

Formative Assessment at Rudyard Kipling Primary School, Brighton and Hove

Ben Massey 15th March 2013

Since Anna and I took part in the Shirley Clarke Action Research group last year, Rudyard Kipling has adopted many of the practices and principles of formative assessment and the positive effects of this are evident across every part of the school.

Following a number of meetings and INSETs to introduce the ideas to all of the staff at Rudyard, teachers and learning support assistants recently took part in an in-school AFL Action Research project to look into how formative assessment was impacting on staff and children and to identify areas for development.

Growth Mindset

Teachers across the school introduced the idea of fixed and growth mindsets to the children and the whole school has contributed to displays. The growth mindset has been successfully incorporated into the schools green (for 'great') and orange (for 'on the way') mark scheme.

Impact:

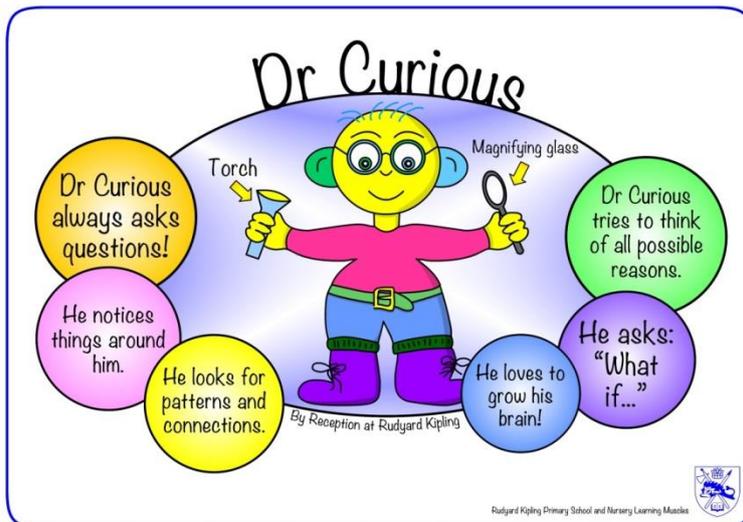
The language of 'Growth Mindset' is evident in every year group and all teachers regularly give out 'ask me how I have grown my brain' stickers to encourage children to discuss their learning. Children are learning to 'act on orange' and use their marking to identify their own ways forward. In some classes, this has extended to children choosing their own targets based on their progress and this ownership has resulted in a clear increase in enthusiasm towards achieving their targets. 'I couldn't and now I can' is now a common phrase in Year 1!

Learning Muscles

We held a school-wide competition for children to design characters to represent each aspect of the eight learning muscles. Each year group submitted a winner and these were used to create posters. Characters were introduced in weekly whole-school assemblies and each class focussed on the traits of that character throughout the week.

Impact:

Children across the whole school are taking an active interest in the ways they learn and are able to explain in detail what character they have been learning like and why. They are developing a clearer awareness of how they learn and how their learning can develop.



Talk partners & self- and peer-assessment

The school has encouraged the use of Talk Partners - including celebrating positive Talk Partner work - and random questioning for quite a long time now and the practice has had a very positive effect on the attitudes of children of all abilities. The use of Visualisers has been especially successful and has made it easy offer real-time feedback and model the use of the school's mark-scheme to children.

Impact:

Children are eager to share their work on the Visualiser and are increasingly confident to carry out self- and peer-assessment. Through shared peer-assessment, children know and can celebrate what they have done well and are developing a clearer understanding of how to achieve their targets as well as to pinpoint new targets and ways forward for their classmates.

Worthwhile Questioning

All planning now contains worthwhile questions, which encourage children to discuss answers and be confident that there is no 'wrong' or 'right' answer, as well as making lessons more engaging and fun!

Impact:

Less confident children are more willing to take part in discussions without the fear of being wrong. Children come up with their own thoughtful and engaging ideas and have started to generate questions of their own which can feed back into planning. Children are able to share their Talk Partners' ideas and support each other. It has given them more confidence to express their ideas and extend their thinking.

Child-centred planning

Increasingly, children are being involved in the planning of sequences of work and reviewing and magpieing from their prior knowledge.

Impact

Initially, children came up with thoughts and suggestions of what they would like to learn about, which fed into planning. More recently, the process has been developed in some classes to include asking the children how they would like to learn *about* things, (which I think is lovely!), which in turn helps to develop their thinking and questioning skills.

Child-generated success criteria

Through analysis of texts and examples of excellence, children in every group play an active role in generating their own 'remember' and 'choose' success criteria for every lesson. Actions and games are used to embed the success criteria.

Year groups have developed age-appropriate 'every time we read and write' success criteria, which show progression throughout the school.

Impact:

Children have more ownership of their learning, know what they need to do and are able to assess their achievements against their own success criteria. They find out what they need to do for themselves and are increasingly able to quickly analyse examples of work to generate their success criteria.

Working Walls

Literacy and Maths Working Walls are being used across the school to support learning. Stepping stones, learning intentions, resources, prompts, success criteria and examples of marked work are updated in line with progress through units of work and are a constant reference point for teachers and children.

Impact:

Working Walls put work in context for children and teachers. Children are more aware of what they have learned so far, where they are headed and the steps they are taking to get there. Literacy walls have been particularly successful for displaying sequences of work.

Conclusion

The impact of formative assessment on learning and the children's understanding of why, what and how they are learning has been massively significant across the school. Children show a genuine pride in having 'grown their brains'. They are able to discuss their achievements and are eager to share and act on their 'oranges' (ways forward). Modelling, use of the visualiser and the active involvement of children in assessing their own and their peers' work is beginning to have a really positive influence on progress and attitudes to learning.

Key factors in the success of the process:

- The opportunity to take part in Shirley's Action Research/ Active Learning Set

- The enthusiasm, creativity, drive and persistence of the two teachers taking part in the Action Research/ Active Learning Set
- Non- contact time for these teachers to plan and trial strategies
- Creation of a Lead Literacy Group to which a range of staff belonged- distributed leadership
- Ensuring the implementation of strategies was part of whole school development, in our case it was one of the Themes of our RAP- Raising Attainment Plan, so INSET* and Staff meetings were planned
- Involvement of all teaching staff and support staff *– ownership of developments/ strategies
- Marking and feedback- a simple and logical system ‘on the way orange’ ‘green is great’ understandable for all children across the primary range. Creating a ‘Can do’ culture.
- Key ‘Scripts’ used by all adults in school, vocalised by the children:
Ask me how I’ve grown my brain today? How have you grown your brain today?
I’m showing a ‘growth mindset’ today.
- Moving onto metacognition, a natural progression from ‘Growth Mindset’ principles
- Children as key partners in developing the characters to represent each Learning Muscle and in identifying the characteristics for each of these
- Introducing the ‘Learning Muscle’ posters in whole school assembly; then displaying the posters around the school
- Adults referring to Learning Muscles when referring to children’s learning. ‘You were just like Perseverance Pete and Co-operating Clara when you did that writing!’
- Making reference to the Learning Muscles in Marking and feedback and on displays eg Which Learning Muscles did Jamie use when making this model?
- Seeing a real impact on children’s learning, both in mindset and attitude and in improved outcomes/ achievement

Jenny Aldridge
Headteacher
15th March 2013