**What effects will the introduction of a peer-assessment checklist have on literacy tasks?**

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**Group 2I**

*Rationale*

Assessment is for Learning (AifL) refers to assessments that are carried out to promote students learning as opposed to simply assessing academic performance (Black, 2004). Peer -assessment is one of many AifL strategies used within classrooms. It allows children to discuss success criteria and identify their strengths and weaknesses in a given area (Topping, 2009). Leahy *et al.* (2005) suggest that children are more likely to identify errors in their partner's work than their own. This in turn allows for effective and supportive dialogue to occur between children, which promotes a deeper understanding of the task for both learners (Bryce, 2013). However, do children lack the confidence and experience to mark their peer fairly when the tool is newly introduced? (Kaufman & Schunn, 2011).

*Aim*

The aim of this enquiry was to find what impact, if any, a peer-assessment checklist would have on learners work across literacy.

*Methodology*

*Face to Face Questionnaires*

This enquiry was carried out with two out of three of my literacy groups. Within this I selected a focus group of twelve children. I conducted face to face questionnaires before and after the enquiry. During the initial questionnaire we discussed what the children knew about the core targets for writing across literacy, the importance of checking over their work and if the children used the core targets regularly. The final questionnaire was once again open ended and allowed the children to discuss their opinions on the checklist and whether they feel it impacted on their completion of tasks and if so, in what way. A full list of the questions used can be found in appendix 1.

*Checklists*

As the children differed in both reading and writing abilities I created two similar checklists, with one additional point for the more confident writers to include (see appendix 2). The checklist was used as a visual aid as well as being a tangible resource that encouraged the children to take responsibility for their learning. A full class lesson was carried out to inform the children on how to use these checklists appropriately. As this was a new concept it was vital that the children felt confident using it. Over the four week period the checklist was implemented six times at the end of various writing tasks.

*Jotter marking and observation*

I toured the classroom as the children used the checklists to gauge how engaged the children were with this tool and what language they were using throughout. The children were encouraged to discuss the results of their assessments with their peer in order to reinforce any changes for the next lesson. After each implementation of the checklist I would check the children's work and leave teacher feedback regarding the child's written work. I ensured that any verbal feedback required regarding completion of the peer-assessment or written work was given on the same day to prevent any continuing miscommunication or errors.

### Findings

At the beginning of the enquiry the children were able to identify the core targets expected within their writing. They were also able to honestly identify targets they regularly forgot to include in their writing. Some comments from the children included:

"I forget my full stops all the time, I just forget!"

"Sometimes when I keep writing a lot I don't use finger spaces."

"I forget capital letters but if I talk to the teacher she notices and I can put them in."

"My writing can be a mess."

The most common core targets that children admitted to forgetting were full stops and capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and for names. I introduced the concept of the peer-assessment checklist to the children and explained how we would use it. I then asked their opinion:

"If I know my friend is going to look at my work I might want to try a lot harder."

"I don't want to be embarrassed if I have messy writing so I would try to make it neat."

"H could help me with my spelling if I get stuck because he is good at spelling!"

Finally, after the four week implementation I asked the children if they felt that the checklist had affected their work in any way. Replies included;

"I am writing a lot neater because I know K would mark me wrong if I had bad formation."

"I was forgetting my capital letters for a while but now I keep remembering them."

"I liked marking the work, it made me feel like a teacher."

"If you keep thinking about what someone else has to have in their writing you remember you need it too or you will get an X in the box."

I observed the use of these checklists and monitored the children's work over the duration of this enquiry. Overall, the most apparent impact for all learners from using the checklist was on their formation. The children appeared to take more pride in their work. Overall, the group

of focus children from the "Clever Cookies" gave a true reflection of their partners work and incorporated the feedback suggested by their peers over the four weeks. The children appeared to enjoy the aspect of accountability when signing their partner's checklist and took their task seriously, this was evident by their use of positive reinforcement to one another.

Upon observing the focus children from the "Mega Minds" group, checklists appeared to be rushed and at times did not truly reflect their partners work. The most common error for this group were spelling mistakes however, the children had little to no feedback for one another. The children informed me that they were not sure if their partner's spelling was right or wrong if it was not a common word that they were used to.

### Conclusion

The results of this enquiry are overall positive. Children who are more confident with their reading and spelling worked hard to incorporate their core targets and would often proof read their work before handing it to their partner. However the children in the "Mega Minds" who experienced external learning barriers, were unable to effectively implement the checklist. Further support will be required for these children to proof read their work and ensure that they are using the appropriate resources available for them to assist spelling.

### Implications for future practice

I will continue to use this tool for all learners in my classroom. I will make the necessary adaptations for particular children to use this tool and include an extra target of "proof reading". As this was a small scale enquiry, I will continue to conduct research on the benefits of AifL in the classroom. In particular, specific tools to support children who experience learning barriers to reading and writing.

### Bibliography

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. and Wiliam, D. (2004) 'Working inside the black box: Assessment for learning in the classroom.' Phi delta kappan, 86(1): 8-21.

Bryce, T. (ed.) (2013) Scottish Education: Referendum (Fourth Edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kaufman, J. H., Schunn, C, D. (2011) 'Students' perceptions about peer assessment for writing: their origin and impact on revision work.' Instructional Science, 39(3): 387-406.

Leahy, S., Lyon, C., Thompson, M., and Wiliam, D. (2005) 'Classroom Assessment: Minute by Minute, Day by Day.' Assessment to Promote Learning, 3: 19-24

Topping, K.J. (2009) 'Peer assessment.' Theory into practice, 48(1): 20-27.

*Appendix 1*

**Questionnaire questions – before**

"Do you know the core targets for writing?"

"What are they?"

"Do you include them in all of your writing tasks?"

"Are there any targets you tend to forget?"

"What is the most common target to forget?"

"Can you think of anything that would help you remember them apart from our core target strips?"

"What do you think of the peer-assessment checklist?" (After explanation)

"Do you think it will help?"

**Questionnaire questions – after**

"Did you like using the peer-assessment checklist?"

"Has anything improved for you? If yes tell me what has improved."

"Would you like to keep using the peer-assessment checklist?"

*Appendix 2*

Peer-assessment checklists (enlarged) Checklists are marked and stapled into the writer's jotter. To the left is the full checklist used for Clever Cookies group and to the right is the differentiated checklist used for Mega Minds and Smart Smurfs.
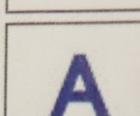
Peer assessment checklist

Have you used full stops correctly?

Have you used capital letters at the start of your sentences?
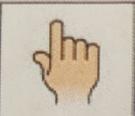
Does your sentence have finger spaces?
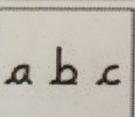
Has the correct formation been used?
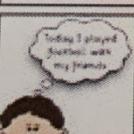
Does it make sense?
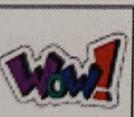
Have you used interesting words?

Comment _____

_____

Peer assessed by _____

Peer assessment checklist

Have you used full stops correctly?

Have you used capital letters at the start of your sentences?
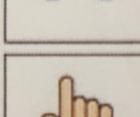
Does their sentence have finger spaces?
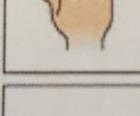
Has the correct formation been used?
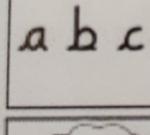
Does it make sense?

How did they do?

Peer assessed by _____