

Use of self and peer assessment



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Self Assessment describes the activities employed within and outside the classroom that enable the pupil to reflect on what has been learnt and judge it against a set of criteria, e. g. using traffic light systems which give pupils the opportunity to indicate their own thoughts about a piece of work against the given Success Criteria (SC). This could simply be used during a pit-stop or plenary, pupils mark work with an R, A or G or with the relevant colour. I have seen this working effectively with children in Keystage 1. Admittedly lower ability pupils require an element of support but simply completing the process prepares and develops their understanding for the future.

Both the whiteboard and the interactive whiteboard are access points for pupils to refer to find their learning objective and success criteria.

Often the LO and SC can be located on children's work.

Self Evaluation is the process by which the pupil gains an understanding of how they are learning as opposed to what they are learning.

There are numerous factors that the class teacher must consider here.

Whether there is/are:

- The right classroom climate
- Clarity in the intended learning outcome and a model of what success looks like – examples of expected outcome, modelled by the teacher or TA
- Time for self assessment and reflection

- Training to allow the pupils to assess their own work effectively – e. g. use of traffic light cards and colour indicators
- Planned opportunities for pupils to assess their work – during plenaries and pit-stops
- Resources provided that help the self assessment process – on whiteboard, selected pieces of work

Classroom strategies that support self and peer assessment include modelling by the teacher using exemplars: at the beginning, during or after completing tasks, success criteria shared or created and continually referred to by teacher and pupils (see whiteboard photograph), use of questioning techniques that promote higher order thinking, graphic organisers e. g. thumbs up, post its, charts and concept maps that encourage reflection on learning process and learning outcome, reflection time during the lesson – referring to agreed success criteria, marking that celebrates and encourages the pupil to reflect on aspects of their work related to success criteria, talk partners are sometimes less inhibiting for pupils to express difficulties. The process develops a more analytical approach to their work as they learn from their partner's talks. It is essential that pupils are trained. (And last but not least), setting clear targets that pupils understand and can refer to, in order to improve their work:

The Wise Owl has become a universal character through Reception to Year 4 at MACAULAY PRIMARY, to indicate the Learning Objective. Similarly is the use of the Success Criteria toolkit, arming pupils with the things they need to succeed in a given task.

Using Talk Partners

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998) indicated that it is crucial that children are familiar with self assessment before embarking on peer assessment, which can be known as ‘ talk partners’ or ‘ buddy checkers’. Children need to be trained in how to do this and a set of ground rules need to be established. I have spent a lot of time with pupils ensuring they are all fully aware of the expectations. Additionally, the emotional aspect of sharing work with a partner should not be overlooked as children can find it daunting to share their work with other pupils in their class. However, the teaching of literacy seems to lend itself to these types of experiences because of the emphasis on development of speaking and listening skills.

As a teacher you should model paired marking for the whole class, using role-play to demonstrate the wrong way and the right way over a piece of work. Recently during our topic on Roald Dahl I produced a piece of descriptive writing which pupils then marked using set criteria. I’ve found it useful to use paired marking two thirds of the way through a lesson, so that the children can make the improvement and continue with a better understanding of the quality of the work.

In order to develop a sound understanding of AfL I recommend the approaches Shirley Clarke discusses in her book Targeting Assessment in the Primary Classroom and Clarke’s Golden Rules for marking with a talk partner should be an essential part of any primary teacher’s toolkit. The guidelines are clear and can be used to create a class agreement for how best to work with your talk partner.

Clarke suggests that both partners should be roughly the same ability, or just one jump ahead or behind, rather than a wide gap, however, I have found that pupils do benefit from working with partners of varying abilities at selected times.

- Each pupil should take time to check their own work before a talk partner sees it.
- The talk partner should begin with a positive comment – at least one.
- The roles of both parties need to be clearly defined. And perhaps displayed for future reference.
- The talk partner needs time to take in the child's work, so it is best for the author to read out work first. This also establishes ownership of the piece.
- Children need to be trained in the success and improvement process, or whatever is being used, so that they are confident with the steps involved.
- Children must both agree the part to be changed.
- The author should make the marks on his or her work, as a result of the paired discussion.
- Children need to be reminded that the focus of their task is the learning intention for the piece of work.
- The talk partner should ask for clarification rather than jump to conclusions.
- The improvement suggestions should be verbal and not written down. The only writing necessary is the identification of the success(es) and the improvement itself.

Common experiences, I have observed in the teaching of literacy include:

- Use of talk partners
- Peer and Self Assessment
- Time to respond to marking
- Comments to help children improve

However, I have found that there can be issues with ensuring pupils have time to respond to the comments made. During the spring term in Year 2, we provided pupils with time solely for this purpose; this was very successful and allowed me, as the class teacher to provide vital feedback essential for the children to progress. A second issue is having time to mark pupils work in this way, the policy indicates that not all pieces of work require marking in full but to select one key piece a week in each subject, making this a more realistic objective.

As part of a continuous process of monitoring individual progress at Macaulay Primary School, some work, for example in Golden Books, is marked according to National Curriculum levels. Trialling within a year group, a key stage and as a whole school is carried out to ensure that levelling is correct, this is moderate by the Literacy Coordinators and ensures continuity throughout the school. The Golden Book follows the children through each year group during their time in the school, instantly providing evidence of progression.