

# **Teacher assessment literacy: How do we know what we need to improve ?**

Chris Davison,

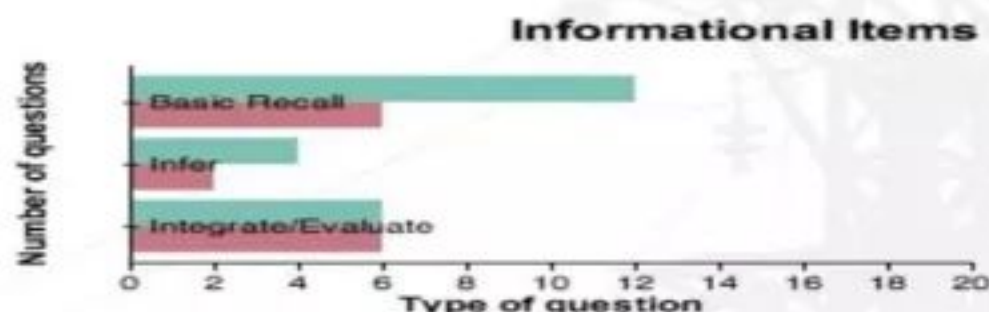
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## What is teacher assessment literacy (and why is it important)?

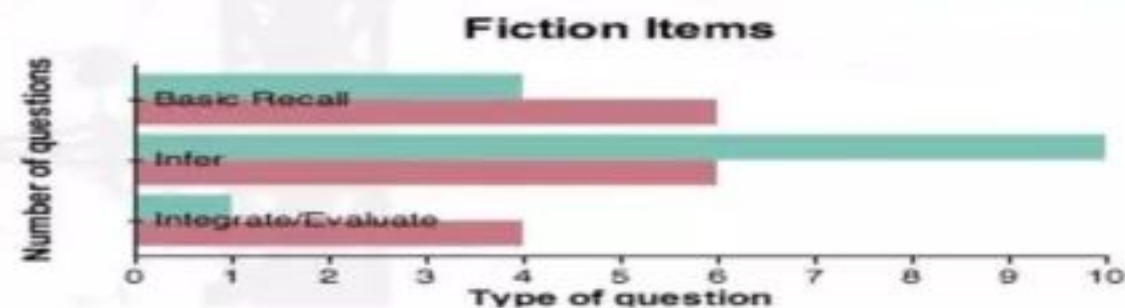
Teacher assessment literacy is regarded as one of the most influential factors in improving student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1999; Hattie, 2008), in particular a teacher's ability to collect, interpret and use a range of assessment information to monitor and evaluate learning needs, provide targeted feedback and help students set achievable goals.

- But when you think of assessment literacy, do you think of this ?

## NAPLAN VS. PIRLS



On informational items...NAPLAN asks more basic recall questions



On fiction items...PIRLS asks more evaluation questions




**NAPLAN**  
 Australia only  
 7 stories, < 200 words  
 Fiction text at grade level  
 Non-fiction above grade level in Year 5  
 Nearly all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students sit  
 91% met benchmark  
 Online in 2016

**PIRLS**  
 59 countries  
 2 stories, ~ 800 words  
 Fiction text below grade level  
 Non-fiction above grade level in Year 5  
 Sample of 6,000 Year 4 Australian students  
 74% met benchmark  
 Online piloted in 2011



- Or this?

**Consider**



▶ Research suggests that teachers spend from **one-quarter to one-third** of their professional time on assessment-related activities.

▶ **Almost all** do so without the benefit of having learned the principles of sound assessment.

Eddy White, PhD (May, 2012) (Stiggins, 2007)

“Assessment literacy is the possession of knowledge about the basic principles of **sound** assessment practice, including its terminology, the development and use of assessment methodologies and techniques, and familiarity with standards of quality in assessment.”

<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-in-the-classroom/Assessment-for-learning-in-practice/Assessment-literacy>



Or this?



### Reading Level Assessment Summary

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Purpose of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_ Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* (See Item numbers below for details)

	①	②	③	④	⑤	
	Level	% Acc	s/c Rate	Comprehension	Fluency	WPM
Independent						
Instructional						
Frustrational						

**1 & 2) Accuracy**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Solv problem selves with using</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pictures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> beginning letters/sounds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> letter-sound clusters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> blending letters/sounds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> onset and rime</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> knowledge of spelling patterns (analogies)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> syllables</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> rereading</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> no discernible behavior</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waxes lettered with meaning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> rarer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> at times</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> often</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes inferences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> associations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> inferences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> substitutions that were</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> visually similar</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> not visually similar</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



- Or even this ?



CLASS, ALL YEAR LONG, I'VE  
TAUGHT EACH OF YOU TO LEARN  
AT YOUR OWN PACE IN YOUR  
OWN PERSONAL STYLE.



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I'VE SET GOALS FOR EACH OF  
YOU, INDIVIDUALLY, TO HELP YOU  
REACH YOUR OWN UNIQUE  
POTENTIAL. AND NOW THE  
RESULTS OF THAT WILL BE  
MEASURED.



5-11

BY AMY S. TORON

WITH A  
STANDARDIZED  
TEST.



www.comics.com



Why is assessment literacy the “new” holy grail?

**ASSESSMENT LITERACY:  
A BONA FIDE “MAGIC  
BULLET” FOR EDUCATION**

W. James Popham  
University of California, Los Angeles

California Educational Research  
Association 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
San Francisco  
November 18-19, 2009

- At the intersection of two major ideological and educational fallacies:
  - *If you measure it, it will improve.*
  - *If you improve it, it will be measured.*



Much research evidence suggests assessment **is** a key to improvement in learning ...

- Black & Wiliam (1998) have convincingly demonstrated the learning gains that can be achieved through well focused teacher-based formative assessment enhance students' learning more than any other strategy across age levels and in different contexts.
- Hattie (2009) in a more recent study of major influences on educational achievement (using 800+ meta-analyses) found that formative practice, in particular self–assessment and feedback, had the highest effect sizes (i.e., impact on student outcomes) out of more than 100 different instructional and contextual factors.

# Influences on student achievement (Hattie, 2009)





<b>Role of assessment?</b>	<b>Effect Size</b>
<b>Self-reporting/self-assessment</b>	<b>1.44</b>
<b>Reciprocal teaching</b>	<b>.74</b>
<b>Feedback</b>	<b>.72</b>
<b>Providing formative evaluation to teachers</b>	<b>.70</b>
<b>Teaching student self-verbalization/meta-cognitive strategies</b>	<b>.67</b>
<b>Teaching test taking skills</b>	<b>.22</b>

*"[A]ssessment-literate teachers will typically make better decisions, and because we want students to be better taught, it should be obvious that today's teachers must acquire more assessment literacy" (Popham, 2009, p. 4, 6).*



- Worldwide there has been a concern to increase teachers' assessment literacy, as well as that of other stakeholders (Taylor, 2009), in part due to concerns that teachers may lack sufficient training in what educational assessment entails (Malone, 2011; Stiggins, 1991, 2008, 2009b; Taylor, 2009) and/or may lack the confidence or skills required to perform their assessment duties in a competent manner (Stiggins, 2008, p. 8).

This raises the question of what kind of “assessment” we want teachers to be literate in ?

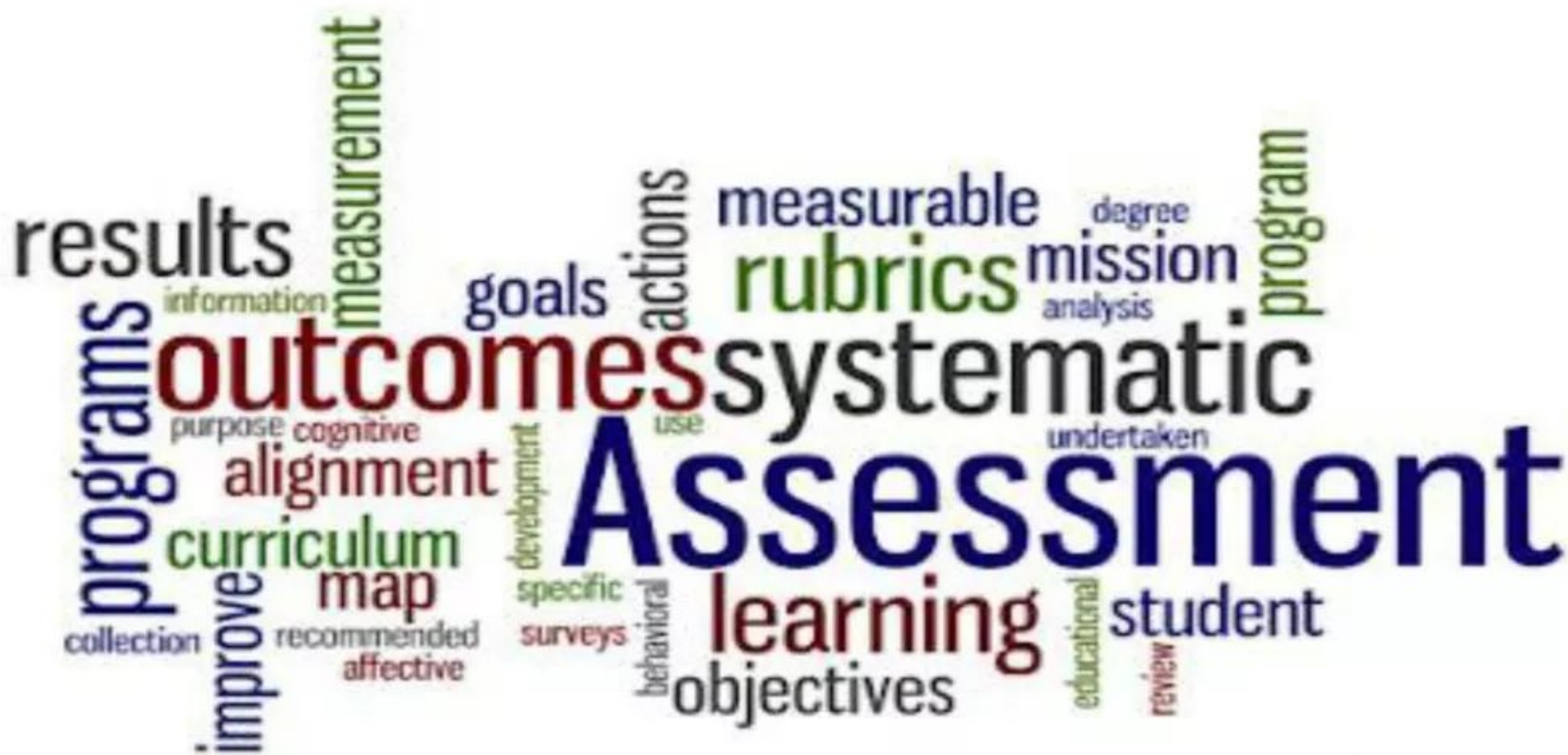
- Researchers do not agree on how assessment literacy should be defined (Walters, 2010) nor what it might comprise (Fulcher, 2012, p. 115). Although many have attempted to define this construct (Fulcher, 2012; Malone, 2011; Popham, 2009), no existing definitions suit the Australian school context, in which teacher-based assessment accounts for most evaluation that takes place.



- Stiggins (1991) argues that the meaning of assessment literacy varies due to “the needs of the decision maker and the practical realities of the decision context” (p.537).



- No existing definitions suit the Australian school context, in which teacher-based assessment accounts for most evaluation that takes place





- In terms of its assessment demands and practices, Australia is very different from other contexts,

*“Australia tends to sit in the middle when comparisons are made between it and other countries, both in terms of the performance on international assessments; and in terms of an assessment system which is balanced between classroom level assessment and standardised assessment, with a reasonably strong focus on classroom assessment ...”*

**eg. NSW ...**

*“The ... syllabuses advocate assessment for learning, as this is a type of quality assessment that has had world-wide success in enhancing teaching and improving student learning. Assessment for learning gives students opportunities to produce work that leads to development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers decide how and when to assess student achievement, as they plan the work students will do, using a range of appropriate assessment strategies including self-assessment and peer assessment.”*

*<http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/7-8/assessment-for-learning-in-years-7-10/>*



## *Assessment for learning:*

- *emphasises the interactions between learning and manageable assessment strategies that promote learning*
- *clearly expresses for the student and teacher the goals of the learning activity*
- *reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, not just achieve a better mark*
- *provides ways for students to use feedback from assessment*
- *helps students take responsibility for their own learning*
- *is inclusive of all learners*

Hence, research shows:

*“NSW teachers are more inclined to use formative assessment (including feedback to students) than the average of OECD teachers (and) teachers are encouraged to use a variety of assessment techniques that are valid, reliable and appropriate to the age and stage of learning.*

*The development of these skills has been a major focus of teacher professional learning opportunities in NSW schools over the past decade. Teacher survey data from OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) indicates that 80 per cent of NSW teachers who participated in professional development relating to student evaluation and assessment practices reported that it had a moderate to large impact on their teaching ...*



*Nonetheless, there is evidence that Australia has some way to go to ensure that teachers understand how to interpret and understand assessment data and effectively embed assessment within a framework of teaching and learning. For example, an OECD review of Australian assessment practices undertaken in 2011 found that when teachers graded against national A-E standards, the consistency of their judgements within a school was weak (Goss et al 2015). A 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) survey reported that 25.7 per cent of primary teachers identified the need for more professional learning in 'making effective use of student assessment information'. The findings were similar for secondary teachers" (CESE 2015, p.13)*

- So in Australia, concerns have been raised about the trustworthiness and reliability of teacher assessment decision-making processes and teachers' ability to be both "accurate" and "fair"; but also about teachers' capacity to be able to collect and use appropriate information to improve learning.



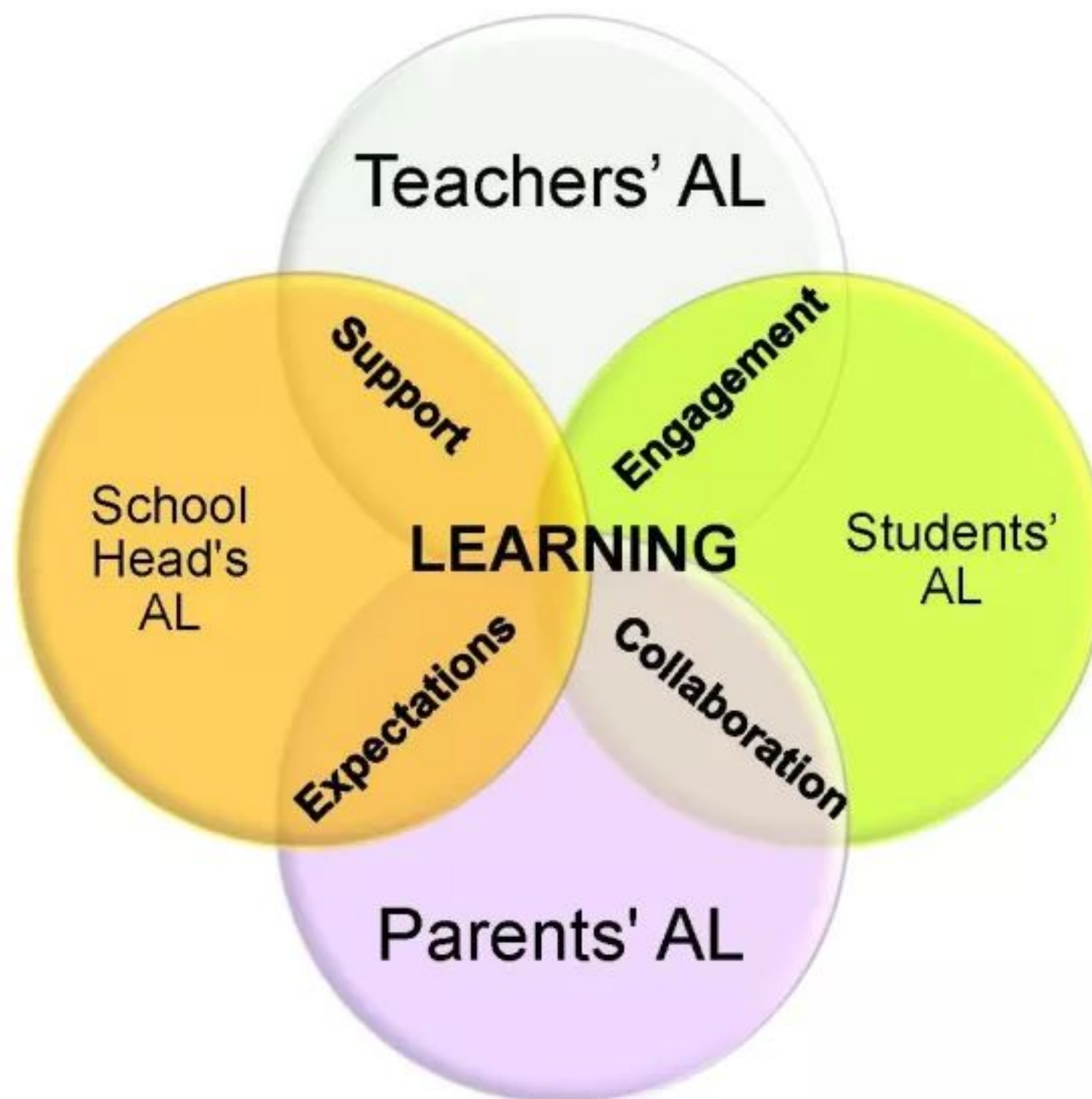
- However, they are not mutually exclusive – both are important for effective assessment, with the teacher equally, if not more, accountable to individual learners, not just systems, and systems highly motivated to improve learning, not just rank learners.

Thus in Australia:

“Teacher **assessment for learning** literacy (comprises the) knowledge and skills in making highly contextualised, fair, consistent and trustworthy assessment decisions to inform learning and teaching to effectively support both student and teacher learning. Teachers aim to build students’ and other stakeholders’ capabilities and confidence to take an active role in assessment, learning and teaching activities to enable and provide the needed support for more effective learning” (Alonzo & Davison, 2015)



# Framework for Building Assessment Literacy in Schools



- However, teacher assessment literacy is only now starting to be widely discussed and promoted in the English language education field (eg. Davison & Leung (eds), Special issue of *TESOL Quarterly*, Sept 2009), although there has been a number of parallel but more narrowly focused developments, eg. on
  - feedback, Hyland & Hyland, 2006;
  - formative assessment, Leung, 2004;
  - dynamic assessment, Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner, 2007;
  - diagnostic assessment, Alderson, 2005.



- Teaching and assessing English as a second or an additional language (ESL/EAL) learners is a particularly challenging area for most teachers.

# 2012 HKDSE English Language Examination Introduction to the School-based Assessment Component



**Introduction to School-based Assessment**

**SBA in the 2012 HKDSE English Examination**

**Assessment, Teaching and Learning:  
from Principles to Practice**

**Extensive Reading Programme**

**Case Studies: Sample Teaching, Learning and  
Assessment Sequences**

**Appendices**

**Acknowledgements**

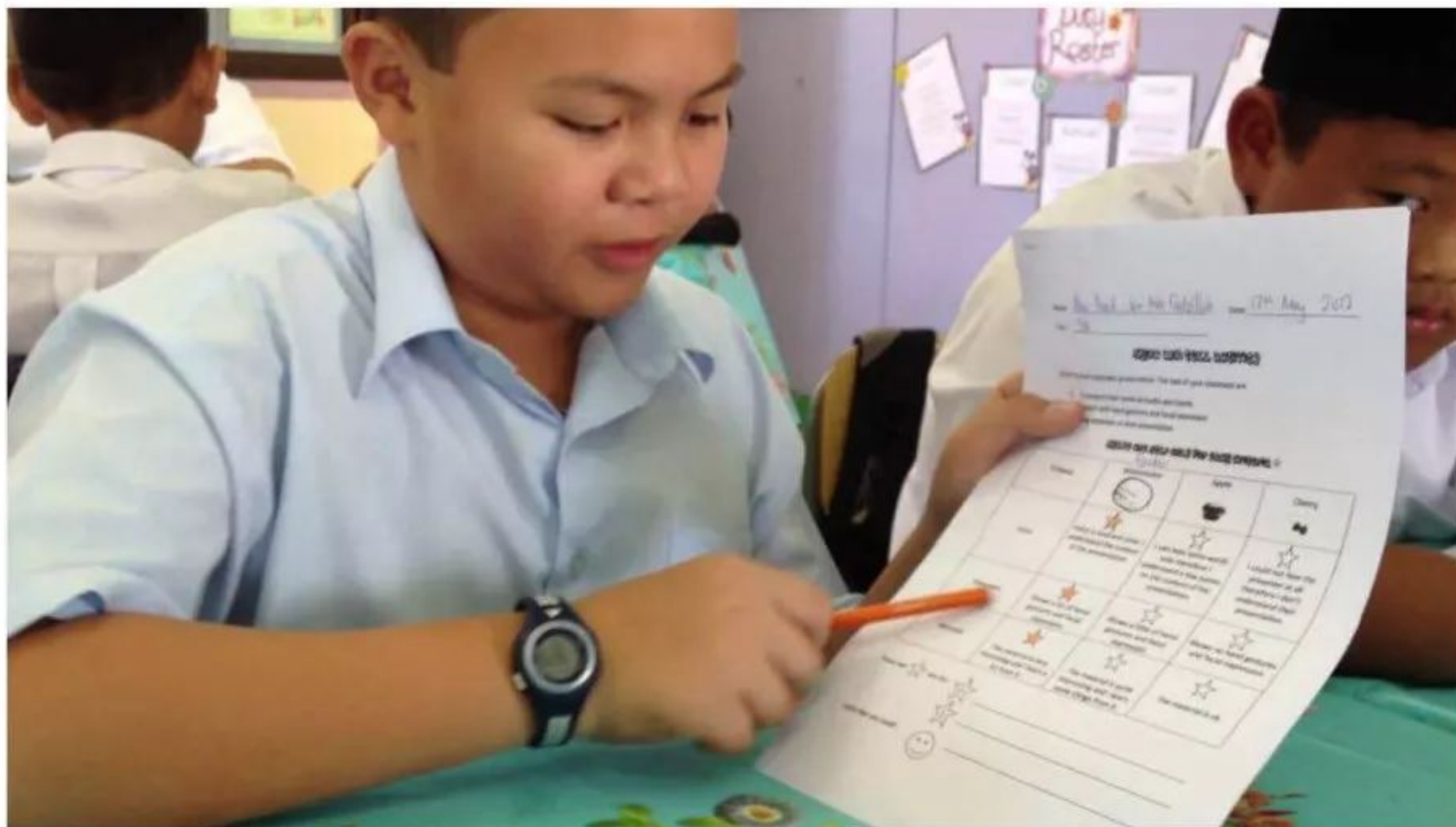


Faculty of Education  
The University of Hong Kong



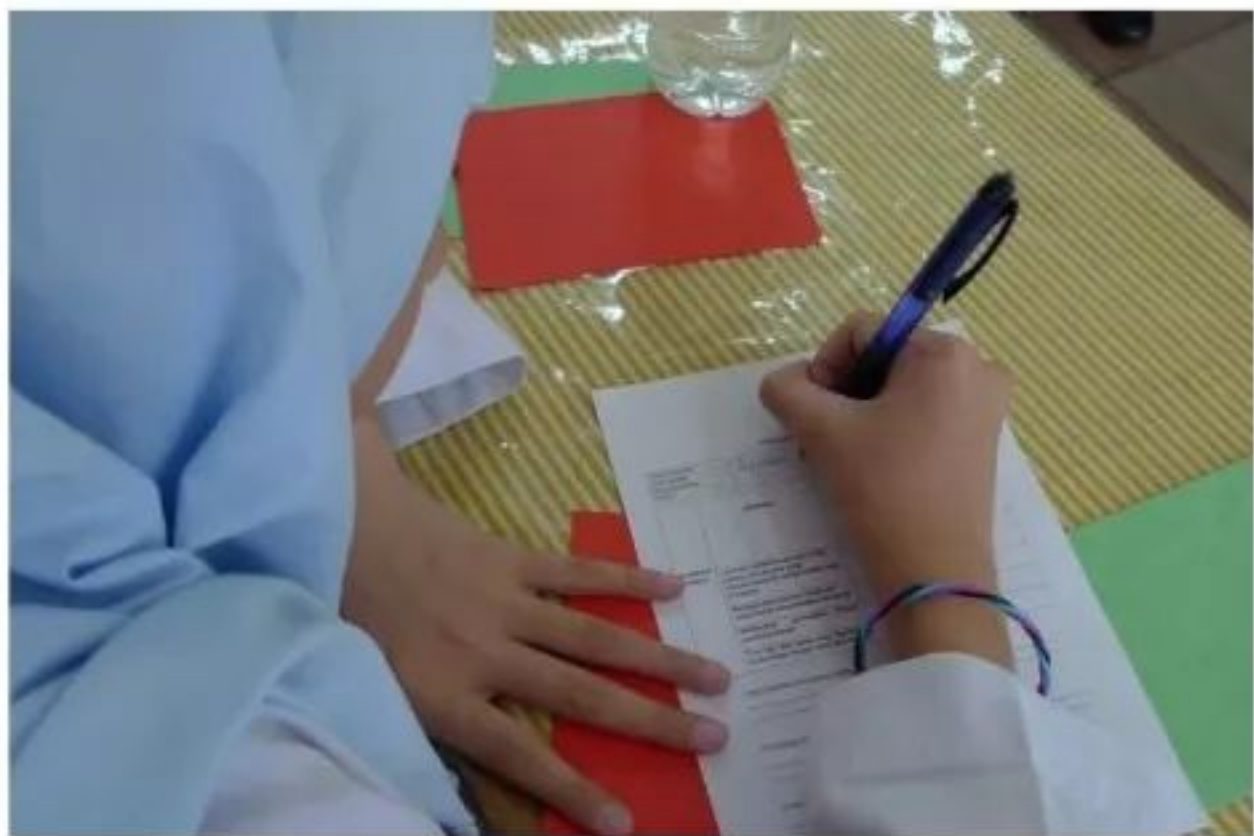


# Assessment for Learning in Singapore





# School-Based Assessment for Learning in Brunei





- In Australia, the primary focus in English language education until relatively recently has been on developing more accurate, consistent and transparent descriptions of EAL development to improve **reporting** systems, esp. definitions of the target groups for funding purposes, eg.
  - the ESL Band Scales:  
<https://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=51621>,
  - the EAL Continuum,  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/eal/continuum/Pages/default.aspx>) and now,
  - the EAL/D Learning Progression,  
[http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/EALD\\_Resource\\_-\\_EALD\\_Learning\\_Progression.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/EALD_Resource_-_EALD_Learning_Progression.pdf).

- Much less attention has been paid to improving teacher assessment literacy at all levels despite a long history of standards-based assessment in general education.



- However, the growing emphasis on benchmarking student performance against standardized assessment outcomes has created particular difficulties for teachers working with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, especially in supporting teacher-assessors with variable level of language knowledge and assessment literacy.

- In Australian schools about 30% of students require systematic and regular English language support, hence all teachers – not just EALD teachers - need access to appropriate and useful assessment tools and advice to enhance assessment literacy in order to support learning and teaching.

- However, most assessment systems are imposed on teachers, rather than negotiated with them based on a contextualised and detailed understanding of their needs, thus creating problems with effectiveness and/or sustainability.



- Enhancing teacher assessment literacy: One approach to improving teacher knowledge and skills in Australia ....
- This presentation will outline the aims and rationale for the TEAL project and its theoretical underpinnings, concluding with the implications for professional learning and teacher support.

- The School of Education at the University of New South Wales, in partnership with the Victorian education system and Educational Assessment Australia (EAA), has developed an innovative online assessment “tool-kit” to help all teachers develop pedagogically sound approaches to assessing the English language development of all students, <http://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/>,

## **How have we tried to develop EAL teacher assessment literacy more effectively?**

By practising what we preach, by following the same principles and developing the same practices among our teachers that we want them to implement with students ...



- striving to be theoretically and philosophically consistent
- beginning by finding out where teachers are in terms of their assessment literacy
- sharing learning intentions, setting clear and coherent success criteria and achievable timelines, modelling desired outcomes and leading - by example - to sustainable improvements in assessment, learning and teaching
- putting the learners and teachers at the centre of the change process
- involving students, parents and the wider school community in understanding and supporting reforms
- maintaining confidence in the assessment system.

# TEAL: Tools to Enhance Assessment Literacy for Teachers of EAL (2012-2017)

- Drawing on Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles and Vygotskian theory, TEAL is an online assessment advice and 'toolkit', <http://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/>, for use by all Victorian school teachers to help assess the stage of development for EAL students in speaking and listening, reading and writing, to improve learning and teaching.
- All tools are aligned against the *Victorian EAL Curriculum*, with potential for alignment to other standards by other jurisdictions.



## EAL teacher self-perceptions of assessment literacy (Alonzo & Davison, 2014)

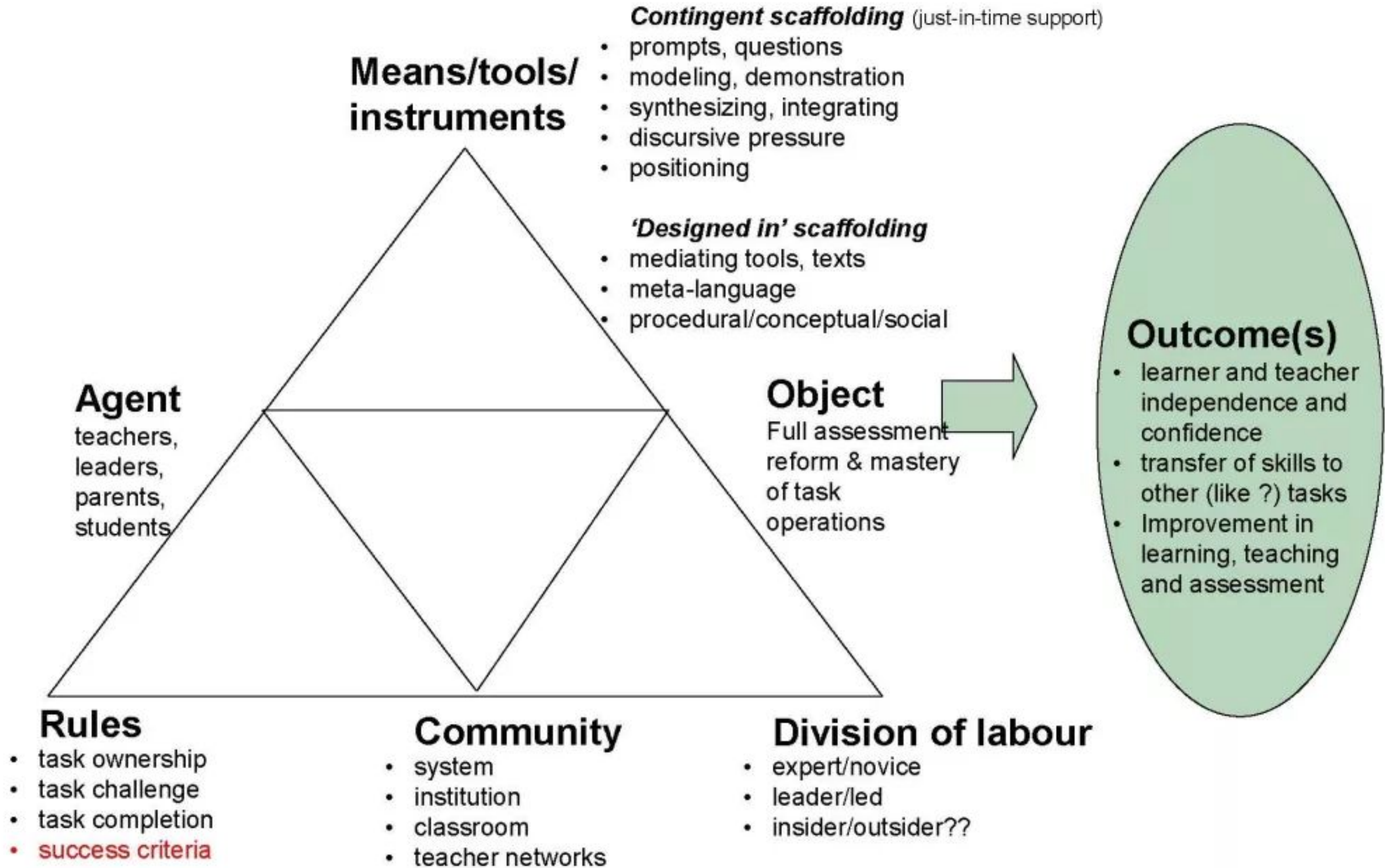
Indicators	Mean Max = 5
Conducts assessment with consideration of student background and culture	4.36
Participates in professional development related to assessment	4.36
Demonstrates belief in the ability of every student to improve	4.14
Identifies appropriate teaching methods	3.94
Maintains confidentiality in dealing with assessment results (norm referencing, inappropriate disclosure of assessment results and ranking students)	3.93
Develops an environment of trust	3.93
Undertakes further education/ training in assessment	3.93
Tailors lessons to available resources	3.88
Uses assessment to build students' interest to learn	3.86
Reinforces positive learning attitude of students	3.79



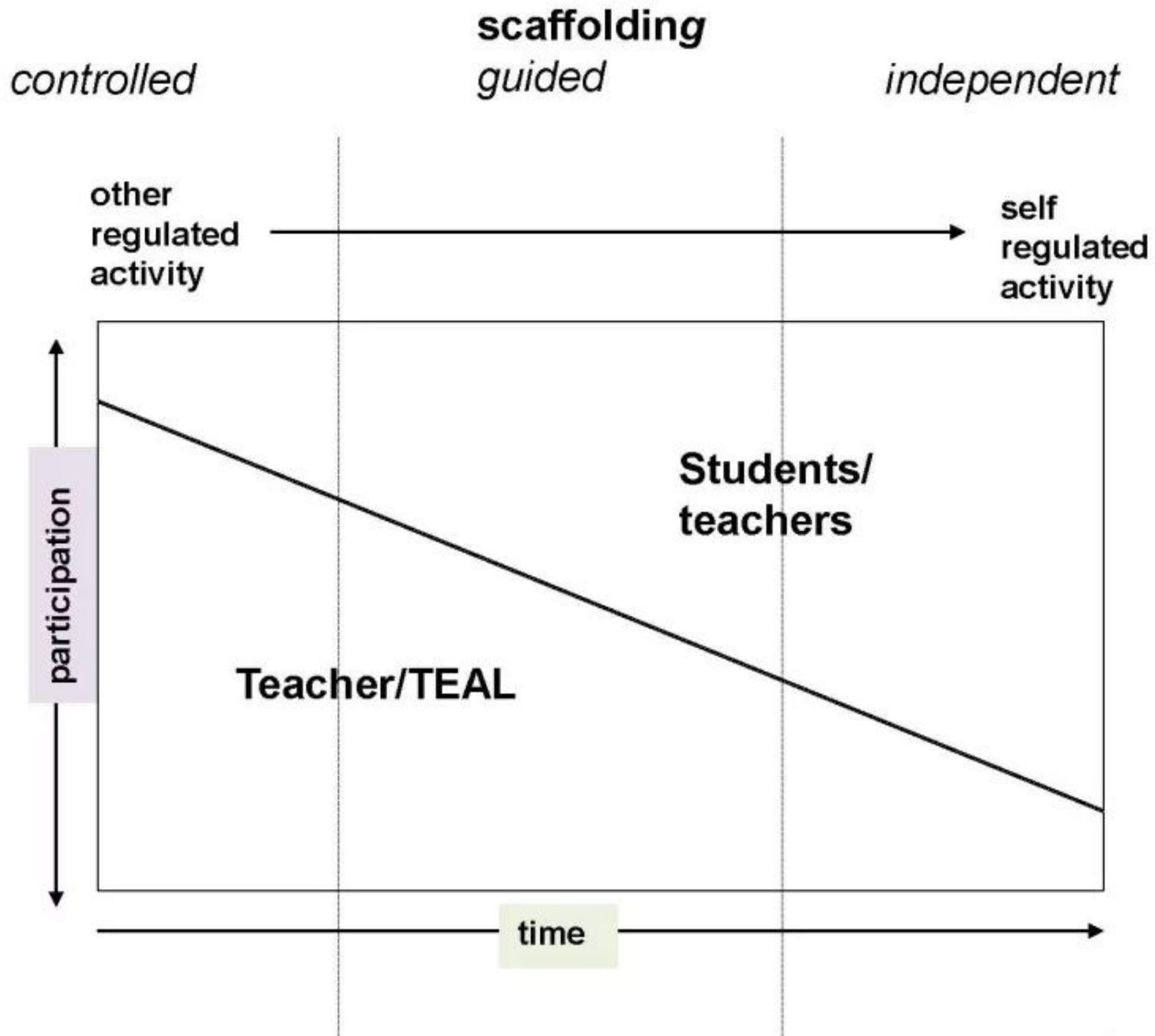
Indicators	Mean
Gathers a range of evidence of student learning	2.36
Designs English language assessment tasks	2.45
Engages students in peer-assessment	2.45
Engages in self- assessment/ reflection	2.68
Involves students in the development of learning outcomes	2.87
Gives feedback related to criteria	2.87
Assists students in using feedback to feed forward	2.98
Collaborates with family to establish home activities to support students	2.98
Informs community of school's assessment practices	3.12
Develops appropriate English language assessment strategies	3.33
Moderates feedback and results of self and peer assessment	3.33
Engages in peer-review of teaching performance	3.36
Identifies key assessment and teaching issues for review	3.36
Involves students in the development of success criteria/ rubrics	3.4
Explains the success criteria/ rubrics	3.4
Engages students in self-assessment	3.4



# Teacher assessment reform as an activity system



# The theoretical framework







# Tools for Enhancing Assessment Literacy for Teachers of English as an Additional Language

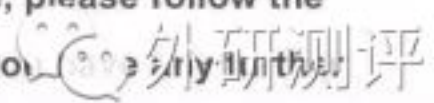
[Home](#) [Professional Learning](#) [Assessment Tools](#) [Annotated Units of Work](#) [Discussion Forum](#) [Contact Us](#)

## Welcome to Tools to Enhance Assessment Literacy



The TEAL web project, launched in June, is an online resource for teachers of primary and secondary level children who are learning English as a second (ESL) or additional (EAL) language in Australia. It brings together a range of tools and advice for the assessment and reporting of the English language proficiency and progress of students.

For more information on the TEAL web project, its contents and its intended use, please follow the links below to read more. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to visit our





## **Key components:**

### **An online teacher-mediated EAL assessment resource centre including**

- **Teacher professional learning resources** - background material re assessment principles and processes/video and text-based resources to develop assessment literacy.
- **An assessment tools bank** – a range of assessment tools and tasks organised around macro-skills cross-referenced by assessment type, EAL stages and year levels.

Log In

Home > Assessment Tools > Common Oral Assessment Tool

# Common Oral Assessment Tool

## Guiding Principles and Advice

1. [Preparing to Assess Students' Learning](#)
2. [Getting Students Ready for an Assessment](#)
3. [Choosing an Oral Assessment Task](#)
4. [Using the Assessment Criteria](#)
5. [Making Trustworthy Assessment Decisions](#)
6. [Aligning your Assessment with the EAL Continuum](#)
7. [Using the Assessment Data to Improve Learning](#)
8. [Glossary](#)

## Assessment Tasks and Criteria

[Oral Assessment Tasks and Criteria](#)





# Task 10 'The future me' Sample 4

## The Future Me:

In ten year time I will be a book writer so that I could put some ideas on paper for everyone to read. I will be going back to the Philippines so that I would be closer to my relatives and most of my friends. I would also live in an apartment with 2 rooms so that the other one will <sup>be</sup> come a library.

I would like to be a photographer if ~~writing~~ books isn't going well. ~~and so that I could~~ put on display the different pictures that inspire me. I would live in an apartment because I wouldn't live in a house alone and that is too big for me.

If I live I would keep in touch is Isabel because if I live I know that she would have a wonderful story to tell me and that they always think of great ideas. In the end I would still come and visit here in Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>me</sup> In the future I would still like to go back in the Philippines but I would live in a place where I could work effectively according to the job I would choose. My hobby would either be ~~baking~~ so that I could help make food that would make everyone happy or a fashion designer so that I could design wonderful clothing.



- **Assessment for teaching and learning exemplars**  
– a selection of annotated units of work across a range of subject areas and year levels, including in the mainstream, showing assessment tasks with self-peer assessment and formative feedback embedded within a teaching/learning cycle.
- **An online teacher discussion forum** – a password-protected area for teachers to share problems, strategies and work samples and engage in moderation/benchmarking.



## **Resulting in a sustainable teacher-based assessment system for**

- the computer-adaptive contextualized testing of reading and vocabulary
- the collection and analysis of oral and written language samples and exemplars
- strategies for evaluating students' L1 language and literacy development

**Aligned with the EAL Continuum to provide longitudinal data and reports to all key stakeholders on students' English language and literacy development over time**

## ***Putting TEAL into Practice***

- A pilot professional learning program to evaluate and enhance the capacity of schools to use the TEAL website to improve their learning and teaching of EAL students, and assess and report on their progress; also functioned as a field trial to refine and improve the TEAL website
- Six rounds of professional learning with 10 groups of three teachers from each school (EALD, content-area, leader) February - November 2016, organised by Department of Education and Training (DET) Victoria, run by UNSW.



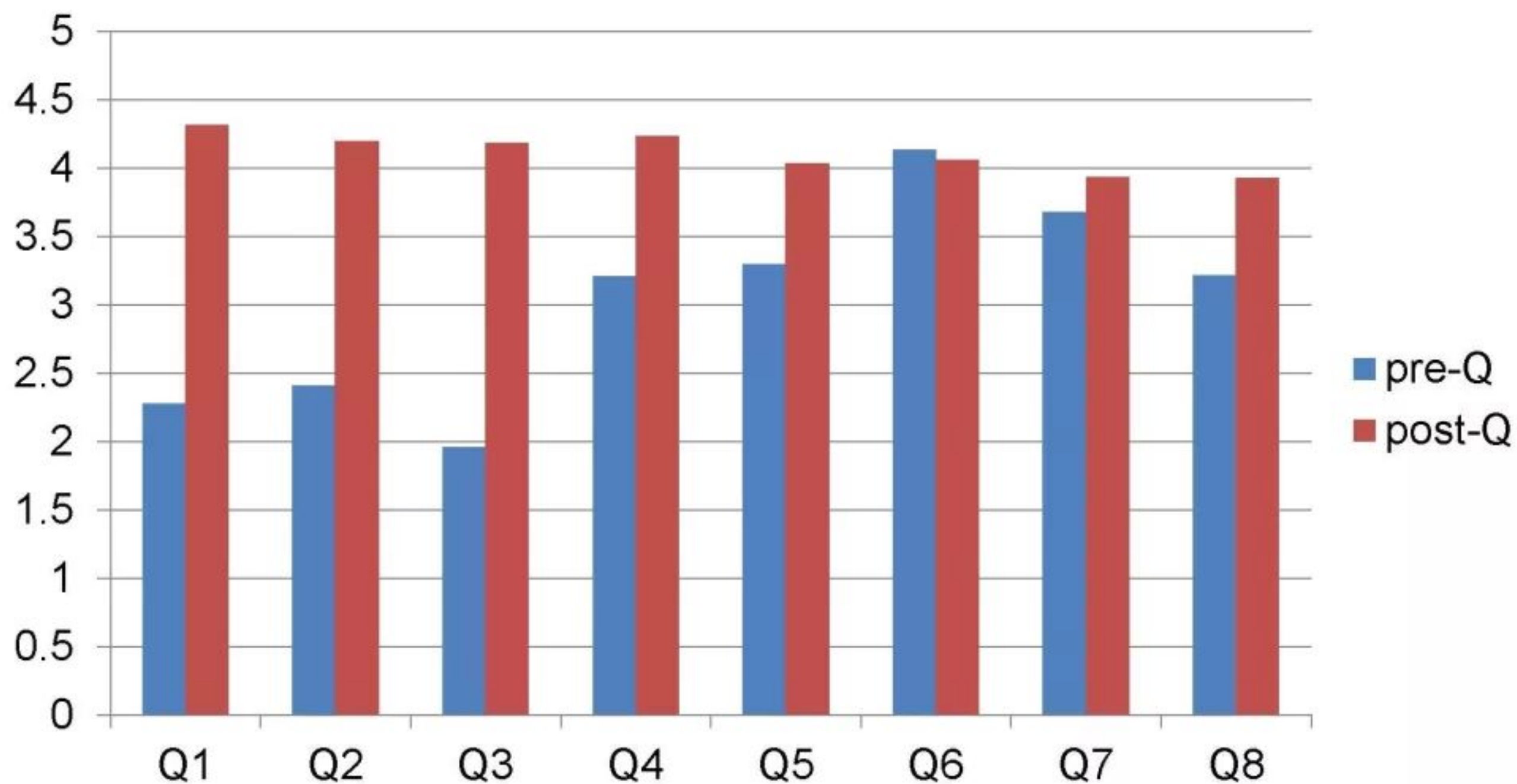
- **6 x 3-hour or 3 x 6 hour modules, focusing on:**
  - becoming familiar with TEAL, its rationale and aims, in particular, developing an understanding of the philosophy of Assessment for learning and giving appropriate feedback to students
  - developing a clear understanding of the materials and assessment advice on the website
  - reflecting on how to incorporate TEAL materials into the assessment of EAL learners
  - having opportunities to give feedback on the TEAL website

- All sessions incorporated time for professional dialogue and for sharing of strategies to enable school-based implementation, plus action-oriented activities in the form of between session tasks, e.g.
  - trialing and evaluating TEAL common oral and written assessment tasks, reading, reflections, etc.



- Overall, a total of 182 teachers enrolled in the professional learning programs - a mix of primary and secondary government, Catholic and Independent schools, along with some teachers from P-12 Colleges and intensive language centres.
- Teachers asked to complete a pre-and post-program survey, demonstrating that over the course of the program they gained a greater understanding of TEAL as well as feeling more ready and confident to implement it in their schools.

# Comparison of pre/post program feedback





1. I have a good understanding of the TEAL website.
2. I understand the TEAL Assessment for Learning principles.
3. I currently use the TEAL Assessment for Learning Strategies in my classroom.
4. I feel confident that I can incorporate TEAL to improve teaching and learning for EAL learners at school.
5. TEAL has given me a better understanding of our students' learning needs.
6. I have a good understanding of the importance of student feedback with EAL students.
7. I have good knowledge and skills in providing EAL students with feedback.
8. I have a good understanding of how to implement student peer and self-reflection with EAL students.



- In the post program survey, teachers identified the following as the most useful aspects of the TEAL resources:
  - Assessment tasks
  - Assessment criteria sheets
  - Assessment samples
  - Advice on feedback and self and peer assessment
  - Readings and resources
  - Links to the *EAL Continuum*
  - Sample unit planning formats

- Participants also provided feedback on the professional learning program, indicating that they gained most from:
  1. Getting to know and use the TEAL website, eg.
    - *Spending time exploring the resource and implementing it into my program. If we'd merely been told about it, it would still be sitting untouched in a folder somewhere;*
    - *As a school leader, TEAL is useful for leading other staff and delivering general EAL advice and PD. The site has some great resources for this;*
    - *Great opportunity to try out a range of assessment tasks, criteria sheets, readings and resources*

## 2. Networking with colleagues and sharing ideas and expertise, eg.

- *Good to have all this professional learning with a large group of EAL teachers and learning from the presenters; Time to talk with others, share ideas and make connections;*
- *The time to sit with colleagues and discuss assessment issues and structures within the school;*
- *Ability to take this information back to inform whole-school planning going forward and to provide PD for teachers*



### 3. Assessment for learning and how it empowers EAL learners and maximises their learning, eg.

- *A wake up call about assessment for learning and not just data collection. I can do much better!*
- *Promoting success for those who need it most.*
- *Strategies and awareness of assistance to EAL students will benefit the entire cohort of students by catering for all needs*
- *The program has inspired me and helped me recognise the need to develop a whole school vision and implement less formal yet consistent and varied forms of assessment for our EAL learners*

## Conclusions

- TEAL seen as an important resource for building teacher assessment literacy and professional learning in English language education, not just in Australia but internationally.
- However, many key questions still to be addressed, hence ongoing research and evaluation into a range of issues, including washback, teacher assessment decision-making, the comparability of assessment tasks, the validity of computer-adaptive assessment, and the relationship between teacher language awareness and assessment literacy.