



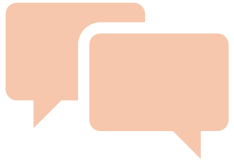
Assessment is a Conversation: Extending AfL for Twice-Exceptional Students



Sarah Gemin

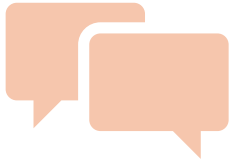


MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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Today's discussion

- My research
- Twice-exceptional students
- Extending AfL:
 - **WHY**
 - **HOW**
 - **WHAT**



Q: How does AfL support **self-determination** for twice-exceptional students?

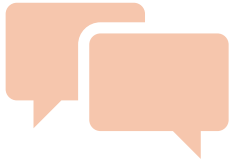
Autonomy – Making meaningful choices

Self-Determination = **Competence** – Making progress and achieving potential

Relatedness – Feeling a sense of belonging

I interviewed...

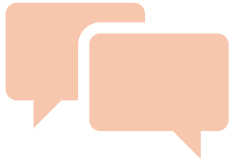
- **6 twice-exceptional students** (gifted + neurodivergent)
- **Their classroom teachers** (Assessment for Learning practitioners)
- **1 MindPlus teacher** (Gifted/Neurodivergent one-day programme)



Twice-exceptional learners are often...

- Unidentified or under-identified
- Misunderstood
- Underserved

BUT, what's good for twice-exceptional learners is good for everyone.



Common assumption

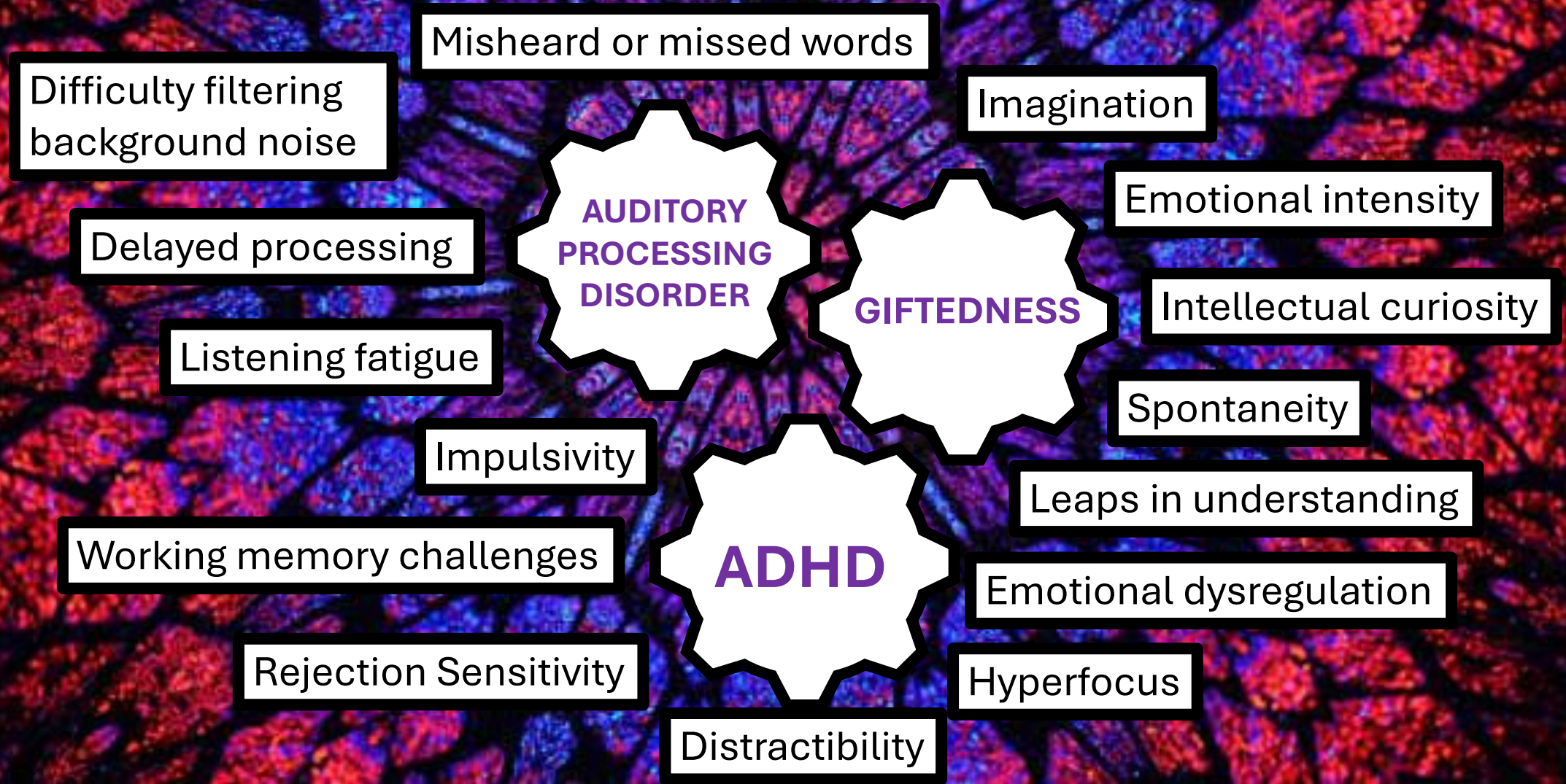


Strengths

Challenges



Example reality





AfL partially supports self-determination

Autonomy

Making meaningful
choices



Clarify learning goals
Make informed task choices
Reflect and justify decisions

Competence

Making progress and
achieving potential



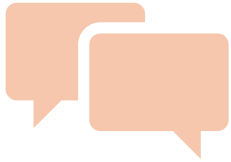
Learning visible through self-assessment
Monitor progress against criteria

Relatedness

Feeling a sense of
belonging



Shared understanding of quality
Shared learning conversations

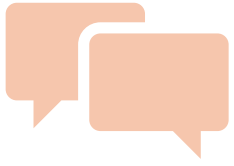


BUT, without personalised assessment conversations, self-determination needs remain unmet

Teacher assumption	Student reality
Avoidance	Overload
Differentiation	Still too easy
Emotionally safe culture	Too scared to speak / can't help blurting out

In all three examples, students experienced

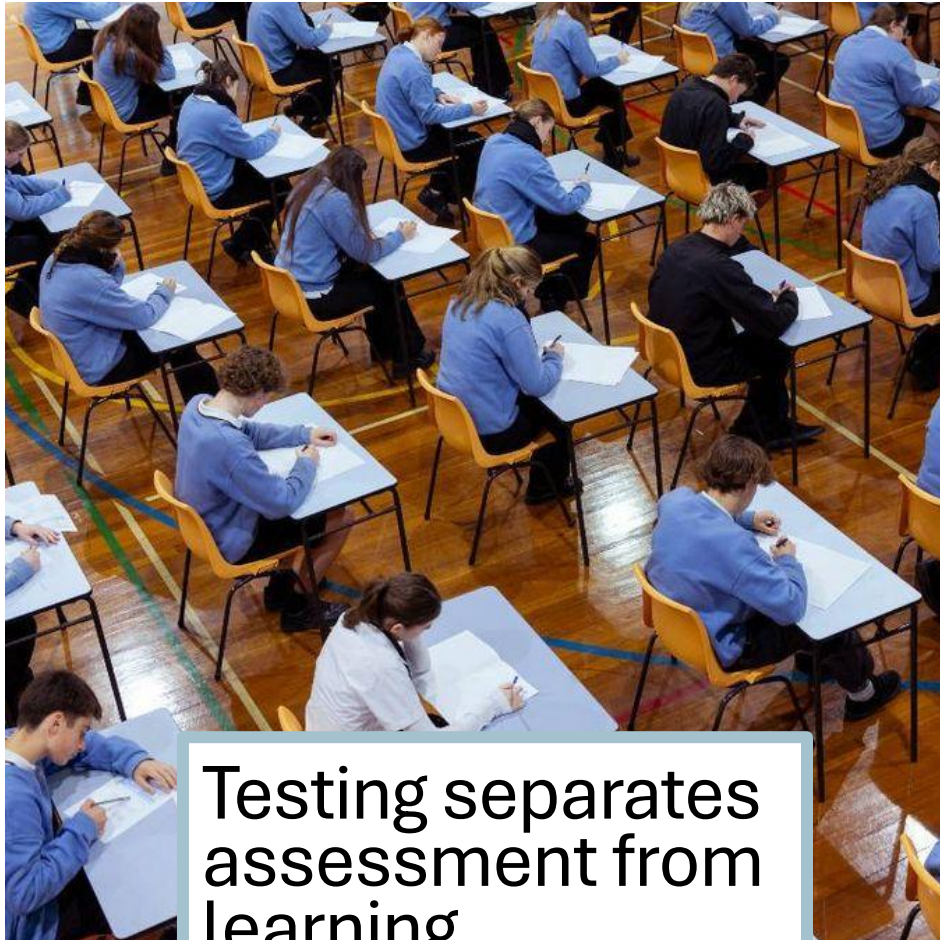
- Limited meaningful choice
- Limited opportunities to make progress
- A lack of belonging



WHY are we using AfL?



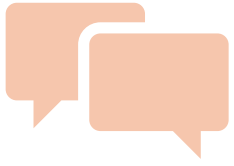
AfL is currently a response to traditional testing



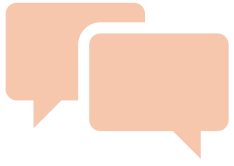
Testing separates assessment from learning



AfL brings students into the assessment process (*apprenticing them into how learning works*)

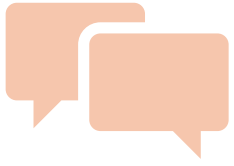


But testing and AfL both assume
assessment is something that **teachers**
design and **deliver/share with students.**



My research
found that
students are
**already
assessing -
constantly**

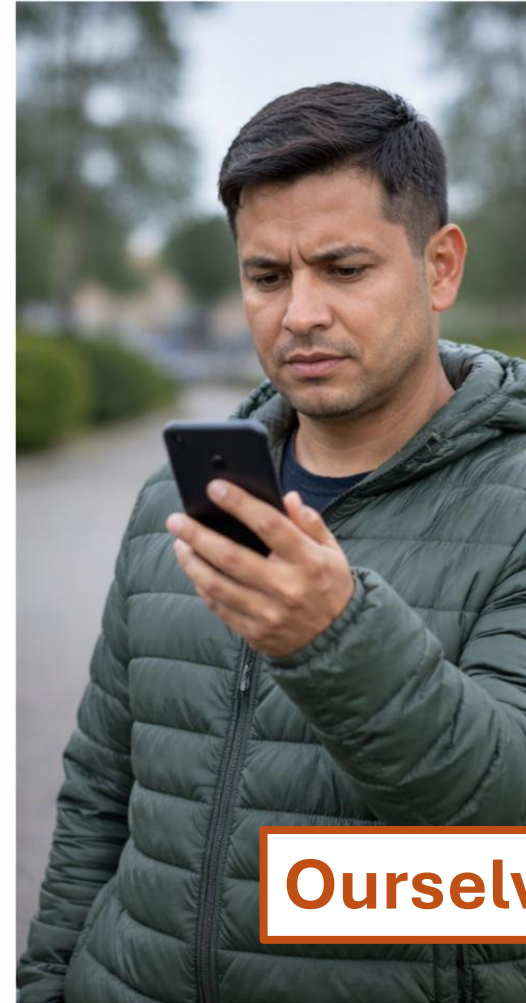




Others



Environment



Ourselves

Assessment is something that all humans do,
all the time.



We develop **evaluative judgement** socially through observation and feedback





Dinner Table Success

- ☒ Stay in your seat
- ☒ Food stays on the plate
- ☒ Say please and thank you

AfL makes this natural and social process **visible and shared**, scaffolding it for learners



A different starting point → a different **WHY**



Assessment is
testing



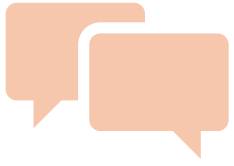
AfL improves learning
within the classroom



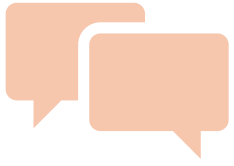
Assessment is
already
happening



Support how learners
evaluate, decide, and act
— **throughout their lives.**



HOW can we deepen AfL
for academic learning?



Support Autonomy

Testing

AfL 

Teacher owns
success
criteria

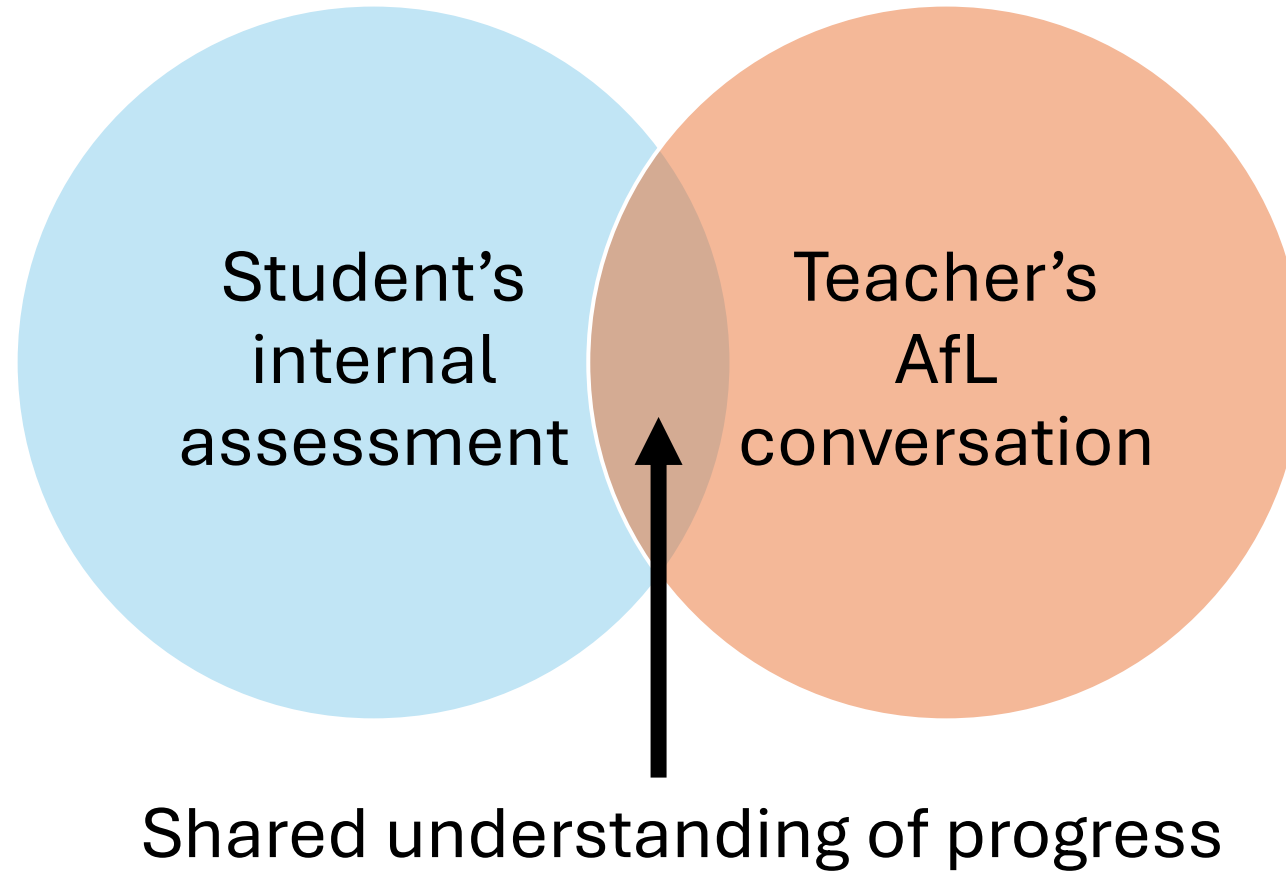
Teacher
shares
success
criteria

Class
co-constructs
success
criteria

Student
chooses their
own success
focus

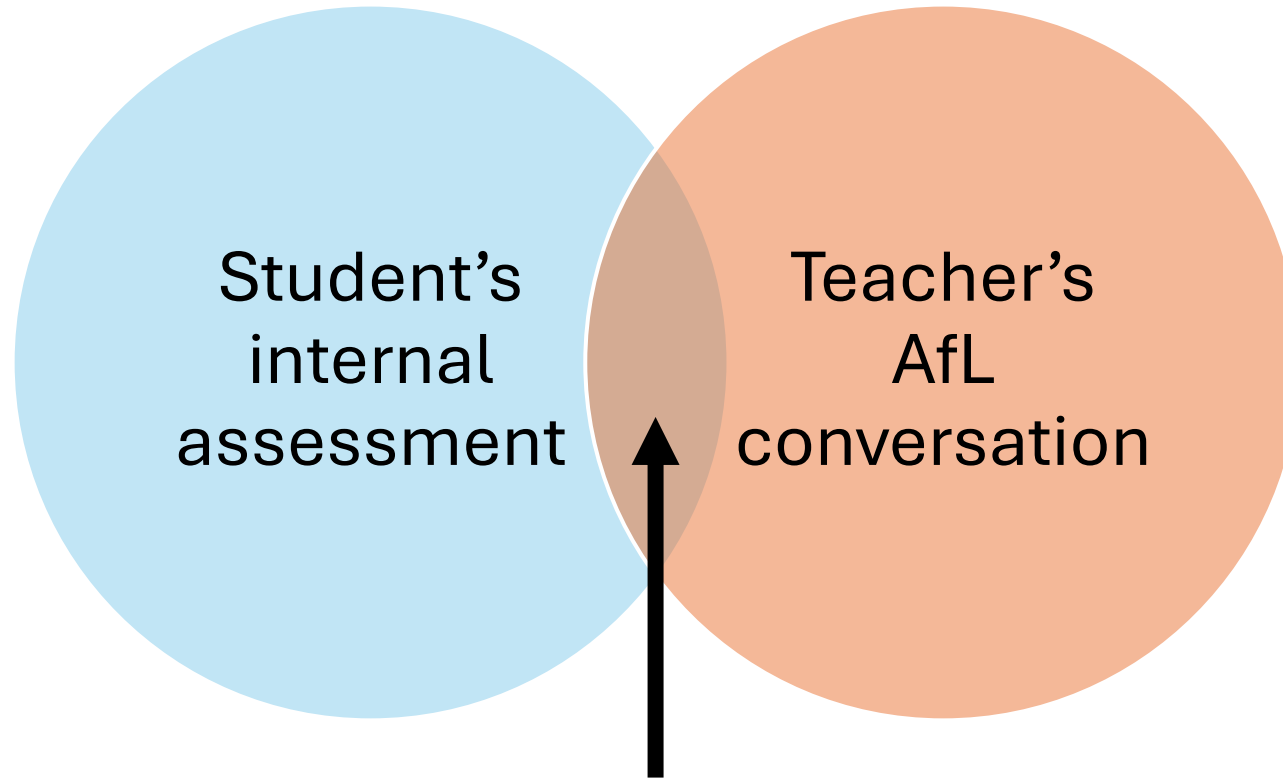


Support Competence



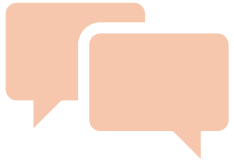


Support Competence



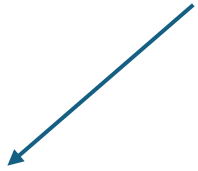
Shared understanding of progress
built through **moment-to-moment conversation**





Support Relatedness

Often several steps
ahead or tangential
thinking



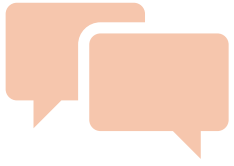
**Express
authentic
thoughts**



*Often fragile
because of
differences*



**Maintain
belonging**



Support Relatedness

Often several steps
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*Often fragile
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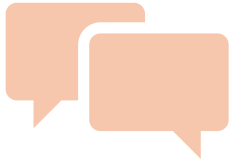
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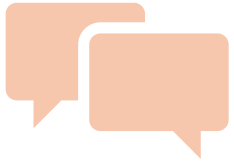
**Maintain
belonging**

Navigating this tension may involve **students assessing class participation**

e.g. Was the discussion inclusive, respectful, productive? How did you/others contribute?

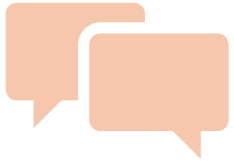


WHAT other learning
can AfL support?



Twice-exceptional learners often...

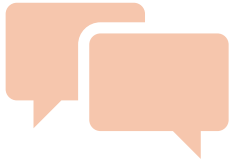
- Notice everything
- Generate lots of creative ideas
- Struggle to filter



Attempts to support focus

Motivation was NOT the problem!

What didn't work	What partially worked	What was missing
Rewards	Strategic seating	Shared understanding
Consequences	Quiet spaces	



Making focus part of the conversation

- Focus is not just behaviour – it's part of how learners evaluate and act
- Like academic learning, it needs to be visible and scaffolded
- How can AfL support this process?

Co-construct
what focus
means

Make focus
visible and
discussable

Evaluate
strategies
together

Track
small wins



AfL can also scaffold how learners...

- Participate in learning and class discussions
- Self-regulate emotions and behaviour
- Ask for support or challenge
- Navigate social situations
- Or anything else!



Summary

- Students are already assessing—constantly
- AfL can develop and extend these capabilities beyond academic tasks, and support students' self-determination
- But only when assessment becomes a personalised conversation between the teacher and student, where students' own assessments shape what happens next