How Effective are Show-Me Boards in the Classroom?

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Group 3H

Rationale
Assessment is for Learning (Assessment Reform Group 2002), states that formative assessment during teaching practices is a powerful way to raise standards and improve learning. Numerous research articles have stated that the use of formative assessment will also raise attainment and improves pupil confidence. The Scottish Government (2008) suggested a variety of activities and resources should be used to evaluate knowledge and gain evidence of this.

Bartlett (2015) states that using Show-Me boards as a tool for formative assessment will increase the wait time for answers, reduce the pressure to vocally give answers and improve the quality of answers.

Our group chose to research Show-Me boards as an assessment activity, as to raise attainment you must create an environment where participation is compulsory (Wiliam 2009).

Aims
The aim of this investigation was to analyse how effective the use of show-me boards were in the classroom. The impact on confidence, quality of answers and engagement was assessed.

Methodology
Fifteen first year pupils completed a questionnaire twice a week, following a lesson that did not include the use of show-me boards. They repeated the exercise after a lesson that did use show-me boards, primarily as a plenary task, both were repeated every week for three weeks. The questionnaire consisted of four simple Yes/No answers to the following questions:

1) Were you given enough time to think of an answer when questioned by the teacher?
2) Did you feel confident in your answers?
3) Were you listening to every question from the teacher?
4) Were you happy with the style of questioning?

These questions were designed to summarise the use and effectiveness of show-me boards as an assessment technique and would only take a short period of time to complete.

At the end of the research project, pupils were asked to write a couple of sentences on a show-me board in regards to their views on using them as an answering tool in the classroom.

Findings
Over the course of the research period, every pupil participated in the task, completing the questionnaires. The results are detailed below:
Week One:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Without Boards</th>
<th>With Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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Week Two:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Without Boards</th>
<th>With Boards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Week Three:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Without Boards</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

Over the three weeks, 24% of pupils felt they were given enough time to think of an answer without using show-me boards, compared to 73% when using the boards.

For question two, for how confident pupils felt in their answer, only 49% agreed with this when not using the show-me boards, compared to 67% when they did use them.

In response to whether they were listening to the questions, when not using the boards, 82% stated they were, compared to 96% when they did use the show-me boards to answer questions. These results are similar, mainly due to the age group involved in the enquiry.

Lastly, when asked if they liked this type of questioning style, when not using the boards, 44% agreed they did, compared to 89% who preferred using them to respond to questioning.

At the conclusion of the enquiry, pupils described using show-me boards as a positive way to answer questions. Interestingly they also indicated they only used the boards in two other
subjects routinely, maths and languages. The overall response to using the boards was encouraging. I have included an example below:

![Image of a show-me board with responses written on it]

The results convey that pupils consistently felt they had more time to think of an answer, had increased attention to the questioning, were more confident in their answers and preferred this style of questioning.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, the investigation has clearly displayed the positive impact of using show-me boards as an assessment tool in the classroom. Pupils were more engaged during questioning, enthusiastic and confident with their answers. Most pupils displayed engagement with this strategy throughout the research task as there was no individual focus on their answers, which could lead to embarrassment or humiliation in front of their peers.

I could not be confident that every student had fully understood the lesson as when they did not use the show me boards, I could only assess a limited number of them, which made planning next steps in their learning more challenging. I observed that pupils felt more anxious with direct approaches, singling them out and did not have enough time to process an informative answer when not using the show-me boards. They also did not listen to my questions as attentively.

I also realised rules had to be consistent when using the show-me boards. For example, to ensure fairness, the pupils had to raise the boards all at the same time to avoid copying and no shouting out of answers was allowed.
Implications for Future Practice
The findings from this enquiry demonstrate that show me boards have a positive impact on engagement, teaching and learning. It suggests this method of formative assessment should be used consistently to ensure students accept them as a method of assessment to be used regularly during learning. Additionally, they could be utilised in other areas across the curriculum, not just as plenaries. For example, they could be used as starter tasks to assess prior knowledge, or as checkpoint assessment during lessons.
As a result, practitioners would be able to immediately assess learning and identify areas of teaching that may need to be altered for future use.
I would suggest, given the results of this study, the use of show-me boards would be a useful tool for my professional development and should be used for all year groups. I think they would also be of benefit during self and peer assessment activities.
On reflection, this enquiry has demonstrated the flexibility and effectiveness of this type of assessment, in particular, the improved engagement, enthusiasm and effort from pupils. I suggest practitioners should be incorporating this technique into their teaching and utilising the boards on a regular basis to broaden and improve on the spot assessment of learning.

Bibliography
1. Did you have enough time to think of an answer you were happy with?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Did you understand the question?
   - Yes
   - No

3. How were you feeling during the test?
   - Happy
   - Nervous
   - Other

4. Did you feel confident in your answers?
   - Yes
   - No

5. How confident are you in your answers?
   - Very confident
   - Confused

6. Would you feel comfortable taking a test like this again?
   - Yes
   - No

7. How satisfied are you with the style of questioning?
   - Very satisfied
   - Dissatisfied

8. How do you feel about the test overall?
   - Positive
   - Negative

9. How did you like the test?
   - Enjoyed
   - Hated

10. Overall, how would you rate your performance?
    - Excellent
    - Average
    - Below average