What happens when we use live (real time) feedback in the classroom?

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Group 4I

Rationale
In recent years, Assessment is for Learning (AifL) has become an extremely important part of education. As highlighted by Education Scotland (2019: Online), "Assessment is very important for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents, children and young people in learning.". Therefore in order to implement successful learning and teaching in the classroom, it is imperative that teachers are regularly assessing learners and providing them with appropriate feedback on how they can develop their skills. Levy (2008: 162) notes that "students will need different levels of support that can be determined through formative assessment". By doing so, learners can identify steps for development and ways that they can improve their work.

One example of formative assessment is to provide learners with live (real time) feedback during lessons. Smarter Scotland (2005: 2) suggest that "learners learn best" when "given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better.". Providing learners with immediate feedback allows them to take responsibility for their own learning and by working alongside the teacher, can make progress in order to achieve success. In addition, this can help to build stronger relationships between the teacher and the pupils to help to create achievable targets whilst working alongside one another.

As highlighted in the GTCS Standards for Registration document (2012: Online) teachers must "have knowledge and understanding of the importance of research and engagement in professional enquiry" in order to ensure they are continuously developing their ability. In addition, teachers must be "reflective" and "enquiring professionals" in order to contribute to "educational change" (Donaldson, 2011: 4). As a class teacher, I had noticed that learners were repeatedly making the same errors when completing tasks. Therefore, I was curious to investigate wether or not learners responded better to the use of live (real time) feedback in comparison to written feedback in their jotter.

Aim
The aim of this enquiry is to evaluate the effectiveness of immediate feedback during taught writing lessons. This enquiry aims to investigate if immediate feedback provides learners with a better opportunity to develop their skills and improve their written work, particularly those who have difficulties within writing. For example, including capital letters, punctuation and the ability to proof read and edit their work.

Methodology

This enquiry was carried out over a period of four weeks in a primary 6 classroom with eighteen children. Data was collected using the following methods:

- Classroom observations.
- Individual discussions with learners.
- Questionnaire at the end of the four weeks to gain feedback from learners.

During these lessons, real time feedback was given to all pupils and each learner was given one to one feedback. However, extra time was spent with learners who presented difficulties within writing and additional support was provided. Each week learners assessed their work with a weekly rotation of techniques. All learners were assessed by the teacher in week four. The table below represents the rotation of assessment methods used during writing lessons:

Group	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
Group 1	Self	Teacher	Peer	Teacher
Group 2	Peer	Self	Teacher	Teacher
Group 3	Teacher	Peer	Self	Teacher

Firstly, learners who were self-assessing their work at the end of the lesson were called out individually to sit with the teacher and discuss their work together. Once this group had received feedback, those who were peer-assessing were then given time to discuss their work individually with the teacher. Finally, pupils who were assessed by the teacher were called at the end of the lesson to discuss the completed pieces of work and receive immediate feedback.

These learners received one to one feedback from myself as well as regular observations to assess their progress throughout the lesson and if learners were applying the feedback to their writing.

Pupils were given feedback using the following method:

GREEN – Good for Green
PINK – Stop and Think
YELLOW – Live Feedback Given

I highlighted pieces that they written well or if they had included useful information in green. This indicated that I was happy with this piece in their work. Pink was used to highlight areas that pupils could improve upon, such as using capital letters correctly, including punctuation or proof reading pieces that required attention. In addition, the immediate feedback that was given to learners was noted in their jotter and highlighted in yellow. This allowed me to observe the feedback the learners had been given previously and examine whether or not they had applied this to their work.

In addition to classroom observation and individual discussions, learners were asked to take part in a small survey that I created to evaluate how they felt about the feedback they were given during these lessons. The results of the questionnaire are noted in the findings section of this enquiry.

Findings

When working with the learners, it was clear that those who were able to work independently on a piece of writing would focus upon the feedback given during the discussion and apply this to the rest of their work. These learners were able to go back to their desk, work effectively and work on areas that had been highlighted in pink as well as make use of the live feedback which was highlighted in yellow. These learners produced pieces of work which displayed that they could meet their success criteria and genre targets. On the contrary, those who had difficulties within writing tended to repeat the same mistakes post feedback. When spending time with these learners, areas for development were identified, noted and highlighted in yellow to be used as a reminder and reference when continuing with their work. Although additional support was provided to help them improve, it appeared that the live feedback had a minor impact upon their classwork.
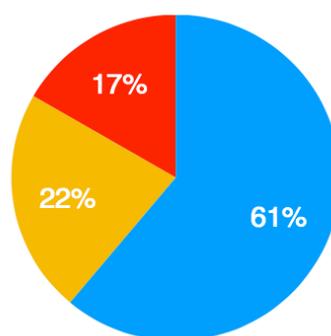
As well as this, learners were asked to provide their opinions of the feedback they had been given in class at the end of week four which is presented in the results below:

1. Do you read written feedback from the teacher?

Yes ● No ● Sometimes ● Unsure

5%
5%
90%

2. Do you use the feedback to improve?
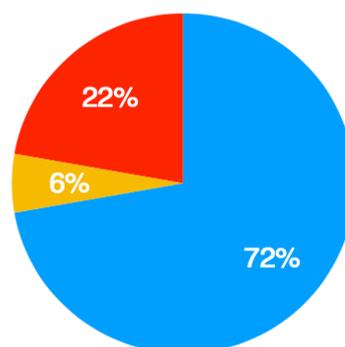
Yes ● No ● Somtimes ● Unsure

17%
22%
61%
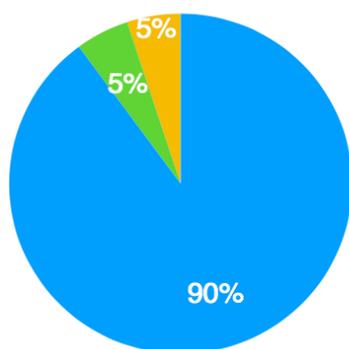
3. Do you prefer written feedback or instant feedback?

Written ● Instant ● Unsure

11% 17%
72%
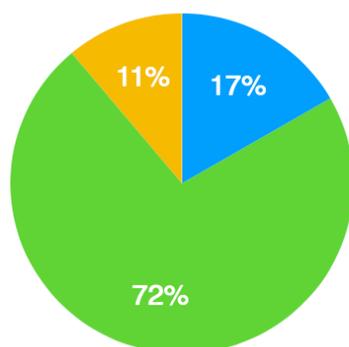
4. Do you feel that you can improve quicker when the teacher gives you instant feedback during lessons?

Yes ● No ● Sometimes ● Unsure

22%
6%
72%

The questionnaire found that 72% (13) of pupils noted that they preferred instant feedback in comparison to written feedback. In addition, 72% (13) of pupils felt that they could improve quicker

when given instant feedback from the teacher. Thus, despite the mixed responses to real time feedback during lessons, the majority of pupils in the classroom were in favour of receiving live feedback from the teacher.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results show that the use of real time feedback in the classroom had different effects on different learners. Those who were capable of working independently within taught writing lessons were able to learn from the immediate feedback and use this to develop their work going forward. However, pupils who had difficulty when writing tended to make little change when presented with immediate feedback. Despite this, most learners in the classroom responded positively when asked about the use of live feedback which suggests that further implementation of this strategy could be trialled in the classroom. In addition, learners felt that they were able to progress quicker when given immediate feedback from the teacher, again showing positive responses from learners.

Throughout the four week period, I felt that I was able to build upon the relationships already established within the classroom. By spending time with each individual learner, I was able to gain a greater understanding of the abilities of each learner. This allowed me to adapt my teaching styles to suit the needs of the learners in the classroom as well as work to help create an enhanced learning environment for pupils. Therefore, it was clear that immediate feedback proved positive for learners who were able to work independently but further research is required to fully evaluate the effectiveness for those with difficulties within writing.

Implications for Future Practice

In terms of future practice, I intend to implement further use of live feedback in the classroom in taught writing and develop this strategy in other curricular areas. The use of the yellow highlighter across different curricular areas will allow me to highlight feedback given to learners and encourage them to continuously work hard to improve their skills. As well as this, I will continue to improve the quality of feedback given to the learners, especially those who require support. In addition, time will be spent with individual learners to provide one to one feedback and help to gain a better understanding of their abilities particularly within literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. By gaining a better understanding of the learners in my classroom, I will continue to implement different formative assessment strategies to improve lessons for learners and work hard to raise attainment.

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