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Teacher-led  
Learning Circles  
for Formative Assessment

**Teacher-Led Learning Circles  
for Formative Assessment:  
SUMMARY REPORT  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
RESEARCH FINDINGS**



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# SUMMARY REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

**Teacher-Led Learning Circles for Formative Assessment (T3LFA) Project:  
Developing Teacher Leadership and Teaching Practice for the Use of  
Formative Assessment to Improve Students' Learning**

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## Education International (EI)

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## 1. Introduction

The Teacher-led Learning Circles for Formative Assessment (T3LFA) project facilitated professional learning and development to advance teachers' leadership of educational improvement with a focus on increasing confidence in, understanding of, and use of student-focused formative assessment practices for enhanced student learning. The dual focus on both teachers' development and students' learning is vital and timely.

The T3LFA project was led by Education International with funding from the Jacobs Foundation and was implemented over three years (2020-2023) in seven countries: Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, and Uruguay. Education International adapted the HertsCam professional learning and teacher leadership model for the Teacher-led Learning Circle programme. Over one academic year, the T3LFA programme included seven 2-hour workshop sessions with all teachers in the Learning Circle, three one-on-one tutorials between the facilitator and each teacher in the Learning Circle, and two network events with teachers across multiple schools. Within each Learning Circle, local facilitators and local union representatives helped teachers (a) create an Action Plan to guide their development project processes and formative assessment practices; (b) develop, identify, apply, adapt, and review formative assessment practices; (c) complete ongoing reflections in a Record of Participation; (d) construct a Portfolio of evidence related to teacher leadership processes and formative assessment practices; and (e) create a vignette to share their learning and experience within and beyond the project. Overall, the T3LFA project supported 21 Learning Circles with a total of 172 teachers (average of 8/Circle), 43 local facilitators (average of 2/Circle), and 17 local union representatives (average of 1/Circle).

## 2. International Research Questions

The international [Research Framework](#) (LaPointe-McEwan et al., 2022) for the T3LFA project focused on the following research questions.

### ***1. In the Teacher-Led Learning Circles, what promising teacher-led formative assessment practices were identified?***

- a) What teacher-led formative assessment practices were used, and how were they implemented?
- b) How did technology support the implementation of formative assessment practices?
- c) Which teacher-led formative assessment practices provided effective feedback to students?
- d) What benefits from using formative assessment were identified for teachers' practices?
- e) What benefits from using formative assessment were identified for students' learning?

## **2. In the Teacher-Led Learning Circles, what professional learning and teacher leadership processes supported teachers' formative assessment practices?**

- a) How were teachers supported in understanding, developing, and using formative assessment practices?
- b) What helped or hindered effective use of formative assessment practices?

## **3. Literature Review: Effective Formative Assessment, Professional Learning and Development, and Teacher Leadership**

An initial [Literature Review](#) (Campbell et al., 2022) informed the definitions of formative assessment practices and effective professional learning used in the T3LFA project. Drawing on Lysaght et al. (2017), we identified four key formative assessment strategies and linked practices:

### ***Strategy 1: Clarifying, sharing, or co-constructing learning intentions and success criteria with students***

- Learning intentions are stated using words that emphasize knowledge, skills, concepts, and/or attitudes.
- Students are reminded about the links between what they are learning and the big learning picture.
- Child-friendly language is used to share learning intentions with students.
- Success criteria related to learning intentions are differentiated and shared with students.
- Students demonstrate that they are using learning intentions and/or success criteria while they are working.

### ***Strategy 2: Leveraging questioning and classroom discussion to deepen student learning and provide in-the-moment feedback for next steps.***

- Assessment techniques are used to facilitate class discussion.
- Questions are used to elicit students' prior knowledge on a topic.
- Students are encouraged to share the questioning role with the teacher during lessons.
- Students' incorrect responses are used to guide teaching and learning.
- Students can explain to others what they are learning.

### ***Strategy 3: Engaging in self- and peer-assessment practices to promote community learning, student ownership in learning, and learner agency***

- Students are given an opportunity to indicate how challenging they anticipate the learning will be at the beginning of a lesson or activity.
- Students are encouraged to record their progress using, for example, learning logs.



- Students are encouraged to use a range of assessment techniques to review their own work.
- A visual record of students' progress is maintained to celebrate students' learning and show areas of/for development.
- Time is set aside during parent/guardian-teacher meetings for students to be involved in reporting on some aspects of their learning.

***Strategy 4: Providing ongoing feedback to close the gap between where the student is and their learning goals***

- Feedback to students is focused on the original learning intention(s) and success criteria.
- Assessment techniques are used during lessons to help the teacher determine how well students understand what is being taught.
- Diagnostic information from standardized tests is used to identify strengths and needs in teaching and learning.
- Students are formally involved in providing information about their learning to their parents/guardians, other students in their class, or other visitors to the classroom.
- In preparing to provide students with feedback on their learning, the teacher consults their records of achievement against key learning intentions from previous lessons.

Based on our [Literature Review](#) (Campbell et al., 2022), we identified that effective professional learning and development included the following six key features:

- Is linked to teachers' identified priorities for their work to support students' needs, improve student learning, and enhance related student outcomes.
- Is differentiated for teachers' professional values, experiences, and work in their school and classroom contexts.
- Provides useful, research- and practice-informed, quality content relevant to identified professional development needs.
- Supports evidence-informed active professional learning, inquiry processes, critical reflection, and collaborative professional learning to value and develop teachers' and professional agency.
- Requires adequate provision of funding, time, and expert resources.
- Involves system, school, and teacher leadership prioritizing and supporting the importance of professional development.

With regard to teacher leadership, while there are teachers who hold formal roles as specific leaders, the T3LFA focused on supporting all teachers to develop their leadership capacities, practices, influence, and impact. This approach is consistent with Frost's concept of "non-positional teacher leadership," which refers to "a set of assumptions, beliefs and values, central to which is the conviction that any teacher or other educational practitioner can be enabled to exercise leadership" (Frost, 2019, p. 4). According to Nguyen et al. (2019, p. 71), "four common hallmarks of teacher leadership" are:

(a) Teacher leadership is a process of influence; (b) teacher leadership is exercised on the basis of reciprocal collaboration and trust; (c) teacher leadership operates within and beyond the classroom; and (d) teacher leadership aims to improve instructional quality, school effectiveness, and student learning.

## 4. International Research Methods and Data Sources

Multiple data sources informed the international research, including Teacher Pre- and Post-Surveys; the Teacher Codification Framework Questionnaire; Local Facilitator, Local Union Representative, and National Researcher Questionnaires; and two Country Reports.

**Teacher Pre- and Post-Surveys** gathered information about teachers' formative assessment practices, professional development experiences, and demographics at the beginning and end of their participation in the T3LFA project (i.e., during Year 2). We adapted the [Assessment for Learning Measurement Instrument](#) (Lysaght et al., 2017) to research teachers' confidence in and use of four key formative assessment strategies and linked practices, and adapted the six features of effective professional learning and development identified in our [Literature Review](#) (Campbell et al., 2022). Demographic data concerning teachers' professional experiences and context were also collected. The pre-survey response rate was 99% (n=171), and the post-survey response rate was 70% (n=121).

Toward the end of Year 2, teachers were invited to complete a **Teacher Codification Framework Questionnaire** to showcase one or two effective formative assessment practices that supported their students. This optional, open-response questionnaire augmented the international researchers' original Research Framework and was intentionally aligned with the four research-based formative assessment categories in the Teacher Pre- and Post-Surveys plus an Other category; 113 responses were received.

At the end of Year 2, local facilitators were asked to complete the **Local Facilitator Questionnaire** about challenges and supports they experienced during Learning Circles, effective formative assessment practices they identified during the project, and how Learning Circles supported teacher leadership. Local union representatives and national researchers were asked to complete the **Local Union Representative and National Researcher Questionnaires** about professional learning processes that supported teachers, promising teacher-led formative assessment practices, and lessons learned to inform successful implementation of Teacher-led Learning Circles. The response rates were 63% for local facilitators (n=27), 59% for local union representatives (n=10), and 100% for national researchers (n=7).

National researchers<sup>1</sup> from each participating country submitted two **Country Reports** to provide data for this report and summarize their country's respective experiences in the T3LFA project. At the start of the project (Year 1), each national researcher completed National Report Part 1: Country Profile to provide an overall profile of the context of their country's education system, assessment policies, and formative assessment practices. At the end of the project (Year 3), each national researcher completed National Report Part 2: Final Country Profile to identify, codify, and describe effective formative assessment practices and the linked Teacher-led Learning Circles experiences in their country.

<sup>1</sup> National reports were written by Professor Dalila Andrade Oliveira for Brazil, Professor Claude Koutou for Côte d'Ivoire, Dr. Christopher Yaw Kwaah for Ghana, Dr. Zuwati Hasim for Malaysia, Professor Sun Kim for South Korea, Dr. Robbert Smit for Switzerland, and Dr. Eloísa Bordoli and Ana María Novo Borges for Uruguay.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Participants' Experiences Linked to Features of Effective Professional Learning and Development

Teachers reported improvements in their professional learning and development experiences through the T3LFA project.

#### *5.1.1 Linked to teachers' identified priorities for their work to support students' needs, improve student learning, and enhance related student outcomes.*

In the Teacher Post-Survey, statistically significant gains in teachers' response to the extent to which their professional development in the Teacher-led Learning Circles "was linked to my professional priorities to support my students' learning" were observed; this was also the most prevalent response. Teachers most frequently stated wanting to improve their formative assessment knowledge and practice, use formative assessment to better support students, and enhance student outcomes through formative assessment. Teachers' goals also included increasing students' engagement and agency in their own learning. Local facilitators further identified that most teachers wanted to focus on students' holistic development of knowledge, understanding, skills, and values, using assessment strategies differentiated for students' diversity and needs and providing quality feedback to support students' progress. While the priority focus was on students, some teachers also set goals to increase collaboration with colleagues and improve their teacher leadership.

#### *5.1.2 Differentiated for teachers' professional values, experiences, and work in their school and classroom contexts.*

In the Teacher Post-Survey, there was a statistically significant increase in the response to the statement that teachers' professional development "was differentiated to include consideration of my professional learning and development experiences and the context I am working in" during the Teacher-led Learning Circles. While the overall T3LFA project remained similar across all participating countries, there needed to be adaptations and adjustments for different national and local contexts. Differentiation in terms of the specific formative assessments to be implemented and reflected on was also important for teachers' contexts and their students' needs. Recognition of teachers' developing experiences and changing attitudes and practices for formative assessment required differentiation over time within the Teacher-led Learning Circles process.

Of note, the Teacher Pre- and Post-Survey results showed high variations in teachers' professional development experiences. It is important, therefore, that differentiation value teachers' different experiences, contexts, and needs while ensuring consistency of high-quality professional learning and development experiences for all participants.

### *5.1.3 Provided useful, research- and practice-informed, quality content relevant to identified professional development needs.*

In the Teacher Post-Survey, the second most prevalent response was that teachers experienced professional development, which “provided useful, relevant content linked to my professional development priorities,” and this increased with participation in the Teacher-led Learning Circles. Local facilitators, local union representatives, and national researchers commented favourably about the importance and usefulness of materials provided to inform the Teacher-led Learning Circles. However, a careful balance between providing sufficient, relevant, and useful content while also not providing too much required content within workshop activities was needed. For example, on the one hand, facilitators wanted more materials to ensure consistent understanding of formative assessment for themselves and the teachers involved. On the other hand, facilitators were concerned that covering the content included in the T3LFA project was time-consuming and limited time for teachers to engage in more open discussions to share their learning and address challenges. Consideration of differentiating the content supports for facilitators may be worthwhile, particularly for substantive knowledge about effective formative assessment and linked promising practices. Selecting facilitators with both facilitation expertise and knowledge of formative assessment practices may be worthwhile for future development of the T3LFA project.

### *5.1.4 Supported evidence-informed active professional learning, inquiry processes, critical reflection, and collaborative professional learning to value and develop teachers’ leadership and professional agency.*

In the Teacher Post-Survey, teachers reported increases in the extent to which their professional development “involved inquiry and collaborative professional learning to develop my professional expertise” during the Teacher-led Learning Circles. Teachers reported that collaborating with Learning Circle colleagues was crucial in helping them learn about and implement formative assessment. By creating a safe space and trusting relationships within the Learning Circles, discussion and feedback among teachers helped them develop, refine, and expand their formative assessment practices. Teachers also shared and addressed challenges with a combination of emotional support and practical suggestions to benefit teachers’ participation and their classroom practices.

Two main challenges linked to collaboration were identified. First, facilitators had to consider how best to ensure professional collaboration and trust when participating teachers held diverging views about formative assessment. Second, ensuring and sustaining collaboration for teachers across geographical contexts could be challenging in some countries. Some facilitators used online collaboration activities, and it was suggested that further future development of virtual collaboration platforms and digital tools would be beneficial. However, not all teachers had access to technology or reliable internet connections. Furthermore, while the use of online collaboration was supported, participants appreciated in-person collaboration to strengthen trusting, mutually beneficial professional relationships and shared learning.

### *5.1.5 Required adequate provision of funding, time, and expert resources.*

Expert resources in the form of materials informing the Teacher-led Learning Circles professional development model and processes, the international [Research Framework](#), and the international research team [Literature Review](#) concerning effective professional learning and development and formative assessment were considered useful. There was also interest in expanding the availability of online platforms and digital tools to support the T3LFA project.

The role of local facilitators was considered vital. Local union representatives and national researchers observed that facilitators provided essential guidance and support for all Learning Circle activities by fostering teacher learning and reflection; developing teachers' understanding of the connections between teaching, assessment, and student learning; and making students the starting point for professional learning. The important role of the international professional development model, materials, and training of local facilitators by HertsCam was central to supporting local facilitators. Facilitators suggested that further and ongoing professional learning for themselves, for example, mentorship and feedback, and for their work, for example, cultural competency training, would be helpful.

The T3LFA project directly funded dedicated time for teachers to engage in this professional development. Teachers appreciated the time for their professional learning and development. In addition to developing their teacher leadership and understanding and use of formative assessments, time out of the classroom and in collaborative workshops helped teachers share and address challenges with implementing formative assessments in their classrooms.

### *5.1.6 Involved system, school, and teacher leadership prioritizing and supporting the importance of professional learning and development.*

At the system level, the role of union leadership was important. Education International led the overall T3LFA project with funding and support from the Jacobs Foundation, and collaboration with local union representatives, international and local facilitators, international and national researchers, teachers, and governments. At the national and local levels, local facilitators appreciated support from their local union representatives in Learning Circle activities.

However, of concern, as expressed in the Teacher Post-Survey, was a slight decrease in ratings concerning whether the participants' professional development "was supported by school leaders," indicating that while this process is teacher-led, attention to positively engaging formal education leaders is also important. Attention to engaging and educating formal school leaders about the concepts, practices, and benefits of formative assessment and how they can be integrated within national and local educational assessment contexts is important.

Encouragingly, growth in and benefits of teacher leadership were identified by the participants. At the classroom level, teacher leadership included actively sharing formative assessment learning and experiences with colleagues, modelling the use of formative assessment for colleagues, mentoring colleagues who were less experienced in formative assessment, and engaging in joint projects focused on formative assessment with colleagues. Some teachers' leadership also extended to the school level, with teacher participants advocating for the use

of formative assessment to inform school goals and decisions. Teachers also reached out to participating teachers outside their school contexts to further their formative assessment learning and practice in between Learning Circle sessions. Through growth in teacher leadership skills and actions, a few teachers extended these skills to areas beyond formative assessment to lead change in their school, district, and broader community.

## 5.2 Participants' Use of Formative Assessment Practices

Teachers reported increases in their confidence and embeddedness in practice for formative assessment.

### 5.2.1 Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

In the Post-Survey, teachers reported increased confidence and embeddedness of all five of the Learning Intentions and Success practices<sup>2</sup> compared to at the start of the T3LFA project. The gains in the overall ratings for both teachers' confidence and embeddedness in practice were statistically significant. Teachers gained the most confidence with stating learning goals using words that emphasize knowledge, skills, concepts, and/or attitudes and reminding students about links between what they are learning and the overall learning goals. Teachers reported the highest levels of embeddedness for using child-friendly language to share learning goals with pupils in both the Teacher Pre- and Post-Surveys. The greatest increases in embeddedness were associated with differentiating and sharing success criteria related to learning goals with students and students demonstrating that they are using learning goals and/or success criteria while they are working. Examples of formative assessment practices from teachers and the identified benefits are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Promising Formative Assessment Practices: Learning Intentions and Success Criteria*

Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Teachers communicate the knowledge, skills, and concepts students need to learn and how students will demonstrate their learning.			
Promising Formative Assessment Practices	Observed Benefits for Students	Observed Benefits for Teachers	Countries that Reported Using the Practice
Observation behaviour guides and checklists	Success criteria were visible to students	Enhanced assessment reliability	Brazil, Ghana, South Korea

<sup>2</sup> Learning goals are stated using words that emphasise knowledge, skills, concepts and/or attitudes; Pupils are reminded about links between what they are learning and the overall learning goals; Child-friendly language is used to share learning goals with pupils; Success criteria related to learning goals are differentiated and shared with pupils; Pupils demonstrate that they are using learning goals and/or success criteria while they are working.

Exit and entry tickets	Accelerated student learning; students practiced self-assessing; enhanced metacognition; made student progress within a lesson visible; increased engagement in writing processes; enhanced confidence and motivation to learn; students internalized key guiding questions	Helped teachers monitor student understanding and achieve learning intentions; provided an efficient assessment method; provided feedback to the teacher; guided teaching and learning	Malaysia, South Korea
Differentiated analytic rubrics	Self-assessment was easier for students and tailored to their needs	Facilitated efficient and timely student self-feedback and peer feedback	South Korea, Switzerland
Rubric co-construction with students	Enhanced students' understanding of success criteria; facilitated student self-reflection	Provided students with tools to self- and peer-assess, helping teachers facilitate self- and peer-assessment; helped teachers engage student voice in assessment	Uruguay

### 5.2.2 Questioning and Classroom Discussion Practices

In the Post-Survey, teachers reported increased confidence and increased embeddedness of all five of the Questioning and Classroom Discussion practices<sup>3</sup> at the end of the T3LFA project compared to at the start. The gains in the overall ratings for both teachers' confidence and embeddedness in practice were statistically significant. Teachers reported the greatest increase in confidence in using students' incorrect responses to guide teaching and learning. This practice was top-rated as the area of most confidence. Relatedly, using students' incorrect responses was also an area of growth in practice to become the most embedded in practice by the end of the project. The area of most increase in embeddedness in practice was allowing students to share their questions during a lesson. Promising practices using questioning and classroom discussion identified by teachers are provided in Table 2.

<sup>3</sup> Assessment is used to facilitate classroom discussions; Questions are used to elicit pupils' prior knowledge on a topic; Pupils are able to share their questions during a lesson; Pupils' incorrect responses are used to guide teaching and learning; Pupils can explain to others what they are learning



**Table 2**

*Promising Formative Assessment Practices: Questioning and Classroom Discussion*

Questioning and Classroom Discussion Teachers facilitate questioning and classroom discussion to deepen student learning and provide in-the-moment feedback for next steps.			
Promising Formative Assessment Practices	Observed Benefits for Students	Observed Benefits for Teachers	Countries that Reported Using the Practice
Think-pair-share	Fostered greater appreciation for the learning that their peers can support; increased interest in class topics; deeper reflection on learning intentions; more democratic teaching environment	Supported valuable insights for enhanced teaching and learning	Ghana, Uruguay
Individual conferences with students before meetings with parents	Students negotiated interpretations of teachers' assessment evidence; enhanced self-advocacy and professionalism; received more individualized feedback and tailored questions	Helped teachers gauge student understandings; enhanced student trust	Ghana, South Korea, Switzerland
Know Wonder Learn (KWL) charts	Supported student inquiry; enhanced curiosity and engagement	Made students' prior knowledge visible; catalyzed rich discussions; generated student questions to guide teacher support	South Korea, Uruguay
Discussion circles with guided questioning on books or topics	Enhanced interest in reading and classroom topics; learning and progress were made visible; increased confidence and self-esteem; fostered student participation	Facilitated class discussion	Brazil, Uruguay
Class debates about readings	Increased students' argumentative capacity	Enhanced and made more visible students' reasoning and higher order thinking skills	Brazil



### 5.2.3 Feedback

In the Post-Survey, teachers reported increased confidence and increased embeddedness in classroom practice of all five of the feedback practices<sup>4</sup> at the end of the T3LFA project compared to at the start. The gains in the overall ratings for both teachers' confidence and embeddedness in practice were statistically significant. In both the Teacher Pre- and Post-Surveys, teachers were most confident using assessment techniques during lessons to help them determine how well students understand what is being taught, and these were the most embedded practices. Notably, teachers gained the most confidence using diagnostic information from standardized tests to identify strengths and needs, and this was an area of growth in embeddedness in practice. Other areas of greater increases in confidence were in teaching and learning and allowing students to explain to others what they are learning, as well as embeddedness in practices involving students in providing information about their learning. Examples of promising practices for the use of feedback by teachers are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Promising Formative Assessment Practices: Feedback*

Feedback Teachers provide ongoing feedback to close the gap between where the student is and their learning goals.			
Promising Formative Assessment Practices	Observed Benefits for Students	Observed Benefits for Teachers	Countries that Reported Using the Practice
Collaborative feedback / ongoing learning dialogues: teachers cultivate ongoing dialogues about learning, encouraging questioning and peer and self-feedback	Students saw learning as a collaborative process; greater engagement in learning; stimulated deeper cognitive processing; contributed to a supportive and collaborative classroom culture	Efficient and timely delivery of feedback; observing and engaging in dialogues guided teaching; increased opportunities for teachers to ask questions that provoked learner-directed assessment	Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, Uruguay
The teacher provides descriptive feedback	Helped make student learning and progress visible to students; highlighted learning intentions	Helped make student learning and progress visible to teachers	Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup> Feedback to pupils is linked to the original learning goal(s) and success criteria; Assessment techniques are used during lessons to help the teacher determine how well pupils understand what is being taught; Diagnostic information from standardized tests is used to identify strengths and needs in teaching and learning; Pupils are involved in providing information about their learning; Pupils can explain to others what they are learning.

Feedback-supporting technologies (e.g., Teams, WhatsApp, Google Classroom)	Students received feedback in a new medium; greater access to feedback and support from teachers and peers; self-documentation tools for students to foster peer and self-assessment (e.g., tables in Excel or Microsoft Word); students provided more accurate self-feedback and reports of their progress to parents; enhanced self-regulated learning	Teachers could share resources with students, especially when physical resources were limited; enhanced visibility for parents in students' work and feedback, catalyzed communication between teachers and parents; supported teachers' documentation of student learning (e.g., tables in Excel, reports on Canva)	Brazil, South Korea, Switzerland
Time for revision/rewriting: dedicated time for students to revise work based on teacher, peer, or self-feedback	Enhanced sense of autonomy; enhanced critical thinking and self-assessment skills	Made students' learning processes and progress visible to teachers	Uruguay

### 5.2.4 Self- and Peer-Assessment

In the Post-Survey, teachers reported increased confidence and increased embeddedness in classroom practice for all five of identified self- and peer-assessment practices<sup>5</sup> at the end of the T3LFA project compared to at the start. The gains in the overall ratings for both teachers' confidence and embeddedness in practice were statistically significant. By the end of the project, teachers were most confident in encouraging students to use a range of assessment techniques to review their own work, and the most embedded practice was encouraging students to record their progress. The highest gains in confidence and embeddedness in practice were for giving students an opportunity to indicate how challenging they anticipate

the learning will be at the beginning of a lesson or activity and encouraging students to record their progress. While self- and peer-assessment were the practices with the lowest confidence and embeddedness ratings at the start of the project, interestingly, these practices were the most frequently provided as examples for the teacher codification framework developed to describe teachers' promising practices developed during the T3LFA project (see Table 4).

<sup>5</sup> Pupils are given an opportunity to indicate how challenging they anticipate the learning will be at the beginning of a lesson or activity; Pupils are encouraged to record their progress; Pupils are encouraged to use a range of assessment techniques to review their own work; A visual record of pupils' progress is maintained to track and celebrate pupils' learning and show areas of/for development; Time is set aside during parent/guardian teacher meetings for pupils to be involved in reporting on some aspects of their learning.

**Table 4**

*Promising Formative Assessment Practices: Self- and Peer-Assessment*

Self- and Peer-Assessment Teachers foster students' self- and peer-assessment to promote community learning, student ownership in learning, and learner agency.			
Promising Formative Assessment Practices	Observed Benefits for Students	Observed Benefits for Teachers	Countries that Reported Using the Practice
Collective corrections: students share their writing or read for the class and peers and the teacher provide feedback or ask questions	Activating student voice; enhanced engagement and participation; improved reading and writing performance; increased student questioning leading to clarifications and consolidation; enhanced communication and critical thinking skills; students could make corrections immediately; encouraged collaborative learning; enhanced listening and comprehension skills	Reduced teacher responsibility in assessment and learning processes; teacher (and peers) could immediately provide feedback and intervene	Brazil, Ghana, Malaysia, Uruguay
Ongoing self-reflection journals	Students used notebooks to document/track their learning about core concepts over time; enabled students to generate and share questions with each other and discuss answers	Provided records of learning which teachers could use to generate formative feedback	Brazil, South Korea, Switzerland
Process-oriented peer-assessment: students correct or review each other's work and discuss their process/ approach using criteria	Increased ability to articulate their thinking; enhanced performance on learning tasks; refined communication; clarified understandings; enhanced metacognition; enhanced logical reasoning	Made visible students' reasoning and learning processes to support teacher interventions	Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, South Korea, Uruguay

Co-developing mark schemes or rubrics for self- and peer-assessment with students	Improved achievement; greater comfort with assessing and reflecting on their own learning; students thought more deeply about learning intentions and success criteria; enhanced participation and understanding of what they need to do; students provided specific self-feedback	Activated multiple sources of feedback for students, reducing their reliance on teacher feedback	Ghana, South Korea, Switzerland, Uruguay
Encouraging explicit student self-assessment using learning criteria	Students saw their mistakes and progress; increased ownership of the learning process; students reflected on their behaviour and conduct in schools	Fostered more feedback in the classroom	Brazil, Uruguay
Visual indicators to signal assessment of understanding (e.g., traffic light card, coloured cups)	Enhanced critical thinking; more sophisticated self-assessment	Helped teachers identify students in need of assistance in-the-moment; students took ownership of their learning and became more self-directed, reducing reliance on the teacher	South Korea, Uruguay

### 5.2.5 Digital Technology in Formative Assessment

Findings from the T3LFA project indicate that sound formative assessment can be implemented in classrooms with or without digital technology. In the Teacher Post-Survey, over 40% of teachers did not have access to WiFi or devices. In contrast, just under 20% of teachers had consistent WiFi, and each pupil had individual access to a device. Teachers used whatever resources were available to support effective formative assessment practices. When available, technology-enabled feedback from teachers, supported the documentation of students' learning over time, helped teachers share relevant digital learning resources with students, promoted enhanced student self-assessment, and facilitated communication about learning progress among teachers, students, and parents/caregivers. Technology can be a useful addition to enhance formative assessment practice in the classroom, although not an essential requirement. The key element is the formative assessment practice rather than the specific technology.

## 6. Key Lessons and Recommendations from the Teacher-led Learning Circles Project

Based on our international research involving data collection from project participants in seven countries, the clear and compelling evidence is that the T3LFA project has been highly successful in supporting and improving teachers' professional learning and development of teacher leadership, and for improving teachers' confidence and use of promising formative assessment practices. Considerable benefits for both teachers and students have been identified. In addition, benefits for the engagement of local facilitators and union representatives were important also. Further, enhancements in feedback benefited improvements in communication about students' learning with and for parents/caregivers and education leaders.

The selection of seven countries spanning four continents resulted in a wide range of experiences for teachers in their varied classroom, school, educational, and community contexts. That the T3LFA approach could be appropriately adapted and differentiated to effectively develop and implement promising formative assessment practices within and across this range of national and local contexts and for teachers' and students' needs is remarkable. Two overarching lessons are:

- 1. The Teacher-led Learning Circles process has been highly impactful, with gains in participating teachers' confidence in and embeddedness of formative assessment; and***
- 2. The need for, and importance of, supporting further implementation of the Teacher-led Learning Circles project in and across education systems.***

Key lessons concerning professional learning and development from the T3LFA project are the importance of:

- ***Teacher-led and student-focused professional learning and development goals:*** An important lesson is the value of supporting teachers in identifying and focusing on goals linked to their students' needs and for teachers' own professional learning needs. These twin goals can enhance both student agency and teacher leadership.
- ***Differentiation:*** Differentiation for teachers' professional contexts and experiences and for their goals and approaches to formative assessment is important, including further differentiation with changing experiences over time.
- ***Quality, practical, and relevant content:*** Quality, practical, and relevant content matters, particularly for substantive understanding of formative assessment. However, quality of content needs to be balanced with quantity and differentiated to be relevant and practical.
- ***Active and collaborative professional learning processes:*** Collaborative professional learning is powerful and valued. Supports for collaboration beyond the Circles and across geographical contexts is important and requires attention to both availability of online and in-person activities.
- ***Adequate resources:*** Funding to support access to expert resources, including facilitators, and time for professional development were central to the success of the T3LFA project.

- **Leadership supports:** System leadership, including teacher unions, in leading, collaborating with, and supporting teachers' professional development, teacher leadership, and use of formative assessment practices is important and useful. Growth in teachers' leadership, confidence, skills, and practices is beneficial with impacts within and beyond their schools. It is also important to engage and educate formal school leaders on the importance of teachers' professional development and leadership and the benefits of formative assessment.

Key lessons concerning promising practices for the use of formative assessment are:

- **Formative assessment involves a suite of highly interconnected practices:**  
Embedding formative assessment involves implementing multiple assessment strategies that are all aimed at supporting student learning. While we have reported promising practices under their primary formative assessment category, most practices reflect multiple categories, highlighting the interrelated and complementary nature of formative assessment practices. The heart of the formative assessment process—i.e., teachers and students interpreting and using evidence of student learning to guide and promote learning—can be accessed and encouraged in multiple ways.
- **Formative assessment practices are adapted for local contexts and assessment systems:**  
There are various ways to facilitate formative assessment across grade levels, curricula, and education systems. However, how teachers practice formative assessment likely shifts in response to local, contextual factors. The countries that participated in this project reflected a wide range of assessment cultures, including those with strong high-stakes testing cultures. Formative assessment can operate within a variety of assessment cultures, even if specific practices are operationalized differently within these contexts.
- **Formative assessment can occur across a range of teaching contexts, regardless of access to technology:**  
Teachers reported developing promising formative assessment practices with or without the use of technology. When students had consistent access to devices and reliable internet connections, virtual classrooms, shared drives, and online tools provided an additional environment to facilitate practices, yet similar formative assessment practices were reported by teachers whose classes had limited or no access to devices or the internet. Technology can enhance formative assessment in classrooms, but it is not an essential requirement for the implementation of promising practices.
- **Formative assessment needs to be intentionally integrated into teachers' pedagogical practices in their classrooms:**  
In some cases, teachers' strategies did not integrate or maximize the potential of formative assessment to further benefit students' learning. For example, teachers shared examples of using group work or approaches to scaffolding learning but did not explicitly use formative assessment practices to support their learning. While group work and scaffolding are valuable pedagogical strategies, it is important that teachers intentionally integrate formative assessment practices to maximize benefits on teaching and learning.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

Two pressing challenges face education globally: first, a crisis in the teaching profession manifesting in fewer people entering the teaching profession, increasing attrition, and concerns about working conditions and wellbeing (United Nations, 2024); and second, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring all students have access to high quality education which supports their learning and addresses inequities in experiences and outcomes, especially following the ongoing impacts of educational disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. While a range of actions is required to address these challenges, effective professional learning and development for teachers and effective formative assessment with timely, useful feedback for students are two of the highest-impact educational strategies. The T3LFA project directly addressed and supported these twin strategies to support large-scale educational change across seven countries – Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, and Uruguay – spanning four continents. The findings from the international research study and accompanying national reports provide urgent and needed evidence for developing and implementing teacher-led, student-focused formative assessment practices with benefits for teachers’ work and for students’ learning.

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# SUMMARY REPORT OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FINDINGS



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