

Practitioner Enquiry

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Group: Group 2E

Rationale:

“What happens when we provide pupils with a peer assessment checklist?”

During this enquiry we wish to look for the different effects that ‘peer-assessment’ has on the progression of a child’s learning.

Peer-assessment has become a frequently used tool within the classroom environment. It is believed that peer assessment acts as a basis of formal dialect between children that allows them the opportunity to analyse and scrutinise one another’s work. Peer-assessment exists as a derivative of a wider society of assessments including: ‘self-assessment’ and ‘teacher assessment’.

Self-assessment provides the learner with an opportunity to critique their own work on a personal intimate level of reflection. Whereas ‘teacher-assessment’ allows for the more traditional method of assessment to take place, where the teacher fulfils the role as the main source of scrutiny over the work and provides feedback through either a written or oral format. Through group discussion we have decided that peer-assessment offers a unique platform of assessment as it involves both the individual learner as well as the learners around them. It offers a more incorporating and engaging form of assessment that allows learners to engage and learn from one another’s insights into learning and grow and improve through this feedback.

This enquiry will look at the way comments from formative assessment can effect a learner’s ability to view their own work as well as the work of their peers, and investigate the impact that this form of formative assessment can have.

Aims:

- The aim of this enquiry is to establish an overview of the; effects, benefits and consequences of deploying ‘peer assessment’ checklist within lessons.
- Distinguish what children find valuable in their work.
- Discover what children believe is regarded as ‘fair’ and ‘unfair’ assessment.

- Discover how children react to one another's feedback and whether this form of assessment actually has any visible impact on their continued work and learning.
- Analyse the provided peer-assessments and work, distinguish how this process can be improved.

Methodology:

This enquiry focussed on assessment within literacy, the tasks were specifically literacy orientated, to create a clear platform and criteria to expose the children to familiar to a familiar success criteria that they could work with and work from. The children were provided with a literacy based task:

- Spelling Tasks
- Metalinguistics
- Main Ideas
- Summary Task
- Taught Writing

During these tasks the children were given a clearly displayed and outlined success criteria. This in turn was clearly translated onto a 'peer-assessment' checklist.

It can often become a challenging concept for children to effectively communicate and understand different aspects of learning that they encounter within education (Cowan, R. & Allen, K. 2007). By using specific signs or symbols, the children were given appropriate forms of communication to engage with aspects of their others learning as well as their own (Arthur-Kelly, M. 2009).

The class teacher observed pupil completion of the peer observation checklist, gathered jotter based evidence and participated in learning conversations in learning conversations with pupils on the validity and reliability of the checklists

The following week another task was presented to the children. This time the children were aware of the success criteria and learning targets within their 'peer-assessments' that they could improve upon. This process was then repeated for a further five weeks to monitor the progress of both the value of the assessments and indeed the impact such assessment was having on the pupils' new learning and progression.

Findings

By establishing a means of communication, personalised to their own learning and needs, the pupils engaged in more active and seemingly appealing forms of communication with one another. Throughout the process the use of peer assessment increased the children's; enthusiasm, communication skills, confidence building as well as their ability to self-reflect. This in turn allowed the class teacher, and fellow pupils, an opportunity to realise the existence of each child's opinion of what translates as successful learning with regards to the provided success criteria. As the process continued the children were gradually able to communicate and appropriately discuss and evaluate their work at a much faster and effective rate than usual. Through the use of the checklist the children were more aware of the expectations that existed within learning experiences and could use this infrastructure to guide their working. Initially the quality of feedback was somewhat inconsequential, but as the weeks went on the children could identify patterns emerging within one another's work and from this were able to construct more adequate and effective feedback. The children were able to develop and express their comments clearer through a reflective and criteria based approach to understanding their peers' work and areas in need of development. As the children's quality of comments began to improve in detail and specification regarding next steps and analysis, the children became more comfortable in expressing their work. For the most part, the use of peer-assessment checklists promoted a sense of unity and enthusiasm regarding their work and allowed each child to receive an equal platform for analysis and understanding what was expected of them.

Conclusions

From this enquiry it is clear to see that peer-assessments, when used effectively, by implementing personalised, visual, communicative symbols, can grant children access to a more structured form of questioning new and unfamiliar learning contexts/contents in a clear and controlled format.

This once again allows teachers the ability to better understand the needs of learners and may also grant fellow pupils the opportunity to further assimilate and become more comfortable with their own educational and indeed social-emotional needs as well as that of their peers. This can be achieved through a clear awareness of the strengths and areas in need of improvement within themselves and their peers, this universal cohesion thus increases the potential to establish inclusion and cohesive working environments within learning settings (Humphrey, N. 2008).

Implications for Future Practice

In gaining a deeper understanding of the implications of this enquiry, this has enabled me to establish significant knowledge and insight; that can encourage the deployment of new and

adaptable skills within learning and teaching that are appropriate to all learners and beneficial in aiding growth throughout education.

The implementation of 'peer-assessment' and a peer-assessment checklist within learning environments, not only offers educators the opportunity to integrate with a range of learners on a deeper level of understanding, but also challenges teachers to become adaptable practitioners that develop and evolve their styles of teaching and learning based on the feedback provided.

In doing so practitioners can begin to truly encapsulate the essence of teaching through acknowledging the needs of all learners in a way that enables all learners to gain an equal access to learning and allows pupils to educationally prosper.

Through the findings of this enquiry my aim is to encapsulate all the potential that can be achieved through effectively engaging with the assessment process of all assessments and use the feedback to inform and further develop and develop my own teaching practice as well as my overarching understanding of education itself.

Bibliography:

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