Adaptive teaching - AfL in everyday practice

*Foreword*

*There isn’t a blue-print to a ‘good’ lesson from the point of view of a particular structure, order or format – many different types and styles of session can be successful as long as they impact positively on learning and progress. However, the pedagogy that can be applied to any session to make it effective is easier to define. Below are examples and explanations of the types of AfL techniques that may be employed during any learning session (lesson) and are essential to consider during the lesson design and planning processes. A teacher would not be expected to try and include all of these techniques in every session, unless appropriate.*

*If working in EYFS these techniques will be far more implicit and look very different to how they are described in this document, which is predominately aimed at KS1 to KS3.*

*Evaluation of how the children’s learning has moved forward and those who made less progress than you expected is then the key indicator for adjustments to planning for the next and subsequent sessions.*

*Colour coding and sub-headings have been used to help the reader to see how the different techniques are utilised throughout different elements of a session.*

*Although the document starts with the introduction and finishes with the plenary, as a lesson would, when teaching, some techniques may be employed simultaneously. Although this should be taken into consideration when planning and delivering a lesson, unfortunately, it is impossible to capture in the linear format in which this document is written.*

*When used by ITT students, this document must be viewed as generic and any delivery and feedback approaches specific to a placement school should be followed and in line with the school’s own policy and guidance documentation.*

**Introduction – the start of the session that ‘frames’ the learning**

**Linking learning:** The Learning Objective (ideally in ‘child speak’) should be shared as part of the introduction,remembering that this should be done both verbally and written for the children to refer back to throughout the session. Following this you could useThis Is Because (TIBs) as a means of putting into context or giving the bigger picture as to how this part of the learning fits into what has gone before and what is to come. If the children are able to do so, it would be great for them to identify the **TIBs.** Why do you think we need to learn/know this?

**Success Criteria:** Often referred to as the **learning outcome(s),** theseneed to be made explicit to the children so that they know exactly what is expected of them in order to achieve the Learning Objective. If using **Success Criteria** this often works best as a **Learning Checklist**. This can be pre-made by you or, even better, agreed with the children using their prior knowledge and understanding. If process success criteria are not suitable the Learning Checklist should be made up of a list of features you want the children to include, thus demonstrating they can meet the Learning Intention, in whatever they are doing. If the Success Criteria are process based and all children are following the same process, differentiation can be shown through a differentiated Learning Objective. This could be done using Must, Should, Could. E.g. Must: know 1 more or 1 less than number to 10, Should: know 1 more or 1 less than numbers to 20, Could: know 1 and 10 more and less than numbers to 20. *NB please use your professional judgement as to which type of Success Criteria are most appropriate for the Learning Objective.*

**Knowledge Harvest:** As part of the introduction, but ahead of your teaching input, if the Learning objective lends itself, you could set up a **Knowledge Harvest** that all the children respond to. These need to link directly to the Learning objective. Responses can come through children using whiteboards, number fans, vocabulary cards, individual checklists, sketch books, number lines etc. Basically any resource that allows them to respond individually, but all at the same time. From these responses, you assess ‘where’ the children are in their learning, knowledge or understanding before your teaching input begins. Any children showing this early understanding then need to consolidate this learning or be extended during the rest of the lesson. This will be done through the differentiation of the learning task, the depth of questioning from the teacher or the investigation and discussion with an adult or peers. Remember these may not always be the children that you expected, so regrouping for the main activity shows that you have used this assessment opportunity to support learning (AfL).

**Modelling & instruction – the part where the ‘expert’ demonstrates and models**

**Linking learning:** This is your teaching input and the chance to model, scaffold or facilitate an experience of what the children are expected to do. It is the led, guided or shared part of the session. Whatever the children are going to do, you should demonstrate and model, including making improvements to something. Here, for example, outcomes from a previous lesson could be improved or further developed, using a visualiser.

Remember that during your modelling and instruction you should explain what you are doing as you do it and why, and ensure there is a visual record/reference if possible. Model your thinking and any strategies you are using (cognition) as well as the knowledge or skills.

During modelling, include key language. The vocabulary that we expose children to is now becoming more of a focus as it is seen as being central to raising attainment and closing gaps between learner groups. Therefore teachers’ subject and curriculum knowledge must include clarity around key vocabulary that will be used with even the youngest of children (then briefly explained in a way they can better understand it). It is important therefore that you model the use of this vocabulary and create an expectation that the children begin to use it too.

Some children might not need your input and can go straight to their activity - think about whether you are going to go and check in with them when you have finished with the other children or whether they then need a targeted follow-up input with you as part of their learning activity.

**Targeting:** If you are in the fortunate position of having another adult or adults in the classroom, it is important that they are directed to tasks that will support teaching and learning. They may be focused on a group of children, offering additional support through extra prompts or questions. They could also be recording key vocabulary or creating scaffolds that will later be used by groups of children working independently. They may even be observing the interaction and engagement of a group of children making less progress, in order to feed back to the class teacher for future lessons. Whichever of these tasks are being undertaken, it is important that additional adults are aware of their role and it is clear in your planning or verbal explanation of who they are working with, how, and what the expected outcomes should be.

**Engagement in learning:** Throughout the introduction and teacher modelling sections, it is important to engage as many learners as possible to check that key elements have been understood. This can be done most effectively through the continued use of individual response equipment (whiteboards, number fans, vocabulary cards, individual checklists, sketch books, number lines etc). Also employing techniques such as talking partners to promote peer to peer learning. If children only respond to questions by putting up their hands, you can only assess the understanding of the child answering the question and this also can allow other children to become passive.

**Targeting:** Balance the above approach by focusing specific questions on targeted groups of children. They too will respond to the whole class questions, but will be the children for whom their response leads you to another question e.g. Can you explain how you got that answer? Ok, so what if we double it? Now can you give me an example of how that is used in a sentence? If the children you identify for this targeted questioning are a group that will work independently during the main activity, you are able to impact on the learning of children that you won’t be working with you or another adult during the main activity.

**In-lesson progress/Fluid grouping** – as a class teacher, you will have created differentiated tasks for each ‘table group’, based on your on-going assessment of what the children can do and their outcomes from the previous session. But true Assessment for Learning and adaptive teaching is responsive, so may require you to adjust groupings based on what you find out from the children during the introduction, before they start their learning activities.

**Learning Activities - the part of the lesson where the children practise and demonstrate their understanding**

**Linking learning:** Differentiated learning experiences are key here. If using differentiation by outcome, be sure you and the children know what different outcomes you expect from each ability group. This can be achieved through your Success Criteria/Learning Checklist which could contain hierarchical features. E.g. the outcome for all the children may be to write a set of instructions but the complexity of these instructions would be different for different groups. True differentiation will see each group doing something different, based around the LI - not all completing the same type of work with different amounts to record.

**Self & Peer assessment:** A group may be completing a self or peer assessment task as their main activity. If you can organise a group to do this in each lesson, you only have to plan activities for the remaining groups. If children are doing self or peer assessment independently of you, the group will require clear success criteria and will almost certainly have needed to have the process modelled to them prior to the session. Alternatively you may decide to lead some self-assessment as you work with a focus group.

**Targeting:** Focus Group 1: Here you should work with your first focus group. These children could have been identified in your planning before the lesson began, as a result of assessment of learning from a prior session or, best of all, as a result of AfL during your introduction. Because they are working with you (or another adult) and will be receiving quality, direct feedback (where other children’s work will be marked later) they don’t necessarily need to record formally in books. Work in books is used as a record of learning but, because you have worked with the children, you will have first-hand knowledge of the learning that has taken place even if not recorded in books. You could do some shared/guided work or record individual ideas less formally using whiteboards. That way, should you then decide you want to keep the work, the board can be photocopied.

*NB: If the rest of the class are not used to leaving you alone to work with a focus group, this in itself will take some training. Make sure that when working with a focus group you can see the rest of the class!*

Focus Group 2: After a Learning Stop, make sure you leave your focus group with a task they can do independently and focus your support in other areas. This can be done in a couple of ways either; working with a second focus group, where you recap and extend the learning that has taken place during the first half of the main activity or move around the class personalising learning through questions and discussion at an individual level with specific children that have not yet been focused on. This will enable you to overcome misconceptions or extend individuals before the end of the session, when it is too late!

**AfL progress checks – to be carried out during the main activity section of the session**

**Linking learning:** Like a plenary, a Learning Stop is a chance for reviewing and reflecting against the Learning Intension. However, not being at the end of the lesson, it allows for development of the learning, improvement towards success criteria or the overcoming of misconceptions to be made within the lesson itself. The tasks outlined below can then be used during Learning Stops to combat misconceptions and consolidate learning whilst there is still time left in the lesson to do something about it. It is a chance to focus on those children who have been working independently and also use AfL to identify your next focus group.

**Self & Peer assessment:** Carrying out a quick piece of peer or self-assessment, linked back to your LI or success criteria.

**In-lesson progress/Learning Gains:** If appropriate drop in an activity or hinge question, similar to those you may have used during the introduction, that allow you to assess the children’s understanding up to this point in the session. The number of children that now show an understanding should have increased from earlier in the lesson and therefore it is clear that learning has taken place.

**Targeting:** As in the introduction, focus specific questions on a targeted group of children, who have/will work independently during the main activity. This way you are able to impact on the learning of another group/table of children that you have been unable to focus on so far.

*NB: A Learning Stop shouldn’t stop the learning. Don’t include one just for the sake of it, only if it will have a positive impact on learning.*

**Review & reflect activities – to be carried out during the plenary**

**Linking learning:** The end of the lesson, like the introduction, will contain many features of AfL already outlined; talking partners, peer assessment, open and closed questioning. It is a final chance to revisit and feedback on the Learning Intension and create an activity that consolidates or extends the learning.

**In-lesson progress/Learning gains:** At the beginning of the plenary, you could repeat the activity or question that was carried out in the introduction, allowing the children a final chance to evidence a meeting of the Learning Intension. It is important that the activity enables you to assess the in-lesson progress/learning gains made by the majority of the children, so again use whiteboards, flash cards, individual checklists etc that allow all children to respond.

**Targeting:** Balance this whole class approach with some targeted questioning, this time focus your questions on a group that have worked independently. By now, if your introduction questions targeted one group, you’ve worked with two focus groups, your LSA has worked with the 4th group, you are only likely to have one group left with which to extend or consolidate individuals and allow them to further demonstrate their in-lesson progress/learning gains.

**Self & Peer assessment:** Incorporate a self/peer assessment activity, linked to the children’s understanding of whether and how effectively they met the Learning Intension, by referring to the Success Criteria/Learning Checklist (not how much they enjoyed the lesson!).

**Linking learning:** A brief input on how today’s learning fits into the learning journey; what you have found out from the children’s responses; where this will lead their learning over the coming days and weeks, or the identification of class, group or individual targets, including any work away from school and you’re done!