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Assessment in Junior Cycle Physical Education Project: Final Evaluation Report

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Section 1   Introduction, Background & Methodologies

Chapter 1   Introduction

The revised junior cycle physical education syllabus was introduced in 2003. The Department of Education and Science put in place a Junior Cycle Physical Education (JCPE) support service to support implementation of the syllabus in post-primary schools. The in-service programme not only introduced teachers to the content of the revised syllabus but also offered comprehensive support to teachers in the areas of planning, teaching methodology and approaches to assessment. In September 2005, the NCCA, in conjunction with the JCPE support service, initiated a pilot project in schools to investigate some key issues relating to physical education assessment. The pilot project arose in response to a perceived need for additional support for teachers in the area of assessment in physical education. The pilot involved the refinement and evaluation of a physical education planning framework with various assessment instruments for use by teachers in association with the revised JCPE syllabus. The work of the project focused on engaging a number of teachers in the development of assessment and planning materials, the trialling of these in school settings and their subsequent refinement based on the feedback received from the teaching and learning setting.

In respect of learning and teaching in physical education, the project set out to:
- examine the use of a variety of assessment instruments
- identify, in particular, an approach to the use of portfolio assessment
- explore how best recording and reporting of learning progress in physical education can be carried out
- report on the effectiveness of Assessment for Learning (hereafter referred to as AfL) strategies
- provide a number of frameworks for effective planning of assessment and assessment procedures

- report on the usefulness of rich tasks (a practical representation of the learning outcomes students pursue within physical education) as assessment for learning strategies.

In relation to existing assessment materials, the project was interested in discovering their ease of adoption, potential to change practice and impact on students' learning.

The project complements the already established developmental initiative in Assessment for Learning in Junior Cycle (NCCA, 2005) and the revised JCPE syllabus (DES / NCCA, 2003). The pre-existing AfL Initiative arose out of a consultation carried out as part of the junior cycle review, which indicated that assessment had been a neglected area in the professional and in-career development of teachers. The project evaluated in this report sought to further embed AfL within practices already being promoted by the JCPE support service. The JCPE support service has incorporated AfL principles in developing a framework for planning pedagogy and assessment. Such a framework has been disseminated through JCPE inservice (Moynihan, Murphy & Flaherty, 2006).

Chapter 2   Assessment for Learning (AfL) review of literature and development of related methodologies

2.1   Background to formative and AfL literature

There has been a dramatic increase in the interest and amount of literature related to formative assessment, and in particular AfL. A number of national organisations with a remit to address school curriculum and assessment within the school sector are promoting AfL as a significant approach and providing publications and web-based resources that not only detail the philosophy of the approach but also provide materials that will support its delivery. Such organisations include the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England and Wales, Learning Teaching Scotland and the Australian Curriculum Studies Association. Within the UK, guidance and training materials related to key characteristics of AfL are available from local authorities that are supporting the implementation of such an approach in schools (Birmingham LEA, 1999 / 2000; Oxfordshire County Council, 2002; Suffolk LEA, 1999 / 2000).

Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam are regarded as pioneers in the AfL movement as a result of their interest in formative assessment and have been involved in producing various publications that not only examine the concepts of AfL (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; University of Cambridge School of Education, 1999) but also practice-referenced research in respect to the extent which the AfL concepts have been applied in particular contexts and the subsequent experiences of students and teachers (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003). The Assessment Reform Group aims to ensure that UK policy takes account of relevant research in assessment practice and it commissioned the Black and Wiliam work 'Inside the Black Box' (1998b). The Group has produced a number of publications that examine aspects of AfL (Assessment Reform Group, 2001).

The interest and research in formative assessment, and more specifically, AfL from both the student and teacher perspective continues to grow in academic publications. For example, a special edition of Curriculum Journal (Vol.16, No.2, 2005) and editions of the Cambridge Journal of Education (Vol.35, No.2, 2005) and Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education (Vol.30, No.4, 2005) all make significant contributions to the current thinking and approaches to AfL.

2.2   Common themes arising from the literature

Within the AfL literature a number of common themes arise and a synopsis of each will be provided below.

'Assessment of learning' focuses on assessment for accountability purposes to determine the level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a block of teaching and learning. Such information is often used in reporting. Assessment for Learning reflects recent advances in knowledge of how learning takes place and the importance of assessment in the promotion of learning. AfL acknowledges that assessment should be part of the teaching and learning process, with information gained from ongoing assessment informing and shaping the process. These assessment methodologies should not be seen as opposing or contradictory, with each providing students and teachers with different experiences in classroom and school practice.

The key principles of AfL lead to an emphasis on;
- sharing learning intentions with students (making the objective of the lesson clear)
- sharing the success criteria (helping students to recognize the standards they are aiming for)
- involving students in assessing their own learning
- providing feedback, which helps students to recognize what they must do to close any gaps in their knowledge or understanding
- communicating confidence that every student can improve
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment

AfL resources on the NCCA website (www.ncca.ie) unpack each of the key principles and provides additional information on areas that might be used to reinforce them such as questioning, homework and reporting. The NCCA also provides concise and informative articles on AfL in their publication '*info@ncca*' (issues 1 and 4). The JCPE web site provides resources related to the AfL framework for the design of blocks of work in physical education.

Chapter 3   Methodology of project

The project was divided into two phases. Phase 1 ran from September to December 2005 and was primarily concerned with the use of planning approaches, the incorporation of AfL approaches into teaching, planning frameworks covering all areas of study from the JCPE and planning templates for lessons. Phase 2 ran from January to June 2006 with a focus on the refinement of Phase 1 outcomes and the exploration of reporting options and the use of the portfolio. This report is concerned with documenting the experiences of teachers and students throughout both phases.

3.1   Teacher networks and participating schools

The project established three teacher networks in Castlebar, Cork and Navan, for the purposes of testing the applicability of approaches to formative assessment in JCPE.

Schools (n=20) that were approached and agreed to be involved in the project nominated one physical education teacher (Table 1). These schools were drawn from the cohort of schools involved (or previously involved) in the JCPE national programme of inservice. Criteria for school selection also included the nominated teacher being a qualified physical education teacher, a range of number of years teaching experience and differing school type. Teachers were encouraged to identify and work with one particular junior cycle class per week, in one area of study in physical education, and incorporate project materials into this class through planning, teaching and learning experiences. Requirements of each teacher included planning for the lessons using the rich task framework, sharing planning and content related issues within their teacher networks, participating in network meetings, completing reflections for each lesson (teachers were asked to submit a minimum of two end-of-lesson reflections from Phase 1 of the project) and accommodating evaluation visits.

The areas of study from the JCPE programme that teachers chose to work with in Phase 1 were predominantly aquatics, adventure, games and gymnastics. Similar activities were chosen in Phase 2 with the addition of athletics. Across the schools, there was a mix of junior cycle year groups chosen for the particular lessons and a number of teachers worked with the same group of students across Phase 1 and 2.

3.2   Working Group meetings

A working group was set up to refine materials already in circulation, test assessment instruments for use in learning and teaching associated with JCPE and plan the format of the project. The group comprised the National Coordinator and the two Regional Development Officers of the JCPE support service, the NCCA Education Officer with responsibility for physical education and an external evaluator.

The working group was responsible for refining assessment instruments and a planning framework for incorporating rich tasks and AfL approaches (example in Appendix 1). Outcomes from working group discussions throughout the project informed how the needs of teachers attending teacher seminars and teacher networks were addressed (see below). The working group considered a number of issues during its meetings, including;

a) the need for a realistic framework upon which assessment practice can be based with some tangible product of learning, e.g., the use of portfolio in JCPE on an annual basis

b) a cognizance of the workload of physical education teachers must be part of any assessment system that is devised

c) the contribution of portfolios in providing information on student learning to students, teachers and parents

d) the development and promotion assessment practice appropriate to the learning outcomes of the JCPE syllabus

e) the change in the nature of engagement between student-teacher and student-student as a consequence of assessment instruments

f) the need for the development of a meaningful system of reporting to parents on student learning

Table 1: Participating schools

Castlebar Education Centre	Cork Education Centre
Dunmore Community School, Dunmore, Co. Galway	Castletroy Community College, Co. Limerick
Rice College, Westport, Co. Mayo	Christ King Girls Secondary School, Cork
Sacred Heart Secondary School, Westport, Co. Mayo	Coláiste an Phíarsaigh, Gleann Meaghair, Corcaigh
St. Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo	Douglas Community College, Cork
St. Gerald's College, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	Glanmire Community College, Cork
St. Joseph's Secondary School, Galway	Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
St. Nathy's College, Ballaghadereen, Co. Roscommon	St. Aidans Community College, Dublin Hill, Cork

Navan Education Centre
Cnoc Mhuire Secondary School, Granard, Co. Longford
Eureka Secondary School, Kells, Co. Meath
Manor House Secondary School, Raheny, Dublin
St. MacDara's Community College, Templeogue, Dublin
St. Mark's College, Tallaght, Dublin
Wesley College, Dublin

3.3   Teacher seminars

An introductory teacher seminar for participating teachers was held in Tullamore on 21st September & 22nd September 2005. A number of formal presentations were made and significant time was given to teacher group discussion.

Formal presentations included;

- an introduction to the Assessment in Physical Education project, including the context, background to the project, level of teacher involvement, the aim of the project and its general structure
- an overview of (summative and formative) assessment, differences between assessment of learning and AfL, the context of the NCCA's AfL initiative and the main components of AfL, i.e., sharing the learning intention, sharing the criteria for success and offering feedback
- an overview of the main areas of work being pursued by the NCCA, representative structures, strands of the junior cycle review, addressing overload and developments at senior cycle
- an introduction of how the concept of 'rich task' as promoted by the JCPE support service incorporates levels of planning, use of learning outcomes and assessment practice
- how the project was to be evaluated, including project networks and feedback schedules such as reporting and school visits.

Three key assumptions were shared with the group in terms of on-going evaluation:

a) teachers would be provided with support in the use of the rich task framework planning structure, assessment approaches ('rich tasks') and methodologies (AfL) within physical education and support to develop and refine assessment materials
b) requirements of teachers would be kept to a manageable level
c) students would be involved throughout the evaluation process.

Group discussions focused on:

- suggested module planning frameworks for the seven physical education syllabus areas of study
- lesson planning templates
- the 'rich task' as an integrated learning experience
- the concept and use of the assessment wheel and suggesting changes to the assessment wheel template
- the concept and use of the portfolio.

A second teacher seminar was held in Tullamore on the 16th December 2005. Due to the nature of the presentations reporting and summarising students' and teachers' experiences within the project to date, teacher discussion was encouraged during formal presentations. Presentations and discussions included;

- interim outcomes of evaluation with a particular focus on the students' responses in relation to learning intention, criteria for success, feedback and assessment instruments
- key issues and possible alternative approaches in the planning process
- teachers' implementation experiences of AfL approaches
- use of assessment instruments, including the 'wheel' and portfolio
- reporting on learning.

A final teacher seminar was held in Tullamore on the 5th May 2006. The seminar focused on gathering teachers' reflections of their involvement in the project, asking teachers to complete and discuss personal reflection sheets and encouraging a selection of teachers to share their experiences through 10-minute informal presentations. Teachers were also asked to identify 'What worked and why?', 'What needs further attention in the context of the project?' and 'What did not work and why?' Summaries of three undergraduate projects connected to the project were shared and discussed. Attention was also given to dissemination of project outcomes and the need for further work to be completed on recording, reporting and the portfolio.

3.4   Planning framework and assessment instruments

A planning structure for incorporating rich tasks and AfL approaches was adapted by the working group allowing relevant module and lesson planning frameworks, instruments and methodologies to be introduced to the teachers at the introductory teacher seminar. Feedback from teachers informed the modifications which were subsequently made to the materials before distribution to the teachers.

3.5   Rich tasks

Prior to the Assessment in Physical Education initiative, the JCPE support service had been developing and promoting the use of a 'rich task', i.e., a practical representation of

the learning outcomes students pursue within physical education. An example of a rich task is included as part of the planning framework in Appendix 1. The rich task presents substantive real problems for the students to solve, based on the learning outcomes of the area of study and may be used as an organisational framework for the design of a block of work.

The task is deemed to be **rich** when it is constructed and based on the following principles:

- is authentic and relevant, to the student and to the learning outcomes to be pursued
- contains transparent criteria and standards
- is multidimensional, involving more than one learning outcome
- involves acquiring, applying and evaluating knowledge
- encourages a divergent response from student and teacher
- provides opportunities for students to demonstrate subject knowledge, skills and understanding
- assists teachers and students in determining the specific help students may require.

The rich task is particularly useful in the physical education context as it is an integrated learning experience that represents the learning outcomes in a **practical environment**. There is a clear synergy between rich tasks and AfL, each concerned with the pursuit of authentic assessment. The effective use of rich tasks shares with AfL characteristics such as

- sharing the learning intention with students
- helping students to recognise the direction and levels of assessment in their work
- providing focused feedback and involving students in reviewing their progress and setting future goals
- evaluating and adjusting teaching in the context of learning outcomes, rich tasks and student progress.

With the evident synergy between the innovative and extensive work completed by the JCPE support service on the rich task and the already established NCCA

'Developmental Initiative in Assessment for Learning in junior cycle' (NCCA, 2005), it was an obvious choice to use the rich task as the operational basis for the Assessment in Physical Education initiative.

3.6   Assessment instrument

Two formative assessment instruments were introduced, the 'assessment wheel' and 'student portfolio', and both relate to the 'rich task'.

The characteristics of the assessment wheel (Appendix 2) are that it is a simple form of student self-assessment (related to a range of learning outcomes) and that it does not depend solely on language to communicate understanding. The concept of the assessment wheel is to encourage the student to record, reflect and map their learning, related to the rich task and to assess their progress towards a preset goal. It also identifies any gaps that may exist and to plan for the next phase of their learning as well as providing a context for feedback, i.e., inform discussion between student and teacher. The wheel was to be used during the block of work to track progress and at the end of the block as a means of documenting student learning.

The student portfolio is a collection of students' work including assessment wheels, self-assessment and peer assessment instruments as well as a record of tasks completed throughout the block of work, and is intended to encourage students to gather evidence of their learning. While the student portfolio was introduced at an early stage in Phase 1, the use of the portfolio was a particular focus of Phase 2. The function of the portfolio was not adequately explored across the pilot schools and subsequently related discussion is limited

Chapter 4.   Methodology of evaluation

4.1   Introduction

A mutli-method approach to evaluating the project resulted in a number of different questions being posed to teachers and students. The report is cognisant of the fact that the evaluation was to focus on;

- teachers' responses to the assessment materials and the assessment framework provided by the working group
- students' responses to the assessment methodologies
- the effectiveness of the use of rich tasks as an AfL approach
- suggestions for future dissemination of these approaches to teachers of physical education.

4.2   School visits

Members of the working group visited fourteen schools in November and December 2006. The aim was to support teachers in the work of the project and to provide an opportunity for discussion around the issues pertinent to the implementation of AfL in physical education. Areas of discussion included;
- the process of planning and how it was influenced by the use of rich tasks and AfL
- implementation issues such as practicalities and time
- the reaction of students and how these approaches influence their learning
- suggested changes to materials and learning and teaching approaches.

Discussions were informal and notes were kept on topics discussed. Points related to the four issues above are reported in Section 6.

4.3   Teacher seminars and teacher networks

Three teacher seminars provided formal points of contact between the working group and teachers and these have been discussed in Section 2. Teacher network meetings allowed teachers to meet three or four times throughout the project and report on progression and discuss any related issues and concerns. It was anticipated that the network would allow teachers to discuss ideas, clarify issues and seek direction in terms of their understanding of the pedagogical frameworks and practices being promoted within the project.

Information gathered from teacher seminars and teacher networks not only informed the emphasis and direction that the project took but also verified a number of points raised through other data sources. Teacher discussion arising from seminars and networks is included in section 6.

4.4   Student and teacher prompt sheets

Informed by Nominal Group Technique (NGT) methodology (MacPhail, 2001), sending prompt sheets to each school provided an efficient and formal opportunity for comments from all students and all teachers to be recorded. Using the first phase of the NGT process, students and teachers were asked to complete short, concise responses to the particular question that was posed:

- for students, '*In what ways are the physical education lessons you have been involved in most recently been different from other lessons?*'
- for teachers, '*What are your observations on the effectiveness of assessment for learning within the physical education context?*'

The data collected informed subsequent teacher interviews and student focus groups.

The aim of conducting the modified NGT was to:

- obtain an input from all students and teachers in each school on their thoughts of AfL methodology and related assessment instruments
- give an indication of the frequency and weighting of students' and teachers' thoughts across the schools
- highlight the similarities and differences in students' and teachers' experiences of AfL across the schools.

A package containing a teacher prompt sheet and duplicate copies of the student prompt sheet was sent during Phase 1 and again in Phase 2 of the project to the physical education teachers in each school. Each teacher was responsible for returning the completed responses to the NCCA. During Phase 1 responses from approximately 400 students (from 18 schools) and 13 teachers were received. Phase 1 responses were made at different stages of the implementation across the schools, tending to be completed in the period between week four and week six. Phase 2 responses were predominantly completed at the end of Phase 2 (May 2006) and included responses from approximately 320 students (from 13 schools) and 9 teachers. Five bullet prompts were listed on each sheet. Students and teachers completed five, and in some cases more, statements.

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All responses were entered into Word documents and similar to the constant comparative method of analysing data the comments were manually reviewed, repeatedly and continually coded, seeking similarities and differences, groupings, patterns and items of particular significance (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The main components of AfL - sharing the learning intention, criteria for success and offering feedback – were used to initially direct the coding of data. Other categories of comments emerged as coding was completed and these are discussed in section 5 under 'student experiences' and section 6 'teacher experiences' respectively.

4.5   Case study schools

Two case study schools were identified and the physical education teachers in each school agreed to formally share thoughts on their experience with the AfL methodology and assessment instruments. There was a particular request that they invest in the development of portfolios to address a number of related issues. These included how often it is used and what is included, how useful it is to students, teachers and parents and assessment opportunities (e.g., peer and self-assessment) that are more conducive to inclusion and recording in the portfolio.

An interview protocol (Appendix 3) informed by initial teacher feedback prompted teachers to discuss;
- planning and preparation for introducing an AfL framework and assessment instruments
- the level of support that was available to them in the use of AfL procedures
- the extent to which the AfL principles were evident in their lessons
- the effectiveness of the assessment instruments and strategies that enhance the delivery and completion of assessment instruments
- the relationship between AfL and the JCPE syllabus
- students' response to the AfL framework and assessment instruments
- the extent to which AfL supported their own values and beliefs in relation to teaching, learning and assessment
- suggestions for future similar initiatives

Teachers were interviewed in their own school context in December 2005 on completion of Phase 1 and again in May 2005 on completion of Phase 2. With permission from each teacher, interviews were recorded. The structure for both Phase 1 and 2 interviews was deliberately similar to encourage commenting on the extent to which experience in Phase 1 had informed the delivery of Phase 2. Similar to the analysis of data collected through the NGT methodology, interviews were transcribed and comments were manually reviewed, seeking groupings, patterns and items of particular significance.

Two student focus groups were conducted in each school, one at the end of Phase 1 and the other on completion of Phase 2. The focus group was to be informed by the pattern of responses from the NGT phase particular to that group of students with a focus on investigating issues related to students' experiences of the assessment instruments (appendix 4). Focus group interviews were recorded with permission from the students and subsequently transcribed. Data from the focus groups was limited in respect to the extent with which students engaged with the questions.

4.6   Undergraduate studies in Assessment in Junior Cycle Physical Education Project

Three undergraduate students commencing their final year in the B.Sc. Physical Education programme at the University of Limerick availed of the opportunity to be involved in the project by pursuing their final year project in a related area. Two projects were conducted in the students' respective final year teaching practice schools, where they were given an opportunity to experience and be involved in the delivery of AfL in physical education. These students' projects resulted in the completion of two case studies evaluating the implementation of the AfL initiative, the factors that impinged upon the implementation and the use of assessment instruments. A third project examined patterns of comments made from student prompt sheet responses across three schools. All three students attended each teacher seminar and presented findings from their studies at the May 2006 seminar. The involvement of pre-service (physical education) teachers in the project not only brought different perspectives to meetings and to the delivery of AfL in schools but also supported the importance of involving pre-service teachers in the development of subject areas.

Section 2   Findings

Chapter 5.   Findings

5.1   Introduction

Sending prompt sheets to each school provided a formal opportunity for comments from students to be recorded. Students were asked to complete short, concise responses to the question 'In what ways are the physical education lessons you have been involved in most recently been different from other lessons?' The spelling, grammar and style of the quotes are reported as they appeared on the prompt sheets.

A number of trends were evident across Phase 1 and 2 student responses with some trends in comments being referenced more in one phase than the other. Many students conveyed a level of understanding in relation to the AfL components of learning intention and feedback with less evidence of criteria for success. Most students were familiar with the assessment wheel and portfolio and, particularly in Phase 2, the rich task concept. Assessing own (and each other's) learning was also reported. Many students commented on the structure of the lessons and the perception of an increased focus on learning. Due to the nature of physical education, an overwhelming number of comments were made in relation to the practical activities student were involved in although they tended not to qualify the link to AfL. A number of comments recorded students' displeasure at the level of thought, writing and homework related to the lessons.

5.2   AfL components

From the three main components of AfL (sharing the learning intention, criteria for success and feedback) students were much more articulate in their understanding of the learning intention;

> *'We spent more time at the start of the class talking about our lessons and what we want to learn'* (School 6, Phase 1).

> *'In each lesson we had a goal to achieve unlike before when we didn't plan to achieve anything'* (School 15, Phase 2).

'I thought outlining what we were going to do for the week was very helpful. It provided more structure to the classes' (School 2, Phase 2).

'We have to take time out at the start of every class to hear about wat we were going to be doing for the class' (School 16, Phase 2).

It was not possible to accurately match student comments with the <u>criteria for success</u> component, with comments related to the criteria being rare;

'We spoke about aims at the beginning of each class' (…) *'We then spoke more about how to go about achieving these aims'* (School 6, Phase 1).

It is interesting to note, as stated in section 6, that teachers admitted to being unsure of what the criteria for success component entailed and how it was delivered in a lesson. This uncertainty may be linked to the students' apparent lack of identification with the component.

Comments related to <u>feedback</u> focused primarily on working in groups;

'We watch each other and learn from others' (School 6, Phase 1).

'We worked in groups and helped each other learn and improve on things' (School 16, Phase 2).

'We watched how other people did it and told them how they could improve' (School 16, Phase 2).

'Its more fun when your working in groups and can discuss what we could improve on' (School 4, Phase 2).

5.3   AfL assessment instruments and rich task

Many comments conveyed familiarity with the assessment wheel and portfolio. The attraction to the <u>assessment wheel</u> was that it allowed students to assess themselves and record their progress;

'I think the assessment wheel is a great idea so we can see how much progress we've made but you don't have to tell anyone else' (School 4, Phase 1).

'The wheel was a really good idea because I was able to see from what I started off as to now' (School 9, Phase 2).

'Its good to have an assessment wheel so you can judge yourself on how good you are' (School 4, Phase 2).

The portfolio was less popular in relation to the number of references made by students and was correctly interpreted as a place to keep records of their progress. In some cases, the portfolio was seen as the cause of a reduction in physical activity when used in the lesson. Comments related to portfolio include;

'We have been given folders and we record our progress through the lessons' (School 5, Phase 1).

'We have used a portfolio to keep the assessment wheels to see how we have improved' (School 7, Phase 2).

'We have a folder to put out information' (…) *'The folder causes less time on the activity'* (School 1, Phase 1).

Comments related to the rich task were more obvious in Phase 2, with a number of students referring to a 'task', 'challenge' or 'performance' that was to be completed at the end of a unit of work;

'We have to work together in order to carry out the assignment' (School 14, Phase 2).

'We get to make up a sequence of dance at the end of the section' (School 4, Phase 2).

'You have an interesting final challenge to look forward to' (School 14, Phase 2).

There was strong evidence of students' awareness of directing and <u>assessing their own (and each other's) learning</u>, believing that such practices reduced the amount of time to be physically active in the lesson;

> *'We get to assess ourselves to see how much progress we've made'* (School 4, Phase 1).

> *'We had to assess each other which we didn't do before'* (School 3, Phase 1).

> *'We have been accesing ourselves instead of the teacher accesing us'* (School 15, Phase 2).

> *'Assesing and evaluating by writing takes away from exercise time and physical work'* (School 15, Phase 2).

5.4   Structure of lessons

A significant number of Phase 2 student comments related to the changed <u>structure of the lessons</u> from previous physical education experiences. Many students reported that the lessons were more organised and included more discussion time, that they were more involved in the class working together, in pairs and in teams and that they were involved more (independently) in the lessons;

> *'It was more organized and it was more explained more'* (School 16, Phase 2).

> *'I think our class became closer because we had a lot of discussion classes'* (School 17, Phase 2).

> *'We seemed to be working more in groups than before. I liked this'* (School 19, Phase 2).

> *'It seemed to be more positive as the class were working together'* (School 6, Phase 2).

> *'You have more say in what you do in class – everybody has an opinion'* (School 6, Phase 2).

'We are more independent. Don't get as much help from the teachers' (School 14, Phase 2).

A limited number of students were concerned that physical activity time was reduced due to the completion of written work. Comments on this topic tended to be recorded from one particular school and this may highlight the need to re-visit the integration of assessment instruments into a lesson;

'The P.E lessons were more structured but we spent more time talking and writing than we did P.E. (School 16, Phase 2).

'I did not like the structure of this P.E because by the time we were finished writing half of the class was gone P.E is our only exercise in school and with all the worksheets it is taking it all away' (School 16, Phase 2).

Some students hinted that the increased <u>focus on learning</u> resulted in less physical activity and more 'class work', being 'taught' more by the physical education teacher and knowing what they were expected to do (learning intention). These issues are subsumed within other categories in this section. Comments that referred to learning included learning more about the structure of the activity, learning new skills and in general spending more time learning in physical education from previous lessons;

'We learn more and take more interest i.e. In swimming we used to just swim around but now we get taught life-saving and learn different strokes' (School 1, Phase 1).

'They were more intresting as i lernt more sckills becouse of them' (School 3, Phase 1).

'We learned something different about physical education every week' (School 17, Phase 2).

'There has been alot more learning involved in these new P.E classes' (School 10, Phase 2).

5.5   Practical activity focus and change in learning expectations

An overwhelming number of comments were made in relation to the practical activities
students were involved in during the lessons. Students qualified that activities were
explained more, had been taught over a longer period of time and that the focus was on
particular aspects of the activity each week;

*'The lessons have been different from other lessons because we were told a lot
more about the game when we played it'* (School 16, Phase 2).

'We have spent a lot more time on the games instead of just doing 1 week of it'
(School 14, Phase 2).

A number of comments recorded students' displeasure at the level of thought, writing
and homework related to the lessons;

'We had to do intelligent thinking during recent PE' (School 10, Phase 2).

*'These physical lessons have been a lot different from the previous lessons
because a lot of lessons have been about using your head' (*School 10, Phase 2).

*I thought the lessons were ok but we had to do a lot of writing which ment we had
less time to do actual P.E.'* (School 16, Phase 2).

'I ratherd the old way because there was less writing!!!' (School 16, Phase 2).

*'These P.E. lessons are kind of boring. I don't like sitting down with a pen and
paper in gymnastics'* (School 4, Phase 1).

'It's stupid. We're getting homework' (School 1, Phase 1).

There is evidence from analysis that the data complements findings reported in relation
to students' perspective on teaching and learning (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004), students'
involvement in the assessment process as part of their learning progress (Dann, 2002)
and students' perspective on self-assessment / feeling about the feedback they receive
(Weeden, Winter & Broadfoot, 2002). There were a number of instances where running

particular students' comments together conveys a more holistic understanding of the experience such lessons strived to promote;

'Our P.E. was more active and I learnt more about the sport and techniques when we formed as a group to talk about what we just done' (…) 'One thing I found bad was there were a bit to many interuptions in our games when we were learning things' (School 8, Phase 1).

'We're concentrating on one thing for a few weeks which I think is good because we get better as we do more' (…) 'We write down what we've done and learn more about what we've done which is good' (…) 'We assess ourselves and each other more so we can know what to do to improve' (…) 'We have a portfolio dedicated to P.E. so we can look back on what we've done' (School 4, Phase 1).

'We have been talking about what we were going to do before we did it' (…) 'We learnt a lot more because we knew what we were doing' (…) 'It was much more fun because most people knew what to do so we could get straight into it' (…) 'We learned about all the different ways to do things and then we learned when to use it appropriately' (School 10, Phase 2).

'the lessons have been more structured and we have been learning more each lesson' (…) 'we have been acessing ourselves, finding out what level we are on in a certain skill or sport' (…) 'writing down how we have improved and the new skills we have learnt was very helpful' (School 15, Phase 2).

Chapter 6.   Teacher experience

6.1   Introduction

Sending prompt sheets to each school provided a formal opportunity for comments from teachers to be recorded. Teachers were asked to complete short, concise responses to the question 'What are your observations on the effectiveness of assessment for learning within the physical education context?' The spelling, grammar and style of the quotes are reported as they appeared on the prompt sheets.

A number of trends were evident across Phase 1 and 2 responses. The most popular trends included;
 - planning encouraging a clear focus and structure to lessons
 - students experiencing ownership of lessons through their involvement and assessment of peers
 - teacher and student appreciation of assessment instruments and the rich task.
Teachers also (positively) reported that their practice had been challenged by their involvement in AfL.

The trends evident from the prompt sheets are enhanced in this section with related comments and discussions from the October and November 2005 teacher network meetings and the working group school visits. This section of the report documents teachers' own experiences and their views on students' perceptions. Students' own perceptions were recorded and discussed in the previous section of the report.

6.2   Planning, structure and focus of lessons

The planning framework was an aspect of AfL that had been effective with the methodology naturally lending itself to the physical education context. While the framework had assisted and enhanced planning skills, it also aided the teaching process by encouraging teachers to *'think a lot more about content of lessons which resulted in more efficient and more effective classes'* (School 4, Phase 2). Such statements outweighed the few comments that were made regarding the increased workload in terms of preparation and the increase in paperwork.

The increased <u>level of planning</u> was strongly associated with establishing a structured and organized block of work and related lessons, with a clear focus on learning, teaching methods and clarity of outcomes;

> *'Having a very clear focus re content and questioning has helped my management of class (…) On a personal level I have enjoyed the planning process- new ideas for scheme, lesson plan and self evaluation tools for students have been inspiring to re-assess my practice'* (School 4, Phase 1).

> *'It alerted me to go back to planning modules and individual classes with more precision (…) It provided a clearer framework for my teaching (…) It allowed me to be focused on my objectives for each class'* (School 6, Phase 1).

> *'I found that my P.e lessons were much more structured at all times we were working towards something'* (School 19, Phase 2).

Many teachers reported that better planning resulted in lessons being easier to manage and organize, allowing teachers the opportunity to focus on the effectiveness of their teaching in progressing towards achieving the stated goals for the lesson.

It was also reported that establishing clear goals and the assessment of these goals aided the learning process for students, including the belief that they had a level of ownership within lessons.

6.3 Student involvement and ownership

It was suggested that the AfL approach provided a 'pathway' for students to learn, with the implication that learning within physical education had become <u>more meaningful</u> for students;

> *'Pupils focused on 'specific' learning not necessarily being happy with just 'generally able to play''* (School 15, Phase 2).

'Students much more aware of the educational value of subject – (…) they were learning through activity rather than just participating' (School 4, Phase 2).

The approach allowed students to experience success both in the short term (each week) and the long term (end of the block of work) (School 6, Phase 1), and consequently engaged a wider section of the class than in previous physical education lessons.

<u>Questioning and feedback</u> were two aspects of AfL that were mentioned by many teachers as increasing students' involvement in the lesson and positively influenced students' engagement within physical education. The extent of students' responses to questioning was high, aiding students to reflect in their work;

'Questioning led to much more interaction with students and very effective in helping students improve performance' (…) 'Focused feedback also helped improve students performance' (School 8, Phase 1).

Involving students in <u>evaluating</u> their own, and peers' work was also seen to not only positively impact on students but also as being informative for teachers;

'Involving students in rating / evaluating their own learning has been informative (not as what I expected)' (School 4, Phase 1).

'A lot of personalities came out when assessing each other or [in] a classgroup situation' (School 17, Phase 2).

Students appeared to enjoy helping each other and were more involved in *'the learning experience'* (School 18, Phase 1), encouraging peer learning and cooperation. Being aware of the learning intention and generally getting more involved in the lessons led to students taking more responsibility for their learning and engendered a sense of shared ownership of the learning experience. Some teachers believed that the sense of ownership helped communication between teacher and student;

'I felt the students took ownership of their lessons and more and more I was becoming a facilitator (…) Students seemed much more motivated and took great pride in completing their tasks' (School 19, Phase 2).

6.4   Assessment instruments and rich task

Most teachers commented that the AfL approach provided for assessment in class and at the end of a block of work. The main attraction of the assessment wheel appeared to be that it allowed students to record information that they could revisit to assess how they had learned;

> *'The wheel is a written testament to what they [students] have learned'* (School 11, Phase 1).

> *'Students had an opportunity to identify current positions and review own performances (assessment wheel)'* (School 8, Phase 1).

> *'Found it a great resource for focusing students on learning, skill development and setting goals. (Especially assessment wheel)'* (School 4, Phase 2).

> *'I liked the wheel – it may not be very accurate but it did give some way of documenting the classes' achievements'* (School 18, Phase 2).

The use of folders was initially a novelty for students with few teachers commenting that students equated the use of the folder with an increase in the importance of physical education. The folders became a chore after the initial weeks for students who were nominated to look after them or, in other instances, for every student who was responsible for taking them home each week. The rich task was deemed valuable, allowing students to be aware of the overall goal(s) of the block of work and, from the beginning of the block, gave them something to work towards.

Less favourable comments in respect to the use of the assessment wheel and folder were that *'pupils not overly excited about 'wheel''* (School 15, Phase 1) and that introducing the wheel and/or folder is time consuming, with limited time available for teachers to review the materials. It was also apparent that due to time constraints, attempting to incorporate both in a class was very demanding and most teachers chose to focus on the use of one in preference to the other.

6.5   Professional satisfaction

There was evidence that teachers' involvement in the project had been challenging and led to enhanced professional satisfaction;

> *'I enjoyed the experience (…) and found myself challenged, which in any situation is good'* (School 17, Phase 2).

> *'Really enjoyed being involved in project. I am a better teacher as a result (…) I need to develop this further – practice. It is difficult not to revert to what I have always done but I also feel that this was good practice'* (School 14, Phase 1).

Some teachers commented that they had experienced a shift in their role to that of one of administering or facilitating, being able to make 'judgment calls' as the class progressed in consultation with the students. They also commented that there was a need on their part for absolute clarity of intention.

6.6   Teacher network meetings and working group school visits

In some cases teachers reported that they had noticeably altered their teaching practice in pursuing the AfL framework. Others reported that the process had made them challenge some of their long established practices or that it had refined their teaching practice which had always focused on communicating expectation and providing feedback to students. Some teachers reported that no significant time was lost in sharing the learning intentions and in the completion of the assessment instruments.

6.7   AfL planning framework

While most teachers commented that the amount of planning was onerous and time consuming it was time well spent in that it clarified the direction of their teaching and assisted in generating future resources, in some cases 'a resource for life'. There was a general concern that the level of detail expected in lesson plans far exceeded what was necessary to deliver the lesson. There was also an acknowledgement that some teachers were 'over-planning', particularly in activity areas with which they were less familiar.

Most teachers were of the view that a reduction in the volume of paper-based tasks associated with planning is essential, reinforcing the belief that planning on a larger scale, i.e., multiple classes, would not be manageable without a reduction in paperwork. There was also a concern with the amount of paperwork that had to be completed in class time. In some instances the time taken to complete such paperwork by students significantly reduced the amount of time during which they were physically active.

The AfL framework resulted in teachers structuring their teaching more than before, helping students to focus during the lesson. Many teachers commented that the framework was helpful in ensuring that the learning intention remained central and that content was balanced within and across lessons. There was some evidence that there was flexibility within the framework to allow teachers to make changes to suit their own school context. Column 3 'Assessment approaches and instruments' of the framework was reported as difficult to complete and it was suggested that this may be due to the fact that the teacher is not only required to have a level of familiarity with the concepts and strategies incorporated in AfL but also with the language and terminology used. Two teachers requested assistance in understanding terminology and in constructing an understanding of the stages of the AfL implementation process, i.e., beginning with sharing/identifying the challenge/rich task, identifying the learning experiences and the content to meet the challenge. Teachers would welcome a simplified version of the framework for planning.

6.8   Use of Planning Framework

Implementation issues focused on the introduction of learning intentions, the rich task and assessment instruments. Teachers supported the value of sharing the learning intention at the start of class as a welcomed, and easy, change to make to their practice. Doing so resulted in students having a clear picture of what they had to do in a lesson and how they were effectively going to work towards doing it. The rich task enhanced student interest, helping to 'key in the students' at the beginning of a block of work and providing direction for students in the related lessons. Students enjoyed working towards the completion of the rich task, knowing that they would be expected to perform for each other.

Many teachers favoured using the assessment wheel two or three times throughout a block of work, usually in the second or third week and again at the end of the block. The assessment wheel was seen as being easy to understand and requiring a relatively short period of time to administer. Accordingly its use did not significantly erode class time devoted to physical activity. Students liked the assessment wheel and this was attributed to them being able to record their progress and recap on what they had learned. The portfolio received a mixed response from the teachers, noting that students were not always willing to take responsibility for them and that their use in class takes time to organise and distribute. The portfolios were well received by students in some schools and in some cases they were encouraged to take them home and reflect on what went well in class and improvements that could be made.

6.9   Student reaction

Students appreciated being given more responsibility for their own learning and some teachers reported a greater diversity of response from students than in previous physical education lessons, commenting that those students they might have regarded as 'weaker' were more involved. This was attributed to the use of appropriate questioning, directing questioning not to the class group but to subgroups in response to individual needs. In some instances students were more active, engaged and involved in their own learning. For students who showed negativity at the outset, becoming familiar with assessment instruments that allowed them to chart their progress, and working towards an end of block challenge, changed their mindset.

6.10   Suggested changes and additional information requested

Teachers suggested changes to planning, the assessment wheel and portfolio. Additional information on resources and reporting were also discussed. These are summarized below;

Planning:

There should be;

- a more concise, condensed, 'user-friendly' planning framework
- simple and clear lesson plan exemplars that illustrate how to incorporate sharing the learning intention, identifying the criteria for success, a key question and an assessment format that is simple and tangible

- minimised workload through use of ICT.

Assessment wheel:

There should be;

- space for record of attendance on the assessment wheel
- no qualifications in the statements in assessment wheel
- further advice on what is to be included in the assessment wheel
- an agreed 'formula' for what is included in the wheel and discussion around the need for clear criteria in order that the judgments students make in assessing the progress of their own learning is not totally subjective but made against clear criteria for judging performance.

Portfolio:

There should be;

- further advice on what is to be included in the portfolio.

Resources:

There should be;

- - video demonstration lessons where AfL strategies are implemented with a group of students that would help in sharing the learning intention with students
- - a bank of planning frameworks, lesson plans and rich tasks
- - self- and peer-assessment task cards that are transferable across activities
- - visual aids and web site access.

Reporting:

There should be;

- clarification on how the information gathered by assessment instruments can be translated into a meaningful report for communication with parents.

6.11 Teacher network meetings

As the network meetings grouped teachers from the same region it was inevitable that there would be a strong overlap between the information shared during these meetings and the working group school visits. Issues that emerged in the March and April 2006 meetings included;

- The considerable preparation time generating a strong structure for physical education was very demanding of practicing teachers.

- Rich tasks provide teachers with a focus for their work and a sense of purpose for the students.
- Teachers appreciated the changes made to the lesson plan format, including more focus on key issues, no unnecessary detail and quicker to complete.
- Teachers found it difficult to sustain the extent of reflecting and recording requested of them.
- Problems had arisen with the administration of the assessment wheel (less evident in previous teacher network meetings and working group school visits).
- The 'steps' instrument (see section 7, school B) appeared more effective as a planning instrument rather than an assessment instrument.
- It was necessary to clarify the differentiation between 'criteria for success' and 'standards'.
- All teachers were sharing the learning intention at the start of each lesson.
- There was greater success with the use of peer assessment than of self assessment instruments.
- Portfolios brought a mixed response from students and teachers. There were storage difficulties and lack of clarity regarding what should go into the portfolio.
- There is a need for shared resources and examples of best practice.

Chapter 7. Case studies of AfL within particular schools

7.1 Introduction
As was mentioned in section 4, an essential part of the evaluation process was the generation of two case studies that were designed to explore more deeply the opinions of teachers and students. The two case studies presented here highlight the possibilities of working with AfL irrespective of previous teaching and learning preferences. Aoife teaches in a single-sex girls school (School A) and her established teaching methodologies have been largely consistent with AfL approaches. Mark teaches in a single-sex boys school and indicated that AfL was a departure from his usual physical education pedagogy. Both report positive experiences with the AfL framework . There are similarities and differences in how they used the assessment instruments.

7.2   School A

Logistics were involved in the choice of class and area of study for AfL. A first year group were chosen because they were the only year group to have a double period (80 minutes) of physical education a week. Aoife determined this as the minimum time necessary to get a feeling for planning and the use of the assessment wheel. A first year class was also likely to have less pre-conceived ideas of what gymnastics entailed as opposed to second or third year students. Aoife chose gymnastics as she is familiar with this activity in her role as a provider of inservice training. Acknowledging that the AfL framework has changed her focus from organisational management to criteria for success and feedback, Aoife believes that the framework refined her thinking about the way she currently taught and gave her the tools to do so. It is not a huge undertaking for Aoife to continue with the AfL framework in the future.

7.2.1   Teacher's response to assessment framework and assessment materials
Aoife reported that the AfL framework fitted neatly with her own philosophy of teaching and learning, acknowledging that the framework formalized, structured and refined her philosophy further;

> 'It gave me formal ideas and formal tools that allowed me to experiment and kind of look into what I had been thinking on an informal level. (…) has given me more

confidence in what I was trying to do anyway and it has given me a more formal avenue because I have tools now, I have a way of planning that helps me to do what I want to be doing' (May interview, 2006).

At the same time, Aoife did admit to being more relaxed and effective in her delivery after her involvement in Phase 1 and during Phase 2;

' (…) after Christmas, it was more natural, it was more comfortable, I was more confident and I don't think I thought about it less or put less time into it but it just seemed easier and it was the same in the classroom you know you got used to telling them, you got used to being more organised, you got used to time being used more effectively and you got used to concentrating on individual feedback and before you would have felt, no I will never get around to everyone in the class. But now that your organisation and your management was more effective you found that you had loads of time, you know you actually have really good teaching experiences one on one because of the planning and the change of emphasis away from the organisation and management of the class to the actually teaching of the class' (May interview, 2006).

Referencing specifically the three components of <u>learning intention</u>, <u>criteria for success</u> and <u>use of feedback</u>, Aoife appeared comfortable with all three. She did comment that a change in use of language of a number of the learning outcomes from the JCPE syllabus could result in appropriate learning intentions for individual lessons. Sharing the learning intention gave the feeling that the teacher and students were in a partnership, each knowing what the expectations of the class were to be. Aoife also noted that by students knowing what they were to do throughout the lesson and consequently take on more responsibility for learning, it allowed her to teach more in the lesson;

' (…) you are not managing, you are not organising, you are actually teaching and it gives you more time to do that' (May interview, 2006).

Aoife had begun to experiment with negotiating criteria for success where she attempted to tease out appropriate criteria by giving students an opportunity to try a task initially and then feed back with what the criteria for success was likely to be. She believed that this allowed the students more ownership and stopped her from answering her own question on what were likely to be criteria for success;

' (…) what I do sometimes is set a task and send them off to do something but with two or three structured questions and say 'While you are doing this task I want you to think about …' and then get them to some back and from that you have got the criteria of success which is completely from them (…) In ninety-nine percent of the cases they will give you exactly the criteria for success that you would have given them but it is more meaningful because they have had to think about it and they have had to go through that process themselves' (May interview, 2006).

She built in the criteria for success throughout the lessons wherever appropriate and relied on peer assessment to provide feedback. This allowed her time to move between the groups of students and give individual feedback where appropriate. Aoife conveyed the extent to which the group of girls embraced peer feedback and consequently her support for peer evaluation;

' (…) gone very much towards peer feedback rather than teacher feedback because I feel they actually listen to what they say to each other more than listen to a teacher. A lot of the time they are so used to teachers being more pedantic about things and I think on a certain level they just tune out (…) They seem to take it [feedback] very well and they seem to be quite sensitive to each other's feelings as well (…) they like giving each other feedback and I think it's because they are girls and it's a social thing (…) it's second nature to them and they really enjoy having their social element and they realise they are also helping each other to learn which gives them more ownership of the whole thing' (May interview, 2006).

Aoife supported the ease with which <u>self assessment, peer assessment, questioning and teacher feedback</u> fit naturally with physical education. She was surprised at the quality of answers students responded with. Questioning was something that Aoife had always pursued in her class and felt that this increased her suitability to work within an AfL approach;

'I have always questioned a lot. (…) the way you teach is influenced a lot by your personality and I am a person who asks questions - regardless of what the situation or environment is I like to ask questions. And I suppose the AfL in a way it suited me because I was used to doing that. So it wasn't that foreign to me to

all of a sudden to be asking 'Why should you do this?' (December interview, 2005).

Aoife had promoted the use of the <u>folder</u> to her students and felt that it was successful in documenting students' learning as well as prompting student reflection;

> *' (…) you often say to kids you know what did you learn and they look at you and they can't think of anything. But if you have a few handouts in a portfolio and you have a few self assessment or peer assessment sheets that they have filled out (…) they look back on it and they actually do realize 'I wasn't just running around', I was actually learning something'* (December interview, 2005).

Aoife also commented that information held in the portfolio, e.g., tasks set, supporting materials and criteria for completion, could be revisited on a weekly basis and reduced the amount of time the teacher needed to spend in each lesson explaining a particular task and associated criteria.

Aoife alluded to the reality of storing folders in the school and whether students should be expected to take the folders home with them. She very strongly makes the point that every other subject area expects students to take home work and suggests a change of culture in relation to physical education in that respect;

> *' (…) if they got into the culture, if they can remember to bring their science book, their lab copy, their homework copy and themselves to a science class, why can't they manage to bring themselves and their PE portfolio to the PE class?'* (December interview, 2005).

Aoife began to curtail the amount of paperwork she was asking students to store in their portfolio, making a conscious effort to provide quality paperwork than a quantity of paperwork. An aspect of the portfolio was formally completed twice throughout a block of work although students were encouraged to refer to them on a weekly basis in respect to re-visiting content, criteria and ideas that would allow them to take part in the lesson.

Aoife was also very supportive of the <u>assessment wheel</u>, particularly in relation to the ease of use for the students and lack of infringement of time on the lesson;

' (…) they were very easy to fill in, very quick (…) that was their biggest benefit. It wasn't time consuming. It was easy to explain. Once they have done one you will never have to explain it again. (…) You spend ten minutes the very first day in first year explaining it and every time after they know what to do with it' (…) the wheel worked very well for me. I wouldn't change that for the world. I think it's one of the best things that have come across in years. You know I can see myself using that for everything' (December interview, 2005).

In allocating criteria to the segments of the wheel, Aoife explained that there were instances where the JCPE learning outcomes could be transferred across to a spoke of the wheel. In other instances a particular JCPE learning outcome constituted a number of learning intentions and consequently mapped across to a number of spokes on the wheel. The time students spend on completing the wheel becomes more efficient as students become more familiar with the tool. Students were familiar with the criteria they had been striving to progress and were able to report that timing to music, working well in a group, incorporating different levels (high / low) and creativity were all assessment wheel criteria for dance.

7.2.2 Students' responses to assessment methodologies

Changes from the previous physical education culture affected students' perceptions of the assessment methodologies. While students liked the assessment wheel and folder, *'they hated the idea of pen and paper in the gym'*, questioned *'why they were supposed to be learning something'* and why they were revisiting the same area of study over a number of weeks than doing something different every week (December interview, 2005). However Aoife commented that students liked working in groups, felt more involved in the physical education lessons than in other subject areas and appreciated being able to see how they were improving.

Students identified working with a partner or in groups and providing feedback as being new experiences in their involvement in physical education. There was an acknowledgement that, when working with a partner, one partner watches the other and comments on what they are doing well and what they could improve. While students appreciated that self-assessment allowed them to record information in their folder without sharing it with anyone else, they found it difficult to self-assess;

'You don't know if you're doing it right. Like you don't want to say that you are really good at something and then everyone will be thinking 'Well, you know, she has an awful big head'. But then you know if you are good at something then you don't mind' (Focus group, May 2006).

'It's kind of hard like because you don't always know if this is the perfect way to do it (…) maybe you think you are good but you might not just be there yet. So its kind of hard to assess yourself really' (Focus group, May 2006).

The qualification wording for how students were to complete the assessment wheel, particularly the use of 'sometimes', 'most of the time' and 'always' was changed in response to students articulating that it was not necessary. This prompted Aoife into discussing the extent to which she may have underestimated what students are capable of commenting on and doing, *' (…) when you give them the challenge of doing something they more than often surprise (…) go over and beyond what you expected them to see of them'* (December interview, 2005).

Aoife reinforced the huge step that had been made in introducing assessment and records of assessment within the physical education context. She continually reinforced her belief that students' self assessments were very accurate, underestimating rather than overestimating their performance. Aoife believed that students tend to be a lot more critical of themselves than they would be with their peers. This was evidenced by their use of the assessment wheel.

Aoife reflected that one of the most common feedback comments from students regarding the assessment methodologies was the use of pen and paper in physical education lessons, detracting from their activity time within the lesson, *'they begrudge giving the time to the paperwork'* (May interview, 2006). This was clearly evident from the student focus group where students recorded their displeasure of any reduction in physical activity time;

> *'We spend more time writing than we do actually doing stuff like running around'* (Focus group, May 2006).

*'Like when we take out our portfolios (…) she [teacher] gives us the sheet [and]
that's half the class gone'* (Focus group, May 2006).

Students suggested that they could complete the related written work either at the end of
a lesson or, if they were given a classroom slot to do so, at another time outside of
physical education. A couple of students suggested that it may only be necessary to
allocate half a class time every three or four weeks to complete the written components,
avoiding the erosion of physical activity every week. Students were not necessarily
adverse to the actual assessment instruments and trusted that they were important if the
teacher was asking them to complete them.

Aoife maintained that, over time, students would become accepting of, and familiar with,
the written component of the lessons and that to reduce the encroachment of written
work on physical activity, homework was a possibility. Aoife implied that an appreciation
of the methodology was becoming evident the more familiar students became;

*' (…) the first time round it was 'Why do we have to do this?' but at the end of it
they saw the journey that they had taken and they could see that they had
mapped their own progress and they saw that they had at stages (…) informed
their own learning (…) they were helping to inform where they were going and
that was a positive experience for them because so often they are sitting in a
classroom and they have no input at all in their learning'* (May interview, 2006).

7.2.3   Effectiveness of the use of rich tasks

The rich task was not significantly different to how Aoife had previously encouraged
students to complete a task at the end of a block of work. The rich tasks were introduced
and explained on the first day of each block. This not only helped contextualise the
learning intentions for the block of work but also alerted students to what they were
expected to do on completion of the block, completing different tasks as they
progressed.

While the students were not familiar with the 'rich task' terminology, they conveyed some
level of understanding in relation to an end of block challenge that was to be completed
in the final lesson, *'We were told everything we were going to have to do [during] the
weeks. So it was just a test at the end'* (Focus group, May 2006). Aoife had previously

commented that it was difficult throughout the weekly lessons to oversee how accurately all students were completing their assessment wheels. To address this she suggested that the completion of the rich task would be an opportunity for her to watch the extent to which students were able to perform the criteria noted on the assessment wheel.

7.2.4   Suggestions for future dissemination

Aoife supported the <u>teacher network meetings</u> stating that it not only gave her the chance to get to know other teachers involved in the project but allowed her to focus completely on the one project and the one class and maintain her motivation. It was also a forum where she took comfort in hearing that other teachers were experiencing similar problems in students' response to particular elements of the AfL methodology and gaining different ideas on activities to try in lessons. The maintenance of teacher network meetings is essential to provide support to teachers to discuss and tease out questions and issues. Aoife made the point that support through such meetings are essential for physical education teachers who can end up being isolated in a school that has a small complement of physical education teachers to interact with and gain support from.

Aoife commented on the usefulness of the sheet that noted methodology for feedback and acted as a prompt to re-focus to teaching in an AfL manner. She also suggested that abstracts or summaries of research documents related to AfL be made available to allow teachers to see their contribution to the bigger context.

A further suggestion for future dissemination was the sharing of schemes and lesson plans with the expectation that they will be adapted to particular students and context. For example, what works for gymnastics in an all-girls school, where the teacher runs extra-curricular activity gymnastic courses, will not necessarily work for a teacher who has never taught gymnastics before and is in an all-boys school. A bank of schemes within the same area of study would allow teachers to pick from each what suits their students and environment and subsequently construct an appropriate rich task.

A resource sheet that suggests effective ways in which self assessment and peer assessment can be incorporated into each activity area was requested. Teachers with

limited experience and confidence in particular areas of study would be able to draw on ideas provided by those more familiar with the area.

7.2.5   Reporting

Aoife supported the assessment wheel as a valid and suitable form of reporting for a parent / teacher meeting. It could be explained to the parents where their child views themselves in relation to specific criteria and where the teacher would place them. Videoing the completion of rich tasks was also suggested as a form of reporting, primarily for the students to assess themselves and their peers. The same recordings could be used to report a student's engagement and performance to their parents.

Aoife believed that the AfL methodology has the potential to change the nature of who is responsible for reporting. She reported that currently there are physical education teachers who are delivering at least ten 35-minute physical education lessons where a different group of students attend physical education each time. In reality it is difficult for the teacher to get to know all the students within such a short period of time. It is near impossible to observe all students at some point in the class, do that on a regular basis and get round each student to give feedback. Aoife pointed out that this then questions the accuracy in teacher reporting and the quality of feedback. She believed that students' completion of AfL assessment instruments may in fact be a more authentic form of assessment where they have time to engage with the criteria during the class and know the extent to which they are progressing.

7.3   School B

A teachers' familiarity with an activity area and the subsequent experience with AfL was an issue raised by Mark. Mark chose to teach aquatics in Phase 1 of the project as he believed he would learn more in working with an area he was less familiar with. On reflection, he felt that due to his unfamiliarity with the area of study he had over-planned for these lessons. The up side to that was that he felt he was at a similar level of understanding in relation to aquatics as that of the students which nurtured the notion of 'learning together' (May interview, 2006). In teaching an area he was more familiar with in Phase 2 he was conscious of reverting back to his previous way of teaching as he was comfortable with the subject content. He also commented that continuity between

classes was essential to sustain momentum, acknowledging that there are times when students sometimes miss taking part in physical education for three or four weeks consecutively. Acknowledging that the AfL framework had benefited his own learning and that of students, Mark is planning to continue with the framework in the next school year. He is comforted by the fact that the time on planning will be reduced by using the resource materials that have accumulated over the past year.

7.3.1 Teacher's response to assessment framework and assessment materials

Mark reported that following the specifics of the AfL framework was not complicated, admitting that the AfL framework was very different to how he had previously taught physical education;

> *'Before [AfL] I decided what we were going to do today and that was it to an extent. And we would have a certain amount of drills or (…) games or whoever would be involved at whatever activity it was and I would usually report back at the end. So that was basically it. End the class. Say well done. That's good. (…) there was no question of letting them know why it was good or what they did well'* (December interview, 2005).

Mark also admitted that it took some time to realise the potential impact of 'for learning' as opposed to 'of learning';

> *' (…) it took a good while to get my head around exactly what we were looking for. (…) it was only about three weeks ago that the penny dropped that 'for' was the key word in that statement [AfL]' (December interview, 2005). 'I suppose it was in the back of my mind all the time (…) you have no real kind of sense of are they [students] learning. (…)' (May interview, 2006) 'I always consider assessment as being the summative so it was a complete change for me. But I suppose we all did a certain amount of (…) feedback which was very informal in that you would say you were doing well or that was good (…) I think it [AfL] is very useful (…) it gives them [students] something to move on towards. It is not an end in itself and I think that's a great strength of the AfL for me. That's what teaching and learning is about for me having thought about it over the last few months'* (May interview, 2006).

He reflected that this led him to appreciate that 'for learning' allows everyone to have something to work towards, catering for all levels of ability, *'you are giving them*

information for learning' (December interview, 2005). One aspect of AfL that Mark was less confident with was the questioning, *'That area [questioning] wouldn't have been part of my normal teaching experience (…) I used to just go in and lay down the law'* (December interview, 2005). He felt that there might be a fear that questioning would encourage a less tightly structured lesson, which may result in loosing control. However, after working on questioning in his lessons he was able to see how the students responded positively to being challenged.

Mark's observations on the assessment instruments raised the issue of the suitability of particular assessment instruments to areas of study. For example, the portfolio was less effective when doing aquatics due to the folder and its contents getting wet. In using the assessment wheel, Mark felt that it was more suited to closed activities such as warming up and cooling down. While working with the AfL framework Martin constructed another idea, 'assessment steps' (appendix 5). In explaining his thoughts behind the assessment steps Mark noted that this format allows room for students to write down how they plan to move to the next step, encouraging students to look to future learning opportunities, i.e., Where are you now?, Where would you like to be? / What would you like to be able to do?, How can you get there? Where each student is on the steps is established through the use of self, peer and teacher assessment. He believed this would be more effective in improving discrete skills, e.g., strokes in swimming and passing in games, allowing students to identify weekly progressions. In contrast, the assessment wheel measures the consistency with which an individual performs each criteria for success for a block of work, with less opportunity for students to record how they plan to improve in achieving a criteria consistently throughout the block.

Mark suggested completing assessment wheels every second week, admitting to carrying over the completion of assessment wheels to the following day where students were seated in another class. This was an attempt to avoid accusations of eroding physical activity time within physical education lessons, *'They* [students] *were more receptive when they were in class, in a formal class to this idea than doing it in the action environment'* (May interview, 2006). He did comment that getting students to reflect on what they had done the previous day in physical education might reinforce certain points for them.

While Mark was appreciative of the level of feedback and recording students experienced in completing the assessment instruments, he questioned the level of credibility such a new concept had with students who were embedded within a formal assessment culture in school. However, he did believe that students were leaving physical education classes having had to think throughout the class and consequently learning something. This led to students becoming more confident and informed in making their own choices in relation to physical activity. Explaining that through questioning and feedback students identified what they could do and what they needed to do to improve fitness, a number of boys had independently signed up to attend a public gym in a bid to address how to improve. Student responsibility was one of Mark's main interests in the AfL approach, *'That's the kernel for me as a teacher for learning, that they can take a bit of responsibility themselves'* (May interview, 2006).

Referencing learning intentions, criteria for success and use of feedback, Martin admitted that the incorporation of such components to his teaching of physical education was a departure from previous practice;

> *'It was different for me because my teaching method I suppose would be 'I'm the teacher and their the subject' (…) it was kinda new for me to get the students involved a bit more in the learning of the whole area, 'Look, this is what we are going to do today' or (…) 'How do you think this will work?', 'How can we improve on this?' (…) the whole area of questioning that wouldn't have been something I would have used much up until then'* (December interview, 2005).

Sharing the learning intentions was an area Mark was not familiar with. He admitted to struggling with the practice of consistently sharing the intentions, having to remind himself that he was to involve the students from the very start of the lesson. It was particularly difficult when he was rushing from one class to physical education, reporting that in such instances he needed one or two minutes to take a 'reality check' in relation to what the learning intentions were for the lesson. In promoting feedback, Mark relied on peer assessment, believing that in some instances students may remember peer comments more than the teacher's comments.

7.3.2 Students' responses to assessment methodologies

Mark recorded his surprise at how students on the whole had responded to the new format of learning within physical education;

> ' (…) anything that is delivered well and with a thought goes down well with students and I think maybe we underestimate a lot of the time what they are capable of and what they think. (…) I was the type of teacher who wouldn't interact a lot (…) there is a definate improvement and you are constantly surprised you know how the level of answers they have without hardly any prompting. (…) quite intelligent people and you know maybe we assume sometimes that they aren't and they are young of course and they are way more receptive to new ideas' ' (…) they are pretty receptive to the idea because they feel that they are more part of it' (May interview, 2006).

Students were able to distinguish the changes that had taken place in their current physical education lessons, ' (…) you have a set thing to do like and your trying to improve all the time like. (…) make your technique better like. Just like work to get better' to previous ones, ' (…) in first year you just pick teams and play away for all P.E. really. Just play for your P.E. When it's over then you just go tog in' (Focus group, January 2006). They were aware of the change in the level of interaction between themselves and the teacher and the questioning and feedback adopted by Mark;

> 'This time is was taught like he told us what to do and then if we were doing it wrong he told us then how to do it right. He tells you how to do better' (Focus group, January 2006).

> 'You understand what's going on a lot more. You understand what you are doing and why you are doing it' (Focus group, May 2006).

They were initially uncertain as to why they were being asked to assess each other and not have Mark, as teacher, do it. Students had commented that they found the AfL lessons more structured, i.e., that there was a plan to follow, and that they were learning and Mark commented that he had initially underestimated their ability to appreciate components of the AfL lessons. Students reported that they tried harder because they wanted to learn and being able to monitor their own progress was attractive to them, ' (…) you like making progress (…) You're doing something good like. It makes you feel

good about yourself' (Focus group, January 2006). The more recent physical education lessons were perceived to be like a 'normal class' where you learn something as opposed to previous physical education lessons where students were not told how to improve. The students engaged with the pair work and peer feedback they had been involved with, noticing that this was a departure from previous physical education lessons;

> *' (…) you went in pairs (…) it was better (…) you knew more about the person when you went in pairs'* (Focus group, January 2006).

> *' (…) if the person tells you your doing it wrong you gonna do it right then like. You're gonna try and do it right. You mightn't be able to do it right but you'd try to do it better like'* (Focus group, January 2006).

Students were articulate in conveying their support and understanding of the assessment instruments, explaining how the assessment wheel and assessment steps were to be completed by the students, *'I thought they were a very good help (…) if you see where you are this week you'll want to improve it more and more (…) instead of staying on the same level'* (Focus group, January 2006). They also believed that completing the portfolio increased their learning capacity, *' (…) When you fill those [portfolios] out you have to know what you are filling out so you learn more'* (Focus group, May 2006).

7.3.3   Effectiveness of the use of rich tasks
Working towards the specific goal of a rich task was a significant change in Mark's teaching practice.

7.3.4   Suggestions for future dissemination
While Mark commented that the time spent on planning was overly long, he appreciated the necessity for the level of planning particularly in relation to teachers similar to himself who had been teaching in schools for a number of years. In such cases teachers may have allowed their level of formal planning and preparation to deteriorate and the planning framework for the project prompted teachers into re-appraising their practice.

To increase the likelihood of teachers remaining with AfL, and to encourage other teachers to become involved, Mark suggested that a one-page template be available for a particular rich task in an area of study and weekly learning intentions that would lead to the effective completion of the rich task at the end of the block of work. While there is an appreciation for the level of thought and time that should go in to preparing such a block of work, Mark felt that in reality teachers were either unable or unwilling to devote such time to teaching AfL. He did acknowledge that in taking up another area of study in Phase 2 *'the planning wasn't as exhausting'* (May interview, 2006) due to refinement of planning materials and his own familiarity with the AfL framework.

He was appreciative of the teacher seminar meetings and cautioned that unless teachers followed up immediately after such meetings it was easy to lose momentum. He also spoke of the shared investment local teachers had in their involvement with the teacher network meetings;

> *' (…) they [teacher network meetings] are very good because we are all kinda in the same situation you know and we are struggling at various stages. You are trying to juggle that with all the different parts. They are great because there is a certain amount of support in a group. It's not too bad if you feel someone else is in the same boat. There is a bit of pressure I suppose as well because you don't want to make a fool of yourself (…) The main driving force at that stage I suppose was not to let the side down'* (December interview, 2005).

7.3.5 Reporting

Mark noted a genuine interest in discussing tangible options for reporting with more time to be spent discussing what should be included in the portfolio and how it and the assessment wheel can be used more effectively. There was encouragement to be more pro-active in using some of the current assessment instruments as a way to gain parents' reaction to the format of reporting and inform future developments in reporting.

Section 3   Outcomes & Recommendations

Chapter 8.   Conclusions

a) Teachers' responses to the assessment framework and the assessment materials provided by the working group

Teachers were highly motivated and energized by the AfL / rich task assessment framework and related materials, reporting that the standard of teaching, learning and assessment in their physical education lessons had improved greatly. There was a noticeable variation in the rate at which teachers adopted the approaches. This arose as a result of variations in school context, nature of the students involved and the extent to which adoption of the framework represented a change or modification of previous practice. There was consensus that the level of planning and preparation was time consuming but also an acknowledgement that it did result in a quality end product. Teachers were of the view that use of the approaches would not be sustainable if they were to increase the number of classes that they taught through the assessment framework. Sharing the learning intention was the easiest component of the AfL strategy to implement and teachers reported an increase in the use of questioning. While understanding and identifying that the criteria for success was a challenge for teachers in Phase 1 of the project it appeared to be less so in Phase 2. This might be attributable to further clarification provided after Phase 1 and/or increased teacher familiarity with AfL. Self and peer assessment were the methodologies most frequently used by teachers and they expressed a need for support to assist them in the more efficient use of these methodologies. It was notable that teachers kept minimal documentation in respect to their own progress in, and reflections about, the process.

b) Students' responses to the assessment methodologies

Students were very conscious of the fact that they were 'learning differently' in the AfL lessons, noting the opportunity provided for them to be more involved and thus experience a sense of ownership. Students enjoyed having targets to aim for and recording their progress. Consequently they commented mostly favourable in sharing learning intentions at the start of the lesson and having a 'task' / 'challenge' to complete at the end of a block of work. Across both phases, it was difficult to establish the extent

of students' understanding and appreciation of criteria for success. There was evidence that completing written work (and to a lesser extent the use of questioning and feedback) caused frustration among students who value the active nature of physical education. This was more prevalent in some schools and may illustrate a need to re-visit effective practices on how best to integrate AfL components into physical education lessons without significantly compromising physical activity levels. There was a mixed reaction to the use of the portfolio. While some students expressed pride in their folders and appreciated the opportunity to record progress, others felt they detracted from physical activity time and were not happy to carry them in and out of school.

c) The effectiveness of the use of rich tasks as an AfL approach

It was evident, particularly in Phase 2, that the rich task allowed students and teachers to have a shared vision on the overall aim(s) of the block of work and what was to be completed by the end of a block. Students commented that rich tasks encouraged them to work together on a weekly basis towards an end challenge. Teachers commented that the rich task contextualised weekly learning intentions and aided planning.

d) Suggestions for future dissemination of these approaches to teachers of physical education

Teachers suggested a number of ways in which the use of the AfL framework and rich tasks could become sustainable on a larger scale, i.e. to include more class groups. These included;

- planning and preparation being more manageable to teachers
- the maintenance of teacher network meetings to report on continued progression, receive support and discuss any related issues or concerns
- more information and ideas on what should be included in the portfolio to best accurately reflect students' achievements
- further work on the assessment wheel to examine how students can assess their own progress against clear criteria for performance
- access to a bank of planning frameworks, lesson plans and rich tasks that will not only potentially reduce the amount of time on duplicating planning across schools but also act as examples of best practice

- the current format of the assessment instruments to be piloted for suitability as a reporting mechanism for parents before any further work is undertaken in changing the format.

Chapter 9.   Recommendations

In making recommendations there is an acknowledgement that some teachers support widespread dissemination to include further development of project materials and reporting on student learning. Others believe that the work done to date is perhaps inadequately advanced to share with a wider audience and that the focus should be to build on momentum already created with the project teachers, encouraging them to be more proactive in their schools and on a national level. It is possible to list a number of recommendations that are directly informed and supported by the experiences of those involved in the Assessment in Junior Cycle Physical Education Project.

a) Templates for planning frameworks, lesson plans, assessment wheels and assessment steps, along with a bank of competed planning frameworks, lesson plans and rich tasks, to be available electronically. This will complement the dissemination of AfL material on the NCCA and JCPE websites and allow access to planning documents that have been prepared, taught and refined.

b) The establishment of a formal network to provide professional advice and assessment instruments designed to be used for formative purposes within physical education. In the absence of a formal network, a teacher forum / discussion e-mail can keep teachers in touch regarding their interest and experiences with AfL.

c) A pre-prepared AfL package including the key principles that are central to AfL, planning frameworks and lesson plans, assessment instrument templates, sample materials and exemplars of students' work to be available to teachers. Such a package could be the basis of a comprehensive addendum to the DES/NCCA (2004) Physical Education Junior Cycle Guidelines for Teachers.

d) The development of a digital video resource that will allow teachers to observe and understand how the AfL approach to assessment in physical education might be adopted into the reality of school life. The resource could include a presentation on key elements of the AfL approach, i.e., sharing the learning intention, identifying criteria for success and using questioning effectively to promote student learning. Examples of rich task performances could also be included to highlight the multiple dimensions of learning that take place through such rich tasks. Such a resource could be made available on related NCCA and JCPE web pages.

e) In developing a Framework for ICT in Curriculum and Assessment, the NCCA to work in partnership with a sample of the project schools to outline the kind of teaching and learning experiences with ICT that an AfL approach to physical education can afford. The most obvious link is with the role of ICT in the preparation and presentation of portfolios and assessment instruments.

f) In considering the nature of the evaluation data, it would seem prudent that before such an initiative can be responsible for changing practice nationwide, the Assessment in Junior Cycle Physical Education Project be extended to refine the use of the AfL framework and assessment instruments with the same cohort of schools. This would allow;

- further refinement of planning materials, with a view to further reducing preparation time and supporting the possibility of delivering a three-year framework to complement the JCPE cycle
- further exploration of the function of portfolios and exploration and agreement of reporting options, working with parents in identifying an effective and tangible reporting mechanism
- teachers from the current complement of schools to increase their familiarity with the AfL framework and assessment instruments, with a view to building a community of teachers who can then provide support and disseminate information and resources to teachers nationwide.

Issues related to the successful expansion of AfL approaches have been considered in the broader NCCA AfL project. Indications from that project suggest that teachers might be best supported in making the required changes to practice by promoting the wider adoption of AfL approaches within schools, introducing the concept of the 'AfL School'.

Formative assessment requires time to be integrated by each teacher (Black et al., 2005) and an investment in further refinement of materials and reporting options will not only inform JCPE but also help direct assessment within senior cycle physical education. Through this initiative AfL principles have been promoted, teachers and students have conveyed a level of understanding of AfL and case studies have illustrated the variable of the teacher and their class in experiencing the framework. For the initiative to contribute internationally to the growing practice-referenced research in the area of formative assessment in physical education, it is imperative that its continual evolution

and refinement is informed by the experiences of teachers and students and the evaluation of such experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Planning frameworks and lesson plan formats

Appendix 2: Assessment wheel

Appendix 3: Teacher interview protocol

Appendix 4: Student focus group protocol

Appendix 5: Assessment steps

Assessment in Physical Education Project…Phase 2   - Planning Framework

Physical Education Syllabus Area: Aquatics

Junior Cycle Physical Education Support Service

Syllabus learning outcomes:	Learning Experiences	Assessment approaches and instruments
Students should be able to: · Participate in a variety of simple water games, and swim, competently and safely, on front and back · Perform at least one swimming stroke competently and safely · Select and perform appropriate water and entry methods · Perform basic survival skills · Demonstrate a knowledge of elementary principles of land-based rescue · Display an understanding of the benefits of swimming as an aerobic exercise · Co-operate with others in the learning environment	*The students will need to be provided with experiences in which they;* · Enter the water safely · Perform basic survival skills · Participate in water confidence building activities · Develop strokes · Carry out rescues	
	Content · Safe Entries · Personal swimming safety · Push, glide, kick · Arm action, front/back, full stroke · Breathing technique · Land rescue & survival skills treading water · Surface dives feet/head first · Combine safe entry, swim and dive · Undertake Challenge	**Equipment needed**
Rich Task: With a partner, one demonstrates safe entry and ability to travel/swim a defined distance. Retrieve two objects from the pool floor and remain in place demonstrating survival skills until rescued by partner.		

Challenge;   *You and your partner have been shipwrecked on a deserted island. One of you needs to return to the wreck of the ship to retrieve useful items necessary for your survival. On retrieving the items you discover that you are too tired to swim back to shore. You need to signal to your partner who will throw you a line to get you back safely. The water is unknown and could be dangerous.*

Teacher Feedback…. Comments on specific aspects of the project		
AfL strategies	**Use of assessment instruments**	**Planning framework**

General comment

Appendix 1b: Sample of Lesson Planning Format			
Lesson planning Activity… Class: Lesson: Date:			

Rich Task			Sharing the Learning Intention:
Learning Intentions:	Criteria for Success	Class organisation/content	Verbally Q&A Video Demonstration Chart Blackboard Other Criteria for success: Verbally Q&A Video Demo Chart Blackboard Discussion and agreement Other: _____ Providing focused feedback: Self - evaluation _____ Peer - evaluation _____ Group - evaluation _____ Teacher Feedback _____ Other _____

Appendix 2; Assessment Wheel

Survival Skills

Water Confidence

Entry

4

3

2

1

Rescuing

1

2

3

4

Back Crawl

Working with others

Front Crawl

Challenge

You and your partner have been shipwrecked on a deserted island. One of you needs to return to the wreck of the ship to retrieve useful items necessary for your survival. On retrieving the items you discover that you are too tired to swim back to shore. You need to signal to your partner who will throw you a line to get you back safely. The water is unknown and could be dangerous.

Student comment

Teacher comment

Name_____

Class_____

Date_____

1. I haven't started this yet.

2. I can do this sometimes but I find it hard

3. I can perform this at a reasonable level most of the time

4. I can perform at a high level always

Appendix 3

Teacher interview protocols

(November / December 2005 **and May 2006)**

1. How did you choose the participating class and the activity strand for the project? **How did you choose the participating class and the activity strand for the project? Was the class the same group from before Christmas?**

2. How did you set about planning and preparing for introducing the assessment instruments and an assessment for learning framework? **How did your experience before Christmas inform your use of the assessment instruments and assessment for learning framework this time? Was the planning and preparation easier second time round?**

3. Did you receive adequate guidance on the use of assessment and Assessment for Learning procedures? **Did you receive adequate guidance at the Christmas meeting to address concerns from the first phase of the project and inform the delivery of the second phase after Christmas?**

4. To what extent are the Assessment for Learning key principles (i.e., sharing the learning intention, sharing the criteria for success, providing feedback based on the criteria for success and involving students in assessing their own learning) evident in your physical education lessons related to the project? **Are any of the Assessment for Learning key principles becoming more evident in your physical education lessons as you progress with the project?**

5. What has worked well and what has worked less well? **Are there similarities between what worked well and less well from the class before Christmas? In what way are the more recent classes different than before?**

6. To what extent have the prepared assessment instruments been successful? To what extent do you believe the assessment instruments pursue authentic assessment in a physical education context? **To what extent have the assessment instruments developed your, and the students', understanding of authentic assessment?**

7. Are there strategies that you believe could enhance the delivery (by teachers) and completion (by students) of assessment instruments? **Have you discovered strategies that enhance the delivery (by teachers) and completion (by students) of assessment instruments?**

8. To what extent is the relationship between the assessment instruments and the JCPE syllabus effective? That is, the suitability of an assessment for learning framework for teaching and learning in physical education.

9. How have the students responded? Have you seen any evidence from your students that assessment for learning improves motivation and / or achievement? Does such an approach benefit particularly students who were previously more likely to be less involved in physical education lessons, e.g., the weaker / more reluctant learners or the 'better' students? **In what ways are the**

student responses similar / different from before? Have they maintained, decreased or increased level of motivation in the classes? Is there a level of familiarity with the Assessment for Learning key principles?

10. Has assessment for learning supported your teaching? What were the most significant changes you made to your practice? Was this easy or difficult? **In what ways have you developed your teaching from before? What changes to your teacher have you found it easy / difficult to maintain?**

11. What suggestions would you make if other teachers in the near future are to pursue involvement in a similar initiative? Would you suggest revisions to any of the materials you have been working with? **What suggestions would you make if other teachers in the near future are to pursue involvement in a similar initiative? Would you suggest revisions to any of the materials you have been working with?**

Appendix 4

Student focus groups
(November / December 2005 **and May 2006)**

1. What do you think of the physical education lessons you have been involved in with [name of teacher] doing [activity] on [day and time]? Have you noticed any changes in these lessons from other physical education lessons? **Have you noticed any changes in these lessons from the physical education class before Christmas?**

2. To what extent, and in what way, do you feel more involved in the more recent lessons? **In what way have the more recent lessons developed your involvement in the physical education class?**

3. To what extent, and in what way, is the relationship between students and teacher different in these lessons from other physical education lessons? **In what way has the relationship between students and teacher developed / not developed from the physical education class before Christmas?**

4. What do you understand the terms 'learning intention' and 'criteria for success' to mean? **What do you understand the terms 'learning intention' and 'criteria for success' to mean?**

5. Have you had opportunities to assess your own performance and that of others during these lessons? If so, do you enjoy these opportunities? How do they make you feel? **Have you had opportunities to assess your own performance and that of others during these lessons? Does this develop the way you were involved in assessment before Christmas?**

6. How do you feel about assessing others' performance/work?

Appendix 5; Assessment Steps

Week by week record of learning   Name: Date:

Challenge:

What I want to be able to do

-
-
-
-
-
-

1

What I want to do next

6

What I need to be able to do…

5

4

3

2

1

What I can do…

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