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Module 4:

Self and Peer Assessment

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1 Brief Overview

At this stage, all participants should be familiar with the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach. Specifically, this approach involves six key stages:

- Clarify and share learning intentions and criteria for assessment with learners;
- Manage classroom discussions, tasks, and activities that provides evidence of learning;
- Provide effective feedback to learners to improve their learning;
- Support learners to serve as learning resources for each other (peer assessment);
- Support learners to take more ownership of their own learning (self assessment); and
- Further teacher and learning

In modules 1, 2 and 3 we covered stages 1, 2, and 3. This module focuses on Stage 4 and 5, that is:

Supporting learners to serve as learning resources for each other (peer assessment) and Supporting learners to take more ownership of their own learning (self assessment);

Note that In practice AfL is implemented by focusing on three key issues: (see Table 1).

- Where is the learner going?
- Where is the learner right now?
- How to get there?

	Where the learner is going?	Where the learner is right now?	How to get there?
Teacher	Clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success	Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	Activating learners as instructional resources for one another (Peer Assessment)	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	Activating learners as the owners of their own learning (Self Assessment)	

Table 1: The five key strategies of formative assessment

1.1. Implementing Peer and Self Assessment: LI and SC

Peer Assessment - Supporting learners to serve as learning resources for each other

We are learning to:

1. Understand how the value and use of peer assessment
2. Develop a range of strategies for applying peer assessment in the classroom
3. Support learners to effectively implement peer assessment

I know I have attained the LI when:

1. I am able to explain how peer assessments improves learning
2. I can apply different peer assessment strategies in my classroom
3. My learners are able to use peer assessment to support each other

Self Assessment - Supporting learners to take more ownership of their own learning

We are learning to:

4. Understand how the value and use of self assessment
5. Develop a range of strategies for applying self assessment in the classroom
6. Support learners to effectively implement self assessment strategies

I know I have attained the LI when:

4. I am able to explain how self assessment improves learning
5. I can apply different self assessment strategies in my classroom
6. My learners are able to use self assessment to monitor and evaluate their work

2 What is peer and self assessment?

Peer assessment is the process where learners review and provide feedback on each other's work based on predetermined criteria

Self-assessment is the process where a learner reviews his/her own work, using predetermined criteria to identify areas of improvement.

For peer and self assessment to work effectively in any classroom, teacher must train learners on how this process work, guide learners in applying this process, and provide appropriate opportunities for learners to use peer and self assessment for improving their learning.

2.1 Research on the benefits of Peer and Self-Assessment

The benefits of peer and self assessment are well documented in research, and include:

- development of metacognitive skills – learners become more skilled at adjusting what they are doing in order to improve the quality of their work (Cooper, 2006);
- increased responsibility for learners' own learning as a result of more opportunities for self-reflection (Cyboran, 2006);
- positive effects for low achievers – reducing achievement gaps (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002);
- development and refinement of learners' capacity for critical thinking (Cooper, 2006);
- increased mathematics problem-solving ability (Brookhart, Andolina, Zuza, & Furman, 2004);
- improved academic results in narrative writing (Ross, Rolheiser, & Hogaboam-Gray, 1998);
- reduction in disruptive behaviour (Ross, 2006).

2.2 Requirements for using peer and self assessment in the class

To self- or peer-assess effectively, learners need to:

- know what they are expected to learn;
- know what successful learning looks like;
- learn how to apply the success criteria;
- give and receive feedback on their self-assessments;
- use feedback from self-assessments to plan next steps and set their own learning goals.

Teachers thus have the responsibility to develop these skills in learners so that they are able to apply peer and self assessment techniques effectively when required.

2.3 Teaching Peer and Self Assessment Skills

The Ontario Ministry of Education (ODoE, 2010) advocate the following four-stages for teaching learners to use peer and self-assessment:

Stage 1: Define together with learners the criteria that will be used to assess the learning.

Stage 2: Teach learners to apply the criteria.

Stage 3: Give learners feedback on the quality of their self–assessments.

Stage 4: Help learners develop individual learning goals and specific action plans.

3 Stage 1 Defining Success Criteria

Teaching learners to assess their learning effectively starts with ensuring they have a clear understanding of what they are to learn and what successful learning looks like. These *learning goals* and *success criteria* answer the question, “Where am I going?” . Involving learners in defining the criteria upon which their work will be judged is a powerful way of helping them come to a deeper understanding of what they are learning, and results in their assessments (self and peer) being more reliable, accurate, and valid.

3.1 What Are Success Criteria?

Success criteria are defined as “standards or specific descriptions of successful attainment of learning goals developed by teachers on the basis of criteria in the achievement chart, and discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with learners, that are used to determine to what degree a learning goal has been achieved. Criteria describe what success ‘looks like’, and provide learners with a model or examples of the levels of achievements they should perform at.

3.2 Involving Learners in Defining Success Criteria

Research confirms the benefits of involving learners in defining the success criteria for a goal or task. By collaborating with the teacher to define the criteria, learners begin to develop an understanding of what quality means in the context of their own work. Wiliam (2007) emphasizes that simply sharing criteria with learners is not enough because “the words do not have the meaning for the learner that they have for the teacher”.

The following steps, proposed by Gregory, Cameron, and Davies (1997), can be used to set success criteria:

Step 1: Brainstorm.

Step 2: Sort and categorize.

Step 3: Make and post a T-chart.

Step 4: Add, revise, refine.

3.2.1 Generating criteria

The process of co-constructing criteria begins with having learners brainstorm a list of possible “look-fors” for a learning task or goal.

3.2.2 Sorting and categorizing

Involving learners in sorting and categorizing the criteria further refines the criteria, deepens learners’ understanding of the criteria, and ensures that the criteria are organized in user-friendly categories. Clustering “like” criteria under a single heading can help learners to identify aspects of their work that need improvement, while at the same time prioritizing and limiting the number of criteria they need to attend to. Organizing the list helps learners to remember, prioritize, and internalize the criteria. It can also increase learners’ commitment to the instructional goals.

3.2.3 Sharing and displaying criteria

A T-chart organizer listing the categories and the criteria is one way to display the criteria. Posting the success criteria for all to see makes the “look-fors” visible to learners during the learning. The criteria can be listed in many ways using templates, checklists, anchor charts, and/or rubrics depending on the purpose and nature of the learning activity.

3.2.4 Revisiting and revising criteria

As learners work with the criteria, apply them to samples, and gain a deeper understanding of the learning goals and criteria, it may be necessary to review and revise the descriptors and the language of the criteria. Some learners may benefit from limiting the number of criteria or prioritizing specific success criteria at appropriate times depending on how they are progressing

3.3 Working with Samples

Examining and analysing exemplars and samples of other learners’ work make the success criteria visible to learners.

Samples can be used:

- at the beginning of the learning cycle to show evidence of expected outcomes;
- during learning to guide improvements;
- at the end of a learning cycle to compare and contrast work with the sample prior to submission of the final product;
- to help generate criteria when brainstorming;
- to model how to apply criteria;
- to practise applying criteria.

3.3.1 Practical challenges that teacher can expect

Possible Challenges or Concerns	Next Steps to Consider
<p>Co-constructing criteria with learners can be time-consuming. Some teachers might find it difficult to justify the time it takes to co-construct the criteria.</p>	<p>Black et al (2003) note that while “any non-trivial change in classroom teaching involves the teacher both in taking risks and, at least during the process of change, in extra work”, improving assessment practices results in improved learner achievement and engagement. Working with teachers implementing assessment <i>for</i> learning in their classrooms, they found that the “work involved turns out to be a redistribution of effort”. Consider making changes step by step, starting small, and then adding further refinements to practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have learners discuss what they learned or what doing the learning activities “looks like”. • Discuss with colleagues other approaches to co- construction that preserve the learner’s active role and balance the time commitment. • Highlight and integrate assessment language and skills into all learning experiences. • Share with learners up front what you are doing with criteria, and why. • Begin small and build on success and engagement. • Begin slow and let the momentum drive the learning. • Practice with generating criteria will improve the rate and the quality of the exercise.

<p>Learners may not have the prior knowledge or experience to be able to generate criteria for a learning task or goal.</p>	<p>Success criteria can be generated in different ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with tasks or processes that are familiar to learners. • Choose simple tasks that make the criteria transparent. • Invite learners to begin to identify “look-fors” during their learning. • Model using the criteria early in the learning cycle. • Provide exemplars, samples, and anchors to help learners identify success criteria. • Develop checklists or rubrics for use in modelling and practising using the criteria.
<p>Showing learners samples of work may limit creativity or encourage imitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the tasks with the success criteria and the learning goal(s). • Ensure assessment tasks provide the evidence you require. • Open up the possibilities and use a diversity of samples. • Incorporate “originality and creativity” as a success category if applicable. • Provide open-ended tasks and choice in how learners demonstrate their learning.

<p>Sharing learning goals and success criteria at the outset of learning may not be possible for inquiry and problem-solving activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners may record success criteria “en route” as they progress through their inquiry/investigation. • Poster paper or sticky notes can be used to record potential success criteria as they are identified during the inquiry. Consensus can be reached following the investigation. • An exit card requiring each learner to write a learning goal for the inquiry and a number of success criteria will help the teacher assess who has learned what. • Alternatively, in groups of four, use a mix and match: Each learner records one distinct criterion on a piece of paper. Pairs of learners from each group rotate, using the Learning intention and success criteria.
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4 Stage 2: Applying Success Criteria

Learning to apply criteria is a critical step in becoming an effective self-assessor. Once learners know and understand the success criteria, teachers can support learners in developing their assessment skills through explicit instruction, teacher modelling, and multiple opportunities to practise and apply the criteria. This ultimately leads to learners being confident about and competent at self-assessment and becoming independent learners.

4.1 Teaching Learners how to Apply Criteria

Teachers, through explicit instruction and modelling, can help learners deepen their understanding of what constitutes quality in their work. As Chappuis (2009) emphasizes, “the goal here is to help learners come to hold an understanding about accuracy and quality similar to yours.”

4.1.1 Modelling the application of criteria

The teacher uses a “think aloud” strategy to model the application of criteria to anonymous work. When teachers model assessment strategies and skills, learners:

- see concrete evidence in a sample;
- connect evidence to the criteria;
- learn to apply the criteria to a sample.

4.1.2 Using samples, anchors, and exemplars

Samples help learners develop a clearer picture of quality performance and simultaneously help learners and teacher come to a common understanding of what constitutes quality work. By looking for criteria in a sample, learners answer the question, “Where am I going?” (Stiggins et al, 2006). Samples and exemplars can be used:

Samples and exemplars can be used:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by teachers to: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by learners to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – model the application of criteria; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – generate ideas when collaboratively developing success criteria with the teacher;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – inform professional judgement; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – practise applying criteria as they develop their assessment skills;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – share a common understanding of quality with other teachers when evaluating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – compare their work with a model.

4.2 Providing Guidance as Learners Apply Criteria

As learners begin to apply criteria to anonymous samples and other work, they assume greater responsibility for their learning.

Teachers gradually release responsibility to learners – they move from:

- modelling applying the criteria,
- to guiding learners in applying the criteria,
- to having learners apply the criteria together
- and ultimately apply them on their own.

At each stage, learners require feedback, support, and practice as they become increasingly assessment literate. Guided practice, is the stage in which the teacher gradually releases task responsibility to learners, and is the most critical stage. Learners benefit when teachers provide guided instruction where necessary, as well as timely, descriptive feedback on the quality of their self-assessment.

4.3 Supporting Learners in Peer Assessment

Sentence starters and prompts can increase a learner's confidence and comfort when giving feedback to peers. Prompts provide the descriptive language and ensure that learners have the appropriate focus when assessing work

<i>What was done well</i>	<i>What can be improved</i>	<i>Next steps for improvement</i>
You did a good job when you ... You are strong at ... Something you did well was ... You are good at ... I like the way you ... Another thing you did well was ... You're getting better at ... One thing you do well is ...	You could work harder on ... I could get some help with You could get better at ... You seem to be having trouble with ... The criteria you have missed are ...	Would you consider changing ... A next step for you could be ... The next time you could ... Do you think you could ... Would you consider adding ... Something you could work on next time is ...

4.4 Promoting Independence with Self-Assessment Tools

As learners reach the independent stage, assessment templates, checklists, and rubrics in learner-friendly language facilitate learners' responsibility and ownership for assessing and monitoring their learning. Learners and teacher can use a self-assessment tool listed in Appendix B.

5 Stage 3: Feedback on Self and Peer Assessment

Learners learn self-assessment by doing; teachers help learners develop their assessment skills by using a "gradual-release" approach. Once learners and teachers have developed criteria and have practised applying them to learner performances, the stage is set for learners to try self and peer assessment.

Teachers should focus on developing learners' self-assessment skills by giving learners feedback on the quality of their self and peer assessments. Teachers need to be explicit in developing assessment literacy. Taking time and effort, both at the beginning and during the learning, to model, instruct, practise, and give feedback on learners' self-assessments is essential. While progress may appear to be slow and incremental at first, learners quickly move towards independent practice with appropriate guidance and support.

5.1 Feedback on Peer Assessments

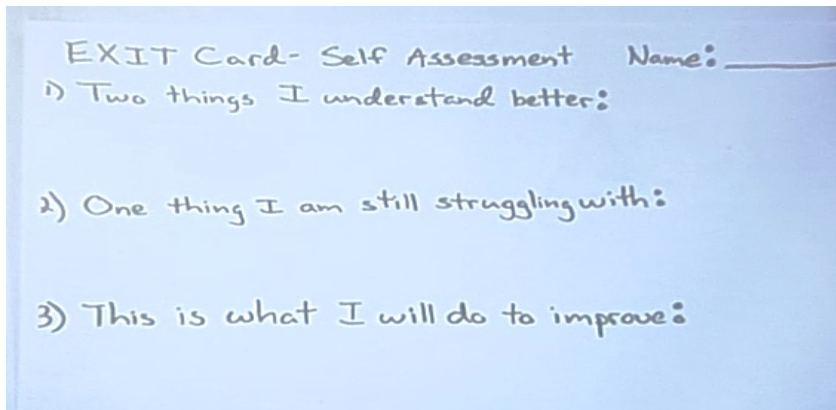
Peer assessment is an ideal way to develop learners' assessment skills. As learners give feedback to one another, teachers can provide feedback on the quality of the information that is being shared. In essence, teachers give feedback on learners' feedback. Learners become increasingly confident and competent in giving descriptive feedback linked to the success criteria.

5.2 Feedback on Self-Assessments

Learners can apply the same assessment skills to assess their own work. Teachers support self-assessment by providing learners with opportunities to self-assess, and by giving them timely feedback on the quality of their self-assessment. The following video clips show two strategies – use of exit cards and portfolios – that help learners develop their self-assessment skills.

5.2.1 Using an exit card

An exit card is a simple way to engage learners in self-assessment. Strategic questions or prompts linked to the learning goal(s) encourage learners to think about their learning, and to make their learning visible. The questions or prompts can identify challenges and/or target improvements. Teachers can use the information gathered using this assessment tool to guide and differentiate instruction, to determine how well learners are self-assessing, and to identify where they still need support.



<p>The Minute Paper What was the most important thing you learned today? What questions do you still have?</p>	<p>My Muddiest Point What is the “muddiest point” in our lesson today? What are you unclear about?</p>
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5.2.2 Using portfolios

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of learner work that tells the story of the learner’s effort, progress, or achievement in a given area(s). The collection must include learner participation in selection of portfolio content; the guidelines for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of learner self-reflection.

Portfolios can optimize the instructional and assessment benefits of self-assessment. Engaging learners in gathering evidence, giving feedback, and communicating their learning encourages learners to take responsibility, own their learning, and monitor their progress. As learners practise self-assessment, self-reflection, goal setting, and self-regulation, they learn faster, better, and eventually independently.

6 Stage 4: Setting Goals and Developing a Plan

As learners become skilled at assessing their progress towards achieving learning goals, they are able to make decisions about where to go next in their learning. Teachers help learners, through instruction, modelling, and guidance, to:

- generate individual learning goals based on next steps;
- develop specific action plans;
- record their goals and action plans;
- monitor progress towards carrying out the plan and achieving their goals.

6.1 Setting Individual Learning Goals

Learners use the specific feedback from teacher, self, and peer assessments to make improvements and determine next steps. Areas for improvement and next steps identified in the feedback lay the foundation for short- and long-term individual learning goals.

Teachers play a critical role in teaching goal setting. They can:

- model writing goals;
- guide learners in writing goals;
- give specific feedback on their goals;
- record the specific actions to achieve them;
- follow up and monitor learners' progress towards achieving the goals.

A SMART goal is:

S	specific, significant	clearly articulates the knowledge and skills identified in the feedback as needing improvement
M	measurable, meaningful	describes specific actions or steps that enable the learner to measure progress and determine whether the goal has been achieved
A	action-oriented, achievable	sets out actions that the learner can take to achieve the goal
R	realistic, relevant, results-oriented	contains an appropriate balance between being challenging and being attainable, given available resources, learner readiness, etc.
T	timely	sets out a reasonable time frame for achieving the goal; identifies checkpoints along the way

6.2 Promoting Learner Self-Reflection

Exit cards, checklists, feedback logs, and learning journals are assessment tools that promote self-reflection and activate learners' metacognitive skills. When learners reflect on how they are thinking and learning, they can be guided by three questions:

- Where am I now in my learning?
- Where am I going?
- How do I get there? (Black & Wiliam, 2009)

Teachers play a critical role in developing learner self-regulation. Providing greater choice and differentiating for learning preferences helps learners move to independent learning. See Appendix A for more techniques.

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Appendix A1: Techniques for Peer Assessment ¹

Carousels

Learners send their piece of work around to others in a group and each of them provides constructive feedback for improving the work.

Improvement evaluation

Learners analyse the work of a peer over a period of time to provide feedback on what has improved and what still needs work. The work compared must use the same type of skills so that the learner can check for improvement and provide helpful feedback.

Two stars and a wish on peers' work

Learners exchange books and give comments to a peer by writing two positive things (stars) about the work and one thing that she 'wishes' the other learner would do to make it better. The comments should be specific to the qualities of the work and provide clear guidance on what to do to improve.

Homework help board

Learners identify homework questions they could not do, put them on the board, and solve them for one another. The teacher only needs to work on those problems that no-one else can solve.

Identifying group weaknesses

Groups of learners discuss what they have learned and what they still need to learn in a particular topic. Each group then decides which of these needs should be labeled as a 'group weakness.' Learners from other groups can then help close some of their peers' gaps in understanding before the teacher is asked for help.

Best composite answer

Learners in a small group build a composite answer by taking the best features of each of their individual answers, making them recognise strengths and weaknesses across the original individual answers. Learners who did not originally understand some aspects of the question learn a lot from their peers.

Learners check peer's work against pre-flight checklist

Learners exchange books and check each other's work against a pre-flight checklist (a list of required components eg title page, introduction, three paragraph explanation, conclusion). The checklist can be prepared by the teacher or learners. Some checklists will be generic whilst others may be specific to a particular assignment.

Question strips in groups

Learners talk in small groups to check their understanding and then submit a group question to the teacher if no-one can answer it within the group. The questions address the areas the learners do not understand or those where they want to learn more. The teacher notes themes and responds, adapting future teaching where needed

Learners check peers' work with mark schemes

Learners exchange books and use a familiar mark scheme that helps them evaluate a peer's work. Learners provide feedback, but usually not grades or levels.

Traffic lighting peers' work

After being taught how to provide feedback, learners mark a peer's work to identify her level of understanding (green=understand; amber=not sure; red=do not understand). It is important that time is

¹ From Wiliam (2010)

allowed for learners to get help with the things they do not understand

Appendix A2: Techniques for Self Assessment²

Concept list:

Learners 'traffic light' a list of concepts in terms of whether they understand them well, need a little help or need a lot of help.

Question strips:

Learners write questions about anything they want more information about or that they are unclear about. The teacher then reads through the questions, answers the main themes and alters future teaching if needed.

Sharing exemplars:

The teacher uses learner work from another class, previous year or a teacher mock-up to share with current learners.

Gots and needs:

Learners write on a post-it note or card something they understood (got) about the lesson and/or something they still do not understand (need).

Homework help board:

Learners identify homework questions they struggled with, put them on the board and solve them for one another.

End-of-lesson summary:

A learner provides a summary of what the whole class was expected to learn during a lesson.

Evaluation with marking schemes:

Learners check their own work against a marking scheme so that they can internalise the characteristics of good work.

Learners write the questions:

Learners develop questions to deepen their own understanding of the topic being studied.

+/-/interesting charts:

Learners write on a flip chart what was positive, negative or interesting about a lesson.

Parking lot:

Learners place questions that they need answered on a 'parking lot'. The teacher answers them for the learners.

² From Wiliam (2010)

Appendix B: Sample Self-Assessment Tools

List the criteria in the left column, using one row for each group of indicators. Record a ✓ or X in the appropriate column to indicate whether the criteria have been met. Use the column marked “Feedback” to record peer or teacher feedback, or next steps.

Success Criteria	✓	X	Feedback/Next Steps

Appendix C: My Self-Assessment Practices

Consider each of the following statements, and indicate R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), or U (Usually).	R	S	U
A. Planning for Self-Assessment			
I identify incremental learning goals, based on the overall and specific expectations, which describe in learner-friendly language what learners are to know and be able to do.			
I identify the criteria for successful achievement of the learning goals, and plan how to develop and/or share those criteria with the learners at or near the outset of the learning.			
While planning, I look for critical points in the learning where my learners will give and receive feedback through self and peer assessment.			
I plan purposeful observations of my learners' peer assessments so I can give them feedback on the quality of their feedback.			
I plan conferences with learners, individually and in small groups, so I can give them feedback on the quality of their self-assessments.			
B. Developing Learners' Understanding of the Success Criteria			
I share learning goals and success criteria with learners at or near the outset of a learning cycle.			
I explicitly make connections between the purpose of a task and the learning goal(s).			
I involve learners in co-constructing success criteria for all significant learning tasks.			
I provide models and exemplars to show what successful learning looks like.			
I have learners generate ideas about criteria through discussion and brainstorming.			
C. Working with Criteria			
I model, for my learners, applying criteria to improve a product or performance.			
I analyse samples and exemplars with learners to develop their understanding of the success criteria.			
I have learners apply the success criteria to their learning tasks in order to provide feedback to peers, and to self-assess.			
I ask learners to practise looking for evidence of one or two criteria in a sample task.			
I provide learners with assessment tools that help them assess (e.g., checklists, exit cards, concept maps) and reflect on (e.g., learning logs, response journals) learning			

Consider each of the following statements, and indicate R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), or U (Usually).	R	S	U
I involve learners in developing assessment tools to assess and reflect on their learning.			
I encourage learners to continuously think about the criteria for success, and to look for the criteria in their demonstrations of learning.			
D. Teaching Learners about Self-Assessment			
I observe learners while they are giving each other feedback in peer assessment.			
I provide feedback to peers on the quality of their feedback to each other.			
I engage learners in self-assessment tasks (e.g., responding to prompts about learning).			
I assess the validity and reliability of learners' self-assessments and give feedback to them on what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and how they can improve.			
I engage learners in learning conversations about the similarities and differences in teacher feedback, self-assessments, and peer assessments.			
E. Developing Learners' Goal-Setting Skills			
I ask learners to reflect on their learning and thinking <i>while</i> learning.			
I help learners monitor and record their progress towards their learning goals (e.g., using a feedback log, maintaining a goal record).			
I have learners gather and organize evidence of their learning over time (e.g., using a portfolio).			
I ask learners to develop concrete, incremental next steps in their learning based on feedback.			
I explicitly teach learners how to set effective learning goals for themselves based on feedback.			
I provide learners feedback on the quality of their learning goals.			
I have learners develop specific action plans to achieve their individual goals.			
I provide time and opportunity for learners to monitor their action plans.			