

What Impact Will Self-Assessment Checklists Have In My Classroom?

Cheryl Toal

Group 4

Rationale

This enquiry seeks to investigate what impact, if any, self-assessment checklists have within the classroom. Self-assessment checklists are a form of formative assessment. Formative assessments are any form of assessment in which the evidence is used to adapt teaching in order to meet the learner's needs. There is a vast amount of evidence which suggests that formative assessment raises standards in pupil work (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Self-assessments are essential to learning as pupils can only achieve a learning goal if they themselves understand that goal and can assess what they need to do in order to achieve this target (Sadler, 1989). I decided to enquire into this issue as I felt that the children within my class were not paying enough attention to their literacy core targets and so I wanted to enquire into whether self-assessment checklists would encourage the children to proof read and self correct their work against the checklist criteria. This should have also provided the children with the opportunity to fully understand their goals to focus on during the next literacy task and take a more proactive approach rather than a reactive approach to their own learning (Nicol and Dick, 2006).

Aims

The aim of this enquiry was to investigate whether implementing self-assessment checklists into the classroom would have an impact on the pupils within my class achieving the North Lanarkshire literacy core targets.

Methodology

In order to enquire into whether self-assessment checklists have an impact within the classroom, a qualitative approach was used as it is inherently more explorative and open than quantitative approaches. Evidence was gathered over a four week period within a primary 6 classroom from 9 children within the blue literacy group who are of average ability. This group was chosen as they, in particular, had a difficulty with proof reading and correcting their literacy written work. However, all children within the class of 25 were given the self assessment checklists after literacy tasks but the data was gathered solely from the blue group. Data was gathered in the form of children's jotter work including self-assessment checklists. A self-assessment checklist was created which included a few of the North Lanarkshire second level literacy core targets for the children to assess their work against. They indicated that they were completely confident that they had demonstrated a core target

by drawing a smiling emoji face next to it. If they were confident but still could improve on achieving the core target they indicated this through a straight emoji face and if they were confident that they did not meet a core target they would indicate this through a sad emoji face.

Data was also collected in the form of pupil feedback. The children were questioned on what impact the self-assessment checklists had on their literacy work and whether or not they found it a worthwhile task. The children anonymously wrote their opinion on post it notes which were collected at the end of the enquiry. This gave me an insight into their thoughts and opinions on the impact self-assessment checklists had.

Findings

Over the four week period, all of the children within the class carried out self-assessments through checklists after their literacy written tasks. It became incorporated into the classroom routine and children knew to complete the task before moving onto finisher activities. The children were thoroughly engaged with the practice and took it seriously. It was obvious from analysing the children's jotter work and comparing it to their checklists underneath that they were honest in their self evaluations. The children would give themselves appropriate emojis and would be honest if they believed they could improve a core target further. During taught writing, the children would use their checklists to inform their targets for the following week. Previous self-assessment checklists were regularly referred back to to ensure children had a focus to work on and could assess whether they improved on that target or not after completing the written task.

At the end of the four week period, the children within the class were asked to think about whether they enjoyed self-assessing their work through checklists, whether they found it a worthwhile practice and if so why? They were advised that any written opinions expressed on post it notes were anonymous and that it was purely for feedback purposes. 71% of the 25 children within the class provided positive feedback regarding self assessment checklists. Some of these comments included "The assessment made me proof read my work more and made me improve my work," and "I think the self-assessments helped me read over my work and correct my spelling more often.". 29% of the class indicated they did not feel that self-assessment had any impact on their work but did not elaborate on why they felt like this.

Conclusions

The findings of this enquiry indicated that self-assessment checklists had a positive impact within the classroom. The children independently read over their written tasks after completion and assessed their work against the literacy core targets on the checklist. The children were engaged with this practice and were more likely to highlight any mistakes and correct them independently. The children were able to take ownership over their own learning through making informed decisions on what their next steps should be and assessing whether or not they had achieved them after they completed their next tasks. The majority of

the class indicated that they felt self-assessment checklists had a positive impact on improving their work.

Implications For Future Practice

The General Teaching Council Scotland (2016) states that professional enquiry improves learning and teaching experiences for pupils as teachers develop more depth in their understanding of learning and teaching and address any gaps for improvement in their practice. Through taking part in this professional enquiry, I have developed my knowledge and understanding of the benefits of using self-assessment checklists within the classroom. It has highlighted the importance of providing children with the opportunity to reflect on their own work and make informed decisions about how to improve the quality of their work. I will continue to use self-assessment checklists within my classroom and will further develop my skills in formative assessment through using different forms of self and peer assessment in order to improve my teaching practice.

Bibliography

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education*, pp. 7-71.

General Teaching Council Scotland. (2016). *Open your mind to power of enquiry*. Available at: <http://www.teachingscotland.org.uk/professional-update/professional-learning/56-openyour-mind-to-power-of-enquiry.aspx> (Last accessed 8th April 2016).

Nicol, D.J. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in higher education*, 31(2), pp.199-218.

Sadler, R. (1989). Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems. *Instructional Science*, 18, pp. 119-44.