



## Implementing Assessment for Learning with Year 7 Students



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### ■ PROJECT AIMS & PROGRESSION FROM YEAR ONE AND TWO

The first two years of our project focused on introducing Cooperative Learning strategies, with the core aim of improving students' resilience and resourcefulness, through promoting more active engagement in lessons. In Year Three we shifted our emphasis on to introducing and implementing Assessment for Learning with Year 7, since we felt that this initiative could enhance our existing work, through developing the important Learning to Learn skills of self-awareness and reflectiveness.

### ■ RESEARCH FOCUS

We looked at the role of assessment in Learning to Learn and how Learning to Learn approaches support the development of confident and capable lifelong learners. A further focus was to reflect on how to build the capacity to introduce and implement change on a large scale.

### ■ DIMENSIONS OF THIS CASE STUDY

During the project here has been a major change to the delivery of the Year 7 curriculum, with each subject area incorporating Assessment for Learning principles into its Programmes of Study. There has been a move to comment-based marking and regularly using formative assessment activities. The data collected includes quantitative measurements of performance; attitudinal surveys from staff regarding what they understand about Assessment for Learning and how they rate themselves in terms of practice; together with interviews and questionnaires from students exploring their experience of Assessment for learning approaches in lessons.

#### Focus in the 5 Rs for Lifelong Learning:

- Resilience
- Remembering
- Resourcefulness
- Reflectiveness
- Readiness

### ■ SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- We have successfully moved our Year 7 assessment culture from one with a summative bias to one with a strong formative emphasis. This is evident in both staff and student attitudes towards formative assessment.
- We have considerably strengthened our capacity to gather, use and analyse data to help us with school self-evaluation and school improvement over the three years of the project.
- Data from 'student voice' has been a rich source of evidence about what our students understand, want and value in the learning process.

### YEAR ONE & TWO RESEARCH

### Summary of Year One and Two findings

In the first year of our involvement with the Learning to Learn (L2L) Phase 3 Evaluation we trialled and evaluated the impact of using Cooperative Learning approaches, based on the work of Dr Spencer Kagan, (1994). Year Two dealt with the expansion of the initiative to more staff and reflections on how to build the capacity within the organisation to successfully take on change.

Through our work, the value of using the cooperative structures has become clear. Teachers have noted the potential of the co-operative structures to build more productive relationships both with and between students. Similarly, they have commented on their capacity to raise levels of participation and engagement in lessons and how they create space for 'thinking time'.

These findings were borne out by student tracking, lesson observations and student interviews, which revealed that the students were very positive about lessons being taught using cooperative structures, that they appreciated the thinking time and were able to articulate the value of the 'emotionally safe' climate within the classroom. Observations of lessons using cooperative structures and those taught in a more traditional style revealed increased levels of interaction in cooperative lessons, more time on task, more time actively engaged with the topic and less time passively listening to the teacher at the front.

### Learning through research

We feel that involvement with the Campaign for Learning (CfL) has brought a number of benefits to the school. It has emphasised the value of creating professional learning programmes, tightly focused on classroom practice, with sustained opportunities for dialogue and reflection. We believe that the lead learner

model we have adopted has contributed to building capacity within the school to take on new initiatives, particularly those concerned with teaching and learning.

Exposure to new perspectives and to the latest developments has permitted us to gain a clearer overview of the various strands of research and knowledge about teaching and learning. This, in turn, has enhanced our confidence about adapting initiatives to the priorities of our context, enabling us to put forward a coherent programme for the future direction of teaching and learning in the school.

On a practical level each year we have grown more skilled in selecting, using and adapting evidence gathering tools. We are more confident about asking intelligent questions, interrogating the data and planning the next stage. This has been helpful as it fits in with the national changes towards self-evaluation which ask 'Where are you now? What are you doing well? How do you know? How are you going to improve?'

This year we have introduced a process of departmental self-evaluation which mirrors the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF). One of the areas that departments have felt less confident in is pupil voice. However, engagement in research over the past three years has given us experience in how to gather data in this area. It has been very powerful to be able to start a dialogue with departments about how students perceive what is happening in lessons. Equally, with regard to the impact of the initiatives on our students, as we explore more about how much they understand about what is happening in lessons, we are appreciating how much more explicit we need to be in terms of talking about learning skills and processes.

From a leadership perspective, we feel that the research findings we have produced are providing convincing evidence of our

current strengths and weaknesses. Sharing this with our middle leadership group has added real substance to the judgements they make and the action plans they formulate. It has also provided a much sharper focus to the review process.

The project has helped us to reflect on stages in the learning process for the professionals in our organisation – first of all teachers learn about the change as individuals, making sense of it compared to their previous experience. They need support at this time to feel able to take risks and potentially make mistakes. As well as encouragement though, they need an expectation to change practice otherwise they learn to understand the change, but not necessarily put it into practice. We have found that staying committed to one or two key strands over time and organising lots of different opportunities for training is beneficial, especially when it is then combined with a shift in school policy as has happened this year with Assessment for Learning.

In summary, the research data that has been gathered over the last 3 years has allowed us to validate our approaches and base any future developments upon sound judgements. It has also had important institutional implications. We have become a better-informed, professional, listening organisation as a consequence of our involvement in the Learning to Learn Phase 3 Evaluation. We have a model for the introduction and evaluation of major change that we can sustain once the project is over, although we would like to continue our links to Higher Education, as we have appreciated their support and expertise with data analysis.

### **Moving forward**

We originally chose to investigate Cooperative Learning approaches because we wanted to move away from teacher-centred lessons to ones where the students were more active, accountable

and engaged. As our understanding of the cooperative learning ethos deepened, it became clear to us that it could act as a bridge to AfL, which we had been interested in since 2003-4, believing that it facilitated our core purpose of developing students' critical and reflective capacity and awareness of themselves as learners.

We initially spent some time raising awareness of AfL through staff INSET before setting up a working party of lead learners in September 2004 (Year Two of the L2L Phase 3 Evaluation). This group was led by a member of the Leadership Team and included representatives from every subject area. Significant amounts of time were spent debating formative assessment practices and how they could be interpreted in our context. Recommendations for changes to school policy were made to the Leadership Team in April 2005.

While the school was keen to begin to implement the recommendations of the working party, it was clear that this could only be managed on a phased basis. There were two possible ways of achieving this:

- To allow subject areas to identify where the strategies ought to be introduced first.
- To insist that all subjects in a particular year group implemented the changes in their entirety.

We decided upon the latter approach to allow us to make changes to whole-school assessment and reporting practices to reflect this new emphasis upon formative assessment principle and to allow us to gather substantial data about impact. While acknowledging that some subjects were likely to find this process more difficult than others, we felt that we could only make sense of the strategy to students and parents if it was being consistently applied across the curriculum, albeit it in a

particular year group. As a result, our whole-school AfL initiative began with the 2005-6 Year 7 cohort.

One of the factors that led us to make the decision to go for implementation across the year group was the amount we felt we had learned from the first two years of the project about analysing our provision for staff learning and development, as well as reflecting on our capacity to instigate and implement change within the organisation. A particular feature that we feel has been significant in the successful introduction of the new approaches has been the creation of 'advocates' for the strategies in each department. These individuals, known as lead learners, gain a more in-depth knowledge of the approach and act as support for colleagues who have not yet been given any intensive training.

A further benefit of these lead learner groups from the first two years of the project has been the increase in the amount of cross-curricular dialogue in the school. However, one of the drawbacks of this approach is that it can be difficult to assess impact across a year group because only certain teachers are involved in the project. By Year Three of the project, we felt we had created firm enough foundations in terms of staff learning to introduce change to a whole year group, affecting all the teachers who worked with Year 7.

## CONTEXT

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### School background

Fallibroome High School is a successful, oversubscribed, mixed comprehensive school situated in Macclesfield, UK. It has 1495 students, including 288 in the sixth form. The intake of the school reflects a wide socio-economic spectrum. Attainment on entry to the school is above average and this is maintained or improved, with very strong results at Key

Stage 3 (ages 11-14), Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16) and Key Stage 5 (ages 16-18). Our A\*-C percentage at GCSE has been around 76% for a number of years, in line with challenging predictors, rising to 79% in 2006. At Key Stage 5 our results have been on an upward trend since 1998 and our average points score per examination entry has placed us in the top 20% of schools nationally for the past two years.

The school has been a Specialist College of Performing Arts since 2003 and is also the lead school in a Networked Learning Community with five of its associated primary schools. Since 2004 Fallibroome has been a Leading Edge school, working closely with two other secondary schools in the local area, Macclesfield. Fallibroome is also a research school for the Campaign for Learning, involved in the L2L Phase 3 Evaluation since Year One, and is especially interested in Cooperative Learning approaches and how they can support Assessment for Learning.

The Ofsted report in November 2002 described Fallibroome as 'an excellent school' and praised our commitment to innovation in teaching and learning. In November 2005 Ofsted came to complete a Survey on the Achievement of Different Groups of Learners and commented on the 'total commitment to raising standards through a clear strategy and approach to teaching and learning' and highlighted that the cooperative learning model is 'effectively supporting learners not only in groups but as individuals'. The features judged to be outstanding in the lessons observed included:

...the pace of lessons, the team work and cooperation between pupils, the use of various teaching/learning techniques and pupils' positive attitude to work.

### Personnel involved in the project

Our involvement with the Campaign for Learning and the L2L Phase 3 Evaluation has been led by two Assistant Head Teachers. Jane Gormally is responsible for Teaching and Learning and Francis Power is responsible for Monitoring and Assessment. Since joining the leadership team in 2002 both have been especially keen to focus their efforts upon strategies with a proven record in improving student learning. Cooperative learning and formative assessment can both point to significant and persuasive evidence to this effect. From the start, it was also evident that both strategies could offer clear advice to our staff about their classroom practice. The tools and strategies suggested by both initiatives gave our project a pragmatic, down-to-earth feel that was essential in developing support among our teaching staff for the changes being recommended.

Our association with the Campaign for Learning gave us the opportunity to apply a more reflective approach to what was essentially a pragmatic initiative. We were keenly aware of our obligation to demonstrate impact and were consequently keen to adopt the methodical research and review processes that are intrinsic to the Campaign for Learning project. In consequence, we are emerging from the three-year project not only reassured by the evidence of the progress that has been made, but convinced of the value of a structured research programme of this nature.

All teachers of Y7 participated in implementing the AfL initiative and all were involved in evaluating it. A steering group made up of departmental representatives met at half-termly intervals throughout the year. These sessions served as feedback opportunities and training workshops. In addition, AfL was a regular fixture on the agenda in Heads of Department meetings and in Line Manager meetings to ensure

that the policy was being implemented consistently.

Year 7 is made up of 241 students, 126 boys and 115 girls. Of these, ten students are statemented and five are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). On entry 38% had achieved Level 5 in English; 46% had achieved Level 5 in Mathematics and 62% had achieved Level 5 in Science.

Our reasons for focusing upon a single year group have already been described. Once this decision had been made, identifying Year 7 as the target cohort was relatively straightforward. This year group are less subject to examination pressures and staff consequently feel more able to make changes and take risks with this part of their curriculum. Also, the parent body would include many new members who had not had experience of the more summative assessment approaches evident in other year groups.

Changing assessment strategies half way through a key stage seemed likely to also generate significantly more difficulties than was necessary. In addition, if successful, the strategy could be extended to Year 8 and gradually grow through the school. This allowed the project to be introduced on a phased basis in a way that recognised the workload implications for our colleagues.

Moreover, Fallibroome has close links with its main partner primary schools, who have also adopted cooperative learning techniques. In fact, the cooperative learning initiative is gradually spreading across the town. Consequently, the majority of our Year 7 students would be familiar with at least some of the structures and classroom expectations which would be used to facilitate the AfL peer assessment activities.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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### Developing this rationale

Under the broad umbrella of 'Learning to Learn', we have consistently placed a strong emphasis upon 'Cooperative Learning' and 'Assessment for Learning'. This strategic decision was supported by the strong body of research evidence underpinning both approaches (Black *et al.*, 2003; Kagan, 1994).

Additionally, we have been especially impressed by the manner in which one strategy can support the other. Assessment for Learning places a particularly strong emphasis upon the provision of opportunities for students to review their work and reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses. Cooperative Learning strategies give the teacher the tools by which to manage such activities, while also encouraging 'reciprocity', (Claxton, 2002).

Formative assessment places a strong emphasis upon student participation and higher-order thinking. Cooperative learning structures allow the teacher to build such work into their lessons. Student engagement in peer assessment activities can be greatly enhanced by the supportive culture that can be created in a cooperative learning classroom. Thus, while both strategies are quite distinct in many respects, one actively supports the other.

This overlap has allowed us to develop a model that draws both approaches together and to present a coherent rationale to parents, teachers and students.

This year, we were especially interested in evaluating if our strategy for leading the discussion of Assessment for Learning and implementing the consequential policy changes was having any impact upon teacher practices and student experiences. We decided to support this process with additional research in two subject areas (Geography and Design and Technology).

This subject-specific research data was much more closely concerned with comparing the learning outcomes of students before and after key changes had been made in each department.

While there is already extensive research evidence available that points to the clear learning gains that can be made through the use of formative assessment techniques, we were interested in the additional validity that such findings would have for our staff if they could be duplicated in our own context. This work was not, however, the central element in our research programme and, as such, has been reported separately from this article (Wood, 2006; Power, 2006)

The focus of the work presented here concentrates specifically upon gauging the impact of our initiatives upon our teachers and upon the classroom culture in our school.

### Objectives

As has been described above, our earlier research in the areas of cooperative learning and formative assessment allowed us to develop a model of Assessment for Learning in 2004 that reflected the overlap between the two approaches and which was then implemented with the whole of Y7 in 2005-06. We decided to elaborate upon this model to develop a self-review questionnaire for our staff and students. In this way, we hoped to address the following objectives:

- To review if teachers felt that their classroom practices between 2004 and 2006 had changed to include more formative assessment practices.
- To gauge the Year 7 students' views of the prevalence of formative assessment practices in their lessons and to compare this to the views of their teachers.

- To investigate if the quality of provision of formative assessment experiences was significantly different between Year 7 subjects.
- To review if student responses suggested any progress had been made compared to the previous cohort (current Year 8).
- Assessment feedback that was dominated by formative advice rather than summative grading. More emphasis needed to be placed upon student progress. Students needed to know how to improve, be given the opportunity to make these improvements and receive recognition for doing so successfully.

### Hypothesis

Our research hypothesis was to investigate the role of assessment in L2L. Specifically, that introducing the AfL initiative would lead to students gaining increased opportunities to reflect on their own progress; a better understanding of their current level of attainment; a clearer picture of how to improve and enhanced involvement in the target setting process.

### RESEARCH PROCESS

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#### Teachers' choices

Our school policy for the implementation of Assessment for Learning was based very closely upon that suggested by Black *et al.* (2003). This model suggests that schools would derive greatest benefit from focusing their work upon five strands. These were:

- A stronger emphasis upon learning intentions and success criteria in lessons and on assessed work. Students needed to know what they were doing, why they were doing it and how to demonstrate that they were doing it well.
- More effective questioning strategies. A greater proportion of students had to be actively engaged in the review and discussion of their work. In addition, there needed to be a stronger emphasis upon higher-order thinking skills. Cooperative learning provided our key response to this strand.

- Greater student access to assessment criteria. Students needed to be given the opportunity to work with mark schemes when assessing their own and others' work. Cooperative learning has an important role to play here in the development of a classroom culture that allows this work to take place constructively.
- More sparing use of summative assessments. When used, they should be organised in a formative manner. Students should be given lesson time in advance to discuss the format and expectations of the assessment as well as time afterwards to review performance, identify where improvements are needed and be given the opportunity to make these improvements.

Each subject area was asked to interpret these strands in their own context. As a result, significant changes were made across the Year 7 curriculum. This included developing assessment criteria in student-friendly language and making these available to parents; changing schemes of work to allow time for peer and self-assessment activities; giving students the opportunity to use each subject's assessment structure to identify future learning priorities; reducing the frequency of summative assessments; allowing time to discuss test results and set targets; changing the way work was marked and feedback was provided; placing a stronger emphasis upon the use of cooperative learning techniques etc. In addition, whole

school changes were made to assessment reports, grading systems, comment banks and parents' evenings. We also scheduled opportunities to explain the rationale behind these changes to the parents of the Year 7 students.

It is important to make explicit how, in our view, cooperative learning can support the five key strands of AFL:

- Objectives
- Questioning strategies \*
- Feedback\*
- Peer and self-assessment \*
- Summative tests

Our earlier research led us to believe that cooperative learning approaches could directly enhance those marked with a star.

Kagan's approach to cooperative learning is based around a series of structures which place an emphasis on four key principles, known by the acronym PIES:

*Positive Interdependence*  
*Individual Accountability*  
*Equal Participation*  
*Simultaneous Interaction*

Students are organised in heterogeneous teams of four and the teams are changed at regular intervals. An important emphasis is placed on the social skills of team-building and class-building and this helps to establish a climate for learning in the classroom. The structures lend rigour and accountability to group work, preventing students either dominating or opting out. An analysis of the structure Numbered Heads Together illustrates the point. Firstly the teacher poses a question and gives individual think time, after which all students have to write down their personal answer (individual accountability and equal participation). The students are seated in teams of four and the next stage is for them to 'put their heads together' and arrive at a team answer. This allows

simultaneous interaction as well as equal participation. The answer arrived at has to be a team answer and everyone in the team needs to be able to explain it as the students do not know at this stage who will be called on by the teacher. This creates an opportunity for peer coaching, establishing a positive interdependence among the team's members, as it is in everyone's interest for everyone to be able to answer. Once sufficient time has been given for everyone to agree on an answer, the teacher uses a spinner to decide who will respond from each team.

Compare this to a more traditional whole class question and answer session, during which research has shown that the wait time after a question is normally just a fraction of a second, whereas, with the cooperative structures, there is inbuilt time for individual and paired reflection before the teacher would expect an answer. Furthermore, if one considers the traditional model of whole class question and answer, on analysis it proves to be very inefficient. The teacher asks a question and then students raise their hands and the teacher calls on one of them to answer. This model has several problems:

- Typically, about a third of the group attempt to answer a question in this way. The other two thirds lose interest and can opt out.
- When one student is selected, the other volunteers lose their sense of involvement. Vocal or other forms of protest often accompany this. They have lost the competition for the teacher's attention.
- If the student answering struggles, the others begin to wake up. "Like sharks in the water sensing blood, they raise their hands." They are happy and excited by the failure of a classmate" (Kagan, 1994).

- The failure of one student increases the chances of success of another.
- Once a student has answered a question, they know that in all likelihood they can now take a back seat, as it is unlikely that the teacher will continue to question them.

Cooperative structures can address all of these issues, because they are created to operate by the four key principles described earlier (PIES). Many of the cooperative structures are ideal for creating and regulating the peer-assessment opportunities that are also crucial for AfL

Finally, the collaborative ethos encouraged by the cooperative structures helps to create a positive climate for learning in which the social skills of listening and turn-taking are developed and students can learn to accept and give constructive feedback.

### Evidence Collected

Data was collected by means of a staff and student questionnaire and student interviews. To create the questionnaire, we elaborated upon the five-strand model of AfL and presented it for the staff in the form of a self-review survey (Appendix 1). We also developed a student form of this instrument that followed the same five strand structure, but was written specifically for this audience (Appendix 2). We then used these instruments as follows:

- In the summer term of 2004, sixty teaching staff were given time in a staff meeting to anonymously complete the survey.
- This process was repeated with a similar number of teachers in the summer term of 2006. It was not possible to match the teachers in 2004 with those in 2006. It was assumed

that both groups were reflective of the teaching staff as a whole, even though the members in both groups were not identical.

- 240 Year 7 students were asked to complete their version of the survey. They were asked to do this twice – once for each of two randomly allocated subjects. All students completed their survey at the same time and under the same conditions.
- A similar number of Year 8 students were asked to complete the survey in the same way as the Year 7 students.

In addition to the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires, we conducted interviews with a sample of students in October 2005 and again in July 2006. These interviews aimed to gather data about attitudes to key elements of AfL practice such as comment-based marking, improvement time and self and peer evaluation and to try to assess whether attitudes shifted over the course of the year. The sample was selected by looking at the KS2 scores of the students and selecting the six boys and six girls with the highest KS2 scores, six boys and six girls randomly chosen from the middle of the list and then six boys and six girls with a statement of special educational needs.

The interviews were conducted in mixed gender groups of six, except for those with the statemented students, which were conducted one to one with a teaching assistant they were used to working with, who also acted as scribe if this was required. The interviewer asked each question in turn, offered clarification if needed and asked students to record their response in writing. Students could choose not to answer if they wished.

The October interviews used the following questions:

1. How do you feel when a teacher marks your work?
2. How do you feel when another student marks your work?
3. What types of things would you say or write if you had to mark someone else's work? Are you taught how to mark your work? (Give some examples if you can)
4. Would you be able to say if a piece of work was good or not? How would you know?
5. Are you often asked to improve your work after it has been marked? How do you feel when you are asked to do this?
6. What does "doing well at school" mean to you?

6. Do you think you have improved at assessing your own and other people's work over the year? Can you explain why?
7. Are you often asked to improve your work after it has been marked? How do you feel when you are asked to do this? Has this changed over the year?

### The role of Learning to Learn

Our motivation for taking part in the CfL project was to research ways to help our students to become engaged, proactive, independent learners. Amongst the plethora of different ideas that can fit under the L2L umbrella, we chose to focus on two strands that had convincing research evidence behind them, namely cooperative learning and AfL.

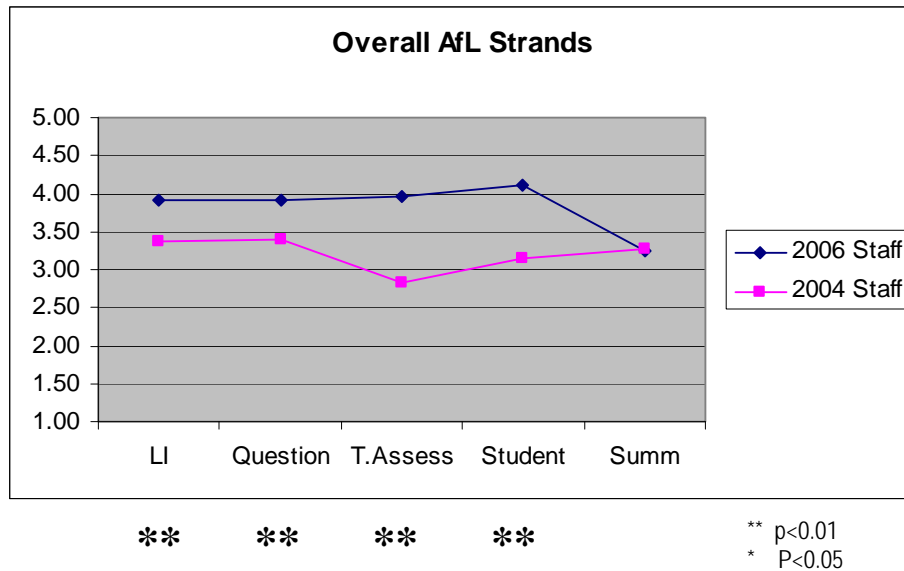
The July interviews used the following questions:

1. How do you feel when a teacher marks your work? How do teachers normally mark your work – is it ticks, grades, comments, targets?
2. How do you feel when another student marks your work? Have your feelings changed over the year?
3. In October some of you felt that the mark would depend on who was looking at their work – e.g. if it was a friend, they would give a good mark, but if it was someone you didn't get on with, they would give a bad mark – has anything changed?
4. In October, some of you were concerned about hurting other people's feelings – is this still a worry?
5. Would you be able to say if a piece of work was good or not? How would you know?

Reflecting on our work over the past three years, we would say that, for us, L2L has become an ethos that permeates the school. On one level there is the student experience in the classroom, where we have worked to help them become more aware of the learning process and of the need for their active contribution to it. Cooperative learning and AfL have facilitated this shift, as has our increasing use of evidence generated from the 'student voice' via interviews and questionnaires.

On a second level, it has been necessary to make a substantial and sustained investment in staff development, so that our teachers could learn about new research into the learning process; could have the opportunity to reflect on this information and make links to their own practice and could adopt the new ideas and incorporate them into their day to day work.

## YEAR THREE PROJECT 2005/2006



*Graph showing the overall results from analysis across our five Assessment for Learning strands*

This leads to a further level on which the L2L ethos has affected the organisation: the strategic level. To bring about the changes over the past three years, we have had to align our observation and monitoring processes to prioritise our commitment to the initiatives and we have strengthened our capacity for critical reflection, using data from a greater range of sources and interpreting it both more skilfully and more rigorously. Discussion of learning, using practical examples from the classroom experience, is now more frequent and more precise and we believe that this will allow us to continue to build on what we have achieved so far.

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### Findings

The following analysis of results from the questionnaires has been structured using the objectives listed earlier. It is followed by analysis of the results from the interviews.

**Objective 1:** To review if teachers felt that their classroom practices between 2004 and 2006 had changed to include more formative assessment strategies.

The overall results across the five Assessment for Learning strands are displayed first, with each strand subsequently broken up into each individual question. Asterisks have been used on the graphs to indicate where significant differences were found between the 2004 and 2006 results.

#### Overall Results

Our five Assessment for Learning strands are:

**LI:** Learning objectives and success criteria (mark schemes)

**Question:** Questioning and dialogue

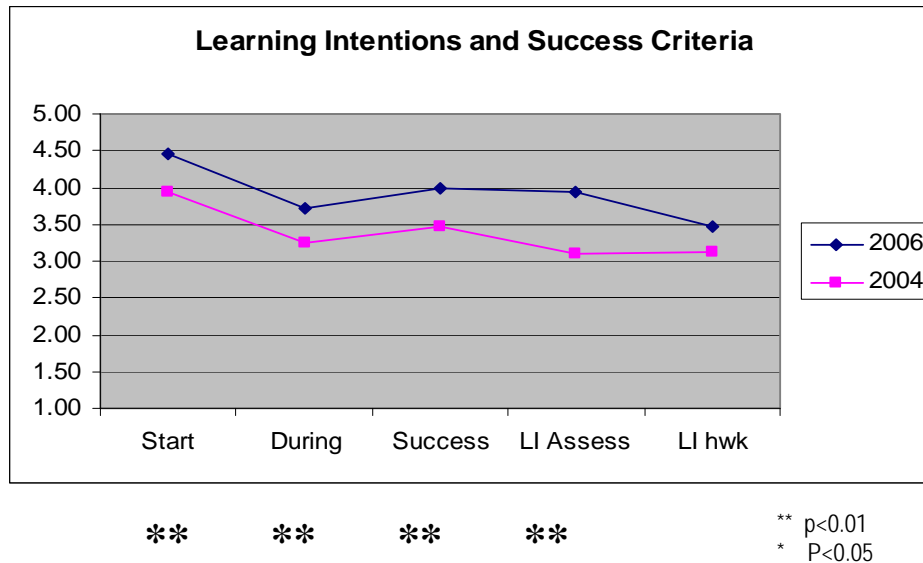
**T.Assess:** Formative teacher assessment

**Student:** Use of self and peer assessments

**Summ:** Formative use of summative assessments

The results shown in the graph above suggest teaching staff feel there has been a highly significant change in their practice with respect to four of the five assessment for learning strands. Most change has occurred in the use of formative teacher feedback. Summative assessments, however, have remained largely unaltered.

## YEAR THREE PROJECT 2005/2006



*Graph showing results for subdivisions of the learning intentions and success criteria strand*

### Strand 1: Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Each strand was then subdivided into several separate questions. In this case:

**Start:** Making learning intentions explicit at the start of lessons

**During:** Making them clear during and at the end of lessons

**Success:** Routinely making the success criteria (mark scheme) clear to students

**LI Assess:** Making learning intentions clear on assessed work

**LI hwk:** Making learning intentions clear on homework

It can be seen in the graph above that teaching staff feel there has been a highly significant change in their practice with respect to four out of five aspects of learning intentions. Less progress has apparently been made with respect to the communication of the learning intentions on students' homework.

### Strand 2: Questioning

In this case, the questions related to:

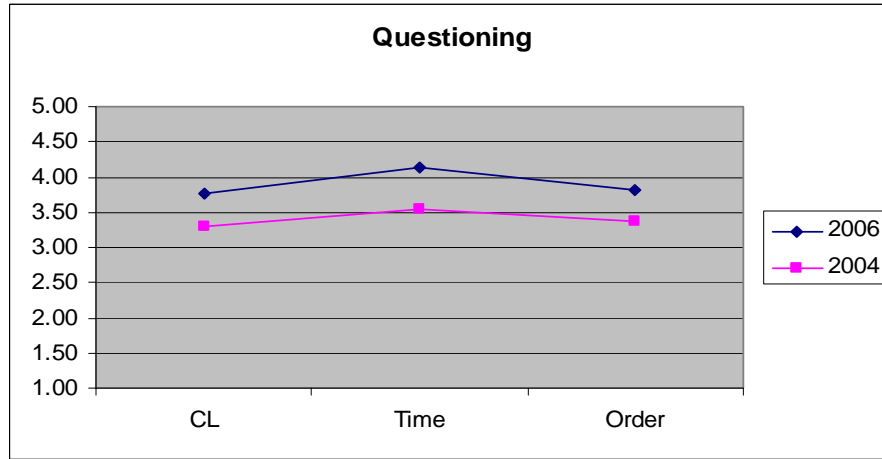
**CL:** Use of cooperative learning techniques.

**Time:** Giving students time to think before answering

**Order:** Use of higher order questions

These results suggest that the teaching staff feel that there has been a significant change in their practice with respect to their questioning style. This is especially true of their use of higher order questioning techniques, but less so in their use of cooperative learning strategies. This latter result may be explained by the fact that we had already started a lot of work on cooperative learning by the time the 2004 survey was completed.

YEAR THREE PROJECT 2005/2006



\* \*\* \*\* \*\* p<0.01  
\* P<0.05

Graph showing results for sub-divisions of the questioning strand

**Strand 3: Formative Teacher Feedback**  
In this case, the questions related to:

**Comment:** Use of comment only marking techniques rather than grades.

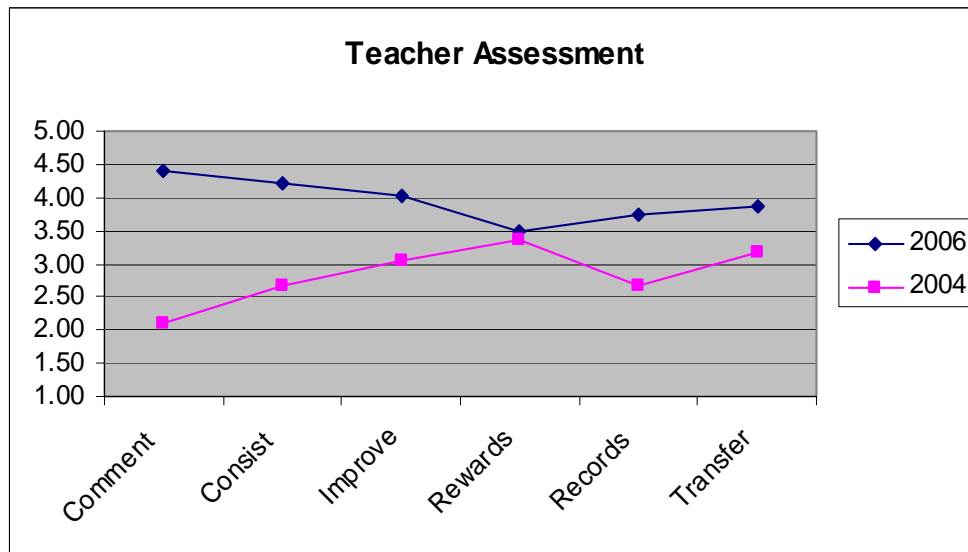
**Consist:** Having agreed departmental approaches for the provision of formative feedback.

**Improve:** Providing time for students to improve their work after it has been marked.

**Rewards:** using rewards to recognise progress/improvement rather than high performance.

**Records:** Recording formative as well as summative information about students.

**Transfer:** Transferring assessment information from one teacher to the next.



\*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \* \*\* p<0.01  
\* P<0.05

Graph showing results for subdivisions of the teacher assessment strand

**YEAR THREE PROJECT 2005/2006**

These results (see graph above) suggest that the greatest changes have been made with respect to the provision of formative feedback. In this respect, there seems to have been a culture change in our school as we move away from quantifying performance and towards providing constructive advice.

Our staff clearly feel reluctant to focus exclusively upon 'improvement' as a criteria for reward. In consequence, we intend to review our approach in this respect to allow the acknowledgement of sustained excellence as well as outstanding progress.

**Strand 4: Self and Peer Assessment**  
In this case, the questions related to:

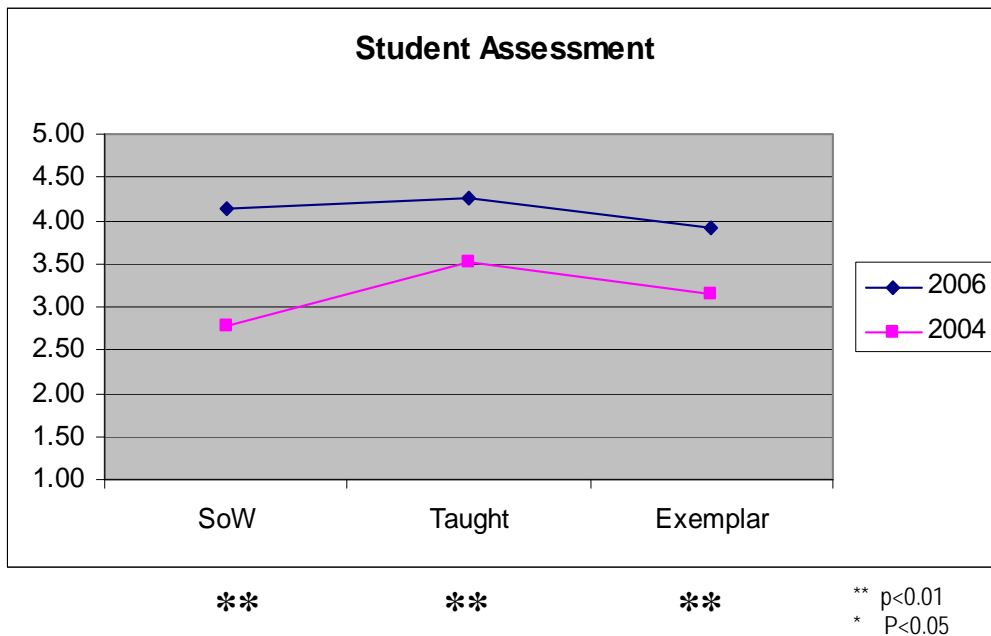
**SoW:** Allocating time in subject schemes of work for peer assessments to take place.  
**Taught:** Ensuring that students were taught how to assess each other's work correctly.

**Exemplar:** Using exemplar work to illustrate the standards expected.

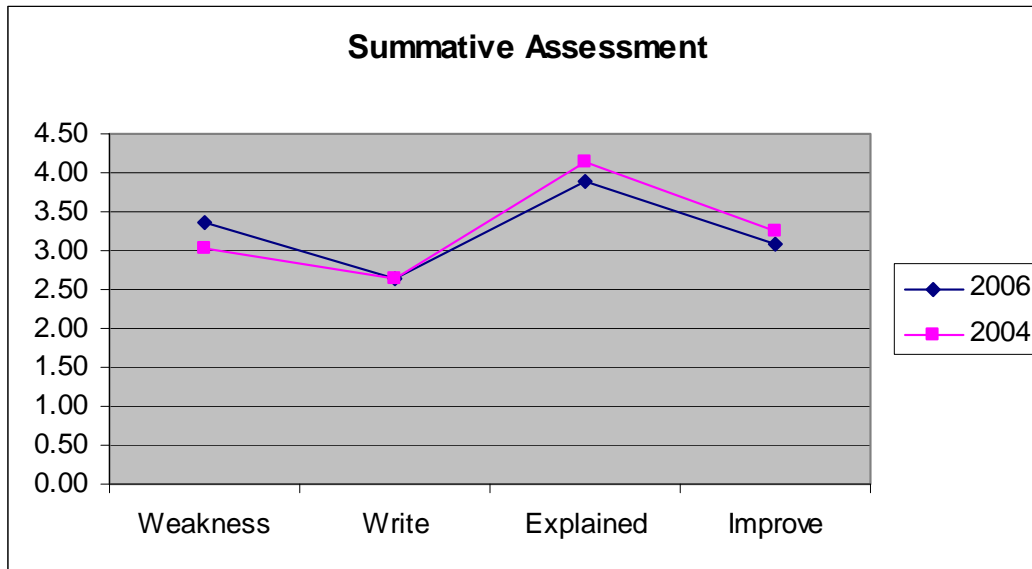
These results suggest that the teaching staff feel that there has been a highly significant change in their practice with respect to their use of self and peer assessment techniques (see graph below). Opportunities for this type of work are clearly much more frequently provided than was the case two years ago.

**Strand 5: Formative use of Summative Assessments**  
In this case, the questions related to:

**Weakness:** Structuring revision to allow the discussion of individual student weaknesses.  
**Write:** Providing opportunities for students to write test questions and papers.  
**Explained:** Explaining the test mark scheme to the students  
**Improve:** Allowing time for work to be improved after marks have been returned.



Graph showing results for subdivisions of the student assessment strand



*Graph showing results for subdivisions of the summative assessment strand*

The results in the graph above suggest that there has been no significant change in the way that we structure our use of summative assessments. In retrospect, we feel that the second question (about students writing exam questions – see Appendix 1) was too specific and could have been phrased to include other exam preparation strategies. We are conscious of the results in the ‘improve’ section and hope to address this in the year ahead.

**Objective 2: To gauge the Year 7 students’ views of the prevalence of formative assessment practices in their lessons and to compare this to the views of their teachers.**

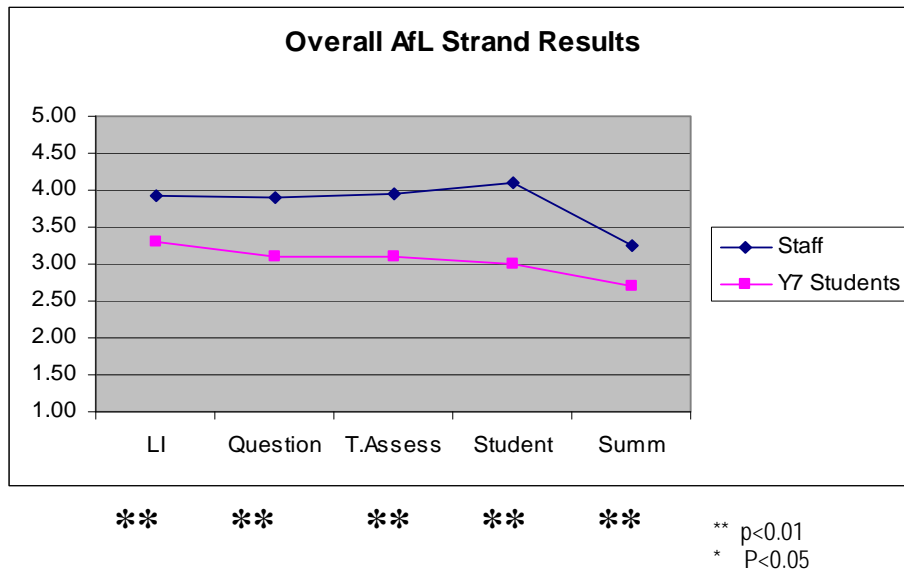
We produced two versions of our questionnaire – one for staff and another for students. This was necessary as we needed to make the questions easier for the students to understand and apply to their own experiences. As a result, we were unable to compare staff and student results for individual questions. However, the five strand themes remained consistent on both versions and this allowed us to produce the comparisons below.

There is clearly a highly significant difference between the views of our teachers and our students. The latter group are obviously less aware than their teachers of these techniques being used. There are two possible explanations for this result:

- a. The students’ picture is the more accurate version and their teachers have been excessively positive.
- b. The teachers’ version is more accurate and the students are simply not as aware of the processes being used.

It seems likely that both explanations are partially true. It is consequently important to consider the implications of both these conclusions.

If our teachers have been more positive in their review of their classroom practice than was justified, does this invalidate the earlier work described above? Is the progress that we believe has taken place since 2004 really a consequence of staff exaggeration? In our view, this is unlikely. We prefer to make the assumption that the staff’s responses in 2004 were similarly positive and that the progress reported in this paper is consequently real.



Graph showing a comparison between staff attitudes and Year 7 students' attitudes

The data presented later in this paper from another year group supports the suggestions that the progress reported by our teachers is being delivered in classrooms. However, even if we conclude that significant progress has been made in many areas, these results still present an important challenge for our school monitoring systems. We need to ensure that formative assessment experiences are being consistently provided in all subject areas. Some of the data presented later in this paper allows us to identify where our efforts in this respect ought to be concentrated.

While we have made great efforts to explain our formative assessment initiative to parents, we have taken less time effort to engage students in this process and help them to recognise the strategies that are being used and the rationale behind them. The results above highlight this issue. We hope to close the gap between the student and teacher results, not just by ensuring consistency of delivery, but also by equipping students with the expertise to recognise what is happening and the benefit it has for their learning.

**Objective 3: To investigate if the quality of provision of formative assessment experiences was significantly different between Year 7 subjects.**

Our Year 7 students completed two surveys on subjects that were randomly assigned to them. This gave us a total sample of nearly 500 returns. When these were divided across the 13 subjects offered in Year 7, this gave approximately 35 returns per subject. We were consequently able to compare the results returned by different curriculum areas. We tested this variation for significance and were consequently able to identify where 'in-school variation' was at its greatest. Those aspects of the questionnaire that returned significant results are summarised below.

Highly Significant In-School Variation (p<0.01)

We found highly significant variation between subjects in the following areas:

- a. Provision of improvement time after a piece of work had been marked.
- b. Frequency of peer assessment opportunities.

- c. The use of exemplar work to model the standards expected.
- d. Explanation of results following a summative assessment.

Significant In-School Variation (p<0.05)

We found significant variation between subjects in the following areas:

- a. Communication of learning intentions at the start of lessons
- b. Provision of opportunities for student-to-student discussion
- c. Use of higher-order questions
- d. The provision of improvement time following a summative assessment.

As a leadership team, this data has allowed us to identify which issues need to be prioritised in the year ahead. It also allows us to plan how to share expertise between departments to address any issues that exist and to identify where inconsistent practice is prevalent and to ensure that the necessary improvements are made. In this way, we may be able to close the gap between the views of the staff about what is happening in the classroom and what is reported by the students.

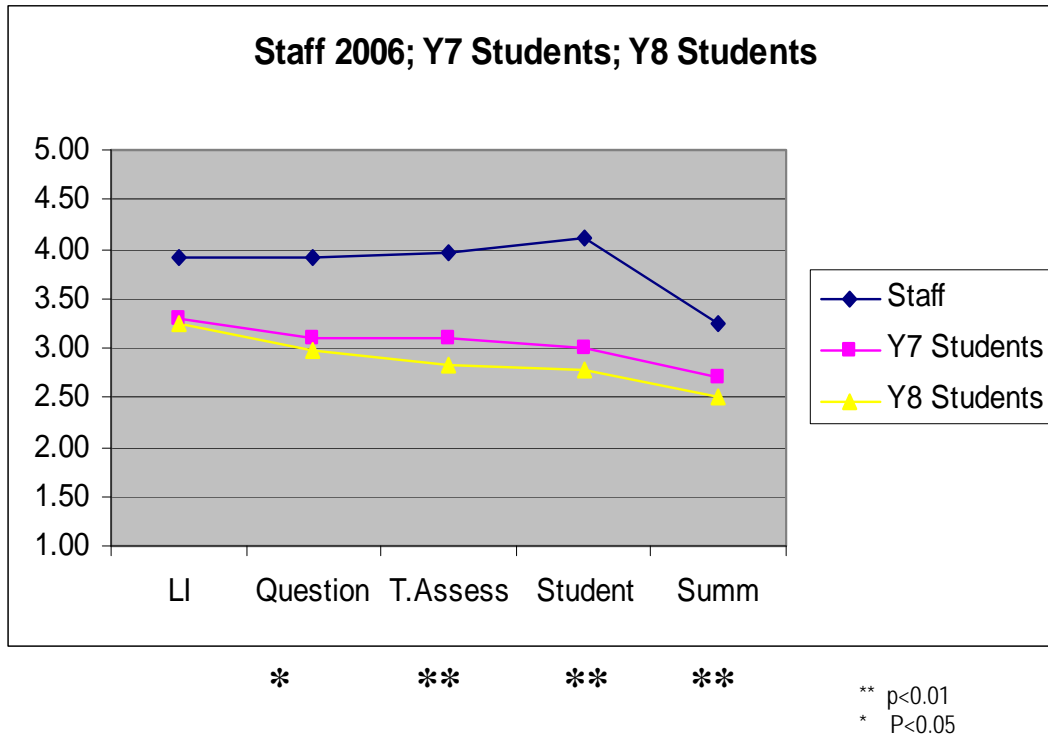
It is important to acknowledge at this point that some of our middle leadership team have been puzzled by the results for their subject. We suspect that the students found some of the questions difficult to interpret for some departments. For this reason, we hope to work with our departments in the year ahead to develop subject-specific versions of the students' questionnaire. Our intention is to retain the structure and content of the survey, but to change the phrasing to more closely match the processes used in different curriculum areas.

**Objective 4: To review if student responses suggested any progress had been made compared to the previous cohort (current Year 8).**

The process described for the Year 7 students was repeated with Year 8. When choosing to do this, we were aware that it provided a very demanding measure of our progress. We had been working on cooperative learning for at least 12 months longer than Assessment for Learning. As a result, many of our Year 8 students were already quite familiar with these techniques. In addition, it seemed unlikely that a teacher who was committed to emphasising learning intentions and formative feedback would stop doing this simply because they were working with a Year 8 group. It seemed inevitable that many of the techniques would be used more widely than in Year 7 alone – indeed this is something we would have actively encouraged. We consequently engaged in this part of our research without the expectation of identifying significant differences between Year 7 and Year 8 experiences.

The overall strand results for Year 7 and Year 8 are shown below. The staff (2006) results are also shown to complete the picture. The difference between the Year 7 and 8 results was tested for significance and this is indicated in the usual way. (The staff results were not used in this significance test).

The individual question scores were also compared to identify where Year 7 and Year 8 practice was different. Year 7 average scores were, without exception, higher than Year 8. These results have been listed below when the differences were sufficiently large to be measured as significant.



Graph showing a comparison between staff attitudes and Year and Year 7 students' attitudes

Highly Significant Difference (p<0.01)

We found Year 7 results to be higher than Year 8 by a highly significant margin in the following areas:

- a. Use of 'comment only' marking.
- b. The provision of improvement time after work had been marked.
- c. The provision of peer assessment opportunities
- d. Allowing time to improve summative assessments after they had been marked.

Significant Difference (p<0.05)

We found Year 7 results to be higher than Year 8 by a significant margin in the following areas:

- a. Reference to learning intentions during lessons.
- b. The use of 'think time' after asking a question.

- c. The use of higher order questions.
- d. Rewarding students for improving.

These results exceeded our expectations. In four of the five strands, Year 7 students report a significantly more formative experience than those in Year 8. This seems to support the teachers' view that assessment practices in Year 7 have become significantly more formative than was the case two years ago, even if the exact level and consistency of current practice is open to debate.

Closer analysis reveals two further points of interest in these results. Firstly, the results for 'learning intentions' suggest that our attempt to raise the profile of this issue has had equal impact in both cohorts. It seems likely that teachers who are making this an issue in their Year 7 lessons are carrying the practice through into Year 8. A similar pattern is apparent with respect to

questioning styles. Secondly, while the teachers' results presented earlier indicated that we had made little progress in our formative use of summative assessments, the students suggest otherwise. It is apparent that, although we have some way yet to travel, significant differences have emerged between Year 7 and Year 8 practice in this respect.

Student Interview Data

As well as the quantitative analysis above, we wanted to track changes in students' attitudes to formative assessment practices to see if there was a shift over the year. The October interviews tried to establish baseline data that can be grouped into four themes:

- Students' reaction to teachers marking their work;
- Students' reaction to their peers marking their work;
- What the students understood by marking; and

- The students' attitude to improving their work.

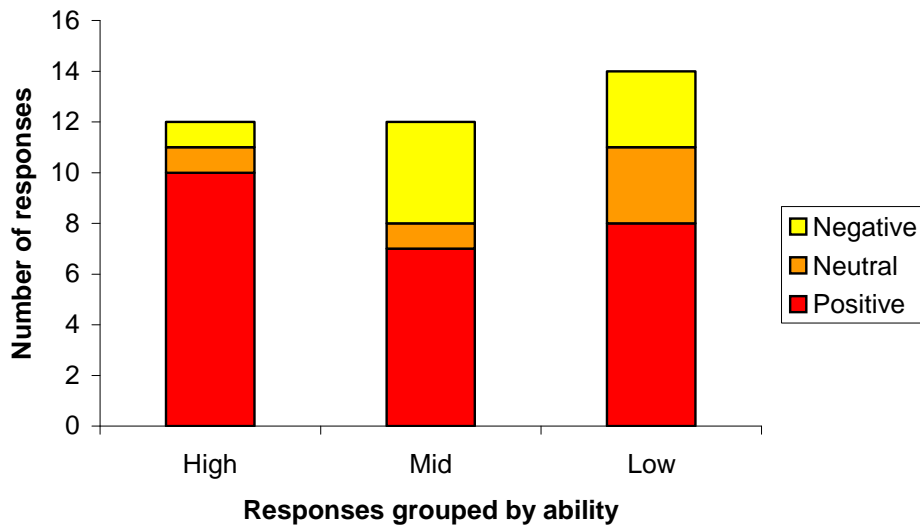
Theme 1: Students' reaction to teachers marking their work

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the students were positive, citing recognition by the teacher and confidence in the judgement of the teacher. More students in the middle and low Key Stage 2 score band were negative about the teacher marking work, giving reasons such as:

I don't like all the RED marks in my book.

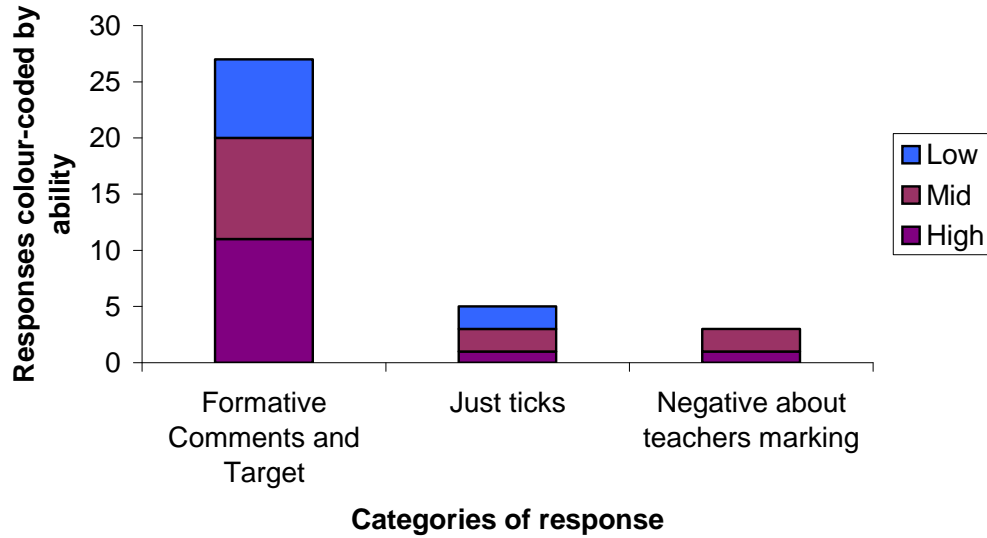
I don't like it because I don't like to know what I have done wrong.

This raises some interesting questions about the role of self-esteem and feelings of self-efficacy in successful learners and will be discussed further in the analysis of Q6. (Oct).



Q1. (Oct) How do you feel when a teacher marks your work?

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Q1. (July) How do teachers normally mark your work - is it ticks, grades, comments, targets etc.?

In July, students were still overwhelmingly positive about teachers marking their work, with just three negative comments, one about different teachers marking in different ways, one about not getting on with a teacher and one saying that it is more nerve-racking if a teacher marks your work. A follow-up part of the question focused on the nature of teacher marking. As a school we had tried to move to comment-based marking with grades restricted to once per half-term in English, Maths and Science and to twice a year in the other subjects. Encouragingly, the vast majority of the responses showed that the use of formative comments and targets was widespread, with the use of grades restricted to summative tests.

Theme 2: Students' reaction to their peers marking their work

Q2. (October) sought to establish a similar baseline for students' attitudes to peer-marking. Responses were more mixed. On the positive side, students stated that:

Other students can give you tips.

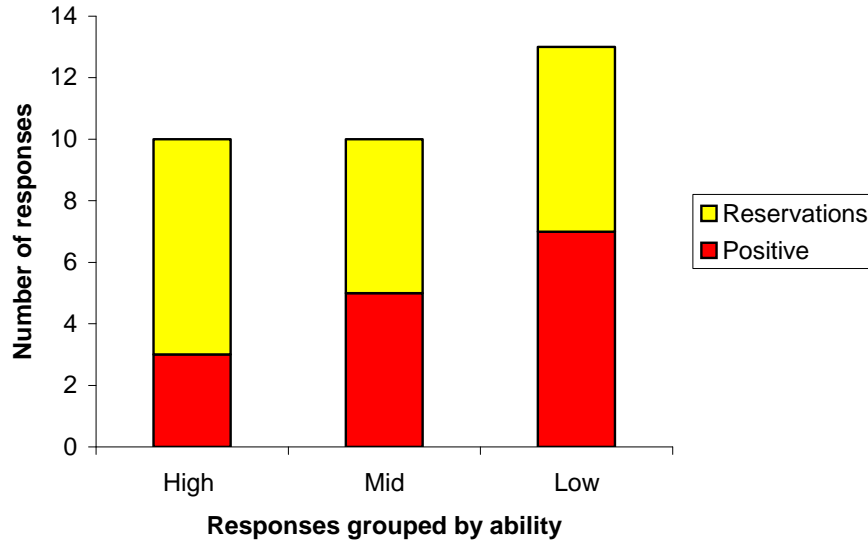
We can help each other.

It's good because the teacher hasn't seen it yet.

I can show them what I mean if they don't understand what I've put whereas when a teacher marks it I'm not there.

Of the reservations expressed, the most common themes were that friendship might influence the mark unfairly; that they did not want to hurt someone else's feelings; that it could be embarrassing; and that the other students might not understand. These concerns were particularly strong amongst the students with the highest KS2 scores.

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Q2. (Oct) How do you feel when another student marks your work?

Caroline Wood, a colleague in the Geography department who has played a leading role in the AfL initiative over the past two years, also conducted interviews with a different sample of students to assess attitudes to peer assessment (Wood, 2006) and similar reservations emerged, although peer assessment was viewed favourably overall.

The comment below is interesting in that it demonstrates that we still have a way to go before all our students are able to be accurate and consistent markers. However, it also demonstrates the success we have had in creating a culture of valuing and expecting formative comments:

By July, the number of those with reservations about peer marking had fallen from 18 to 8 equally spread across the groups of the sample. Students appear happier to trust their peers but concerns remain about competence:

They don't put the right answers, they will put something like this was a good effort not anything to work on or comment on how you did the work.

I don't like it because they mark things wrong when they are right. It really irritates me and I don't know how well I have done, therefore getting confused.

I don't mind just as long as they are confident that they know what they are doing.

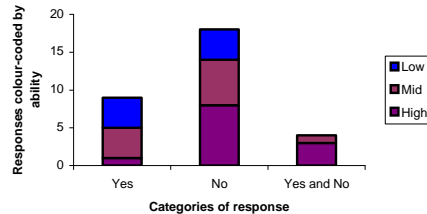
Q3. and Q4 (July) tried to address areas of particular concern from October interviews, namely bias from friends and not wanting to hurt people's feelings. By July, bias was less of a concern, with a majority of students more positive about their peers marking their work fairly. When asked to clarify why, they gave reasons such as having been trained to mark and having clear criteria; having more friends now and therefore feeling more confident; and also being confident that the teacher would effectively sort out any problems. Similarly,

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a majority of students now felt less anxious about upsetting others, reporting that they knew how to frame the comments positively; that everyone understood that that was how work was marked here and again, that they now knew their classmates much better.

Nevertheless, some concerns remained, with students commenting that they still felt that there was an opportunity for bias especially if the teacher was not proactive about dealing with the issue. Having to put comments on someone else's work was also still identified by a minority as a possible source of conflict with classmates. This was most strongly felt by those students in the middle or lower KS2 bands, perhaps because these students were more likely to receive more negative comments.

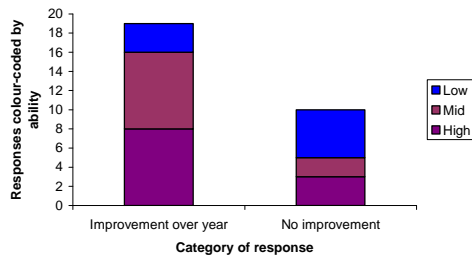
piece and, in fact, this is the way that some teachers are trying to move because, if students are feeling stressed about their peers seeing their mistakes, then their ability to assimilate formative comments on their work is potentially reduced.



Q4. (July) Are you still concerned about hurting others' feelings?

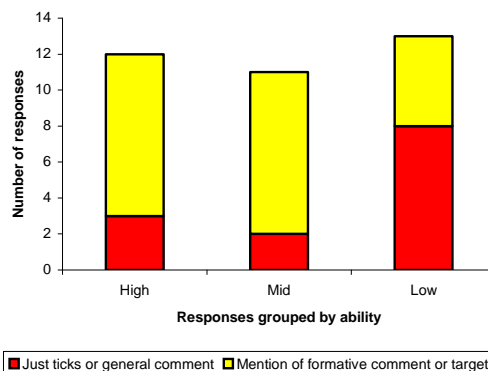
Theme 3: What the students understood by marking

Encouragingly, even in October, many of the students said that they would include a formative comment or target on a piece of work, although a substantial proportion, especially in the lower KS2 band would just use a tick or a general comment. Equally, most of the students (18) were confident about their capacity to tell if a piece of work was good or not. However, closer analysis showed that this was rather a false picture as 4 of these 18 made no reference to any external criteria, just using gut feeling and a further 3 said they would just compare the piece to their own work.



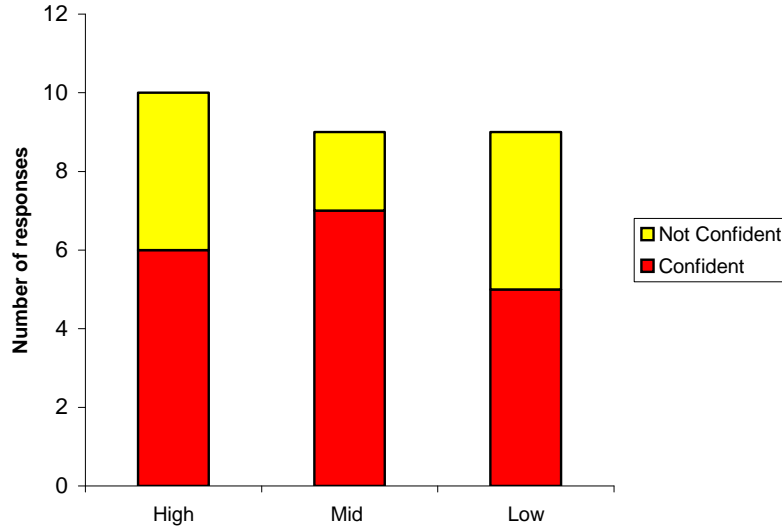
Q3. (July) Concern over friends marking work unfairly

One student said that they now marked other people's work less and tended to mark their own or mark an anonymous



Q3. (Oct) What types of things would you say or write if you had to mark someone else's work?

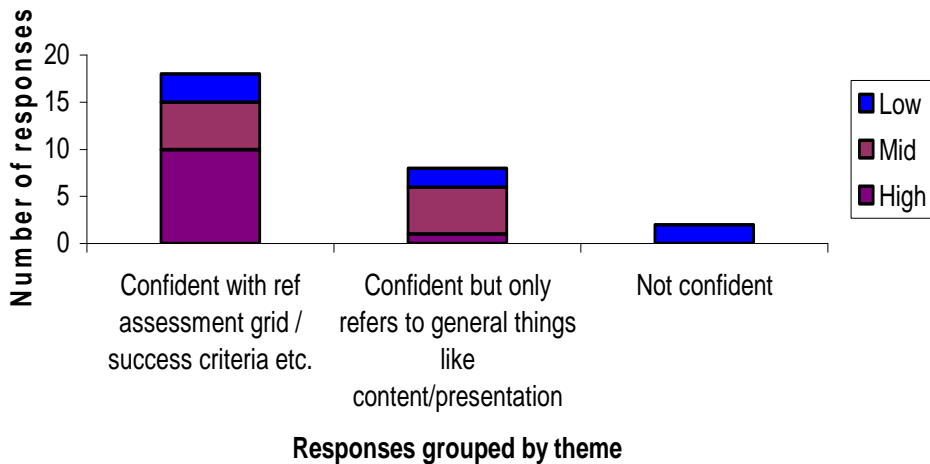
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Q4. (Oct) Would you be able to say if a piece of work was good or not? How would you know?

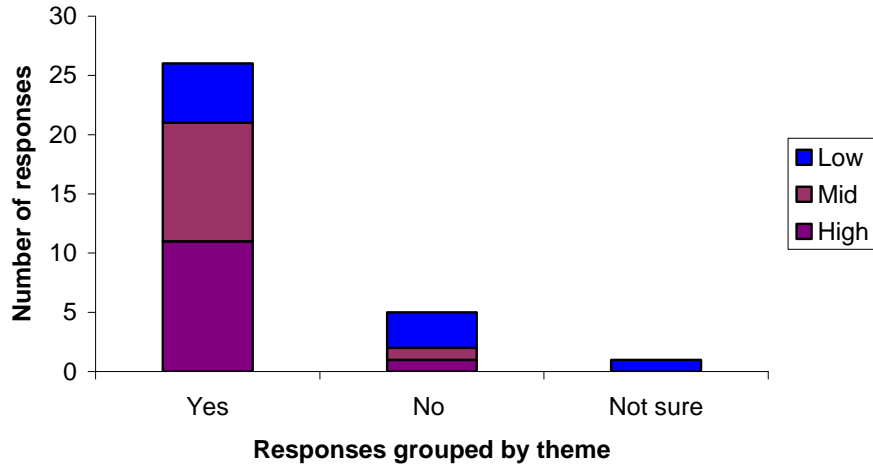
By July, more of the students were confident about marking work and, more importantly, they made reference to using an assessment grid, success criteria or a specification on which to base their judgement. Moreover, the July interviews showed that a majority of students felt that, over the year, they had got better at assessing work because they were familiar with the systems and had been taught how to do it. An area to develop will be how the weaker students access the process because they gave more negative responses to both Q5 and Q6, explaining

that they lacked confidence or did not understand how to use the feedback forms many subject areas had introduced. As we move the AfL initiative into Y8, whilst also refining Y7 in the light of our experience, it will be essential to address these concerns, especially as work done by a colleague in the Geography department over the past two years (Wood, 2005; 2006) has shown that it is the weakest students who have the most to gain from participation in AfL exercises.



Q5. (July) Would you be able to say if a piece of work was good or not?

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Q6. (July) Do you think you have improved at assessing your own and other people's work over the year?

Theme 4: The students' attitude to improving their work

Q5. (Oct) asked the students if they were often asked to improve their work after it had been marked and how they felt when asked. Some interesting strands can be seen in the quotations below:

**Top KS2 band:**

Sometimes it is annoying when you think you have done well.

Sometimes I feel like I can't be bothered but I still do it.

**Middle KS2 band:**

It's a pain – not again.

It is a pain doing them but I will always try and do them.

I don't like doing this because you have spent all that time working on that piece of work.

I don't like trying to improve my work because I might struggle.

I sometimes feel a little bothered about it because I feel like I've wasted my time doing bad work.

Lower KS2 band

I don't like doing work again.

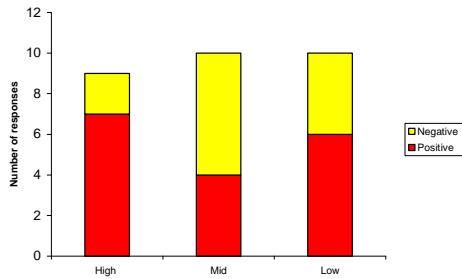
Yes. Often. I feel bored and stupid having to do it again.

Yes – I don't feel so good

Yes a lot of times. I feel a bit stupid.

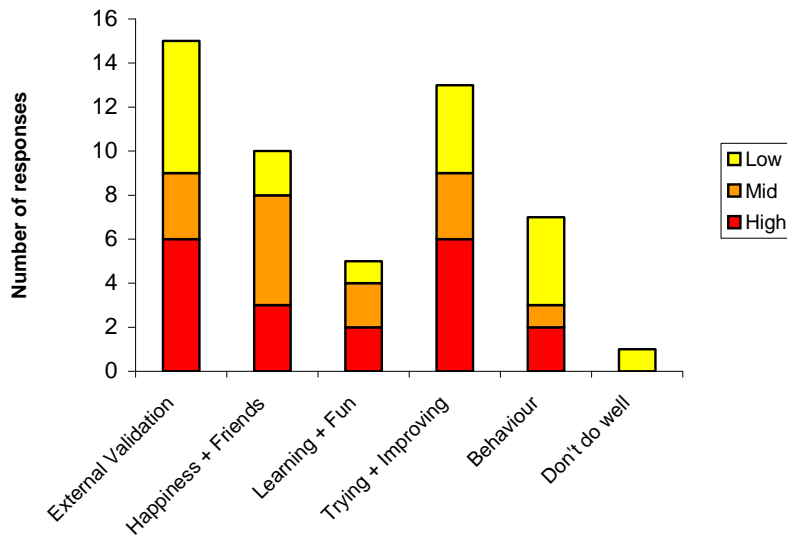
Only for house points

Notice how the negative feelings increase with the middle to lower KS2 band students. Obviously, a major task for the teachers would be to sell the benefits of improvement time to the students, which brings to mind Alastair Smith's concept of Radio WII FM- What's In It For Me?



Q5 (Oct) Are you often asked to improve your work after it has been marked? How do you feel when you are asked to do this?

As a more general background question in October, we also asked the students to

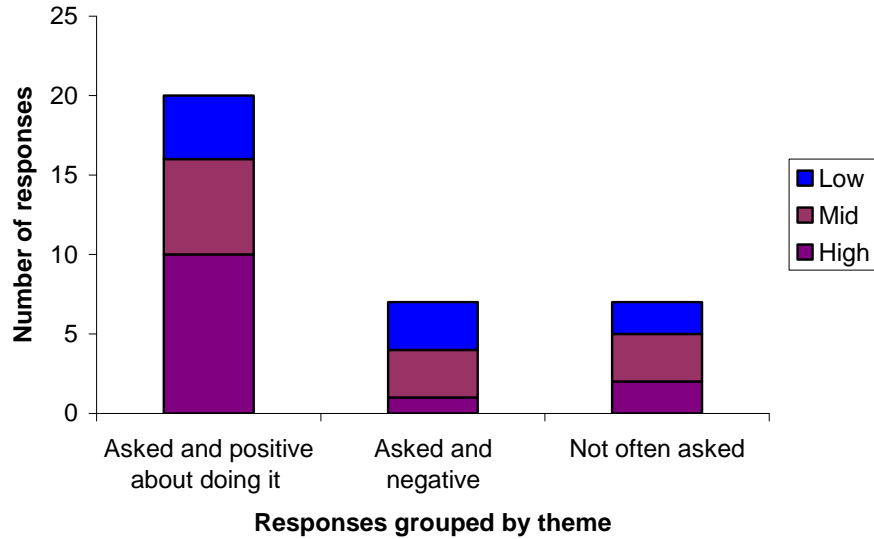


Q6 (Oct) What does "doing well at school" mean to you?

explain what doing well at school meant to them. Students had a completely free answer and their responses have been grouped by theme. Interestingly, the responses showed some variation dependent on the KS2 band. In both the high and low band, there was more emphasis on external validation such as comments from the teacher, good grades or house points, as well as more emphasis on trying and improving. The lower KS2 band students tended to associate doing well with behaviour.

The middle KS2 band placed a stronger emphasis on happiness and friends. Clearly, this is a crucial part of being at school, but it does pose some questions to be followed up, for example, does this emphasis on happiness and friends, combined with a more negative attitude to improving work, suggest that the middle band might underaspire? It was not in the scope of this study to investigate further, but the school is looking at how it can use attitudinal software such as PASS to help us identify this factor. It may also be of help in supporting students like the one who felt that they did not do well at school.

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Q8. (July) Are you often asked to improve your work after it has been marked? How do you feel about this?

Incorporating improvement time after work had been marked was a key area for development over the year. Encouragingly by July, the vast majority of the responses showed that the students were regularly being asked to improve their work, and more significantly, that most of them were positive about doing so. Although still split, more of the middle band students appeared to be able to see the value of such activities, despite finding it 'boring'. There remains a proportion of students who report that they are not being asked to improve their work and so greater consistency in this area is being set as a priority for curriculum leaders.

it was because it wasn't very good. But now I know that we are asked to do it because it will help us get a better level or grade. So I don't feel that my work is not good, but I know we are doing it to get a higher level.

Before, I didn't like to improve my work, but now it helps me understand things that I didn't understand because the teacher often goes over how to do the question.

Conducting the student interviews has been of tremendous benefit, giving us an insight into how our AfL work is being received and understood at classroom level. As has been discussed above, it shows that progress has been made in all four of the initial themes identified. It is very rewarding to obtain feedback that almost perfectly captures the L2L ethos, such as:

On the other hand, specific areas to be targeted for development can be identified from comments such as the ones below about improvement time, and these are being shared with staff via the middle leadership group:

When I was asked to improve my work at the start of the year I thought

Sometimes I don't see the point because they never look at it.

I don't like it because it means you have to do it again and they usually set it as homework, which is really boring.

### Extensions and Changes to the Method

At the outset of the Assessment for Learning part of this project, we were especially interested in evaluating the progress that was being made from the staff perspective. The instrument shown in Appendix 1 was developed with this purpose in mind. As the project progressed, we became much more interested in the students' experiences and whether they tallied with that reported by the staff. This gave rise to the instrument shown in Appendix 2 and to the student interview process. This somewhat belated consideration of the student perspective left us with an important problem when we came to analyse the results. While we had a baseline of the staff's views from 2004, we did not have one from the students. Thus, while we could easily gauge if opinions in the staff body had changed, we could not make a like-for-like comparison for the students. The only way we could gauge if the students' experience had changed between 2004 and 2006 was to compare the Year 7 student results with an older cohort. In retrospect, a comparison between the Year 7 2004 cohort and the Year 7 2006 cohort would have been more interesting.

It was evident in our discussions with staff that there was strong support for extending our initiative into Year 8 next year, despite the inevitable workload that this would create. At the time of writing, much of this preparatory work has been done and is currently being implemented in Year 8 classrooms. We hope that our review processes will reveal similarly strong support from our staff for further extending our work with into Year 9 and eventually into Key Stage 4.

As previously highlighted, important differences exist between the staff assessment of our current situation and that offered by our students. We hope to closely evaluate this issue over the coming year in two key respects. In the first place we aim to modify our research instruments so that they more accurately assess the range of experiences offered by different subject areas. In the second place, we hope to engage our students more actively in the research process. We hope to raise their awareness of the key issues being addressed in our school and to develop their skills in the evaluation of their own experiences.

## CONCLUSION

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### Developing this approach

Over the past three years we have made a substantial commitment in time and resources to introducing cooperative learning techniques, and, latterly, Assessment for Learning. We are very satisfied with the progress being made in embedding these approaches. We have successfully built the capacity within the school to scale up the initiatives from an initial group of enthusiasts to all the staff teaching Y7. Findings from Years One and Two are detailed in the relevant reports leaving this Year Three report to deal with three main areas:

- Specific findings from the AfL research;
- Our overview of the experience of participating in the project ;
- Our plans for the future.

### Specific findings from the AfL research:

In terms of AfL, the three most important findings from this study are:

- We have successfully moved our Year 7 assessment culture from one with a summative bias to one with a strong formative emphasis. This is evident in

both staff and student attitudes towards formative assessment.

- There is significant variation in the strength of provision for formative assessment strategies between different departments.
- Our students do not perceive the quality of our formative assessment provision to be as strong as their teachers, although they do recognise that significant progress has been made.

#### Overview of participation in the project

Changing teachers' classroom practice is notoriously difficult. We are consequently very encouraged to see the important improvements that our results suggest have been made over the last number of years. Yet this is not the most important benefit that has been derived from this project. The process of critical review and evaluation has allowed us to reflect upon our practice in a much more thorough, methodical and analytical manner than would typically be the case. Instead of relying upon limited evidence and patchy review processes, we have had to identify the factors that are particularly important to us in advance, set up processes where these can be measured reliably and then evaluate the outcomes systematically.

One strand that has emerged particularly powerfully has been the value of data gathered from the students. It has allowed us to receive a snapshot of practice in classrooms to supplement observation evidence and, as such, this evidence 'from the horse's mouth' provides a strong indicator that our teachers are learning to regularly incorporate the changes into their daily work. Our staff have responded very positively to comments from the students, meaning that data from questionnaires and interviews has been a powerful catalyst for sustaining and refining the initiative. The data generated from the students has also posed stimulating and challenging questions about how consistent we are

across departments and how explicit we are in sharing the learning process. It has also given us very specific areas to target, such as how can we ensure that the weakest students access the AfL process and how do we acknowledge and value how students have attempted to improve their work based on formative comments.

#### Our plans for the future

Building on our work so far with the students, we intend to create a student review group, trained in formative assessment techniques and aware of effective teaching and learning methodology. This group will give us feedback about how the CL and AfL initiatives are progressing. Longer term, we also want this group to be a forum via which students can make suggestions about what they enjoy and find useful in the learning process.

We will also extend the amount of individual action research going on in the school through the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Enquiry Group which will support teachers working on their own or in small groups to produce a piece of reflective enquiry based around Assessment for Learning / Cooperative Learning.

We will continue to use the expertise gained from the project to enhance our departmental monitoring processes, establishing clear expectations that the initiatives of the past three years are now becoming part of normal practice. Our experience over the past three years has shown us that it is essential to actively involve the middle leaders, because they are important in interpreting the initiatives for their own subject area, as well as playing a crucial role in monitoring that the developments are happening in the classroom. To facilitate this process, we have aligned self-evaluation and lesson observation processes to reflect our priorities and have found that this helps to

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maintain focus and momentum. As we move forward, we plan to increasingly expect departments to have evidence of contributions from student voice to their teaching and learning development agenda.

### Summary

Over the last three years we have been able to generate a wealth of evidence that indicates a substantial shift in practice at classroom level. This has been most marked in the Year Three project because of the number of staff and students involved.

The link between the school and the University of Newcastle has been beneficial, as it has provided a source of advice for the design of data collection tools, as well as supporting our analysis of the data gathered through the help of specialist software.

Schools are data-rich institutions but, through involvement in the project, we have become better at interrogating the data and formulating and testing out hypotheses. This has meant that, at a strategic level, the research process has had a significant positive impact on the school self-evaluation and school improvement process, allowing us to inform our planning with detailed data, specific to the context of our institution. Our systems for generating feedback from staff and students have been considerably strengthened and as a result, we feel that we are a better-informed learning organisation.

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APPENDIX 1

Teacher Version

Formative Assessment Review

We would like to know the strengths and weaknesses in our current practice with relation to formative assessment. We are very conscious, however, that the school's emphasis has historically been upon summative approaches. As such, many departments may feel unable to score themselves highly on a range of issues listed below.

The purpose of this exercise is to help us to set the school's priorities and to help you to set the priorities for your own department. As such, we would welcome an honest assessment of your current position.

We do not need you to write your name on this form. However, it would be helpful if you could indicate your department so that we know where to look for examples of good practice.

Department:

1. Clarifying the learning objectives and success criteria:

	1	2	3	4	5	
I rarely communicate lesson objectives to my students at the start of the lesson.						I regularly communicate lesson objectives to my students at the start of the lesson.
If I mention lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson, I rarely refer to them during and at the end of the lesson.						I regularly refer to the lesson objectives during and at the end of the lesson.
I do not make the success criteria for a unit of work explicit to my students.						Success criteria are routinely explained to students in a format that they understand.
I rarely explain the learning outcomes for work that I intend to assess.						The learning objective of assessed work is identified on all students work.
I don't explain the learning outcomes for homework to my students.						The learning objective of homework is identified on all students work.

2. Improving the quality of questioning / dialogue:

	1	2	3	4	5	
I rely heavily upon the use of traditional question/answer techniques.						I use cooperative learning strategies to manage the dialogue in my classroom.
Students are expected to answer most questions quickly.						Students are given time to think about / discuss responses to questions.
Most of the questions asked of students rely upon the recall of factual information.						Higher order questioning is a feature of my lessons.

Teacher Version

3. Improving the quality of marking / feedback / record keeping:

	1	2	3	4	5	
My assessed tasks typically report a mark or grade.						Most of my assessed tasks do not report a mark or grade. Instead I use a formative comment.
If I provide formative feedback, I do not do so a manner agreed within my department.						I use an agreed, consistent departmental approach to the provision of formative feedback.
I don't give students the opportunity to improve their work once it has been marked.						I routinely give students the opportunity to improve their work in light of the feedback they receive.
Displays, merit points, certificates etc. are only used to reward outstanding work.						We seek to use displays, certificates etc. to recognise and support progress.
We only record summative assessment data.						We record both summative and formative data.
Assessment data does not get transferred from one teacher to the next.						We transfer assessment data from one teacher to the next in an agreed format.

4. Involving students in the self/peer assessment in a methodical manner:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Schemes of work do not allow time for students to engage in self or peer assessment.						Opportunities to self and peer assess are included regularly in schemes of work.
I do not teach my students how to assess work.						I make a deliberate effort to teach students how to assess their own and others' work.
Students rarely discuss the completed work of others.						Completed work is used to model/discuss the standard expected.

5. Using summative tests in a formative manner:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Most of my revision lessons involve a quick review of the same content for the whole group.						I plan revision time in a way that allows students to identify and act upon their weak areas.
I do not teach students how to write questions and tests.						I teach my students how to write tests and sometimes use their suggested questions.
I do not usually explain the mark schemes to the students.						I routinely explain the mark scheme to my students.
I do not allow students time to re-work their examination answers.						I allow the students time to re-work examination answers.

Additional Comments (If Necessary)

APPENDIX 2

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Student Assessment Survey

We would like you to think about how you have been assessed this year in a particular subject. We do not need to know your name and we do not want you to name any teachers. We are only interested in your honest views about the assessment process. There are no right or wrong answers.

In order to make it easier for you, we are asking for you to think about a particular subject. Please write this subject in the box below:

Subject:

1. Learning objectives and success criteria:

	1	2	3	4	5	
I am rarely told at the start of the lesson what I am going to learn today.						My lessons often start with what we are going to learn today.
I am never reminded about the learning objectives during the lesson.						I am often reminded about the learning objectives during the lesson.
Lessons usually just end – we don't talk about what we have learnt.						Lessons often end by talking about what we have learnt today.
When I do written work in class, I am told what to do, but not how to do it well.						When I do written work in class, I am told what to do and how to make sure that it is done well.
My homework tells me what to do, but I never get advice about how to do it well.						When I am given homework, I am always given clear advice about how to do it well.

2. Questioning:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Only the people who put their hands up answer questions in our lessons.						We all get the chance to talk to other people at our table about questions that the teacher asks.
The teacher does nearly all of the talking in our lessons.						We get lots of chances to discuss ideas with other people at our table.
We are usually expected to answer questions very quickly.						We are often given time to think before we have to answer questions.
Most of the questions I am asked expect me to recall simple facts.						I am often asked questions that don't have simple answers – they make me think very hard.

3. Teacher Assessment and Rewards:

	1	2	3	4	5	
When my work is assessed, it always includes a mark or a grade.						Most of my assessed tests do not report a mark or grade. Usually I just get a comment.
When I get my work back, I am never asked to improve it.						I am often asked to improve my work after it has been marked.
If I am given a reward for my work (e.g. house points), it is usually because I have done the work better than most other people.						If I am given a reward for my work, it is usually because I have improved a lot since the last time.

4. Student Assessment:

	1	2	3	4	5	
I have never had a lesson when I have been asked to mark another student's work.						I am often asked to mark other students' work.
If I am asked to mark another student's work, I am not really taught how to do it properly.						When I mark another student's work, we spend a lot of time learning how to do it properly.
When we start a new task, we are never shown completed work from other students in our groups.						We often look at completed work from other students before we start a new task.

5. Tests:

	1	2	3	4	5	
I never get asked to write questions that could be used on tests.						I often get asked to write questions that could be used on a test.
When my test has been marked, nobody explains where I have lost marks and how I could improve.						When my test is marked, I am always told where I have lost marks and how I could improve.
I never get the chance to improve my exam paper after it has been marked.						I am always given time to improve my exam answers after they have been marked.

Additional Comments (optional)

Please add any comments that you would like to make about how your work has been assessed this year.