature of the sense of community in the classroom. Students would have learning related conversations without teacher involvement, highlighting their growing ownership of their own learning. “All of a sudden they’re making the transition now into their learning activities that I am not a part of directly.” As an example, during one math activity involving clocks, a group of students agreed that they needed to make success criteria about telling time, and as a group, they created these success criteria.

This growing student independence with respect to AfL had important impact on teachers. Teachers relied less on providing instructions for next steps. Rather, they used questioning strategies to provide feedback to help students determine their own next steps. As a result, student independence became a teaching goal in some classrooms. The result was an increase in students’ awareness about what they were learning and why. Further, students were asking for learning goals, helping to develop rubrics, and using success criteria. “They’re taking their work, they’re comparing their work, they’re talking between themselves. They’re doing peer assessment.” Student independence is evident in students’ efforts of monitoring their work and their learning. Teachers are observing students keeping track of their progress.
“Some students will go to success criteria that’s posted on the wall and look to see if their work is matching it.” Teachers heard students talk about their work progress and identify what was done correctly, provide and integrate feedback, and then address areas for improvement. As an example of this, one teacher recounted a student saying, “I think I need to change my goals because I think I am really good at that.”

**Teachers’ AfL Knowledge and Practices**

An important emphasis from teachers’ statements was their increased self-awareness of their teaching practice. Many methods for assessment of student learning were already in their repertoire, but their involvement in the BC AfL project helped them to bring these methods together in a cohesive manner, with an awareness that these methods were all about AfL. Teachers felt they were becoming more purposeful in the strategies they employed in their classroom practice as they increased collaboration with students. One teacher noted that she “enjoyed letting go and giving the reigns to the kids.” Teachers expressed an awareness that their increased understanding of AfL allowed them to better appreciate the teaching and learning strategies they were employing, such as differentiated instruction strategies, and richer more meaningful tasks. As teachers’ knowledge of AfL increased, they also acknowledged that they were becoming more self-critical, thoughtful, and flexible in their instructional practice.

Teachers’ planning changed with increased knowledge of AfL. Planning took on a more longitudinal sense, with the creation of long term learning goals and building upon them throughout the school year. Learning goals and success criteria were being used in many ways and for different tasks. Connections were being made between learning goals, success criteria, feedback, students’ learning skills, and the curriculum. “I have grown significantly in my learning around student involvement ...” with respect to their learning. “It’s sort of shifted the teaching part to me more with the students. The teaching is really working together and learning together as opposed to me teaching something.” Teachers stated that more of their teaching time was being used to provide opportunities for peer/self/teacher feedback, discussing learning goals, and co-creating success criteria.

**Reflection on Learning**

“I have grown significantly in my learning”

Throughout the data there was evidence of ongoing teacher growth and reflection about teachers’ instructional practices as related to AfL and beyond. Their thoughts about how feedback could be more effective, and their reflections about their own learning and their students’ learning became a powerful element of change in teachers’ professional practice. Their involvement in the BC AfL project enabled teachers to question “things that I wouldn’t have been questioning before...”
We found evidence of a cultural shift related to their practice. These teachers reported they were willing to take risks, make a mistake, and learn more about AfL. Teachers talked about taking notes in a professional development day, or an instructional rounds day, and being able to apply their learning directly into their own classes the next day. Other teachers’ modeling of AfL, and conversations in schools “really allowed me to be creative, and it’s really provided me with the most excitement.” Not only has the AfL project opened the lines of communication between teachers and students but teachers also felt that communication was more open with principals as co-learners. Conversations and observations with colleagues and educators involved in the AfL project increased knowledge of AfL. “You can read as much as you’d like and think you’re doing it well, but until you see different school settings, personally I never really know how effective I was being.”

From learning about AfL to reflecting on AfL as a professional learning approach, teachers believed they had become “opened to the possibilities.” Descriptions of feedback mirrored the teachers’ stated sense of changed and improved professional practice. They spoke of the value in feedback that comes from using a wide variety of feedback, both formal and informal, incorporated into lessons, for monitoring and instructional decisions rather than evaluations. Feedback was also used to increase students’ abilities to become independent learners. “It doesn’t have to be written and onerous.”

Instructional Rounds as a Professional Learning Structure

Teachers valued instructional rounds as a method for learning about AfL. They talked about the value of classroom context and embedding their learning about AfL in existing classrooms. “I’m super visual, give me a picture of stuff going on, that’s why the classroom visits were so powerful.” Teachers valued the opportunity to observe different grades and divisions of classrooms, and also to make same grade observations. Combined, the observations of practice, discussions of classroom tasks and the planned AfL, and the end of day debriefs helped to “close the gap between what I want the students to learn and what I actually think they’re learning.” To delve deeper into AfL and the possible strategies and learning available, teachers wondered about specific changes that could be implemented. Suggestions included more time to talk in depth about the task to be observed in the classroom, fewer people in the instructional rounds day, longer time in classroom observations, even more focused discussion, and direct feedback and conversation with the host teachers. These points were all made with care, collegiality, and professionalism because they appreciated the instructional rounds environment. As structured in the board the instructional rounds process provided “a no-risk platform. It provides you an opportunity to ask those questions because it’s risk-free.”

From our interview and survey data we found that the teachers in the BC AfL had embraced a professional collaborative inquiry stance. These teachers were hungry for professional learning and they believed they were making a concerted effort to improve their classroom practice. They were looking for even more guidance to make further improvement to their
practice. “I don’t need people coming in patting me on the back saying great job, but I want people to come in and say, ‘you know what? This was successful, but you could do this to make it better.’” Admittedly, this was likely not present at the beginning as the teachers acknowledged that they were initially cautious of receiving feedback and being asked questions about their classroom practice. Quickly, and over the time of the BC AfL project, they began to feel more comfortable, and were increasingly asking for more opportunities be available for receiving feedback, having deep conversations about classroom practice and AfL. One teacher noted, “I like the fact that it’s non-judgmental, but I’m almost at the point of really seeking and needing some judgmental feedback to push me a little bit further as a teacher.” Another teacher believed, “if you want to become better at Assessment for Learning, perhaps you need to be able to identify what worked and what didn’t”.

Overall, the teachers who were part of the BC AfL project appreciated the opportunity they had to participate in this project and experience an instructional rounds approach to professional learning. The teachers understood there was still much to learn and that they were at different places in their learning; however, they saw value in observing teachers at different levels of AfL integration. They appreciated that there was “a number of very strong teachers who are involved in this project and who are available for assessment leadership in the school;” that said, they also wanted to move forward with small steps. They saw themselves in the beginning stages of promoting this project school-wide. These teachers looked forward to modeling the use of assessment for learning principles, engaging in conversations with other teachers, and sharing ideas, but in careful, little, and simple ways. “The way I see myself as a leader is not necessarily as an expert in everything, but just helping to create that comfort level of I have people coming into my class to see that’s happening.” Moving forward, they believed they could take on a leadership role and support their colleagues by asking questions, engaging the discussion, and enabling others’ thinking.

The data provide some evidence that the teachers in the BC AfL can play a small leadership role for other teachers. They perceived themselves as “anchored in assessment knowledge” and believed they could be catalysts, resources, and examples in discussions at division meetings, and school improvement team meetings, etc. They noted that other teachers not involved in the project, were beginning to take notice, ask questions, and participate in learning the ‘common language around assessment.’ There appeared to be a growing realization that “assessment isn’t just ‘of learning’, but ‘for learning’.”

I think we need to ignite the fires in the next group who is willing but a little bit nervous about it...
Challenges

I have felt that through these PD days, I have been forced to question all of my teaching practices and if there is real value in what I am doing in the classroom. I leave the PD sessions feeling completely overwhelmed AND motivated to improve on my teaching practices.

For the teachers involved in the BC AfL project, the structure of the project enabled them to meet the challenges of implementing a new professional learning model, Instructional rounds, learning a new concept, assessment for learning, and initially getting past their worries about the amount of time outside of their classrooms to participate in this project. Further, the value and benefits of participating in the BC AfL project overshadowed and often reduced to a minimum, the thoughts and worries of these challenges. The teachers did mention, almost unanimously, the challenge of time. However, they were not just demanding the need for more time. Rather, they were asking for time for specific purposes related to the project. For example, time was needed for more planning time with other teachers collaborating in the project. This time was needed for deeper conversations about the tasks and the associated assessment for learning strategies. The teachers wanted to understand the task, the learning goals, and the success criteria better so that they could better observe and appreciate and learn about the assessment for learning they were observing. Another example was time to learn about AfL. The teachers wanted more time to read the literature, explore the connections of the literature and theory into practical classroom-based planning. Conversations with colleagues, “opportunities...to sink your teeth in and...allow you to step back and focus on yourself, you’re focusing on yourself and that’s going to translate into the classroom.”

Teachers also wanted more time to implement the curriculum. However, this was not about ‘covering the curriculum’ but rather exploring the curriculum and finding a good set of concepts that could be used as the context for practicing assessment for learning in their classroom. It was a critical appraisal of curriculum and their appreciation of the level of their knowledge about AfL. ‘Implementing the curriculum’ was about finding a balance between academic, social, and behavioural needs in the classroom environment, while also making AfL a part of their classroom practice. This sense of time was further echoed in the teachers' emphasis of the challenge of time to give feedback to students, and for students to use feedback. They wanted to give meaningful feedback, and to efficiently give feedback. Helping students take ownership for AfL in the classroom requires students to be much more involved, and this takes time to negotiate the teaching practices commonly found in classrooms to learning practices associated with assessment for learning.
Moving Forward

“Ahhh, momentum. I believe this has been the hardest thing to maintain...
When everyone is on board it is much easier to keep focused.”

Teachers acknowledged the benefits of AfL and the professional development model of the central PD days and the instructional rounds days. Teachers indicated they wanted additional opportunities to embed AfL practices into their teaching and to observe colleagues’ integration of AfL. Teachers suggested an increase in the size of the community of learners, including more teachers in the project. As one teacher summarized, “Sometimes I think we need to find a new approach to reach teachers in this time-starved environment. Just like host-classrooms, the visual and “real” experience creates more thought and conversation. Just like the kids!”
The Principals’ Perspectives

“It has changed the way I operate as a principal.”

The principals we spoke with universally articulated the success of the BC AfL project in terms of its impact on their leadership, teachers’ practices, and students’ learning. They spoke about their roles in the BC AfL project and the factors that supported the implementation and spread of AfL in their schools. Principals described changes in their schools’ learning cultures as well as in the learning culture across the board. They observed teachers and administrators engaging in rich conversations focused on AfL practices grounded in evidence of student learning. As one principal stated, “This is the way I’ve always wanted to professionally learn. [This project has] provided me the vehicle and the means to be able to do it in the way that I wanted to do it and the way I wanted to support my staff in doing it.” Perhaps most importantly, principals shared evidence of AfL practices in classrooms and the impact of these practices on students’ learning and engagement.

What does Success Look Like?

Principals described the success of the BC AfL in various ways. Most commonly, they spoke about changing cultures in their schools, with classroom doors opening and rich conversations occurring among teachers, focused on AfL practices and grounded in students’ learning. “Teachers are beginning to share with teachers, getting the time to share with teachers, getting the time to have very specific observations of a teacher working in their classroom with their kids.” Conversations among teachers illustrated greater depth of thinking and increased self-reflection among teachers. Teachers were engaged in the professional learning process and this was positively impacting the teaching and learning in classrooms. Conversations among teachers were also happening between teachers across different schools, outside of designated instructional rounds time. Hence the cultural shifts observed in the schools may also be spreading, contributing to a learning culture across the board, with teachers working together to understand and implement AfL practices in their classrooms and schools.

When principals visited their teachers’ classrooms, they were engaging in more purposeful observations, looking for specific evidence that AfL practices had been embedded in the learning environment. Importantly, the teachers involved in the BC AfL appeared to be comfortable with these types of observations. Principals reported hearing evidence of AfL in the language of teachers and students during classroom activities. Principals are spoke about teachers and students using learning goals, success criteria, questioning, and feedback to support teaching and learning. In many classrooms, AfL was gaining traction as a regular classroom activity. “I think they [students] feel bereft if it wasn’t there. It’s part of how they think.”
Principal principals were also increasingly using their involvement in the BCAfL to monitor and revise their School Improvement Plans (SIP’s). Principals reported that they were approaching their SIP’s from an AfL stance and applying AfL strategies to refine their SIP implementation efforts. Describing his experience with the BCAfL project, one principal explained, “What it has done, it has created not only a lens but also a filter for me in all of my interactions that I have with my staff.”

What Supports this Success?

Principals described several factors that contributed to the positive outcomes of the BCAfL project. In particular, principals indicated that teacher readiness supports success; teachers with prior experience with AfL practices and instructional rounds more readily engaged in and benefited from the BCAfL project. These individuals displayed greater openness to learning and a willingness to take risks in their professional learning and practice, both critical to the success of this project. One principal explained, “You have to be in a mindset where you’re willing to learn, and you’re willing to look at everything you’ve done before. And [involvement in the BCAfL project] just skew[s] it. It’s like a huge paradigm shift.”

Within the BCAfL project, principals identified two critical administrative roles that supported the project. First, principals were co-learners with teachers, focused on learning collectively around AfL practices in the context of students’ needs. Principals articulated the importance of adopting an “open to learning” stance themselves and a willingness to engage in learning with their teachers. “The clarity comes when you’re sitting there with your staff and you’re talking with them about what you’ve seen in their classrooms and what others have seen.” Principals also stated that they were transparent with teachers about their own personal learning goals, further demonstrating an open to learning stance. Principals noted that participating in instructional rounds with their teachers outside of their home school was a valuable opportunity to engage in deep discussion about AfL practices and students’ learning in a non-evaluative setting. “Taking it outside of our school made it less evaluative and less about me and this building and the teachers I work with.”

Second, these principals were facilitators of professional learning within their schools. In this role, the BCAfL project helped principals focus formal in-school professional learning sessions with teachers on AfL practices. Informal communications with teachers also centered on AfL practices contributed to a beginning shift in school culture towards a common AfL goal. Moreover, principals reported that both formal and informal communications with teachers became increasingly data-based and grounded in evidence of student learning as a result of the BCAfL project. “Every conversation I have with teachers about a struggling student starts with—So what does your data say?” This emphasis on
evidence has allowed principals to provide teachers with specific, descriptive feedback about teaching and learning in relation to AflL practices.

In addition to the principal, teacher leaders have supported the implementation and spread of BCAflL learning at the school level. Principals identified that teachers in specific support roles (e.g., SWST?) have worked with teachers involved in the BCAflL to help teachers better embed AflL practices in the classroom. In other cases, enthusiastic teachers have spread learning from the BCAflL project to teachers not directly involved, helping them to develop greater understandings of AflL practices. “It can’t help but not happen when you have people who are engaged and excited and enthused.”

Lastly, principals stated that the focus on AflL across all board professional learning initiatives has further supported the learning and implementation of BCAflL project strategies in classrooms and schools. One principal expressed the benefit that “everyone can focus on AflL and grow in that direction.” The Principal Rounds were one means to provide an important opportunity to receive feedback from other administrators regarding their School Improvement Plans and specifically, the extent to which AflL practices have been embedded in their schools. The administrative role can be isolating, and Principal Rounds can provide a unique opportunity for principals to provide each other with support and feedback. These Principal Rounds were also considered to be a valuable opportunity for principals new to their role to learn from more experienced peers.

The Challenges of Implementation and Leadership

“Time is definitely a concern.”

While acknowledging the positive outcomes of the BCAflL project, principals reported barriers to the implementation and spread of AflL in their schools. Perhaps not surprisingly, time was mentioned as a significant challenge. Principals spoke about time in two ways. First, they acknowledged that it takes time to shift school culture around AflL. Principals explained that teachers need to be ready to let go, take risks, and allow students to drive the learning. “We have to get people to believe, and that’s a big part of it.” Furthermore, barriers within schools must be broken down and teachers need to be willing to visit each other’s classrooms as co-learners around AflL practices. Even for teachers actively engaged in instructional rounds through the BCAflL project, principals identified that learning within the program is cyclical and iterative, with deeper learning occurring after each cycle. Ultimately, developing a deep understanding of AflL and embedding it in classrooms takes time. Similarly, principals identified that it will take time to see the impact of Principal Rounds on schools, as this is a newer, less-established initiative. Regarding Principal Rounds, one principal stated, “We’re still a few years off from seeing any real change.”
Second, principals explained that managing time during the school day was a challenge associated with the BCAfL project. In order to participate in instructional rounds, teachers must take time out of their own classrooms. In addition, principals indicated that some teachers now expected release time to engage in BCAfL learning outside of the scheduled time built into the project. “I think we’ve created a culture where for teachers to do anything they have to be released. I think that’s a barrier for us moving forward.” This potentially makes informal conversations and learning among teachers a challenge outside of designated instructional rounds days. Even for teachers and principals highly engaged in the program and actively seeking opportunities to co-learn and co-teach with colleagues in their home school, finding time in the school day for these activities was challenging.

Spread was another challenge frequently identified by principals. Principals articulated the benefits of the BCAfL project for the participating teachers and wanted to spread these positive outcomes to all teachers in their schools. As one principal explained, “What we’ve got now is a gap between the rest of the staff and them {teachers in the BCAfL}.” Some teachers not involved in the project were thought to be showing an increased interest in incorporating AfL practices in their classrooms and were talking about having opportunities to participate in instructional rounds. Moving forward, principals were looking for strategies to involve more of their teachers in the learning of the BCAfL project and the instructional rounds method of professional learning.

The efforts needed to engage teachers in open conversations about AfL practices and students’ learning was a challenge for some principals. “As an instructional leader in the building, it’s really hard to remove that evaluative piece and the teachers have to be really quite confident to be able to have those conversations with you or to have that trusting relationship so they don’t think that I’m evaluating them every time they come to me.” These trusting relationships with teachers was identified as a critical condition that would enable principals to provide teachers with feedback and support around classroom level AfL practices. Principals specified the importance of providing teachers with descriptive feedback that allowed teachers to deepen their thinking about AfL and refine implementation of AfL strategies with students.

Finally, principals cited the challenge of collecting evidence on the impact of the BCAfL project on teaching, learning, and school culture. “I’m struggling with the one question of what evidence will I collect and how will I collect it? Because I’m not sure.” Again, the Principal Rounds could provide a potential opportunity to support administrators in the methods to collect quality evidence of the impact of the project in their respective schools.
Planning for the Future

“I think the improvement is taking it to the individual school level.”

Principal Rounds provided a venue for principals to explore various options for school implementation of BC AFL learning with principal colleagues. The impact of the BC AFL program on principals’ learning, as well as the learning of teachers and students in their schools, drives principals’ commitments to spreading AFL in their respective schools.

“Principal Rounds is where I’m giving 100% of my time. I think the value in participating and sharing in ah-ha moments is so powerful.”
School Board Leaders’ Perspectives

The school board leaders—Jennifer McIlmoyle-Parsons, Instructional Leadership Consultant: Assessment & Evaluation, and Jenifer Leclerc, Superintendent—were interviewed following a year of implementation of the BCAfL project. The intents of these interviews were to gain their systemic perspectives on program administration, effectiveness, and alignment with board-level directives. Both school board leaders described KPRDSB’s commitment to building teachers’ capacity in AfL as district-wide initiative in which the BC AfL project was the primary means of “directing the learning focus and providing a model for our teachers.”

In describing their experiences with the BC AfL project, school board leaders shared their perspectives in relation to: (a) the richness of AfL as an pedagogical approach; (b) their efforts to adapt the instructional rounds model to fit their specific learning needs; and (c) systemic adoption of AfL. Within each of these themes, school board leaders identified strengths of the BC AfL project as well as challenges and next steps for program development.

It’s Deeper than Practices

Both of the school board leaders asserted to value of AfL as a pedagogical approach with the potential to change classroom culture. “The focus is on student learning, and helping students become better learners.” The school board was committed primarily to developing teachers’ use of learning goals and success criteria as a basis for directing students’ learning. “Learning goals and success criteria have been a priority for three years now, and while we may have been doing them and complying with a visual presence in classrooms across the board, the BC AfL project has pushed the learning deeper.” There was recognition that through sustained attention towards learning goals and success criteria as part of the BC AfL project, teachers were gaining a “deep understanding and application of how they [learning goals and success criteria] impact AfL and student learning in general.” To this end, the school district leaders noted that teachers were generating an understanding that moved beyond the adoption of specific strategies to a deeper understanding of what connects those practices for powerful teaching and learning.

It’s important to take them in finite quantities, these pieces of the assessment for learning framework, to scrutinize them and see them for all their different aspects, but then to take a step back and really look at them in terms of how they all fit together to support student learning in a classroom.

Throughout their interviews, both of the district leaders recognized the linkage between specific AfL strategies and the desire to use them in support of students’ learning. They clearly articulated the linkage as one that moved instruction into meaningful feedback into students’ learning.
Adapting the Process

The school district leaders were committed to leveraging the instructional rounds approach for teachers’ and principals’ learning. Having attended a learning session at Harvard University, the school district leaders understood the original design and delivery of instructional rounds. They were also aware of some of the stages of the process that they could adapt in order to better serve the learning needs of teachers and principals in their board:

At the end of the day, I remember having a conversation with one group who had some very strong concerns about instructional rounds at their school. They hadn’t been with us at Harvard. They were a new group, one of many new groups over the process. But they made us sit back and really look at why we were doing what we were doing, and what the goal was. I remember saying, ‘it’s critical to me that these teachers believe that we’re listening and can be responsive.’ We had that local opportunity to make a transition to respond to their needs, and it was receive with a great deal of positive feedback. It impacted them greatly.

Of the adaptations made to the process, one was the shift in the final prediction task to become a guiding question, personal to each observer, that directed their classroom observation and that centered their reflection at the end of an instructional rounds session. This shift seemed to “provide a greater focus on learning that was personal for each teacher.” In addition, reframing the prediction task to a personally compelling question provided greater benefits to the observations, enabling teachers to take away something that was relevant to their own AfL learning and practice.

One of the instructional rounds processes the leaders found helpful was maintaining the descriptive focus of feedback after observations. While some teachers reported a desire to have “direct feedback” on the effectiveness of their practice, the school district leaders made a concerted effort to encourage descriptive rather than evaluative feedback that was based on the focus of observation. However, as a means to address some teachers’ interests in receiving “direct feedback”, the school district leaders invited the host teacher to share an aspect of their practice that “they were curious about” before the observation. By doing this, it opened the door for observing teachers to provide feedback on that aspect of the host teachers’ practices. Through this adaptation, the instructional rounds process as practiced in KPRDSB enabled both its original intention to provide descriptive feedback as well as direct feedback on aspects of teaching practice that the host wanted feedback on. “In this way, we’re keeping in the descriptive mode, but also providing explicit feedback on what the person indicated they were curious about.”

Having the opportunity and flexibility to adapt the instructional rounds protocol in various ways gave ownership over the process of learning and better-reflected tenets of AfL and co-learning models of professional development.
Next Steps: Systemic Adoption

“We’ve seen benefits to the schools we’ve already invested in and our interest is to scaffold their support and actually grow it out of the school."

Both school board leaders identified the next goal for their board was to increase the number of teachers learning about AfL. Hence systemic adoption of AfL was viewed as the primary next step for KPF. However, the two leaders identified several challenges to achieving this goal, including the resource intensive nature of instructional rounds, instructional expertise in AfL by school principals and other district staff, balancing centralized learning days with instructional rounds days, and potential resistance to changing pedagogical practices. “So, we’re interested in looking into whether or not we can bring along people who have not been part of rounds yet from each of their staffs, introduce new voices” Given the value and benefit of the instructional rounds project, both school board leaders indicated their interest in sustaining commitment to instructional rounds and expanding the program to new teachers and principals.

The school district leaders suggested that at the school level, teachers who were not part of the project were beginning to ask questions about it and that there was curiosity generating about instructional rounds and about AfL. Both district leaders were excited to leverage this curiosity by inviting, when possible, teachers to future centralize learning days or instructional rounds opportunities in their schools. “Even informally, inviting teachers to an IR day or encouraging conversations about AfL will support more teachers’ interests and learning.” Building opportunities for continued adoption of AfL appears to remain a primary area of growth and development.

One area that district leaders recognized as an area that could be better leveraged was school principals’ learning and their role as instructional leaders and co-learners in AfL. There was recognition that given the nature of the first year of program implementation, principals were still grappling at understanding how they might use AfL to support teacher learning. “I like to think we can find ways to use instructional rounds as adult learners in the role of instructional leader. I think it can be as much about the principal as a learner of their own craft, starting as simple as the school improvement plan, and having the opportunities to work with colleagues, perhaps using rounds approach to moderate and to monitor a school improvement plan... We need to align the infrastructure with the current role of instructional leader.” As a result, the leaders acknowledged the need for continued efforts need to support principals in both their developing understanding of AfL (i.e., as learners) and as instructional leaders who use AfL in their existing roles and responsibilities. The mapping of an AfL approach onto the role of the school principal requires further attention.
Across the data from the two school district leaders there was clear enthusiasm to continue to spread AfL as a pedagogical approach to support teachers’ and students’ learning. The school district leaders raised several areas for their continued commitments to this goal, including:

- Engaging additional “curious” teachers in learning about AfL through a variety of professional learning models including instructional rounds and centralized professional learning days

- Continuing to refine the instructional rounds protocol so that it responds to local learning needs and is reflective of the type of feedback and learning structures teachers require to advance their AfL conception and practice. These adaptations may be different for teachers at various stages of AfL adoption.

- Articulating the linkage between instructional leadership and school principal roles with an AfL approach

So that’s my big question, how do we take this learning opportunity and transfer it to a larger scale? I think the answer for me is we go slowly.
Section 5: Post-Survey Results

Teacher Survey

The following data were gathered through a survey of teachers at the end of the BC AfL project. These results informed our findings presented in Section 4 of this report. In total, 15 teachers completed the survey with 14 teachers having at least 5 years of teaching experience. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation values) are presented for quantitative survey items. Direct text responses are presented for open-ended survey items.

Data from this survey indicate that:

- Teachers have generally observed greater learning benefits to students working at a Level 3 or 4 compared to students working at a Level 1 or 2 since implementing AfL strategies throughout their teaching.
- Teachers generally see greater benefits to AfL integration in Mathematics and Language Arts than the Arts and Physical Education.
- Amongst the various strategies and practices associated with AfL, these teachers report higher confidence in understanding, using, and constructing learning goals and success criteria in their classrooms.
- Teachers would prefer more professional learning days but also highly value the instructional rounds days.

### Demographic Information (i.e., Who completed the survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>15 teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Range of Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Range</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Years</td>
<td>1 Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 Years</td>
<td>8 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Years</td>
<td>4 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-30 Years</td>
<td>2 Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Current Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>0 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior/Intermediate Level</td>
<td>8 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Level</td>
<td>6 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Previous AfL Training

- The majority of teachers indicated ‘no’ previous training in AfL. Two teachers mentioned in-school professional development or workshops on “Growing Success”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about BCAfL Program and AfL Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Think of your students who were achieving at a <strong>level 3 or 4</strong> before you started emphasizing AfL practices. On a 7-point scale indicate whether or not you have observed a change in the following aspects of their learning since emphasizing Assessment for Learning in your classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. quality of student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. level of student achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. student motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. students' ability to self-regulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. students' ability to monitor their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. student collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. quality of student questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. quality of student answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. quality of peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. accuracy of self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. students' ability to identify learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. students' ability to identify success criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Think of your students who were achieving at a <strong>level 1 or 2</strong> before you started emphasizing AfL practices. On a 7-point scale indicate whether or not you have observed a change in the following aspects of their learning since emphasizing Assessment for Learning in your classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. quality of student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. level of student achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. student motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. students' ability to self-regulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. students' ability to monitor their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. student collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. quality of student questions</td>
</tr>
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<td>h. quality of student answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. quality of peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. accuracy of self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. students' ability to identify learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. students' ability to identify success criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. On a 7-point scale indicate the extent to which Assessment for Learning supports student learning and achievement in the following subject areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language arts / English</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies / Geography &amp; History</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. On a 7-point scale indicate your confidence in the following Assessment for Learning principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the difference between learning goals and success criteria.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the relationship between learning goals &amp; success criteria.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I develop a shared understanding with students about learning goals and success criteria.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I co-create learning goals and success criteria with my students.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create a classroom environment where students have ownership of their own learning.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help my students to become resources for their own learning.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help my students to be resources for their peers' learning.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. On a 7-point scale indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I found the 4 professional development days beneficial to my learning.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer fewer professional development days.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer additional professional development days.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the Instructional Rounds days beneficial to my learning.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer fewer Instructional Rounds days.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer additional Instructional Rounds days.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. What would make the professional development days more effective?

a. I'm at a loss as to how to answer this. I find all the days together very fulfilling, thought provoking, and they are invariably stretch my thinking. I love how afterwards, we receive emails that recap the day for us and also keep us accountable for what plans we have for the future.

b. Other guest speakers....Sandra Herbst. Time spent with Division-like teachers to share, ask questions, ponder. Seeing clips of other classes that are fully into A4L...at our grade levels.

c. More discussion amongst the group about great strategies and things they are doing in their own classrooms. It would be great if there were more teachers who taught my grade to talk with.

d. Time with grade-like teachers to focus on what works and what is challenging with A4L practices.

e. More concrete ideas teachers can take back to class and apply.

f. More opportunity for practical classroom-based planning/discussing

g. Include more time for teachers to talk and share strategies that work within the classroom setting.

h. A set goal to achieve by the end of the day, I enjoy the professional planning with colleagues but find I am more productive when I have a set goal.

i. Being able to sit with grade-like teachers to discuss successes in implementing assessment for learning practices within the lower primary grades.

j. I'm a visual learner so more images/etc. would be helpful. Also, this may sound silly but my days consist of conversation with 6 year olds with the occasional adult voice thrown in there. While it is great to "talk the professional talk" we are not immersed in it day to day in the classroom and there is a lag time in our listening/speaking as we search our mental "files" for terminology references if that makes sense. Keeping this in mind during sessions and perhaps always providing a reference source for our "discussions" would be helpful - even if just to review before the gatherings. I found the language difficult to access quickly and confidently when having to fill out personal goal pages and often felt as if I was not fully understanding what was being asked (even if I was bang on).

k. This is such a difficult question to answer. I have felt that through these PD days, I have been forced to question all of my teaching practices and if there is real value in what I am doing in the classroom. I leave the PD sessions feeling completely overwhelmed and motivated to improve on my teaching practices. I don't think that I would change a thing. I really like that I have the opportunity to talk to people in the same division and other divisions. I believe that it's really important to understand what's being taught before and after your grade to get a better idea of the "whole" picture when it comes to a student's education.
11. What would make the Instructional Rounds days more effective?
   a. The reason I chose #4 in the questions surrounding fewer PD days or instructional rounds is because I wasn't expecting to have so many more days in the new year. When I look at the schedule, my initial thought is that there are a lot (possibly too many) but I'm fairly certain that as they take place I will be grateful for the amount of release time given.
   b. Expanding the classrooms to schools out of our DSB. Longer times spent in each classroom.....20 min just gives a glimpse and observation times are cut up...i.e. we see only part of a lesson, then walk in part way through another. Grade alike observations (I think we are starting this in the new year). Expanding the A4L group to others in our schools...I think we are starting this in the new year as well. Setting up rounds within the school or family of schools as professional learning scenarios.
   c. I think the instructional rounds are great. It would maybe be more beneficial to have more time beforehand to talk about the task (i.e. teachings leading up to the day, next steps, etc...).
   d. Instructional rounds were quite effective. Would not change anything about these days.
   e. Less worry about teacher feelings and more directed feedback.
   f. Smaller groups in classes (less than 6)
   g. When I am the host teacher - I really miss being the observer and I especially miss observing the teachers in my building. Ultimately those people are the ones I see and work with most often/closely and I miss not being able to see their rooms in action. I don't know if that can be improved on or made more effective or not.
   h. Provide time to explore research connected with assessment theories and explore concrete strategies to use in the classroom.
   i. I find them very effective, but perhaps keeping discussion on task could help enhance its effectiveness.
   j. I think they are great already!
   k. They were great - really like the format and discussion after. I wonder if Rounds based on teaching divisions would be even more effective - perhaps as participant numbers increase this can be a possibility. I can see specific challenges exist at various ages and stages of teaching which may be better addressed in more homogenous groupings.
   l. I don't find these days as valuable as the PD days. I do think that it's important to see A4L implemented in the classroom, I just think that it would be more valuable for me to see more of my grade or similar grades. That being said, I believe that having the whole group observing the same lessons give us the opportunity to jump into some discussions that would not have happened if we were unable to this common ground.
12. Since the beginning of this project, how has teaching and learning changed in your classroom?

a. There are no surprises for students in what is expected in any assignment. Students have a clear understanding of how to achieve each learning goal. They are more collaborative in peer assessment. I am more collaborative with them in determining success criteria around a learning goal. My descriptive feedback is specifically linked to the success criteria and tells students where they have been effective and where they need to go next. Students are not "mark-driven" and do not expect to see a level on every piece of work; instead, they respond to the feedback to improve their learning.

b. I'm much more purposeful with my goals. My kids are immersed in owning their learning. They know their class goals and personal goals. They are becoming more collaborative and giving feedback. I’m feeling more centered as a teacher, I'm enjoying letting go and giving the reigns to the kids. Reporting to parents is easier... they are on board and love to hear their kids talk about feedback, goals and criteria. I use our blog to share some A4L concepts. I feel I have a better handle on differentiating for my kids. It doesn't make my job easier, it takes extra time...or maybe just time spent in a different way, but it is totally worth it.

c. Wow. I have really changed how I approach learning goals, success criteria and feedback. I've also really been able to see a difference in the students taking responsibility for improving their own work. They are using examplars, success criteria and feedback much more frequently and accurately.

d. My teaching has changed toward a student-centered learning environment with the co-creation of learning goals and success criteria. I ensure I provide ample time for peer, self and teacher feedback. Time is provided at the end of a lesson/unit for students to reflect on their learning and attaching this knowledge to where they are in terms of overall goals.

e. We have incorporated a lot of feedback practices and it has helped everyone understand what direction we need to head towards academically.

f. A4L practices have become far richer, more meaningful, and developed as tools for learning in my classroom. Prior to the project, learning goals and success criteria were things I listed because I thought I had to; now, I am using them along with descriptive feedback as tools to develop a co-constructed understanding of what and how my students are learning.

g. I have grown significantly in my learning around student involvement in the creation of learning goals and success criteria. Students are more aware of what they are learning and why, and have started to take more ownership over their work and how they can improve.

h. This is challenging to answer as we have been involved in the project for a lengthy time and there has been a grade change for me as well. I think I am more intentional in sharing with students and parents the big ideas, the big learning goals and the why of learning specific tasks. I am trying to use learning goals and success criteria in more ways and for different tasks and subject areas then I initially was. However, it requires a lot of work, a lot of planning and a lot of thinking and I find that for now doing more than one or two really deep learning goal/success criteria/feedback round at a time is challenging.
i. I have become a much more reflective educator and I have broadened my understanding of the assessment for learning process, and the importance of continually refining my techniques.

j. I find I do more small group and individual work with students rather than whole group lessons. I have found students more independent when working which therefore affords me the opportunity for more small group work.

k. I begin each lesson by talking about our learning goal and our success criteria ties in with our goal. I've created more long-term learning goals and success criteria that can be built upon throughout the school year. I've been providing my students with meaningful feedback more consistently and am checking in on them to see if they are using it.

l. LOL! On one hand I feel like I know EXACTLY what I need to be doing and on the other hand I've never felt more SELF-CRITICAL of how I'm doing it! I'm sure I was a good candidate for this because I am a life-long learner but I think I need longer periods of time to STEP-AWAY and just PRACTICE what I'm learning in a timeframe that better matches my littlest learners. Again, I'm finding it challenging this year anyway because of the gap in my students learning readiness and consequently, I feel frustrated that my own yearning to implement ideas etc. is somewhat hampered. On the upside, my 2's are definitely using the language of feedback and criteria much more readily even though my own consistency seems to be erratic sometimes as I try to keep my younger learners engaged in learning. I do however, feel confident in my understanding of the connection between clear goals, co-created criteria and timely feedback to developing independence and responsibility for learning by the students' themselves.

m. Everything that I do is more thought out. When I am planning for a lesson and am thinking about possible questions that students might ask and how I can question students to get them to think deeper. I also am a lot more flexible in my teaching and plans. I am not in as much of a rush to get things done, as much as I am for making sure that my students are getting what they want and need out of a unit. I am finding that I can't plan more than a day in advance because my plans change so much based on my students needs.

13. How has this project promoted assessment leadership in your school?

a. This is a tricky one, in my opinion. We have a number of very strong teachers who are involved in this project and who are available for assessment leadership in the school. But this small group is conscious of the advantages we have had in being a part of this project and that not all teachers have had the same background learning. So we are taking small steps-- one-on-one conversations with other teachers as they ask; informal discussions around the lunch table or in the hall in passing. The leadership certainly comes from the principal but, for some staff, that is seen as just "another thing" that is coming from administration.

b. The teachers involved in this project have become leaders in the school; however they were respected as such before, but now they are anchored in assessment knowledge. Lots of teachers are beginning to take notice of the ideas we are playing with and asking questions. The lead teachers are catalysts, resources, examples in discussions at Division Meetings, PLCs, SIT teams.
c. We are just in the beginning stages of promoting this project school-wide.
d. I feel confident to speak with teachers who are not part of A4L to encourage the use of A4L practices throughout teaching. Communicating with other teachers who are involved in the A4L initiative further enhances my teaching and understanding of assessment.
e. We are trying to get other students on board with the practices we have learned. The leaders are the team members of the A4L group.
f. Developed a core team of collaborative partners. Leadership opportunities in their infancy.
g. Teachers and principal have all demonstrated leadership by modeling the use of assessment for learning principles, engaging in conversation with teacher not involved in the process yet, and opening their classrooms to allow others to observe to share ideas with each other.
h. There is lots of talk amongst the teachers who are involved in the project and lots of sharing of ideas, successes, failures, etc. Across divisions and grades - I think it is always neat that we can share and learn with and from teachers who may not be our grade alike partners. I think there are questions from other teachers wondering what our project is all about and how they can learn from us, but there is also a big knowledge/understanding gap that we are trying to close between those that have been involved and immersed and those who have not.
i. This process has given my colleagues and I a foundation with which to discuss assessment with our colleagues. Since we now have a clearer picture of how assessment can work, we have been able to share our learning with others during professional development days. Additionally, it has also enabled me to push my own thinking and the thinking of others.
j. Our school has initiated an assessment leader within each grade hub. This individual is looked upon for assistance or questions by others, and helps facilitate grade and division partners comfort level with AfL.
k. Teachers from the assessment for learning group have been sharing their learning with their division partners. We are learning from each other by visiting classrooms, co-planning and sharing ideas.
l. Mmmm...I'm not entirely sure that at this point, we have "leaders" per se... maybe because time and opportunity to share etc. is just not possible on a consistent basis in the midst of regular teaching duties, which every year increase. I have discussed it informally to anyone who happens to ask but at this point, few formal discussions have developed. We have had 1 junior and 2 primary teachers with 1 principal participate.
m. Our principal has begun to do AfL sessions in divisions during our staff meetings and on PA days. I think for the teachers participating in AfL, we are offering our insights from this PD. I believe that it will take time for teachers to understand how powerful AfL can be in student learning and success.
14. How has this professional development project promoted the culture of assessment in your school?

a. I feel like it has been extremely beneficial to the people involved and those teachers are certainly promoting the culture of assessment. There are some other staff who are open to new learning and are beginning to use it as well. I have benefited greatly from having on-the-fly chats with other staff involved in the project about A4L challenges that come up. I love how we are all pushing each other to become better teachers.
b. Learning Goals and success criteria are common place now, however, the depth of knowledge, use, purposefulness is still quite varied. There is a feeling that the rich get richer with this project. Thus it needs to be opened up more or implemented at the school level (Instructional Rounds). There is more common language around assessment.
c. Again, it is a slow process, but I can see more and more teachers coming on-board to develop a deeper understanding of the A4L practices.
d. A positive culture has been created in the school leading to more questioning of individual practices. Less hesitation when sharing with a colleague and more openness in terms of sharing with each other with the hope of become a more effective educator.
e. We are able to spread the word that AfL does not have to be an overwhelming endeavour.
f. Early stages.
g. It's helped start the path to a more collaborative culture with shared language and high expectations.
h. Honestly, I don't know!
i. With the support of our principal, it has opened doors and promoted a dialogue with our colleagues. We have learned to rethink what appropriate assessment is and how we can support are students by providing rich tasks and meaningful feedback.
j. The culture of assessment in our school has shifted from evaluative to formative. Where you find staff discussing assessment on a weekly basis and as check in rather then a product of work.
k. The realization that assessment isn't just 'of learning', but 'for learning'. That the creation of LG's, SC and providing FB are key to the achievement of students.
l. I am relatively new to the school and from what it appears, as a school, they were a little further ahead in their A4L understanding than I was when I arrived. I think there is a curiosity around what we have been doing however, that has not materialized into any new conversation that I am aware of. Perhaps now that the team has been increased, a more obvious shift in the culture will be noticed.
m. Our school is quite large, so I think amongst the A4L group we are noticing a gap between what is going on in our classrooms versus some of the others. Because of the size though, I'm not too sure this movement has become "infectious" to the other teachers. I'm wondering if possibly after a year or so of teachers getting more independent students we might start seeing some interest/curiosity from other teachers.
15. Think about your continued learning in Assessment for Learning. Describe structures and resources that would help you and your school maintain momentum in learning about Assessment for Learning.

a. I have the added bonus of team teaching with a partner who is also involved in the A4L. This is both a benefit for us as well as for our students. Having the time to discuss A4L issues is wonderful and it is because we share a class that we can do that so readily. Having scheduled time to meet with others would be beneficial as well. We have only done it once after school and it was an amazing time of sharing and open discussion (without the principal present). Having to answer to our project leader has really helped in keeping me on track but I'm not sure that would work after the project is finished if that role was taken over by the principal...

b. Time, Time, time....to watch, talk, share, practice. Instructional rounds within the school. Deep chats about learning goals, criteria, feedback with a facilitator that pushes our thinking, not just by presenting information. Set up inquiry, questions boards around assessment in the school. Maybe even a year-long focus on Goal setting, another year on Criteria, and another on feedback. These are heavy concepts with many layers and it takes time to figure out, watch, investigate, implement....along with everything else that we need to do. Some things need to be 'let go' in order to focus on this wonderfully high yield structure for learning. Letting people know to hone in on one subject area to immerse A4L into.

c. I think that we need time to talk to our colleagues. We also need to have colleagues who are willing to participate.

d. Further time with grade alike teachers. Specific examples of how teachers are adopting assessment practices into their classrooms. Examples of student responses and how they would like to see assessment change to meet their needs while still meeting the curriculum requirements.

e. Continued use of instructional rounds and PD opportunities.

f. I really liked the books that we got from Sandra Herbst - those are short, easy to read and easy to follow resources and I really think they would be valuable for other colleagues in the school to have access to. I also think that somehow incorporating instructional rounds on a school level could also be valuable.

g. I would love to see concrete strategies linked to the theory we have discussed in order to see how the learning can be implemented in a manageable way. For many teachers, the process of transforming theory into practice can be quite difficult and may be a barrier to convincing others to join in the process. If they are shown that it can be managed and provided with tools to do so, I feel they would be far more eager to participate.

h. Our school has just added 2 more staff members to the project, which I think will help continue the momentum of A4L in our school. I would like to see structures where staff can do something similar to rounds with colleagues within the school and at other schools to continue the rich professional discussion around A4L. I think this is important, as it seems difficult to explain or discuss with colleagues who have not experienced the process.

i. Implementing observational rounds would be very beneficial, as would time to co-plan and discuss ideas/strategies.
j. I think we have to be careful to allow teachers to move forward at their own pace and in stages that are appropriate to where they are beginning, but that also allow for the changes in classroom dynamics that happen from year to year. I have also said that a picture is worth a thousand words - photos collected of classrooms that show real-life-real-time bulletin boards showing goals, criteria, anchors, feedback approaches etc. can be just as educational, engaging and inspiring as hours of talking. Sometimes I think we need to find a new approach to reach teachers in this time-starved environment. Just like host-classrooms, the visual and "real" experience creates more thought and conversation. Just like the kids!

k. Ahhh momentum. I believe that this has been the hardest thing to maintain. I believe that having more teachers trained in A4L at the school is what would help keep teachers in check. When everyone is on board it is much easier to keep focused.
Section 6: Key Findings and Recommendations

Our evaluation of the Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning Professional Learning (BCAfL) project indicates the project has been a valuable process to support teachers’ and school administrators’ professional learning in the KPRDSBDSB. The set of centralized professional learning days, and instructional rounds within the schools have had a positive impact on teachers and their instructional practices. Principals also benefitted from their engagement in the BCAfL. Both the teachers and the principals involved in the BCAfL reported positive impacts on developing a learning culture in their classrooms and in their schools. While we have little direct evidence of positive impacts for students, teachers and principals reported that students were more engaged in their learning and that AfL practices were contributing to that increased engagement. The teachers and administrators we spoke to continually spoke of a developing understanding of how formative assessment practices supported professional and students’ learning. Our own observations of the instructional rounds and classroom activities supported this conclusion. Teachers and students were able to articulate and demonstrate, with differing degrees of proficiency, important aspects of formative assessment. Teachers developed and shared success criteria with students. To a lesser extent students used peer- and self-assessment to support their learning.

While our overall findings for this program provide support for its continued support and use, our evaluation has also identified important findings that will likely help to improve the BCAfL project as it moves forward in KPRDSBDSB. The key findings described below are intended to support the ongoing implementation of the BCAfL project.

Key Findings

1. **Instructional rounds increases AfL knowledge, skills, and practices.**

   Throughout our interviews and observations, we heard administrators, teachers and students use the language of the Assessment for Learning (AfL). In some classes and schools, this language appeared to be a natural part of the instruction. In others, the language was emerging. Similarly, we observed students engaged in sound AfL practices, especially those related to developing success criteria, and, to a lesser extent, peer-assessment and self-assessment. Once again, we observed instances in which the students appeared to be very comfortable with both the language and practices of AfL. Combined, our findings suggest a growing sophistication with AfL for those teachers involved in the instructional rounds process that is central to the BCAfL project.

2. **Teachers with varying AfL experiences responded differently to instructional rounds as a model for professional learning.**

   As noted above, the BCAfL has been a successful addition to the set of initiatives occurring in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB). Nonetheless,
we found that the instructional rounds process was not an equally comfortable process for teachers. Teachers and administrators who already had a developing or foundational knowledge of AfL were more willing to explore their AfL practices. Educators who were less comfortable with AfL appreciated the presence of these more conversant educators. Previous AfL experience may help teachers to be more comfortable with having observers in their classroom and also enable these teachers to take greater “risks” to expand the AfL practices in their classroom. Teachers with less exposure to AfL are less likely to initially experiment with AfL, and will also find it more difficult to appreciate the complexity and subtlety of AfL practices within a classroom. This finding suggests there may be a need to ensure that IR groups consist of educators with differing levels of experience related to AfL and perhaps the IR process itself. Educators with less support may also require supplementary opportunities to learn about the fundamental components of AfL.

3. The BCAfL project has resulted in “pockets of learning cultures” with respect to AfL, and these pockets are likely the necessary first steps toward a more systemic AfL culture within a school or across the board.

The teachers and administrators directly involved in the BCAfL continually spoke of the value of the AFL not only to their own teaching and learning, but also to their opportunities to engage in more collaborative activities to support their ongoing professional learning. For these educators, the BCAfL was a valuable form of professional learning and collaborative inquiry. In those classrooms and schools in which AfL related practices are used more consistently and successfully, there is also a growing “student culture” in which the students use the language of AfL and are increasingly demanding that other teachers use similar AfL practices. We surmise that the efforts of educators directly involved in the BCAfL and their students will gradually influence other educators to develop their AfL knowledge and skills.

4. There are important challenges to address regarding the use of instructional rounds to support AfL integration.

As noted above the instructional rounds process was not equally effective for all of the educators involved in the project, and the process does not yet seem to have had a large impact on those educators not directly involved in the project. Teachers and administrators acknowledged that other educators and administrators were interested in the BCAfL project. We also noted that AfL skills were not equally used by students, even within those classes led by teachers with more AfL experience. Of ongoing interest, our observations and interviews provide further evidence that those students performing below expectations (Levels 1 and 2) were less engaged in AfL related activities and were less able to use AfL to support their learning. These students may require more support to effectively use AfL.
5. The instructional rounds model may be more effective when there is flexibility to adapt the process to the specific context in which it is being used.

As the district leaders worked with educators throughout the board, they identified aspects of the IR process that could be modified, largely depending on the comfort level of the educators in the schools, or on the purposes of the IR. These modifications included changes to the reflection process, more focused “next steps” and “learning goals”, and an opportunity for teachers to receive feedback from their peers if they felt comfortable with such feedback. Certainly, there are current models of IR that do not provide teacher feedback based on the observations. As City et al. note (2009): “We think people have to engage in sustained description and analysis of instructional practice before they can acquire either the expertise or authority to judge it, much less evaluate it.” Nevertheless, teachers valued the opportunity to discuss specific instructional activities related to AFL.

As a second example, the discussion regarding predictions at the end of the day was also modified. Once again, this change was used to help teachers ask more specific questions regarding their own practices. It is important to retain the descriptive observations of instructional rounds. Nevertheless, there needs to be a cultural shift in which educators and students understand that effective peer- and self-feedback is rarely evaluative. First, teachers should use the BC AfL to ask questions of themselves and other educators. These questions should focus on a query specifically related to their own learning goals. I am curious to know if the students working at Levels 1 and 2 understood the methods I used? Were the students engaged in the AFL process? What were the challenges the students were having with the process? Such questions would not be evaluative of the teacher but rather would fit into the spirit of peer- and self-assessment. Rather than predictions at the end of the day, educators could be asked questions such as: What is one thing that you will now try in your classroom as a result of what you observed today? If you were to do a similar lesson, what modifications would you make given the context of your classroom or school? Such questions require self-assessment, a critical, and perhaps the most valuable, component of AFL.

With regard to structure, the educators found the instructional rounds days to be the most effective, with the central days to be less valuable. This is not completely surprising as there is a large body of evidence that educators find professional learning activities most valuable when these activities are directly linked to teaching and learning. The principal rounds were also considered to be valuable but to a somewhat lesser extent. There is real value in the centralized days but the number of these days could be reduced or spread out, allowing for greater use of instructional rounds days. Nevertheless, as noted above, for those educators new to the process, there may be further needs for centralized and supplementary learning.
6. The intended goals and impacts of the BCAfL will take time before measurable shifts in practice and outcomes can be realized in the classroom, the school, and the board.

Our call for time does not mean the acknowledgement of competing priorities. Rather, our evaluation has indicated that educators need to explore AfL over a long period of time. Real change in educational practice requires time to explore the impacts and implications of developing concepts of teaching and learning. The current conceptions of AfL are complex, and educators cannot be expected to develop such knowledge and adaptable skills quickly. The BCAfL project will not be successful if it only exists within a school for one year or term. The project has a whole requires ongoing support and the teachers within the project also require ongoing opportunities to share and explore their learning. Any attempts to further spread the learning obtained from the BCAfL project to other teachers and schools will likely require even more time, as those involved in these programs are often the most dedicated or interested educators. It will likely take more time to engage other educators who were less interested prior to the implementation of the program.

This need for time also extends to aspects of instructional leadership. While principals had little difficulty recognizing their role in the project as one of instructional leadership, the teachers were less likely to consider themselves as instructional leaders in AfL. Further, the definitions of leadership varied in terms of roles and responsibilities, amongst teachers and amongst principals. We found evidence that growing levels of comfort and exploration of AfL practices seemed to enable educators to consider themselves in a leadership role.
Recommendations

The following eight recommendations have been identified to guide KPRDSBDSB’s next steps with building AfL capacity within its school board.

1. Provide or obtain resources (financial and personnel) to continue the BCAfL project. As identified below, there are aspects of this project that could be refined; however, overall, this evaluation has identified that the instructional rounds model positively benefits teachers’ and administrators’ learning and the promotion of learning cultures that value AfL.

2. It is likely that sound AfL practices may look different in various subject areas. Keep the curricular focus of AfL relatively narrow. Until educators are comfortable with various facets of AfL, it will be more challenging to try to explore emerging AfL practices across subject areas. Teachers generally reported greater benefits to AfL integration in Mathematics and Language Arts.

3. Revise the instructional rounds days in consideration of the following:
   a. Cautiously implement AfL strategies to examine the impact of observed AfL practices during instructional rounds days (be cognizant of teachers’ comfort with moving beyond descriptive feedback). Use this information not as an evaluative tool, but rather as a peer-feedback and self-assessment method to inform future practice and teachers’ learning and teaching goals.
   b. Continue to explore the potential value of modifications being made to the instructional rounds day. As an example, have teachers more explicitly articulate their AfL learning goals and how they use the instructional rounds day to meet those goals.
   c. Use the modified prediction activity to encourage teachers’ self-reflection to focus on their subsequent practices and exploration related to AfL.

4. Develop a long-term strategy that encourages other teachers to learn about AfL and continue to cultivate a culture of formative assessment in schools. As new schools are brought into the BCAfL project, partner new teachers and administrators in the project with those who are already involved in the BCAfL.
   a. Implement a structure for collaborative professional learning that pairs teachers (and administrators) who are novice learners about AfL with those who are developing leadership capacity in AfL.
   b. Provide supplementary resources and supports for incoming educators, including the opportunity to observe and co-plan with other educators.
   c. Use a communication strategy to disseminate information about AfL and the learning successes and stories of teachers who are implementing AfL in their classrooms.
5. The leadership team should work to move aspects of the BC AfL forward to the “next level.” In order to accomplish this:
   a. Explore ways to help teachers to extend their evolving practices around learning goals and success criteria to explore peer- and self-assessment.
   b. Work with teachers to determine how AfL can better support struggling learners and those achieving at Levels 1 and 2.
   c. Support teachers’ reflective practice concurrently with their AfL development, changing this project to include questions about “how I learn.”

6. Revisit the structure and purposes of the principal rounds days. Specifically, there is a need to provide principals with alternative learning opportunities with respect to AfL-informed leadership (i.e., how principals can use AfL in their support of teacher learning).

7. Identify board outcomes and goals of AfL integration to support students’ learning. Use these outcomes and goals to monitor board growth and development toward a systemic culture of learning that values formative assessment as a learning process.

8. An important goal of programs and initiatives such as the BC AfL is to create a learning culture in which such professional learning opportunities become a natural part of the processes and practices amongst educators rather than a series of events they attend. Identify potentially important similarities and differences amongst the BC AfL project, the results of this evaluation, and other concurrent projects and initiatives. Use this growing body of evidence to further shape the BC AfL project and other subsequent initiatives.
References


Marzano, R. J., (September, 2009). Setting the record straight on "High-Yield" strategies. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, (91) 1. 30-37


Appendix A: Data Collection Instruments

Professional Development Day Reflection

Role (principal/teacher/superintendent): ______________________________

Panel (elementary/secondary): ______________________________

1. From your perspective, what was the most important learning achieved today?

2. What areas of the “Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning” program are you still unclear about?

3. What do you hope to learn and/or achieve through engaging in the “Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning” program?

4. Do you have an identified support network to assist you in implementing the program and achieving your learning goals? Please describe.

5. Fill in the table with keywords/phrases that describe your understanding of the “Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning” program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment for Learning</th>
<th>Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>Instructional Rounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who does it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where does it happen?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When does it happen?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does it happen?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Please rate the impact of the following learning tasks on your professional learning. Scale 1 to 5 where 5 = most impactful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Task</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Additional Feedback &amp; Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing/Clarifying Learning Goals &amp; Theories of Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task #1 - School-Level Leadership Framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task #2 - Connections to Student Achievement Initiatives</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Task #3 - Instructional Leadership</td>
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<td>Task #4 – Theory of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norms for Instructional Rounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing the Learning – Principals or Teachers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Instructional Rounds Reflection Form

Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning

Your Rounds Day

Please Circle:

This was a: Teacher Round Principal Round
Our School District is: KPRDSB PVNCC

Think about your day:
1. What were some Assessment for Learning practices that you observed today (please be as specific as possible)?

2. What were three key observations you made today that specifically demonstrated that one or more students were actively engaged in Assessment for Learning?

3. In your role and based on your experience today, what will you intentionally do in your practice now to implement the Assessment for Learning behaviours you observed today?

4. Looking ahead to the learning goal selected at the day’s end, what actions will you take to prepare for the next set of instructional rounds?

5. What resources or supports, if any, do you now think you need to promote your Assessment for Learning goals?
Question 1
Please indicate if you are an Elementary or Secondary school teacher.
- Elementary school teacher
- Secondary school teacher

Question 2
How has "Assessment for Learning" impacted your teaching? (Please provide specific examples.)

Question 3
How has "Assessment for Learning" impacted student learning in your class? (Please provide specific examples.)

Question 4
What challenges have you experienced while implementing "Assessment for Learning"?
BCAfL: February 2013 Principal/VP survey

**Question 1**
Please select one of the following
- Elementary school Principal/VP
- Secondary school Principal/VP

**Question 2**
How has your participation in this professional learning program impacted your methods of school leadership and the teaching practices in your school?

**Question 3**
What current or ongoing supports and resources will help the implementation of "Assessment for Learning" throughout the school?

**Question 4**
Please describe any challenges you have faced in integrating "Assessment for Learning" into your leadership approach.
Classroom Observations Protocol and Interview Questions

Observation data collection focused on:

- Language of the teacher
- Language of the students
- Practices of the teacher around AfL
- Practices of the students around AfL
- Classroom culture – sense.
Teacher Interview protocol

1. How has your involvement in this project impacted your thinking about teaching and assessment?

2. Tell me about your specific AfL goals, and what you have done to meet those goals in your classroom?

3. As you move forward what are the specific learning goals and actions that you are thinking about?

4. How do you know that students are learning more effectively as a result of your efforts?
   a. Can you provide some specific examples?

5. Can you give us some examples that students are able to monitor, track and support their own learning?

6. How has the learning culture in your classroom evolved as you have engaged in this project?

7. How has the learning culture amongst your colleagues evolved as you have engaged in this project?
   a. Can you comment on teachers not involved in this project?
   b. Can you comment on your role as a leader?

8. Talk to me about how your approach to professional learning has evolved over this past year.

9. Thinking about the professional development program, what are some of the challenges you faced?

10. What would you suggest to improve this professional development program?
**Principal Interview protocol**

1. How has your involvement in this project impacted your thinking about leadership, teaching and assessment?

2. Tell me about your specific AfL goals, and what you have done to meet those goals in your school?

3. As you move forward what are the specific learning goals and actions that you are thinking about?

4. What specific evidence do you have that teachers and students are benefiting as a result of your efforts?

5. How has the learning culture in your school evolved as you have engaged in this project?

6. Tell me about the teachers not involved in this project, their interest in this project, and your efforts to engage them.

7. Talk to me about how your approach to professional learning has evolved over this past year.

8. Thinking about the professional development program, what are some of the challenges you faced?

9. What would you suggest to improve this professional development program?
Final Survey for Teachers
BCAfL: Teacher Survey (May 2013)

Part A: Demographics

1. Number of years of teaching experience?
   Years ____________

2. I currently teach:
   - Primary (K-3)
   - Junior/Intermediate (4-8)
   - Secondary (9-12)
   - Other, or, special teaching responsibility, please specify... ________________

3. What particular grade do you do most of your teaching? Approximately how many students do you teach in a semester/term?
   Grade: ____________
   Number of students ____________

4. In addition to the Building Capacity in Assessment for Learning project, what other assessment-focused professional development opportunities have you participated in? (For example, have you participated in the Assessment Partners project?)
   Please also provide the duration of these professional development opportunities.
   ____________________________________________________________
Part B: Assessment for Learning Implementation

4. Think of your students who were achieving at a level 3 or 4 before you started emphasizing AFL practices. On a 7-point scale indicate whether or not you have observed a change in the following aspects of their learning since emphasizing Assessment for Learning in your classroom.

(1 = no change - - - - 7 = significant change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. quality of student work</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. level of student achievement</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. student motivation</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. students' ability to self-regulate</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. students' ability to monitor their learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>vi. student collaboration</td>
<td>o</td>
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<td>vii. quality of student questions</td>
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<td>viii. quality of student answers</td>
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<td>ix. quality of peer feedback</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>x. accuracy of self-assessment</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>xi. students' ability to identify learning goals</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<tr>
<td>xii. students' ability to identify success criteria</td>
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<td>o</td>
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<td>o</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. Think of your students who were achieving at a level 1 or 2 before you started emphasizing AFL practices. On a 7-point scale indicate whether or not you have observed a change in the following aspects of their learning since emphasizing Assessment for Learning in your classroom.

(1 = no change    - - - - - - - - -  7 = significant change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. quality of student work</td>
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<td>ii. level of student achievement</td>
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<td>iii. student motivation</td>
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<td>iv. students' ability to self-regulate</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. students' ability to monitor their learning</td>
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<td>vi. student collaboration</td>
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<td>vii. quality of student questions</td>
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<td>viii. quality of student answers</td>
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<td>ix. quality of peer feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>x. accuracy of self-assessment</td>
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<td>xi. students' ability to identify learning goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>xii. students' ability to identify success criteria</td>
<td>O</td>
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</table>

7. On a 7-point scale indicate the extent to which Assessment for Learning supports student learning and achievement in the following subject areas. If you do not teach a given subject area, please mark "N/A".

(1 = no support    - - - - - - -  7 = significant support)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Math</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. Science</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Language arts / English</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Social Studies / Geography &amp; History</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. The Arts</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>vi. Physical Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8. On a 7-point scale indicate your confidence in the following Assessment for Learning principles.
(1 = no confidence - - - - - - - 7 = significant confidence)

i. I understand the difference between learning goals and success criteria.

ii. I understand the relationship between learning goals and success criteria.

iii. I develop a shared understanding with students about learning goals and success criteria.

iv. I co-create learning goals and success criteria with my students.

v. I create a classroom environment where students have ownership of their own learning.

vi. I help my students to become resources for their own learning.

vii. I help my students to be resources for their peers' learning.

Part C: Professional Development

9. On a 7-point scale indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1 = fully disagree - - - - - - - 7 = fully agree)

i. I found the four professional development days beneficial to my professional learning.

ii. I would prefer fewer professional development days.

iii. I would prefer additional professional development days.

iv. I found the Instructional Rounds days beneficial to my professional learning.

v. I would prefer fewer Instructional Rounds days.

vi. I would prefer additional Instructional Rounds days.
10. What would make the professional development days more effective?

11. What would make the Instructional Rounds days more effective?

12. Since the beginning of this project, how has teaching and learning changed in your classroom?

13. How has this project promoted assessment leadership in your school?
Please also comment on a) Who are the assessment leaders? and b) What does this leadership look like?

14. How has this professional development project promoted the culture of assessment in your school?

15. Think about your continued learning in Assessment for Learning. Describe structures and resources that would help you and your school maintain momentum in learning about Assessment for Learning.