RLC Research Review: Feedback (Literacy Focus)

Context – Looked After Children:

According to c. 41 of the Children Act 1989, Looked After Children (LAC) are children that have been in the care of a local authority and provided with accommodations for a continuous period of more than 24 hours. A child up is eligible for the LAC designation until they turn 18, return home, or are adopted (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [NSPCC], 2021). The education of LAC in England is supported through key legislation and policy:

- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which amends aspects of the Children Act 1989 and reforms the care system of LAC,
- The Children and Families Act 2014, which specifies that local authorities must appoint at least one person to support the educational achievement of LAC, and
- Statutory guidance from the DfE (2021a), such as how to promote the emotional and behavioural development of LAC.

As of 31 March 2020, there were 80,080 LAC in England, representing nearly 1 in every 100 pupils attending school (DfE, 2021). While already a striking number, it has been growing year over year since 2008, increasing by over 15% since 2015. The majority of these children are placed in the care of their local authority due to abuse or neglect (63%), while the remaining are placed into care due to family dysfunction (14%), family in acute distress (8%), absent parenting (7%), child's disability (3%), parent's illness (3%), or other issues (2%) (DfE, 2021).

About 10% of LAC move between three or more placements each year, putting them at significant risk regarding their well-being and positive behavioural outcomes. Moreover, a large and growing body of evidence suggests that LAC may suffer from established behaviour patterns developed throughout early childhood that negatively impact their ability to thrive in typical educational settings without specific attention to their social-emotional and academic development. At the same time, LAC are far from a homogenous group of children. They vary by age (ranging from under 1 year up to 18 years), ethnicity, gender, reasons for being looked after, placements (e.g., foster placement, living independently), legal status (e.g., care order, voluntary agreement), locality of placement, and support needs.

The DfE's (2021) most recent data from 2019 on outcomes for LAC finds the following:

- four times more likely to have a special educational need;
- nine times more likely to have an education, health, and care plan;
- lower educational attainment non-looked after children at
    - key stage 1 in reading, writing, and mathematics, and science (26 percent fewer reached the expected standard);
    - key stage 2 in reading, writing, and mathematics (28 percent fewer reached the expected standard), though this outcome appears closely related to the prevalence of pupils with a special education need;
    - key stage 4 in the average Attainment 8 score (44.6 versus 19.1), percentage of pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and mathematics (40.1 versus 7.2), and English baccalaureate average point score (3.87 versus 1.52).

In general, LAC are more likely than non-looked after children to have mental health issues, additional or special education needs, and lower educational attainment. Finally, after leaving care, they are also less likely to be in education, training, or employment (NSPCC, 2021). See the sources below for more in-depth examinations of the complex and multi-faceted circumstances and outcomes LAC face.

Department for Education. (2021). *Statistics: Looked-after children*. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. (2021, August 6). *Statistics: Looked-after children*. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children

Oakley, M., Miscampbell, G., & Gregorian, R. (2018). *Looked-after children: The silent crisis*. Social Market Foundation.
Sebba, J., Berridge, D., Luke, N., Fletcher, J., Bell, K., Strand, S., Thomas, S., Sinclair, I., & O'Higgins, A. (2015). *The educational progress of looked after children in England: Linking care and educational data*. Rees Centre, University of Bristol.

Title:

Key texts:

Colin, J., & Quigley, A. (2021). *Teacher feedback to improve pupil learning: Guidance report*. Education Endowment Foundation.

Flórez, M. T. and P. Sammons (2013). *Assessment for learning: Effects and impact*. CfBT.

See also: http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk (ongoing research on powerful learning conversations, learner response systems, making teaching and learning visible and the Anglican Schools Partnership Effective Feedback)

Other reading:

Hattie, J. (2013). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement, Routledge.

Wiliam*, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C. and Black, P. (2004). 'Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement'. *Assessment in Education,* 11 (1), 49-65

Method:

Colin et al. (2021): The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guidance report on teacher feedback sought to disentangle the complex web of evidence about feedback and its impact on pupil attainment. The main findings from the review are intended to inform the approaches adopted by primary schools, secondary schools, and further education providers, with pupils in the age rage of 5-18 years as the central focus. As the report outlines, three sources of evidence were integrated:

- "a systematic review of the evidence on teacher feedback led by Dr Mark Newman at the EPPI-Centre—Dr Newman and his team have reviewed and analysed the evidence on teacher feedback interventions published after 2000;
- the expertise of an advisory panel—the recommendations draw on the expertise of academics and current practitioners. These include Caroline Bilton, Clare Christie, Megan Dixon, Harry Fletcher-Wood, Professor Steve Higgins, and Andy Tharby; we also thank Professor Ruth Dann for her guidance at the outset of the project and Professor Dylan Wiliam for his support in drafting recommendations; and
- research on current practice, including Feedback in Action, a review of current feedback practice in English schools led by Dr Velda Elliott and her team at the University of Oxford (2020) and funded by the EEF; this review conducted surveys with 247 primary teachers (from 194 schools) and 144 secondary teachers (from 113 schools), alongside interviews and case studies in 2019." (see p. 6)

Flórez and Sammons (2013): In this key text, the authors searched for *assessment for learning* research using several major international databases, concentrating on English and Spanish publications. Of 478 relevant search results, 33 were selected on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria related to quality, relevance, context and date (1998 – 2010). Six articles were *meta-analyses or literature reviews and the remaining 27 were individual research projects. The authors are highly respected in the fields of educational assessment and school effectiveness.

*NB: Meta-analyses are statistical methods for aggregating and standardising the results of many studies that look at the same effect but where each uses different measurements. From a meta-analysis, an effect size can be calculated to give an indication of the overall strength of the effect of a variable, such as feedback. Hattie generally considers an effect size to be worthy of particular consideration only once it is greater than 0.4 since almost all innovations create some small but positive effect. An effect size of 1.0 indicates advancement in learning by a whole year or a two-grade leap in GCSEs.

Overview of the Issue or Subject:

Research on the effectiveness of feedback centres largely on *assessment for learning* (AfL) and the value of formative assessment in particular. As such, each concept as well their inter-relationship is considered in this research overview about feedback with a literacy focus. Where possible, this overview highlights research findings within the context of literacy.

Assessment for Learning Definition:
The Assessment Reform Group (ARG) provide the most commonly used definition of AfL:

Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence.

An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs.
(Black et al., 2004, pp. 2-3, as cited in Flórez et al., 2013, p. 3)

The definition that the authors give links assessment to an idea of learning that is about constructing knowledge, rather than traditional transmission ideas of knowledge (teacher to student). Thus, the focus of AfL is on improving learning rather than quantifying/proving current levels of knowledge.

Principles of Assessment for Learning:
As outlined below, the ARG outline 10 principles of AfL grouped into four key areas. When it comes to the generation of effective feedback, the EEF's (2021) school leader implementation guide underscores that "the principles of effective feedback likely matter more than the methods through which it is delivered" (p. 2). Accordingly, it is critical to develop a deep understanding of how AfL (and feedback) principles can inform school and classroom practices.

1. AfL is part of effective planning 2. AfL is central to classroom practice 3. AfL promotes understanding of goals and criteria	These first three principles can be understood as a whole. In brief, they refer to the need to recognise assessment not as a mere accessory to pedagogical practice, but as an integral part of it. Assessment must be intertwined with all the moments of a learning process and, thus, must be considered when planning. For this to happen, teachers must define clear learning goals or criteria and be able to share them with students in an understandable way. Along with this, students should be constantly reminded of these criteria or learning goals during the learning process, their learning evaluated and feedback given to analyse the progress of students and take decisions according to this evidence.
4. AfL is sensitive and constructive 5. AfL fosters motivation 6. AfL recognises all educational achievement	This second set of principles is related to the impact of assessment in shaping students' motivation, especially in terms of the nature of the feedback they receive. Teachers should be careful in what they say to students and try to give descriptive feedback exclusively centred on the quality and content of each student's work rather than use value-laden terms such as 'good' or 'poor'. They should also suggest ways for students to improve their work. In the context of AfL, there is not only an excellence level which all must achieve in order to have recognition; any learning progress made by the student in relation to his or her previous state deserves recognition and positive feedback.
7. AfL focuses on how pupils learn 8. AfL helps learners know how to improve 9. AfL develops the capacity for peer and self-assessment	The process through which students learn must be a focus of attention in classroom practice, both for teachers and students. This involves developing awareness in the student about his or her learning processes, and increasing autonomy through practices of peer and self-assessment in order to support students in developing their own responsibility for their learning. Giving feedback to students on how to improve, and not just on their mistakes, also contributes to the development of autonomous thinking and learning.
10. AfL is a key professional skill	This principle highlights the complexity involved in taking assessment for learning into practice, as it requires teachers to learn how to work from this perspective and to develop the necessary skills for doing so. The ARG recognises here the need for good quality professional development programmes as a fundamental requirement for the successful implementation of assessment for learning in classroom practice.

Source: CfBT report (p. 6)

An analysis of the four areas (10 principles) reveals links with other important areas in educational research:

- For principles 1-3, there is a clear link with research on achievement orientation. Pupils can be motivated to compare their achievements with others (a performance orientation) or to develop and master skills and competencies (a mastery or learning orientation). Much research shows that pupils with a learning orientation are more motivated and resilient in the face of failure and attain more desirable outcomes than students with a performance orientation.

- Principles 4-6 link to Carol Dweck's work on mindsets, in which she suggests that praise should be limited to pupils' efforts and strategies rather than be evaluative of their abilities. The former encourages a growth mindset (a belief that ability can be much enhanced through one's own efforts) and the latter encourages a fixed mindset (the belief that ability is an immutable characteristic).

- Principles 7-9 are resonant with much research on metacognition and learning-oriented classrooms. The focus of this research is that learning and classrooms are much more effective when pupils are encouraged to reflect on and develop their learning skills; that is, how to learn.

- The last principle highlights a key concern of AfL research, which is that assessment practices must be seen as embedded within teaching and learning processes overall. Learning strategies

are not enough; for implementation to be effective and lead to improved learning (and therefore achievement), teachers must have a deep and reflective understanding of AfL principles.

Overall, a reading of this research area suggests that AfL is a complex, multi-layered issue. As such, and this will be returned to below, research on the effectiveness of AfL can be elusive.

Four key areas of research emerge from the literature on AfL, these are: questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment, and the formative use of summative assessment.

Questioning:
Consistent findings have emerged about the importance of questioning style. Most teachers use mainly closed questions which encourage a shallow, surface level checking of understanding. Greater use of open questions to develop higher order patterns of thinking are encouraged. Teachers need to give greater thinking time having asked questions, and greater time should be given for children to respond, in order for pupils to elaborate and explain their answers. In order to achieve this, a classroom climate conducive to dialogue must be created, where mistakes are welcome and where teachers are seen to be learning from students as well as vice versa.

In relation to teaching the purpose and use of an apostrophe for example, the EEF's guidance report suggests that rather than pose broad questions such as "When should an apostrophe be used?", which does little to elicit misconceptions and learning gaps, teachers could present a variety of phrases (e.g., "hes very happy") and ask pupils where apostrophes should be added. One recent project funded by the EEF called Embedding Formative Assessment has examined the use of more effective questioning (among other formative assessment strategies) among 140 secondary schools. On average pupils made the equivalent of two additional months of progress in their Attainment 8 GCSE score, and follow up studies have found these benefits may be greatest for children in lower prior attainment groups.

Feedback
As an overall factor, feedback has been shown to have one of the largest effect sizes on student achievement. Evidence compiled by the EEF suggests effective feedback may be able to advance pupils' achievement by about 5-7 months, with low attaining pupils finding the greatest benefit. However, this is based on hundreds of studies and only reveals an overall average finding. Generally, feedback refers to "information given by a teacher to pupil(s) about their performance that aims to improve learning" (EEF, 2021, p. 7). Four aspects of feedback are thought to underpin its capacity to improve pupil learning:

Source: EEF (2021, p. 7)

Recent research shows that comment-only feedback is superior to grade- or mark-only feedback. Feedback needs to be 'informative and descriptive' and should help students show where they are in relation to the learning goals and give strategies and advice on how to bridge the gap. By contrast, marking is less helpful when it focuses on pupils' personal characteristics or their positional level relative to other children in the class. The latter reinforces a performance orientation and can lead to maladaptive learning strategies, such as avoiding practising or trying new learning approaches. Classroom studies by Ofsted into the marking of spelling and punctuation show that this aspect of literacy is corrected more in primary than Year 7 classrooms, but that the marking is often inconsistent, lacking in guidance for learning linked to the corrected mistake. Suggestions from research into marking show the possibility of links between marking correct answers (e.g., spelling) and formative assessment. This highlights giving children the opportunity to find their own mistakes, using clear guidance, and then correct them.

While plenty of research indicates that effective formative feedback approaches lead to increased pupil attainment, the research is often limited in that it fails to separate out the effect of the feedback from the wider approach within which it was used (e.g., whole group approaches or direct instruction). As well as suggesting the need for more research in this area, this issue points to the need for teachers to see formative assessment as part of a toolkit of effective strategies that underpins the use of other techniques, such as questioning skills.

Evidence from inspections over the years shows that many teachers are not effective at providing children with the feedback they require to help them evaluate their work and identify what or how to improve. In general, most feedback is too little, too late, too vague, and too impersonal. The timing of feedback was found to be key in the Transforming Writing Project where teachers identified instant feedback from teachers and peers as particularly significant. Teachers reported that when children read or heard instant or "next day" meaningful assessments of their own writing there was a clearer link to improvement in the quality of their writing. Building in time to respond is crucial to the successful assessment of writing. Children need a "couple of minutes built in for revision" to read and respond to assessments as part of routines at the beginning of writing lessons. Instant feedback also has an impact on peers who witness and learn from other children's revisions. This feedback needs to be very focused, on one writing tool or feature of writing, which children can tackle to create an immediate improvement. A further dimension in response to feedback was the initiation of mini-writing lessons. Children chose to participate related to their own assessment of need, based on self, peer or teacher feedback.

Reviews of dialogic teaching suggests exploratory talk, argumentation, and dialogue support high-level thinking through engaging teachers and pupils in co-construction of knowledge. In the Transforming Writing project, for example, teachers constructed dialogic talk spaces for children to collaboratively talk about and assess their own writing. This process was actively modelled by teachers using the teachers' own writing. The spaces were provided through the use of visualisers to show writing to whole class or small groups throughout a sequence of literacy lessons.

The Purposes of Feedback

One major international literature review found that feedback either comes from the student to the teacher or from the teacher to the student. This mutually iterative dynamic should inform the whole teaching and learning process. John Hattie, the distinguished New Zealand academic, suggests that important feedback is that which the teacher derives from the student in order to be able to adapt teaching in a suitable way to take learning a stage further. Another aspect of student-teacher feedback is that when teachers write comments on pupils' work, pupils are also able to evaluate the usefulness and the quality of their own learning tasks and make appropriate adaptations to improve their learning.

Much of the emphasis on techniques in feedback concerns that which teachers give to students in order to enhance their learning. A range of techniques are used, including: two stars and a wish, now and next steps, traffic-lights, comments only, comments linked to criteria, end of lesson review, peer review, progress reports, reflective portfolio comments, computer-generated feedback and the use of rubrics. The relative successes of such techniques have not been widely researched however, so schools should evaluate their use carefully. Where these are suggested to be effective, it is not known whether it is the

technique itself or the way in which the strategy promotes other aspects of learning, such as collaborative group work.

The literature on feedback draws an essential distinction between person-focused feedback (e.g., "*Great sentence; you are a superstar!*") and feedback focused on the task, subject, or self-regulation (e.g., "*You have learned more about how writers use adverbs for effect today. Could adverbs add to the atmosphere you are building around your character?*").

Assessment used to adjust groupings to context (e.g., for small group teaching) has been found to have a positive impact on the progress of lower achieving groups in literacy (particularly writing). This finding is supported by other research studies where flexibility in planning enables the teachers to respond quickly to children's emerging needs.

Peer and Self-Assessment
Peer and self-assessment have varied goals and purposes. These can emphasise metacognition, collaborative learning or greater autonomy in learning. Peer assessment can be useful in providing additional formative assessment and research suggests that pupils will often accept the comments of peers more readily than those of the teacher. Related to this, peer tutoring has been shown to be highly effective in raising achievement and that the benefits flow both ways, sometimes benefitting the 'expert' in the relationship even more than the 'novice'. Successful implementation of peer and self-assessment has found to be difficult; pupils are sometimes not sufficiently aware of the learning objectives to make useful comments, teachers can doubt the usefulness of peer comments, and schools are sometimes reluctant to sanction methods that appear to take control away from teachers and give it to pupils. Potential strategies include: self-assessment journals, traffic lights, question setting, concept mapping, colouring squares for goal statements, and jigsawing. The relative merits of these approaches requires further research.

The formative use of summative assessment
Some research has focused on the contradictory demands made by standardized tests of attainment (used to judge the school as well as the pupil) and the principles of formative assessment. This perspective sees summative and formative assessment as having entirely different purposes. However, when looking at the processes of summative assessment, many teachers report how such tests are also used for formative purposes. Other research shows that pupils sometimes use summative feedback to identify future learning goals. Therefore, the distinction between summative and formative assessment is, at times, a false one. Approaches to harmonise the two forms of assessment have included: asking students to formulate exam questions, reviewing examination results collectively, peer assessment of summative results and traffic lighting. Notwithstanding the value of using summative assessments formally, the existence of high stakes testing is seen by the ARG as one of the main barriers to effective implementation of AfL.

Moderation
Teachers' judgements and interpretations of assessment data are fundamental in achieving greater coherence between system level accountability and local level assessment practice. While many agree that standards can be used as a lever to improve the reliability of teacher judgement, especially when marker training and reliability checking are employed, there is uncertainty about how teacher-generated classroom evidence can be used by education systems to report and track achievement over time. Research suggests that professional judgement is not reliant exclusively on the availability of stated standards. *Moderation* can provide opportunities for teachers to use their own judgements of assessment data and integrate these with those of other teachers, and in so doing share interpretations of criteria and standards. This form of moderation is referred to as 'social moderation' or 'consensus moderation' and involves groups of teachers meeting to discuss and negotiate assigned grading of student work to reach consensus about the quality of that work. Teacher-based assessment is viewed as having high validity

(meaning) but questionable reliability (consistency across settings). Central to addressing the latter is a strong focus on (1) teacher assessors developing a common understanding of the standards and (2) 'similar recognition of performances that demonstrate those standards'.

Research into strategies to support the moderation process has found that training in the use of standards to develop individuals' judgement needs to be distinguished from training in moderation practices aimed at matching standards to student work. Added to this is the importance of tackling the tension between tacit knowledge that is learnt through experience and is not easily articulated, and explicit knowledge, including that related to supplied assessment artefacts (e.g. the guide, annotated student work samples). Some researchers argue that providing a definite framework within which educational assessment can be made, using the dual approach' (i.e. explicit statements and exemplars along with tacit knowledge) can form a basis for whole school and wider context moderation.

The strength of the research overall
Overall, many studies confirm the usefulness and value of AfL and feedback. However,

- Research into assessment for learning has thrown up a number of issues which threaten the validity of the evidence in this area. Most research has focused on teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of AfL practices. Less has been researched on the pupils' perceptions of its use.

- Research on AfL has largely been unable to separate out the individual effect of AfL on student achievement. AfL practices are often used in conjunction with other strategies and techniques, so the relative contribution from these or other confounding variables has not been established. The CfBT (2013) report states that "There is only one quantitative study that has been conducted which was clearly and completely centred on studying the effect of AfL on student outcomes. This produced a significant, but modest, mean effect size of 0.32 in favour of AfL as being responsible for improving students' results in externally mandated examinations" (p. 17). However, even this study had several methodological limitations to it, such as the way student achievement was measured and the nature of the control group. More recently, the EEF's (2021) guidance report found that "the evidence regarding the timing and frequency of effective feedback is inconclusive" (p. 19).

- It is not always clear what is meant by AfL in the research. Considerable confusion arises in this area and studies that test the effects of AfL practices sometimes do not meet the definition provided by the ARG (even research they cite themselves). This might be partly to do with the lack of theoretical precision about what is meant by concepts like 'formative assessment' and separating out purpose versus process. Other concepts, such as *academic self-concept*, *implicit theories of learning* (mindsets), and *achievement orientation* have a clearer theoretical basis in the psychology of learning and motivation, and therefore lend themselves to more precise testing and verification of their efficacy in learning situations.

Other effects on pupils and teachers of AfL
AfL tends to encourage active participation in lessons and can improve pupils' self-concept in relation to their learning. Its principles also encourage open dialogue and a non-threatening environment in which learning can be derived from mistakes. AfL can help shift students' learning away from performance orientation (comparing to others) and more to a mastery or learning orientation, in which they focus more on aspects of the task and improving their skills and competency. As pupils are encouraged to self and peer assess, they take more control of the learning environment and can become self-regulated learners. The shift away from test results to comments also means that lower achieving students can become especially motivated as a result of AfL efforts.

AfL also enables teachers to shift from becoming content deliverers to facilitators of learning environments and processes who monitor and support pupils' progress. Participation in good quality AfL programmes has been found to be highly beneficial for teachers' professionalism as a whole.

Options or Questions Regarding Key Issues and Debates:

How could my feedback and teaching practices support learners to hear and begin to develop their own internal 'voice' as a communicator?

Are my groupings flexible and related to the needs of the learners in my class?

Building in time to respond is crucial to the successful assessment of writing. Children need built-in time for revision to read and respond to assessments as part of routines at the beginning of writing lessons. Instant feedback also has an impact on peers who witness and learn from other children's revisions. This feedback needs to be focused—on the task, subject, or self-regulation—in order to move learning forward. To what extent are current school feedback policies and practices aligned with these dimensions of effective feedback? How could person-focused feedback be reframed to make it less vague or general regarding next steps?

Which of the following problems of implementation, highlighted in the CfBT (2013) and EEF (2021) reports of effective AfL and feedback practices may need to be addressed in your school?

- lack of commitment from senior staff;
- contradictions between the aims of national testing systems and AfL, which can lead to teachers opting to focus their teaching towards the former;
- lack of appropriate disciplinary knowledge or assessment skills in some teachers;
- superficial understanding of AfL, which adversely affects the quality of it in practice;
- resistance to promoting greater student participation and less teacher control of the learning process in the classroom; and
- a one-size-fits-all approach in terms of the appropriate method or time for delivering feedback.

What considerations will you need to make in order to evaluate the effectiveness of feedback and marking strategies?

Do the principles of AfL underpin existing strategies that promote learning at the school? Could they be used to enhance their effectiveness?

Potential Implementation Issues to Consider:

Although the costs and issues with implementing AfL and feedback are very low, some issues still need to be considered. First, the implementation of feedback interventions requires a substantive time commitment from school staff, particularly individuals unfamiliar with how to provide effective feedback. Professional development opportunities may be necessary to ensure that AfL and feedback interventions complement rather than intensify teacher workload.

Second, it is critical to stay mindful of the context for feedback and how it may relate to its impact on learning. For instances, teachers would do well to consider the impact of feedback on pupil learning if delivered to a whole class, groups, or individuals.

Third, the greatest impact on pupil's writing can be seen to come from studies where teachers found a way to combine talk about writing with focused strategies. One key strategy was the co-constructed toolkit, developed to support independent and peer review of success criteria. This has a clear connection to AfL principles, particularly 7,8,9, 5, but must be embedded in classroom practice and culture.
Fourth, school leaders need to examine how school assessment policy relates to research findings about effective assessment for improving literacy. For example, to what extent is assessment at the point of learning promoted, not just assessment of final outcomes?

Finally, from the perspective of teachers, a key message about implementation comes from Dylan Wiliam, one of the most influential researchers in this field. He states that: “The general principles emerging from the research underdetermine action – put simply, they do not tell you what to do” (p.51 Wiliam et al, 2004). In this 2004 research with mathematics and science teachers, the researchers spelled out some of the principles and offered suggestions but nothing was prescribed. Rather, the teachers had to first come up with and then integrate the strategies themselves, using their own judgement. Furthermore, research suggests that teachers prefer/need to see ‘living examples’ of formative assessment practices put into action by other professionals that they trust and respect before they try these out for themselves.