

## **What impact do “show-me” boards have on learning in my classroom?**

### **Rationale**

Within classrooms many practitioners use “show-me” boards as a formative assessment strategy. With this reasoning it was decided to carry out research in regards to the use of these boards within the classroom. The question that was developed, in view of growth mindset and motivation, was, “What impact does “show-me” boards have on the learning in my classroom?”

Assessment plays a crucial role in the cycle of learning and teaching, it informs practitioners of the child’s learning journey so far. It shows areas of strengths and areas that require additional support for the next steps in the individual’s journey. Quality assessment is a major focus at present within education and particularly North Lanarkshire. At a recent assessment and moderation CPD course Myra Young spoke about quality assessment and moderation as being an on-going process and how this directs further learning.

Curriculum for Excellence is seen as a curriculum in which all children can be successful learners, importance is placed in children engaging in and being supported throughout assessment, to allow all children to flourish and reach their full potential (Education Scotland, 2011). Show-me boards is a practical way that allows for the children to engage in the assessment process and become aware of their learning and development, encouraging them to outline next steps and how they can further their learning.

### **Aims**

The aim of this professional enquiry is to investigate the impact of, and children’s motivation when using show-me boards within the classroom.

### **Methodology**

Over a period of around four weeks this research was implemented in a composite primary two/three class of twenty-five children. Show-me boards were used throughout many lessons across a variety of curricular areas, including Maths, Literacy and Social Studies. The boards were used by the children individually and in pairs or trios. Modelling was not required for the children due to them already being familiar with using show-me boards in class.

There were several methods used when collecting data, these included observations of the children by the teacher, listening to and recording pupils during the task, asking formative feedback questions, discussions with the children, asking them to write down what they enjoyed about using show me boards and taking photographs. These methods were used to collect data as, through discussion with the practitioner enquiry group, it was felt these were best suited to the enquiry.

### **Findings**

The use of show-me boards allowed practitioners to instantly receive a snapshot of the learning of each child and identify those who may require further support. This therefore allowed immediate interventions to be put in place to guide and further support the learning of each child to ensure their learning was on the right track.

Another benefit of implementing show-me boards as an assessment of the learning allowed the teacher to assess themselves, it would highlight if the lesson were pitched at an appropriate level to challenge the children. If the majority of the children display correct answers the teacher can then further challenge the pupils, or on the other hand, if the children were not displaying the correct answer the teacher is able to then simplify the questions. As previously discussed this in turn therefore informs the next steps for learning for the children, identifying where further challenge or support is required, ensuring the children are being supported through their learning journey. Brien (2012;184) discusses the importance of assessment, so children are aware of their progress and that they are supported and celebrated as they progress through the curriculum.

The majority of the data collected presented positive feedback from the children. The children felt comfortable and confident when using this form of assessment, therefore were actively engaging in the learning and teaching process. In discussion and written comments from the children show-me boards were something they enjoyed in class, they were able to receive instant feedback on their answer, one child stated, "I know if I am wrong I can ask for help". This positive engagement supported the growth mindset approach taken while implementing this enquiry, the children were aware that the purpose of the activity was to improve their knowledge and understanding and that by assessing the learning it was possible to improve and develop.

Additionally the children relished the chance to show off their learning, stating, "I like when the class see I have the right answer." and "I can show what I have learned." I was able to implement a positive learning environment within the classroom where the children enjoyed sharing their work with one another.

However, through observations, with a few children it was apparent that answering questions and sharing with peers was stressful. Some pupils would look to others for the answer; although capable to answer the questions it was clear that the fear of being wrong or taking too long had a negative effect on their confidence in finding the answer. However I was aware that in their own time and during tasks the children were confident and capable of finding answers to similar questions. Another observation made was that children became restless, and to some extent, disengaged with the activity whilst waiting on other children finding their answer.

## **Conclusions**

Through this enquiry it was found from the data collected that almost all pupils enjoyed using the show-me boards in class as mostly the feedback was positive, however observations indicated that perhaps not all of the pupils felt as comfortable as the oral and written feedback would suggest. This could be explained by the issue

that the children did not want to be seen to have a different opinion than that of the majority of their peers. Carol Dweck (2012) highlights how growth mindset aims to reduce the attainment gap by encouraging children to be motivated by challenges to their learning and how to overcome these challenges.

A limitation I found however to this enquiry would be that as the children were aged six and seven they found it difficult to fully explain why they believed that show me boards supported their learning, or why they enjoyed using them. Many of the children simply responded that they liked to use show me boards to learn.

Additionally, the children I found were already biased towards using the show me boards in class as they were already familiar with them and regularly used these.

### **Implications for Future Practice**

I have found this enquiry to be informative and believe it will influence my future professional practice when implementing show-me boards in the classroom. It is clear that a positive learning environment is essential so that children feel comfortable displaying answers, correct or incorrect, publicly within the classroom. The growth mindset approach allows an emphasis to be placed on even if the answers are not correct then practice and further support will allow our learning to develop and reach our end goal.

In future I will look to implement this formative assessment technique in pairs/trios, this should help to reduce pressure children may feel as it would not place the onus solely on the individual and will allow the children to support one another's learning.

### **Bibliography**

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