

SALF BOOKLET

to accompany Continuing Professional
Development Workshops



EXCERPT FROM SALF TEACHER GUIDELINES

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Contents

About the Authors	5
SALF Introduction Background and Content	9
Chapter One Building Blocks for SALF	15
Chapter Two Self Assessment and Learning: Strategies and Methodologies for SALF	33
Chapter Three Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in Junior Classes	63
Chapter Four Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in Middle and Senior Classes (3rd to 6th Classes)	93
Chapter Five Self Assessment and Learning Folders and the Home	159
Bibliography	175

SALF Introduction:

Background and Content

Assessment for Learning as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum identifies the important role that assessment can play in enhancing children's learning and achievement. However, no learning can take place without the learner and so assessment processes must take account of the understandings that children have about their own learning and assessment.

Recognising this, one teacher in discussion with the class asked a group of 11 year old children what was assessment? What did it involve? They responded as follows:

- A test for disabilities
- Parents are saying what we are learning from our H.S.R.A.*
- An extra learning programme
- To get help
- To improve

H.S.R.A. refers to a 'Home/School Read Aloud' programme the children were involved in.

9

It became apparent that the assessment work being done in the classroom, using some of the methodologies outlined in these Guidelines, were not viewed by the children as assessment because a test was not involved. When reminded of the methodologies being used in the classroom as ways of finding out what they knew and could do i.e. assessing their knowledge and learning, they were then asked how they would describe assessment. They were equally forthcoming and made the following observations. The points made were recorded as spoken:

- Making decisions on how you are doing/improving
- Good judgement i.e. questions, selecting a book, review of questions
- To get a better understanding of your work
- What you yourself think of your work
- To realise what you are finding out
- That your work is valuable to you because it is done by you
- To estimate how you think the work is going for yourself

What is striking about the first set of responses is that the children describe external evaluations whereas the second set of responses indicate a strong sense of ownership and frequent use of personal pronouns suggesting that the child is very much involved in the process. It was from such moments of classroom work that Self Assessment and Learning Folders were designed and developed.

When discussing assessment with teachers, they commented that the assessment process often highlighted what it was that children did not know or could not do. Yet, when teachers want to use assessment information to enhance children's learning it is critical that they have evidence of what it is that children already know and can do as well as children's own understanding of how they arrived at that point in their learning. It is necessary to have this information across all curricular areas. Assessment for Learning processes are premised on the fact that children know, understand and can act on the following information:

- What is good work?
- Consider the extent to which they have achieved the criteria for good work
- Agree ways of bridging the gap/s between what good work is and the next steps needed to achieve that.



Content

- Chapter 1:** *'Building Blocks for SALF'*,
Key classroom practices and strategies to enhance children's learning in the classroom.
- Chapter 2:** *'Self Assessment and Learning - Strategies and Methodologies for SALF'*
Strategic methodologies for SALF to develop children's ability to engage in self and peer assessment.
- Chapter 3:** *'Instructions for building SALF Junior Folders'*
The steps involved in compiling and completing a SALF folder with Junior Classes.
- Chapter 4:** *'Instructions for building SALF Middle & Senior Folders'*
The steps involved in compiling and completing a SALF folder with Middle and Senior Classes. The skills necessary for self-assessment when doing project work.
- Chapter 5:** *'Self Assessment and Learning Folders beyond the Classroom'*
Strategies for supporting the involvement of parents/grandparents/guardians and carers in the process.

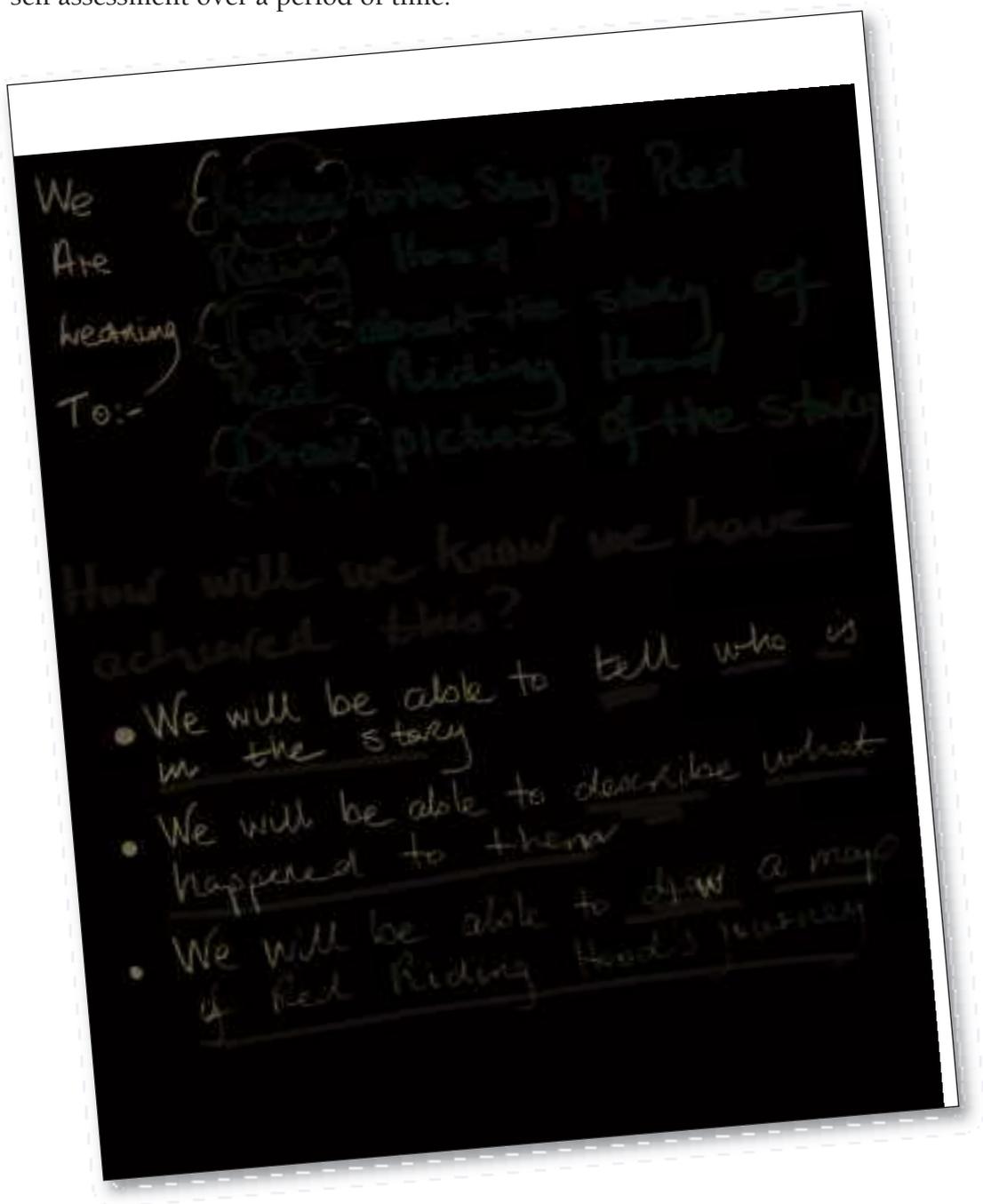
Templates provided in these guidelines may be photocopied by the purchasing school although it is recommended that teachers adapt all resources to their own specific requirements and in accordance with school policy.



Learning and Self-Assessment Strategies and Methodologies for SALF in the Junior Classes

1. Whole Class Charts

Used as **'We Are Learning To'** charts as outlined in Chapter 1, the teacher shares the learning intention/objective with the class and together with the children take time to think and talk about how they will know they have achieved that learning. **'We Are Learning To'** charts assist in clarifying learning intentions and outcomes and can provide a framework to build learning targets and success criteria in to classroom discussion. These whole class discussions provide opportunities to build the skills of early self assessment over a period of time.



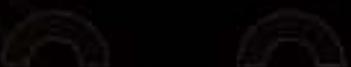


The learning objectives shared with the class become the success criteria when, at the end of a block of work, children can re-visit and discuss what they have achieved. Mapping the story of Red Riding Hood provides children with the early stage skills for mapping in geography. Such evidence of learning can be selected for SALF and placed in the folder.



3. Checklists

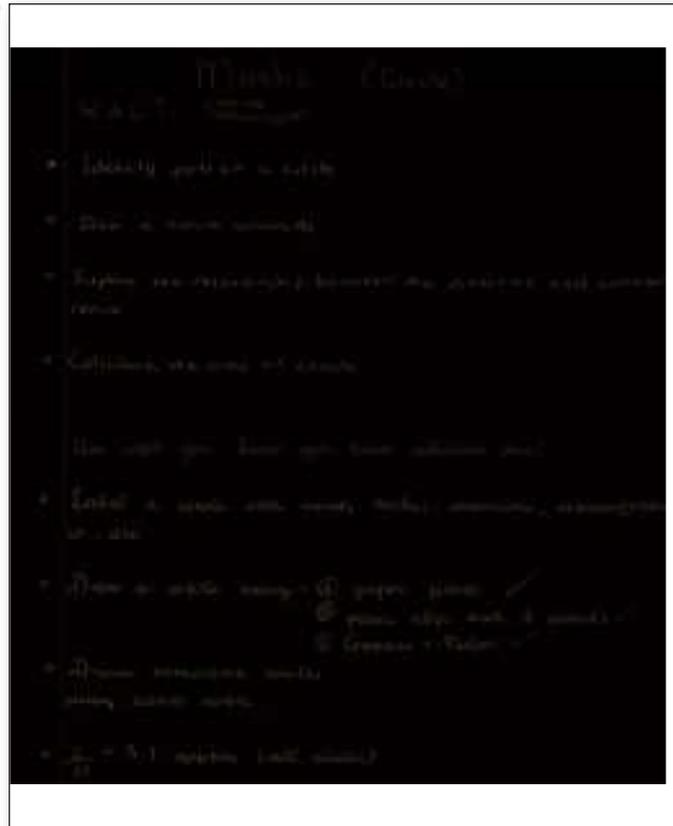
Checklists can be designed using curriculum objectives at the beginning of a strand unit. Individual checklists can be used. Children and teacher discuss content of the checklist to outline learning intentions so that success criteria can be identified. When learning outcomes are achieved children colour in the matching symbols.

Checklist	
. I can run over 2 flat markers	
. I can run over flat markers evenly spaced	
. I can run over 2 low hurdles	
. I can run over low hurdles, evenly spaced	

Athletics - Infants - Hurdling Date: _____

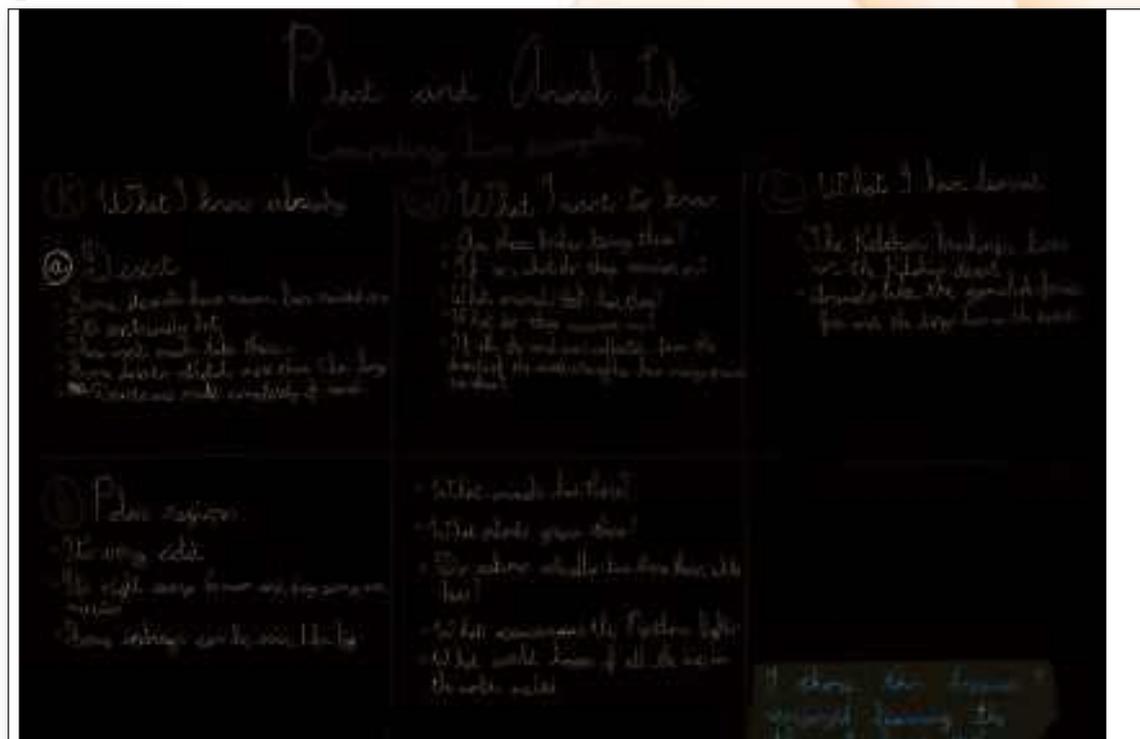


Here is a sample of what one child (age 11) selected to include in SALF folder



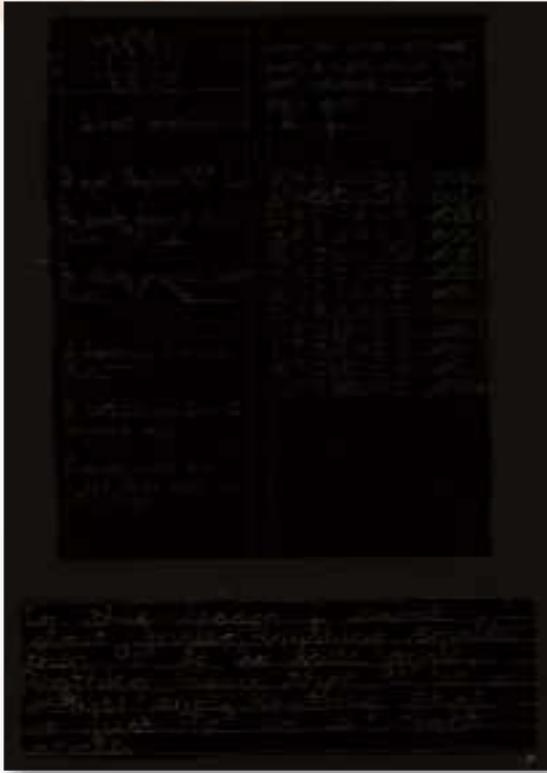
2. Individual KWL Sheets

Children move towards more detailed and independent work using templates to record their learning. Extending the stage of whole class KWL charts to develop individual KWLs is an important step.

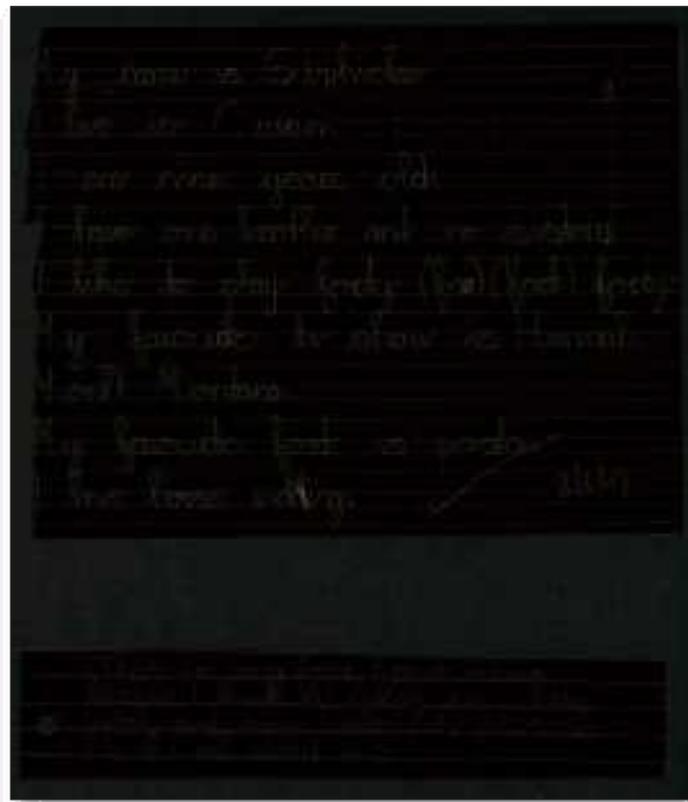


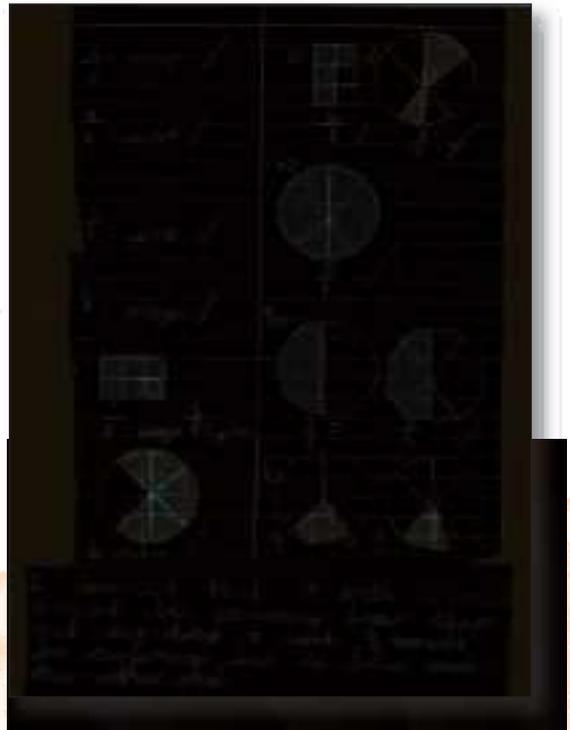
5. Work samples with comments that justify selection

From time to time samples of work are selected by the children that they feel provide evidence of their learning in a curricular area. The written comments by each child justify the selection, identifying and reflecting the learning that has taken place from the viewpoint of the child.



52





6. Mapping

Mapping is used in a variety of ways throughout the SALF process. It assists children to illustrate learning outcomes at an individual level, enabling them to record and summarise evidence of what they know and can be extended to show new learning as it happens.



10: Reviewing Learning Goals



Having children set and review personal learning goals works well. Teachers continue to use the strategies of 'thumbs up, thumbs down' or use traffic light symbols during lessons so that children can indicate how they are responding to the learning objectives of the lesson. However, in the context of SALF in the middle and senior classes, it is expected that children will engage with these personal goals over a longer period of time through the use of the strategies and methodologies as outlined in this chapter.

59

Before children complete any review, as well as strategies for improvement that have been identified in particular areas, it is very helpful for them to realise that they can get help with their work. This can be done through thinking about and exploring the following questions in the classroom:

Do I need help with this?

Who do I think might know enough about this to help me?

I wonder if I tried this another way would it work better?

If I did this with someone else maybe we could find an answer?

Is there a website where I could find out more?

Chapter Three:

Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in Junior Classes

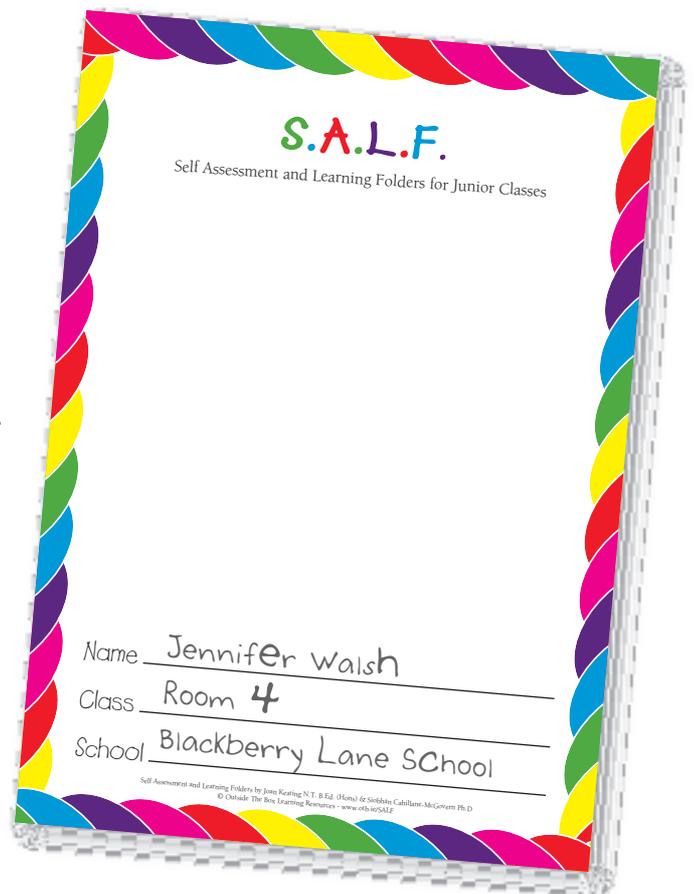
This chapter presents the steps that a teacher should follow when building and developing SALF folders in a junior classroom. In reading through this chapter it is important to consider the skills and strategies outlined in chapters one and two of these guidelines. Children are ready to begin working with their SALF folders when the classroom culture and ethos for respectful discussion has become accepted and established and when children have a language with which they can start to discuss their learning and achievements in an age-appropriate way. Many of the assessment methodologies described in chapter two can be explicitly taught at appropriate steps of the folder.

The pages of a Junior SALF folder are designed for writing, drawing and colouring on. Work samples and photographs that record learning activities the children are engaged in can be glued onto the pages with comments written underneath.

Building and developing SALF folders with Junior Classes involves ten steps:

64

- Step 1:** Learning Conversations and Discussions
- Step 2:** Sharing with the children what a SALF folder looks like
- Step 3:** Establishing a SALF Organiser
- Step 4:** The Name Page
- Step 5:** The Photograph Page
- Step 6:** Early Stage Mapping
- Step 7:** Affirming the Child as Learner
- Step 8:** SALF and Curriculum
- Step 9:** SALF goes Home
- Step 10:** SALF Review Workshop in the Classroom



Step 4: The Name Page



The three personal pages in each SALF are dedicated to the identity of the child. One of the most significant acts of ownership for children is having their own name given an exclusive and highly prominent position at the start of their SALF folder. When the task of writing their own names is set, some children will scribble and make attempts at writing their names, others may be able to copy it and draw a picture of themselves. The children may receive help from the teacher, other adults working in the classroom or in the home. Having an adult at hand to act as scribe while they put their name on the allocated page in their folder is very important. When completed the child and adult together colour in the box beside the word NAME on the SALF organiser. The child begins to understand the concept of how the organiser is linked to the page that is completed. What is intended over time is that children come to see the folders as the storybook they have created showing themselves as learners, illustrating what they have learned.



Step 5: The Photograph Page

The photograph used for this page can be one from home or can be a photograph taken in school as part of the “Self-awareness” and “Developing Self-Confidence” strand unit of the S.P.H.E curriculum. Where the photograph is taken in school, the children are asked to bring an item or photograph from home that is really special to them. The teacher organises an opportunity to photograph each child with his/her chosen item. Children are invited to recall and relate why they chose this. Other children can watch, listen and ask questions. By choosing words to name, describe and add detail, children are developing oral language skills and confidence in an enjoyable way. The next task is a collaborative one and where possible can include a homework session with the folder.

The child and adult sit together and engage in a discussion about the photograph. The child and adult complete the sentence

“In this photograph I am I chose it because”

The child is encouraged to read the text created in collaboration with the adult. Finally, the box that corresponds to the photograph page of the SALF organiser is coloured in. The class teacher and others who work with the children in a classroom setting can assist with this.



71

Parent Quote:

‘I think her favourite would have to be the photo of her at ‘Show and Tell’. She was delighted to show the photo off. Her confidence has improved. It was lovely for everyone to see different areas of her learning all together in one folder. We are really enjoying talking and discussing with her all the different work and pictures completed throughout the year. It is lovely to see such progress from the beginning of the year right through. She thoroughly enjoyed telling her brothers, sister, Mum & Dad about her work. She eagerly answered any questions we asked.’

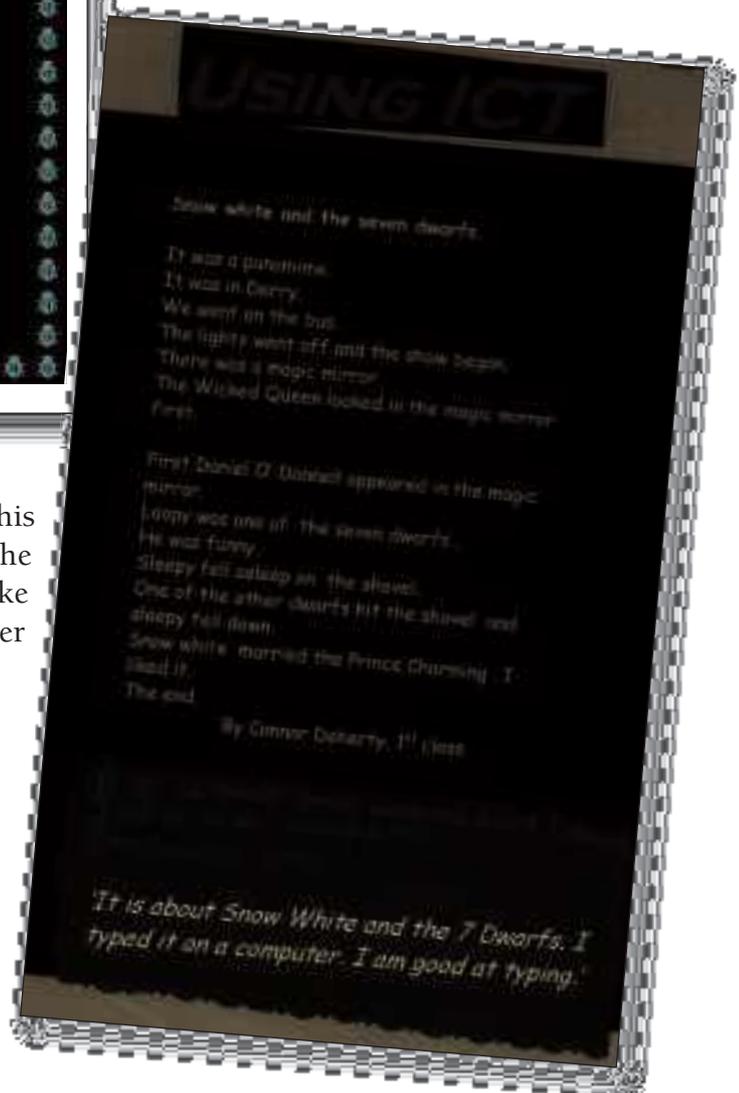
Curriculum and ICT

From time to time photographic evidence of classroom work and the process of recording what the class want to say about that work may be digitally recorded by the teacher. Some children will use this as evidence of their learning to include in their folders. In this example the teacher gathered the information from the children through talk and discussion. The class camera was used to record the activities. Children received individual copies to store in their SALF folders.



78

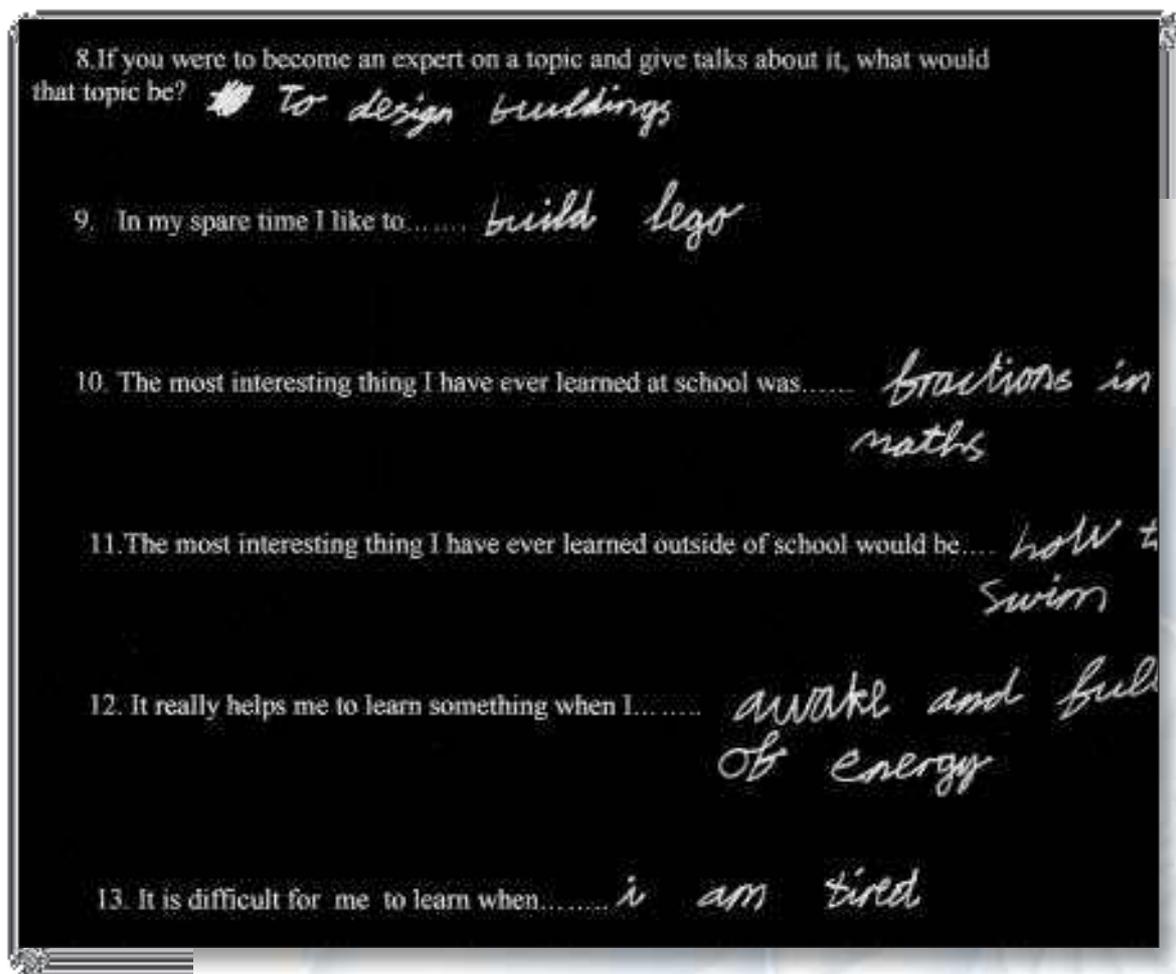
In a further application, this child used his computer to write about a visit to the pantomime. When deciding that he would like it in his folder, he wrote why on a slip of paper and added it to his work.



Chapter 4: Middle & Senior Classes

Step 4 (iv): My Interests' Survey

A key component in the success of SALF folder development as a self assessment and learning strategy is that children understand these folders are important and that they take ownership and responsibility for their own folder. Now is the time to introduce the 'My Interests' Survey' which enables children to consider themselves as learners in the wider context of their life experience. This and other types of interest inventories provide an opportunity for children to think about and record a snap shot of that learning: it provides teachers with further insights into children's strengths and interests. The survey will require an initial reading, exploration and some conversation in class of the items listed. A whole-class discussion facilitated by the teacher can be used to explore any queries the children may have. Where words need explanation, this is a useful opportunity for doing so. From time to time children may wish to discuss a question with the teacher as they complete their sheets. This is a very productive exercise, providing valuable insights about the child as learner. It is useful for the adults and teachers who work with the child to have an opportunity to read the completed surveys. Allow children up to two weeks to complete this and then include it in the SALF folder where it can be re-visited. Templates 4E and 4F of this survey are included at the end of Chapter 4. The following excerpt is taken from an 'Interest Survey' and work done by the child at home (4th class – 10 year old)



8. If you were to become an expert on a topic and give talks about it, what would that topic be? *To design buildings*

9. In my spare time I like to..... *build lego*

10. The most interesting thing I have ever learned at school was..... *fractions in maths*

11. The most interesting thing I have ever learned outside of school would be.... *how to swim*

12. It really helps me to learn something when I..... *awake and full of energy*

13. It is difficult for me to learn when..... *i am tired*

Step 9: Further Content for the Curriculum Display Spaces of the SALF Folders: *Using Checklists, Rubrics, Mapping, KWLs and other strategies*

By now you will have spent several weeks working with the class on their folders. There are a number of options available to you at this point. Children may need to continue working as described in Step 6 before introducing strategies that involve them using the curriculum Display Spaces to insert more robust assessments of their work- assessments that are more criterion referenced. Such assessments may include checklists, rubrics, mapping, KWLs and other strategies.

Teacher Story

– Designing an Aquatics Checklist

'I set out to design a way to involve children in setting learning goals that would also show children's performance and improvement at PE. Following some thought and discussion on how I might do this, I designed some self assessment checklists to trial, based on the 1st to 6th class aquatics curriculum for this term. In fifth class I distributed individual copies of the trial aquatics checklist and had a discussion with the class on how these checklists could work. I asked the children to colour in all the sections of the checklist that they were able to do BEFORE beginning this year's aquatic programme. This was an easy task. We then looked at the skills listed in the remaining sections of the checklists and outlined the NEXT LEARNING OBJECTIVES in that way. After six weeks we will have a whole class session to review their checklists, and, using a different colour they will colour in the sections to represent the new skills they have gained.'

Children's comments

- *'I enjoyed this as I thought I couldn't swim but I now know I can still do aquatics'*
- *'I can do more than I thought I could'*
- *'I know what I still have to learn'*
- *'I did not understand the language like 'rotate' and 'glide' at first'*
- *'I had to check did it mean with or without my armbands'*

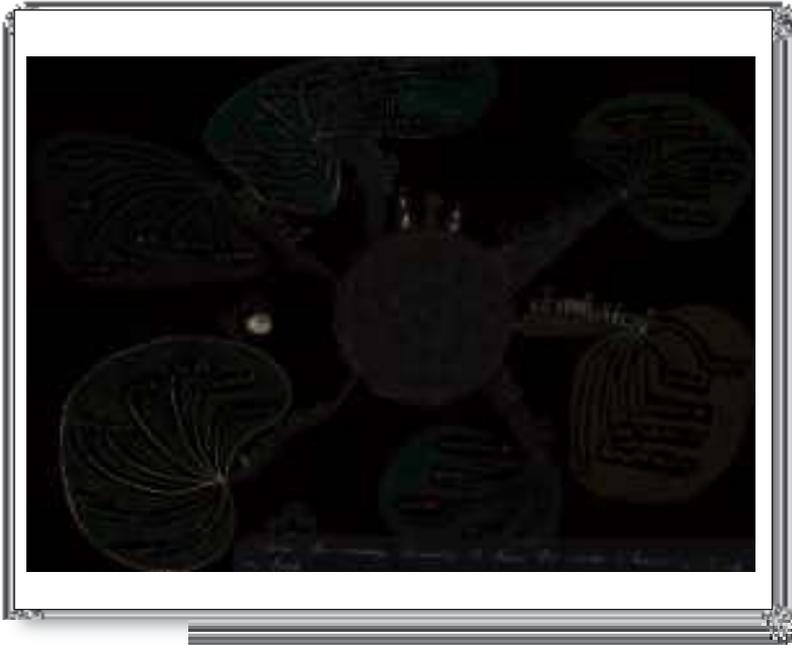
When I asked the children why they felt we were doing these checklists they said:

- *'To let the instructors know what we need to learn'*
- *'To let us know what we need to learn'*
- *'To show us what we have achieved at the end'*

Class Teacher

Mapping:

Mapping provides children with a skill that enables them to incrementally record and summarise their learning. It enables the child to recognise and show what they know, building on new information as they learn. From their maps children have evidence of their understanding of a topic for themselves and can share this understanding with others. They can use the map to say what they know and can do. As they are adding to their maps they can also show what they now know that they did not know before.

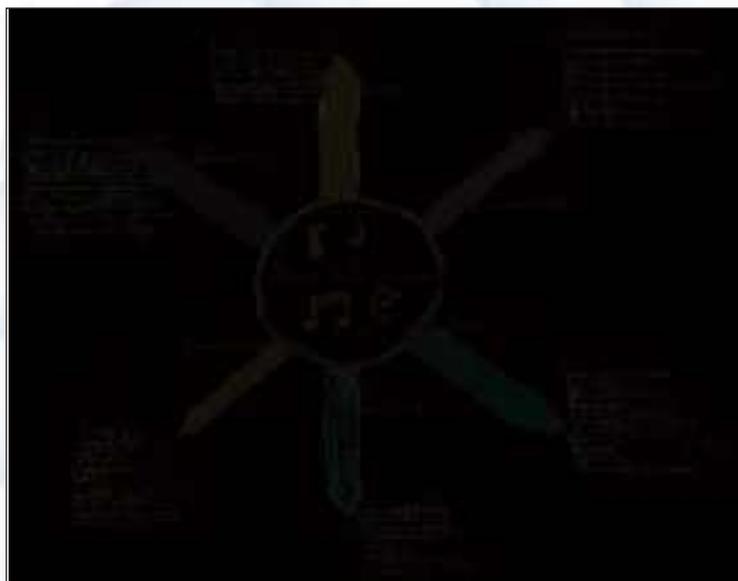


Computer generated mind maps offer several advantages and expand digital learning. They enable children to restructure mind maps, moving words and sections around in seconds.

121

The above map illustrates one child's record of what they had learned on the topic of food when learning Irish. The information was built on as the work developed. Each of the six sections of this map could be further used to support writing sentences and paragraphs leading to a final piece of work of a short story on food.

The following map records each item as it was completed and built upon item by item in the music programme for a class in one term. At any stage the map could be used to choose an item to revise and perform. It also served as evidence of participation and a record of learning for each child.



Project Work in Middle and Senior Classes... *Inventions, Creations, Tasks and Ideas*

What is it and how can it be used in the SALF folder?

Integration of subjects is a key underpinning principle of the Primary School curriculum. Project work is one way of ensuring that integration happens across a number of curricular areas. A significant challenge for teachers is to provide starting points that allow children to explore an area of work in an individual way. To date teachers report a lack of resources that provide avenues for children to demonstrate the extent of their ability, to show what they know and can do in formal and informal learning settings and what they can bring to that learning.

'Before, with project work, children had a tendency to copy and paste or regurgitate facts. This has changed entirely and they now produce very original individual work'

Teacher quote

124

Using the lists of *'Inventions Creations Tasks and Ideas'* [Adapted from 'Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom', ©Heacox, Diane, 2002 - Minneapolis, USA; Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 2002] these guidelines offer teachers such a resource. This concept was originally designed to provide opportunities for children with different backgrounds, strengths, limitations, interests, styles, preferences and needs to have access to challenging and engaging work. The lists in the *'Inventions, Creations, Tasks and Ideas'* templates at the end of Chapter 4 (Template 4L for Middle Classes and 4M for Senior Classes) provide teachers with the opportunity to present children with options that fit with valid learning outcomes and learning objectives. They allow children to be active agents in making informed choices about their own learning.

Children show ease and confidence using computers and can apply these skills while engaged in many of the activities that are listed in 'Inventions, Creations, Tasks and Ideas'. Such work can assist in building the digital literacy profiles of individual children.

Steps for Classroom Practice when working with the lists for 'Inventions, Creations, Tasks and Ideas':

- 1 A classroom discussion is held that provides an overview of the content of all eight lists at middle class level (Template 4L) or senior class level (Template 4M)
- 2 Following that general conversation go back to List 1 and discuss choices
- 3 A time frame of four weeks is allocated to List 1
- 4 Children reflect individually on their own List 1 and circle three items they would like to try
- 5 An asterisk is placed on the first of the circled items the child will work on
- 6 Children receive individual copies of their progress sheet, (Template 4N) record their names, identify the first item they have chosen to work on and the date they are starting
- 7 Some children will complete just one item, others may complete two or more in the four week period

Write a letter

Compose a riddle

Create a story

Illustrate a myth or legend

Create a poem

Design a brochure*

List 1 is then officially closed and the process of selecting what to work on from List 2 proceeds in the same way. A progress sheet for List 2 is given to each child and the process continues with the exact same steps as outlined for List 1. Three priority items are circled and the item they wish to start on is marked with an asterisk. 'Inventions, Creations Tasks and Ideas' List 2 is now started and the 'My Progress Sheet List 2' records this and is stored in each child's Self Assessment and Learning Folder.

The following samples are intended as a guide to assist communication between home and school to support effective practice. They are matched to the steps children will be engaged in as they build their folders as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 of these guidelines. By adapting these for your own classroom work, information that will be useful to those working at home with SALF can be provided at stages where it is needed. These and any additional communication that supports the work are helpful to home, school and the child in the first attempts at creating a really meaningful Self Assessment and Learning Folder.

I think it gives the parent a better insight in to what exactly is happening in the school right across the curriculum. Sometimes we're very narrow on that, we think it is Irish, English, Maths that's it. But there's lots of others things like music, history, geography, science, nature and this shows the parent exactly what's going on. The report card will show you he's good at maths, not so good at English, very good at Irish, but it's only a tick in the box. Here's real life stuff.

Parent

164

Sample Letters, Review Sheets & Templates

The following samples will need to be adapted by each school to match their own specific requirements.

- 5.1 Sample Introductory Letter for Parents/Guardians/Carers of Children in Junior Classes
- 5.2 Sample Introductory Letter for Parents/Guardians/Carers of Children in Middle and Senior Classes
- 5.3 Sample Letter to accompany completed ' My Interests' Survey' for Middle and Senior Classes
- 5.4 Sample Letter to accompany ' Inventions Creations Tasks and Ideas' for Middle and Senior Classes
- 5.5 Sample Letter to accompany First SALF Review in the home for Junior classes
- 5A Template 5A: Parent/Guardian/Carer - Child Review Sheet for SALF in Junior Classes
- 5.6 Sample Letter to accompany SALF Review in the home for Middle & Senior classes
- 5B Template 5B: Parent/Guardian/Carer Joint Review Sheet for SALF in Middle & Senior Classes
- 5C Template 5C: Working with SALF in the Home - a Briefing Sheet



Modelling the 'Likes' Mind Map

Resources:

A4 sheet, ruler, pencil, colours

Junior SALF folders have a pre-printed layout to support early stage mapping.

For middle and senior classes the following guidelines could be helpful.

These are detailed instructions. You could also pre-print the layout for your class to save time.

Instructions:

- Hold the sheet in landscape position and show children how to fold it exactly in two, get the corners to match. Crease lightly along the fold
- Now fold in four again, crease lightly
- Open up the sheet and put a pencil dot at the exact centre of the page
- Draw a box 4cm x 4cm at the centre. (Maybe tell them go 2cm out from that dot to create the 4 sides). Again, to save time here, you can let them draw the box freehand.
- Do thumbnail sketch of self –head and shoulders only - in the box
- Write LIKES on the top (roof) of the box
- Choose first colour and draw the first 'branch' out from the top right hand corner of the box. Put a key word on it. When they have the first branch done with the 3 smaller branches/symbols drawn etc. it will fill the top right hand quarter of the page
- The remaining 3/4s of the page will have one 'branch' in each page done in the same way.
- SALF Guidelines pgs 42, 72/73,101 and with subject content 80, 121)there are some pictures of children's maps as they began to develop their own style



Self Assessment and Learning Folders

WALT / WILF at 3 Class Levels

W.A.L.T 3rd/4th (English)

WALT: Present a character description from Roald Dahl's book 'The Twits'.

W.I.L.F.

- Write a paragraph describing Mr. or Mrs. Twit .(8-10 sentences)
- Use adjectives to describe nouns e.g. horrid, old man hairy nostrils
- Use adverbs to describe verbs e.g. screamed angrily greedily ate
- Illustrate your character paying attention to detail e.g. crooked mouth double chin
- Use labels, lots of colour and fill your page.

WALT / WILF at 3 Class Levels (contd.)

W.A.L.T 5th/6th (Art)

WALT: Develop line, shape, texture and pattern in clay.

Make sturdy figures in clay using it expressively and with imaginative detail.

W.I.L.F.

- From pictures of gargoyles, identify key features.
- Explore own facial features and identify key points.
- Form a clay head/gargoyle paying attention to the above key points

We Are Learning To ...1st/2nd (History)

WALT: Compare school days in our grandparents lives with schools today.

WILF: What I am Looking For

- Interview a parent/grandparent.
- Describe what the classrooms looked like.
- Write/draw about ways in which our schools have changed.
- Identify similarities and differences.

WILF can be differentiated

Linking the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Guidelines for Primary Schools and SALF

In the introduction to the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools, and in answering the question: Who are the Guidelines for, it is stated: The Guidelines are: ‘intended to support, in a practical way, the inclusion of the voice of pupils and parents in school self-evaluation’. (School Self-Evaluation guidelines for schools pg. 9)

Why pupil voice?

In his synthesis of a wide range of research relating to educational achievement, Hattie (2009) identifies,

“that feedback was amongst the most powerful influences on achievement” (pg 173). He clarifies that research shows that not all types of feedback are equally effective and proposes the idea that feedback is most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher.

“When teachers seek, or at least are open, to feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged-then teaching and learning can be synchronised and powerful.” (pg 173)

The Challenge of Pupil Voice

The value of including pupil voice can be further contextualised when we consider research carried out by Nuthall (2005). Nuthall’s work describes how personal learning is to each child, and how much of this can be missed in teachers’ observations. In the classrooms that Nuthall studied, talking about learning (both teacher and student) was not common, and there was over-reliance on visible indicators such as pupil engagement and the responses of small number of students to inform teachers’ understandings about learning.

A challenging finding from this work was that:

“the students lived in a personal and social world of their own in the classroom, they already knew at least 40% of what the teachers intended them to learn, a third of what each student learned was not learned by any other student in the class, students learned how and when the teacher would notice them and how to give the appearance of active involvement”. (pg 241)

Additional context factors such as socio economic background of children and inclusion of SEN and migrant children in mainstream settings may further inhibit children from active participation in their own learning.

In using the messaging system of assessment, SALF enables children to learn the language of learning, to develop a value system on their personal learning and to share insights into personal learning. In the School Self-Evaluation process children who are experienced in the SALF process have the potential to contribute insightfully to pupil voice.

SSE process

As you have seen earlier, the Guidelines propose a six step self-evaluation process for schools to engage in as follows:

1. Gather Evidence
2. Analyse Evidence
3. Draw Conclusions
4. SSE Report
5. Improvement Plan
6. Implement and Monitor

In thinking about gathering evidence, pupils' work (copies, files, folders, displays, portfolios, demonstrations of skills-SSE Guidelines pg 48) is cited as an important source. Another important source of evidence is 'the views of pupils and parents'. (SSE Guidelines pg 48).

As pupils develop a deeper understanding of the language of learning and assessment through their engagement in the SALF process, they are better equipped to collaborate and provide insightful feedback that supports their own learning and the teaching they are experiencing.

In the SSE guidelines a 'quality framework for evaluating teaching and learning is provided'. (SSE guidelines pg. 22) Teaching and learning are looked at from **three main themes - Learner outcomes, Learning experiences, Teachers' practice**. These are then further broken down into **subthemes**, as outlined in the diagram below.

TEACHING and LEARNING



<http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/primary/index.php/teaching-learning-framework>

Each of the sub-themes then has specific '**Evaluation Criteria**'. The criteria identify what quality means in terms of each of the sub-themes and helps schools to make 'judgements about pupils' achievement or aspects of teaching and learning'. (SSE guidelines pg. 28)

In step one of the SSE process, a school gathers evidence on teaching and learning in the school. While pupils' work samples are often readily available, a pupil's deeper insights into their own learning and in evaluating their own learning is often more difficult to source in concrete format. Many of the SALF methodologies provide a valuable insight into the pupil's perspective.

Outlined below are just **some** examples of how various aspects of the SALF process support the collection of evidence to use in discussions on what is working well or needs to be improved in terms of pupil contributions. (See Chapter 4 of the SSE Guidelines for Primary Schools.)

References:

- Nuthall, G A (2005). The cultural myths and realities of classroom teaching and learning: A personal journey. *Teachers College Record* , 107 (5), 895-934
- Hattie , J (2009.) *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London: Routledge

Linking SSE and SALF methodologies

Theme	Sub-theme	Evaluation criteria	SALF methodology
<p>1. Learner Outcomes</p> <p>(SSE Guidelines pg. 30)</p>	<p>1.1 Attainment of curriculum objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy their learning of the curriculum area and are motivated to learn. • Pupils at risk of underachieving are attaining well, in accordance with their ability, and make very good progress from their prior levels of achievement. 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>WALT (We are learning to) chart: The class teacher shares the learning intention/objective with the class and together with the children, takes time to think, talk about and record how they will know they have achieved that learning.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>As above</p>
<p>1. Learning Experiences</p> <p>(SSE guidelines pg. 32)</p>	<p>2.1 Learning Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, high quality displays promoting the development of literacy and numeracy in each curriculum area are evident 	<p>Displays of collaborative charts at different stages of lessons e.g. an ‘ideas’ chart at the beginning of a lesson, or a ‘learning goals chart or a ‘review of what we have learned’ chart’, “contributes significantly to their language development at all class levels” (SALF Guidelines for teachers pg 25)</p>

<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 34)</p>	<p>2.2 Pupil's Engagement in Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils are enabled to engage actively in their learning • Pupils get opportunities to report on/explain their learning • Pupils reflect on the activity and thus consolidate the learning that has taken place 	<p>premise of SALF is engaging pupils in their learning. This happens at regular intervals both as a collective lesson and individually. For example Step 1 of the 10 Steps for Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in both Junior and Middle/Senior classes is: Learning Conversations and Discussions.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Work samples: Pupils are required to reflect on and comment on a piece of their own work. In cases where pupils are compiling a SALF folder/scrapbook and need to make a selection for their folder, they must put a written comment under the work sample and justify the selection, identifying and reflecting the learning that took place.</p>
<p>1. Teachers' practice</p> <p>(SSE Guidelines pg. 38)</p>	<p>3.1 Preparation for teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers plan for how they are going to assess the pupils' learning and take account of assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment of learning AoL approaches 	<p>Assessment for learning processes are premised on the fact that children know, understand and can act on the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is good work? • Consider the extent to which they have achieved the criteria for good work • Agree ways of bridging the gap/s between what good work is and the next steps needed to achieve that. <p>(SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 10)</p>

<p>(SSE Guidelines pg. 40)</p>	<p>3.2 Teaching approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons are guided by expected learning outcomes that are curriculum linked and are shared with the pupils • Expected learning outcomes are achieved during lessons 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Checklists: these can be devised based on curriculum objectives and used by individual children. The teacher and child discuss the content of the checklist to outline learning intentions so that success criteria can be identified. The child then colours in the matching symbol when the learning outcome has been achieved.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Rubrics: These are constructed using learning objectives from the curriculum. Children/Teachers use these rubrics to assess how well the child has achieved the different learning objectives. They also can lead to a discussion to set new learning goals.</p>
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<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 42)</p>	<p>3.3 Management of pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils’ contributions and questions are encouraged and respected in the classroom • Due account is taken of pupils’ views and opinions in accordance with their age and maturity 	<p>Developing Questioning Skills is one of the four Building Blocks of SALF (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 16). The skill of questioning is modelled by the teacher.</p> <p>“This ethos of enquiry leads to children really believing that what they have to contribute is recognised, acknowledged and valid.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 20)</p> <p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Whole class KWL (Know – want to know – learned) charts: The teacher records what the pupils know at the beginning of a lesson / topic/ unit of work. This is recorded in the first column. Next the teacher elicits what more the children want to know about this topic. This is then recorded in the second column. The third column is completed after the topic/unit of work is completed, where the teacher now documents in consultation with the children, what they have learned. These frameworks allows for the opinions, views and interests of pupils in terms of the content of the lessons.</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>Task review sheet: Children complete these frameworks to foster self-reflection. They assist the child and teacher to discuss how a task or project is developing. It encourages a child to self-assess.</p>
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<p>(SSE guidelines pg. 44)</p>	<p>3.4 Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are involved in assessing their learning through self-assessment and peer assessment • The gathering of information on pupils learning is timely and happens at regular intervals 	<p>Junior classes:</p> <p>Step 10 of Building Self Assessment and Learning Folders in Junior Classes is the SALF Review Workshop in the Classroom. Here children participate in a class discussion about the folders are working for the children. It provides an opportunity to revisit their own folder and gives children time to see other folders.</p> <p>“Where children are ready, this presents an opportunity to introduce early stage peer reviews.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 86)</p> <p>Senior classes:</p> <p>In middle and senior classes peer review takes place as Step 7: Introducing an audience for the SALF Folders: (i) in the home : (ii) in school</p> <p>During these reviews children readily exchange information and ideas.</p> <p>“When the first peer reviews have taken place, children can have an opportunity to write a short review of one other folder and receive a written peer review of their own SALF folder.” (SALF Guidelines for Teachers pg 115)</p>
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Self Assessment and Learning Folders



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Published by:

Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd.

Self Assessment - The Importance of knowing me.

Children's voices and assessment

Assessment is a messaging system about the kinds of learning and achievement that are valued and validated. This is true for everybody involved in the process – directly or indirectly; teachers, children, parents/guardians and the wider school community. That this is so is clearly articulated in a recent Department of Education and Skills (DES) circular to schools (0056/2011). The purpose of this circular was to draw the attention of boards of management, principal teachers and teachers to the publication of *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy Among Children and Young People, 2011-2020*, to list five areas for immediate action under the strategy and to describe how assessment information on pupils' progress should be recorded, used and reported (Section 7).

The circular identifies the importance of assessment, described as 'gathering information about how well students are learning and using this information to improve the learning opportunities provided for them'. Assessment data should be used to provide messages about teaching, learning and achievement to individual students and their parents, to teachers, principals and boards of management and to national bodies such as the DES and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). In this article we

propose that schools would benefit greatly from using the SALF approach in order to satisfy two requirements, namely:

1. Schools should use a balance of Assessment of Learning (AoL) and Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices and
2. Schools should report on children's progress to their parents twice during the school year.

The challenges of assessment

In working with teachers as part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses, the authors noted that these aspects of assessment proved challenging and contentious. In particular teachers reported that they found it difficult to manage classroom assessment in a way that ensured children could personalise the process in order to enhance their individual learning and achievements (IAL). They also noted difficulties with reporting assessment information to parents in a way that demonstrated evidence of children's positive achievements as well as information about what children still needed to improve. Most importantly, teachers wanted to report assessment data to parents in a way that would enable them to support their children in improving and progressing their learning.

The Self Assessment and Learning Folders resource

Self Assessment and Learning Folders (SALF): Primary School Guidelines for Teachers was published in 2011; SALF is

an Irish resource written by Irish authors. The publication was a response to requests from teachers who were attending CPD courses with the authors. During the courses it became clear that teachers wanted a set of guidelines to bring with them after the course in order to demonstrate and explain to colleagues how SALF processes and strategies work. Essentially SALF provides schools and teachers with a structured framework that embodies AfL strategies, encompassing pedagogical methodologies that involve a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to child thus enculturating them into a community of learning and assessment practices. In doing so opportunities are provided for children to individualise their learning and assessment narratives while taking account of classroom learning outcomes, based on curriculum objectives. The guidelines provide models and real life examples of how teachers can model strategies at classroom level, guide and scaffold children as they participate in implementing them and finally children working independently. These strategies include sharing and discussing the learning intentions with children and identifying the success criteria for achieving these using e.g. KWL, charts and Rubrics as well as review sheets.

The benefits of SALF

The SALF process works because it takes account of the cognitive, affective and motivational factors that impact chil-

4 The *SALF* process also provides opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and the assessment of that learning. This is done by them and their parents through reporting and assessment.

children's learning and their assessment of that learning. The cognitive factors are addressed through the following strategies:

- sharing learning intentions;
- using rubrics that are co-constructed with children;
- using task review sheets to consider, discuss and reflect on the degree to which tasks have been achieved.

Affective factors are considered through the use of a designated step in the *SALF* process that affirms the child as a learner 'conferring' on each child an encouraging and inspiring word that is true about that child at that time.

Motivational factors are addressed in a number of ways: the first three steps of the process are designated to the child personalising and taking ownership of the folder. A later step in the process involves sharing the *SALF* folder with different audiences, at home and in school. Choosing what to include in the folder in any particular curriculum area and articulating personal reasons for doing so is highly motivating for children.

Regular reporting to parents

DES Circular 0056/2011 states that 'by maintaining regular contact with parents about their children's learning, schools can help them support their children's learning and progress'. However, in a report commissioned by the NCCA and authored by Hall et al. (2008), it is noted that reporting is more closely linked with summative than formative assessment. Most reporting to parents relates to the results of tests that have been administered to children, yet this is of least use to parents in terms of providing them with any means by which they can help their chil-

dren to improve. The research conducted by Hall et al. (2008) provides evidence of this. This report also notes that 'regular communication can increase levels of parent involvement, especially among those parents who have less formal education and who need additional structures to engage in schools' (Hall et al. 2008) and enables parents to take part in decisions that have to be made about their children's learning.

Children's participation

A central aspect of the *SALF* process is that children build and maintain a folder with evidence of their learning and achievements together with justification for their choices. The folders include an organiser that children complete as they insert evidence of learning in each curriculum area. They become aware of the need to include samples of their work across the breadth of curriculum being experienced in school. It also includes space for children to include evidence of their learning outside of the formal school setting. Steps in the *SALF* process provide opportunities for children to bring the folders home. These opportunities are more than 'show and tell' occasions. Parents are invited to discuss the content, ask questions and provide feedback about it. Advice on ways in which teachers can support parents in this process is provided in the guidelines. Hall et al. (2008) identified the research work of O'Donoghue and Dimmock (2002) as providing a helpful set of reference points for reporting to parents. School reporting should involve parents, students and teachers in assessing, discussing and setting future learning goals. The review sheets, completed by parents as part of the *SALF* process address this point. Re-

porting should be flexible with regard to when it should occur. *SALF* folders provide ongoing evidence of learning which can be shared and discussed at any time.

Hall et al. (2008), offered evidence that children wanted more information from assessment data to help them know what to do to improve, more comprehensive reporting about all topics covered at school as well as the social aspects of their learning. This is exactly what parents wanted as well. The *SALF* process offers opportunities that provide a breadth of information about children's learning and the assessment of that learning, needed by them and their parents in order to support learning and achievement.

Components of *SALF*

- *SALF*: Guidelines for Teachers – Primary School
- *SALF*: DVD
- *SALF*: Junior Class Folders
- *SALF*: 20 Pocket Folders
- *SALF*: 20 Pocket Folders including a re-writeable DVD

SALF is published in Ireland by Outside the Box Learning Resources (045 400 322). More details on www.oth.ie/SALF. See also review of *SALF* on page 67.

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assessment

... not to mention free books for children

Involving children in self assessment

"For children the skill of being able to consciously reflect on what they know and then being able to make an evaluative comment on it does not simply happen. It needs to be taught explicitly and planned for in an integrated way" (p.23 SALF Guidelines)

The *Self Assessment and Learning Folders* provide a structured framework for teachers that enables children to become more active in their own learning and the assessment of that learning. Children develop assessment skills to present evidence of their work and their assessment of that work across eleven curricular areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Geography
- Drama
- Visual Arts
- SPHE
- Irish
- History
- Science
- Music
- PE

The *SALF Guidelines* is an easy read which carefully takes you through the 'building blocks' necessary to develop self assessment skills and strategies. It emphasises the need to create a culture of openness and honesty where children can develop skills and strategies to develop and engage in self and peer assessment. The skills are clearly explained, linked directly to curriculum objectives across all the subject areas and well illustrated with lots of examples, case studies and positive quotes from children, parents and teachers who were involved in the piloting of the programme.

Junior class teachers were particularly interested in the presentation folder for junior classes – a scrapbook format into which drawings, photographs and work samples can be glued. Some of the self assessment techniques – thumbs up, thumbs down and traffic lights are currently in use in their classes and they positively reported on the ideas for checklists and ideas for parental involvement. Whole class charts and whole class KWL charts would provide readiness and experience so that the children could move to independent records as they progressed through the school. This

would provide a valuable record of work and important communication with home at the end of the year. At middle and senior classes SALF is in the form of folders with 20/40 clear pockets that provide 40/80 display spaces in which the children's selected work samples can be displayed.

The *Self Assessment and Learning Folders* include an organiser at the start of each folder. The establishment of the organiser would certainly be assisted if self assessment/evaluation skills were encouraged and developed from the junior school. Many tips for creating and personalising the folder and for learning how to select work for presentation are listed. Again the list of skills is presented with plenty of suggestions and templates for tasks and ideas. The 'My Interests Survey for Middle Classes' is especially noteworthy, as is the list of words for affirming the child as a learner and the reflection questions for parents when they review the folder with their child. The folder-type presentation at middle and senior level allows the student to review choices of work and 'de-select' or 're-select' other samples from time to time.

The guidelines includes many comments of teachers who have used the *Self Assessment and Learning Folders*. They lauded the improved motivation within their classes and the fact that children, through reflection, came to recognise their individual areas of strengths, limitations, interests, preferences and needs. They were also enabled to set their own goals and identify their progress. As well as developing self assessment techniques, SALF also presents methodologies that support children's competencies for peer assessment. Teachers were particularly impressed with the standard of project work which provided for integration of subjects and differentiation (key principals of the revised curriculum).

"Before, with project work, children had a tendency to copy and paste or regurgitate facts. This has changed entirely and they now produce very original individual work". (Teacher quote)

SALF provides opportunity for teachers and students to engage in creating digital literacy profiles. The disc can be used like a flash drive where work can be edited or deleted at will; alternatively it can be used with a CD/DVD player which allows you to burn group or individual files but it does not allow for any editing after burning.

SALF outlines guidance for enriching home/school dialogue about children's learning and assessment by outlining ways in which parents, guardians and carers can support children as they reflect on and talk about their folders.

For teachers who want to develop assessment strategies in order to improve children's learning, this book describes the step by step guidelines to support teachers' classroom practice. The overall impression of the *Self Assessment Learning Folder* is that it provides a valuable structured framework that bridges teacher-led learning and assessment with child-led learning and assessment.

The components of the SALF Starter Kit are: SALF Guidelines for Teachers (€44.95), SALF Folder for Junior Classes (€4.50), SALF 20/40 Pocket Folders for Middle to Senior Classes (€2.95 each), SALF DVD for Teachers (€44.95).

"The SALF folder was his Curriculum Vitae... In the turning of the pages it was as if it became his voice. The pages contained synopsis of what he was about. So it had an authenticity about it because it was his own work. Ownership is hugely important". (Parent quote)

Available from Outside the Box Learning Resources, 045 409122, info@otb.ie (www.otb.ie/SALF). ISBN: 978-1-906-926-1-7.

Reviewed by BREDA FAY, District Education Committee Representative and teacher from Seol Ghóca Naíofa, Kícock. See also article on SALF on pages 44/45.



S.A.L.F.

Self Assessment and Learning Folders



- Placing Classroom Practice at the Heart of Assessment -

Self Assessment and Learning Folders; S.A.L.F., provide teachers with a structured framework that bridges teacher-led learning and assessment with child-led learning and assessment.

S.A.L.F. is based on socio-constructivist principles of learning and provides a framework for teachers that enables children become more active in their own learning and in the assessment of that learning. S.A.L.F. outlines classroom practices that support and enhance children's assessment and learning using methodologies that best develop children's competencies for peer and self-assessment.



Researched and piloted in Irish schools, S.A.L.F. has been designed for Irish school children and their teachers, parents, guardians or carers. It clearly outlines the steps involved in creating, compiling and completing Self Assessment and Learning Folders with Junior, Middle and Senior Classes in the Primary school. It includes strategies for supporting the involvement of parents/guardians/carers and others in the process. The S.A.L.F. process recognises the role of the teacher as facilitator of the child as learner. It equally recognises the central role the child occupies in the processes of assessment and learning.

Features of S.A.L.F. include:

- Provides a framework for children to present evidence of their work and their assessment of that work across all curricular areas
- Provides a source of information that can be used by them to make assessment decisions about that learning
- Personal to the child
- Respects the potential of the child
- Empowers children to discuss their own learning
- Encourages children to explore their own learning and the learning of other children
- Involves peer and public learning
- Provides activities that directly and positively build links between home and school around the learning of the child
- Bridges learning inside and outside school
- Creates a safe context for children to express their own thinking about their learning

S.A.L.F. consists of the following components: Teacher Guidelines Book; Teacher DVD (45mins); Junior Class Folders, 20-Pocket Folders and 40-Pocket Folders. Online SALF Training Courses available - see www.otb.ie for more details.

(© 2011)

Age Suitability: All Primary

Authors: Joan Keating & Siobhan Cahillane-McGovern

FÉACH AR SEO: Tá na filteáin ar fáil freisin **as Gaeilge**

S.A.L.F. Order Form			
Product	Price	Qty	Total
S.A.L.F. Teacher Guidelines	€44.95		
S.A.L.F. Teacher DVD (45 mins)*	€44.95		
S.A.L.F. Junior Class Folder - OLD PRICE	€1.95		
S.A.L.F. 20 Pocket Folder* - NEW PRICE	€3.95		
S.A.L.F. 20 Pocket Folder (with DVD-RW)*	€4.95		
S.A.L.F. 40 Pocket Folder* - OLD PRICE	€3.95		
S.A.L.F. 40 Pocket Folder (with DVD-RW)*	€4.95		
S.A.L.F. Starter Kit	€95.00		
Postage, Packaging & Insurance (included)*	€7.00		
Order Total			

*Price includes Vat

Please identify language of folder:

ENGLISH IRISH

PAYMENT DETAILS		
Enclosed is my Cash/Cheque: <input type="checkbox"/>	Please Invoice (Professional Address-Only) <input type="checkbox"/>	
I wish to pay by Credit Card: <input type="checkbox"/>	VISA <input type="checkbox"/>	MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> LASER <input type="checkbox"/>
Card Number:	Expiry Date:	Issue No:
YOUR CONTACT DETAILS		
Full Name:		
School/Organisation:		
Address:		
Tel:		
Your Order Ref:		
Email:		

SALF and SSE

Linking the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Guidelines for Primary Schools and SALF

In the introduction to the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools, and in answering the question: Who are the SSE Guidelines for, it is stated: The SSE Guidelines are: 'intended to support, in a practical way, the inclusion of the voice of pupils and parents in school self-evaluation'. (School Self-Evaluation guidelines for schools page 9)

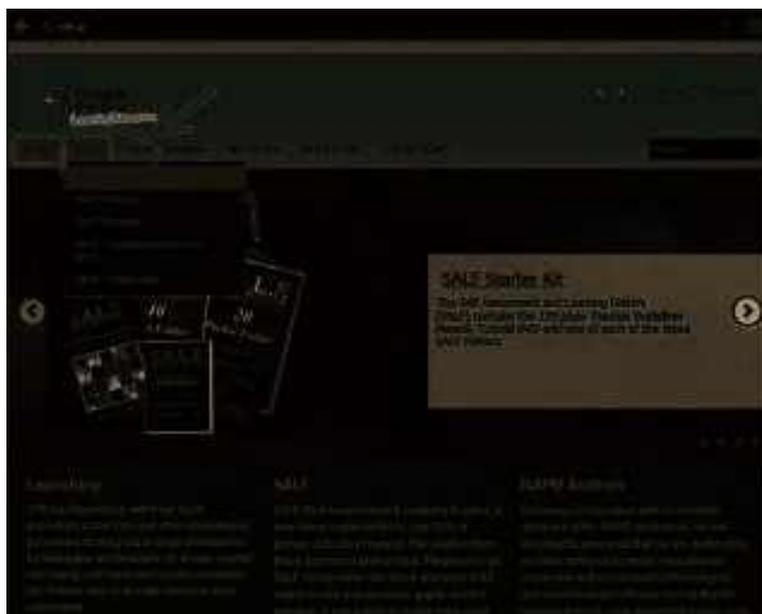
The Challenge of Pupil Voice

In using the messaging system of assessment, SALF enables children to learn the language of learning, to develop a value system on their personal learning and to share insights into personal learning. In the School Self-Evaluation process children who are experienced in the SALF process have the potential to contribute insightfully to pupil voice. As children develop a deeper understanding of the language of learning and assessment through their engagement in the S.A.L.F. process, they are better equipped to collaborate and provide insightful feedback that supports their own learning and the teaching they are experiencing. In thinking about gathering evidence, pupils' work (copies, files, folders, displays, portfolios, demonstrations of skills (SSE Guidelines page 48) is cited as an important source.

Another important source of evidence is 'the views of pupils and parents'. (SSE Guidelines page 48). See SALF Teacher Guidelines, Chapter 5.

OTB Website

www.otb.ie - SALF Button



Full details on SALF from:

Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd.

W6W Tougher's Business Park, Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 409322; Fax: 045 409959; Email: info@otb.ie; Website: www.otb.ie