

Understanding how feedback frames a pupil's learning gap in the primary classroom

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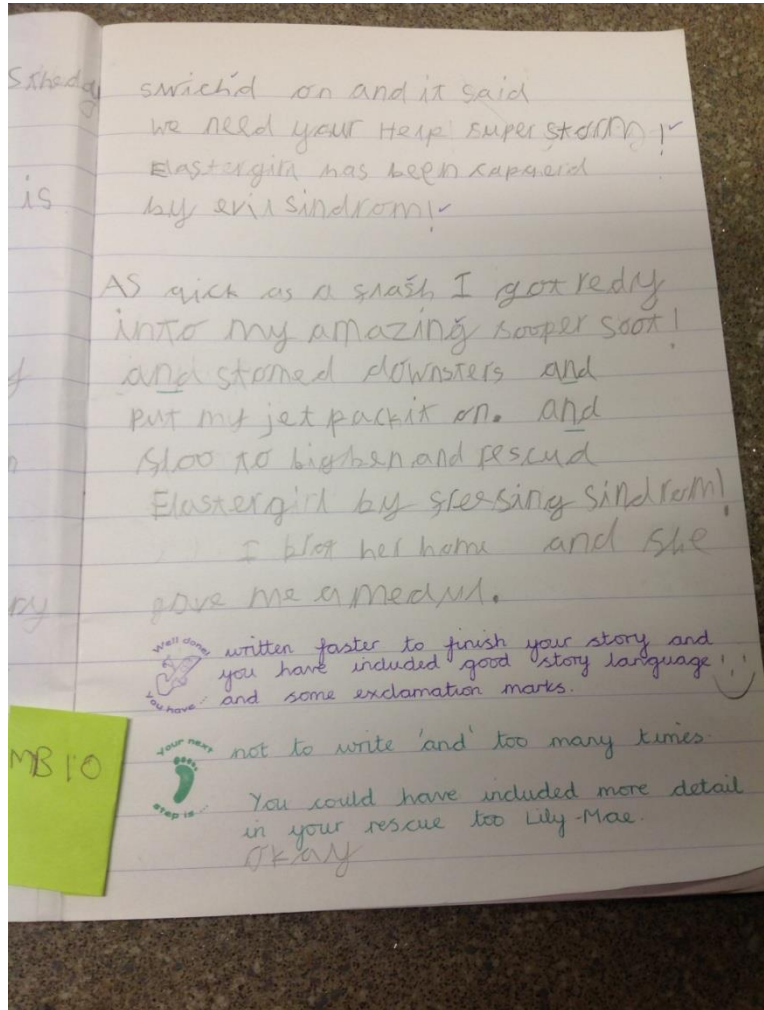
Research Objectives and Purpose

- To understand what sense pupils make of the feedback and targets they receive as part of assessment for learning
- Consider how the 'learning gap' (which feedback seeks to alter) is constructed.
- To focus on pupils who demonstrate below the expected levels of achievement in primary school (but who do not have a special educational need) in order to understand their understanding and use of feedback.

Feedback

- “Few concepts have been written about more uncritically and incorrectly than that of feedback” (Latham and Locke 1991:224)
- It is identified through meta-analysis as having one the highest effect sizes (+8 months) of any teacher’s practice (EEF teaching and Learning Toolkit)
- It is identified is the key bridge connecting teaching and learning and the foundation of formative assessment Black and Wiliam (1998)
- Further evidence shows that a considerable number of studies (1/3rd) show a negative impact following feedback (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996)
- Wiliam (2016: 115) claims that his (and Black’s) support for the high effect size of feedback “may have been a mistake”
- Bennett (2011:12) identifies the effectiveness of feedback as ‘urban legend’

The Importance of Noticing



Well done you
have: written
faster to finish
your story and you
have included
good story
language and
some exclamation
marks



Your next step is:
not to write 'and'
too many times,
You could have
included more
detail in your
rescue too Lily
Mae.

OKAY

What is feedback?

- Ramaprasad claims “it is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way” (1983:4)
- Sadler, (1989:121) information about the gap between actual and reference levels is considered as feedback only when it is used to alter the gap”
- Hattie and Timperley (2007:81) “information provided by an agent (eg. teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding an aspect of one’s performance or understanding.”
- Shute (2008:154) “information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her behaviour for the purpose of improving learning.”

Learning Gap (the gap between what children know now and need to know next)

- In UK classrooms teachers are increasingly using tightly focused teaching objectives with clearly defined learning outcomes (success criteria) for the children (Murtagh, 2014)
- The learning gap (for each child) is shaped and delineated by the national curriculum, national and international standards and teachers' structured teaching intentions and success criteria.
- It is assumed that children will accept the learning gap constructed and presented to them by teachers.
- There is an assumption here that children are 'intentional learners' (Black et.al. 2006) and have a 'feel for the game' in the classroom. Bourdieu (1998)

Research Focus and Project

1. What sense do pupils make of their learning?
 2. How do they construct their learning gap?
 3. In what ways do pupils talk about their learning, and do they differ from their teachers views?
- Carried out in 2 schools in areas of high social deprivation
 - Initially with children in year 1 (aged 5-6) and year 5 (9-10)
 - Ten pupils in year 5 (five in each school – total of six boys and four girls) who were identified by their teachers as “not making expected progress in numeracy and literacy and do not have a categorisation of special educational needs”
 - Five one to one sessions with each pupil (for about 15 minutes for each session) over a 10 week period.

Pupils' perceptions of their next steps for learning.

- What next steps for being a better writer do you think your teacher would like you to make?
- What does your teacher want you to learn next in maths?
- What are your targets and next steps for literacy/numeracy?

Using two coloured post-it notes pupils were asked their and their teachers targets for both literacy and numeracy.

Pupils were asked to sequence the post-it notes in the order that they chose with their own priorities. They were then jumbled up. Then to sequence them in the order they thought the teacher would prioritise.

“imagine you are Mrs??? [*teacher*] what order would she put them in?”

4 write capital letters

3 use adjectives

6 write full stops

full stops

2 Check your sentences make sense

1 put your commas in the right place

5 Do not use two capital letters at the start of your sentence.

steps if I asked steps to

Extract from table: **Learning Targets for Literacy**

** Perceived as teacher targets*

Session 2 Literacy	Targets sequenced by the pupil in order of his/her priorities	Targets sequenced by the pupil in order of pupil perceived teacher priorities
S1:2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak what I want to write 2. Improve handwriting* 3. Listen to the teacher* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen to the teacher* 2. Improve handwriting* 3. Speak what I want to write
S1:3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sometimes use the computer eg. for school council questions 2. Using connectives * 3. Use of metaphors* 4. Check the size and spacing of letters* 5. Use a different colour pen 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check the size and spacing of letters* 2. Using connectives * 3. Use of metaphors* 4. Sometimes use the computer eg. for school council questions 5. Use a different colour pen
S1:5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn to spell more words properly 2. Use joined up writing more* 3. Use more connectives 4. Use more adjectives* 5. Read my checklist three times 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use joined up writing more* 2. Use more adjectives* 3. Use more connectives 4. Read my checklist three times 5. Learn to spell more words properly

Learning Targets for Numeracy. *Perceived as teacher targets*. No sequencing sought if 2 (or less) targets identified.*

Numeracy	What are your targets for numeracy?	What does your teacher want you to learn?
S1:1	Don't know	Odd numbers like 350
S1:2	Don't know	Methods
S1:3	Not sure	Decimals and fractions
S1:4	1. Write numbers in the right box 2. Times tables* 3. Adding fractions 4. Takeaway numbers Re-ordered for teachers priorities 1,2,4,3	Times tables
S1:5	1. Get better at fractions 2. Dividing 3. Grams and kilograms Re-ordered for teachers priorities 1,3,2	Don't know
S2:1	Be good at 'timsing' Work with big numbers	Don't know
S2:2	Learn more Get better at diving and timetables	Don't know
S2:3	Don't know Go up a level	Times tables
S2:4	Not got targets I want to get better at column addition	Everything
S2:5	Keep practising	Not sure

Literacy Findings

- In literacy **all the pupils could identify targets for themselves** as well as those that they thought their teachers had for them.
- **All the children ordered them differently** according to whether they were asked to do so for their own priorities or for their teachers.
- Virtually all the **targets were ‘conformist’** related to national curriculum targets.
- Only three were more personal “speak what I want to write” “sometimes use a computer” “use a different colour pen”.
- All the targets, whether their own or those perceived to be the teachers, were **low level** – they were not challenging and did not relate to the current new learning in their recent lessons.
- **They had internalised some ‘next’ steps in literacy** and they had a sense of a learning gap, but this was related to low level steps which were more about consolidation of fundamental writing processes.

Numeracy Findings

- Pupils had been more positive about maths previously (said it was easier than literacy).
- Pupils found it **difficult to identify targets (next steps)** for their learning from their own view or from their teachers.
- They had **very little notion of a 'learning gap'** (something needs to be learnt next)
- Lessons and comments in books were very focused on specific questions and the pupils had clearly not internalised much beyond the immediate contexts and content of each lesson.




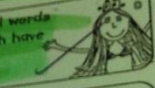
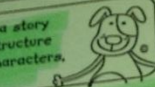
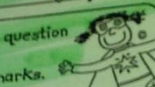
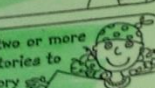
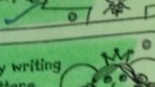

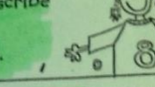

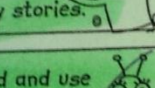
Pupils controlling the effect of the 'gap'

- Kluger and De Nisi (1996) indicate that pupils regulate the effect of the demands made on their learning (through feedback). In this research it is clear that they have reduced what is required of them in literacy to a much lower level and have virtually eliminated any notion of what needs to be done next in mathematics.
- This is in a context in which pupils are given very specific targets, and delineated next steps
- They have 'orchestrated' the multiple voices and messages around them to their own ends. - they have demonstrated both power and agency in this process (Holland et al 1998)

My name is **Ebonu**

Date I started these targets

I need to

- 10-11-14 I need to use other connectives instead of 'and' e.g. when, but, so, because. 
- 10-11-14 I need to punctuate all of my sentences with a capital letter and a full stop. 
- 10-11-14 I need to start to punctuate speech in my writing. 
- 10-11-14 I need to spell words correctly which have more than one syllable. 
- 10-11-14 I need to write a story with a simple structure - an opening, characters, and events. 
- 10-11-14 I need to use question marks and exclamation marks. 
- 10-11-14 I need to put two or more events in my stories to develop the story structure. 
- 10-11-14 I need to join my writing and make my letters the right size. 
- 10-11-14 I need to describe settings in my writing. 
- 10-11-14 I need to write interesting endings to my stories. 
- 10-11-14 I need to find and use new and interesting words in my writing. 
- 10-11-14 I need to describe the characters 

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BASE SHEET: Writing Level 3C (A completed sheet levels the child as Level 3C)

BASE SHEET: Writing Level 3B (A completed sheet levels the child as Level 3B)

Limitations of feedback

- Pupils reinterpreted and lowered the learning demands made through teacher feedback and targets.
- Teachers made little attempt to consider pupils' interpretations of their priorities for learning
- For pupils, national attainment priorities and expectations did not matter (enough)
- For teachers, national attainment priorities and expectations mattered (too much)

Limitations of feedback continued.....

- Pupils were honest and open that they were prioritising **their** next steps differently from their teachers
- Teachers were surprised and embarrassed that they had not listened to the pupils' views
- Pupils were mediating and 'orchestrating' the narrative of the assessment messages given to them within a broader context of stories of their own lives.

Some reconceptualising of feedback

Two further approaches need to come into play when considering feedback .

A **'relational approach'** characterised by:

- a dialogic encounter through which perspectives can be shared and negotiated.
- use of 'exploratory talk' (Mercer: 2000)

An **'individualistic approach'** aimed at helping pupils internalise learning - characterised by

- alignment of teaching with existing schema
- recognising curiosity
- support with metacognition and metalearning approaches

The learning gap – who constructs it and who controls it?

Assumptions underpinning feedback present a ‘deterministic approach’ characterised by:

- feedback being nationally framed
- a means of making learning ‘visible’
- teacher constructed
- apparently teacher controlled
- with some (often tokenistic reciprocal engagement with pupils)

These seems problematic

Creating and sustaining relationships in assessment for learning.

- Assessment for learning is relational - socially, historically and contextually
- Participants enact particular versions of understanding and acting on formative assessment regardless of the intentions of others.
- Newman et al (1989) suggest the phrase “dialogue with a child’s future” for what happens in the space in which teaching, assessment and learning are encountered.
- Where is the space in which differences and dialogue can be genuinely discussed, and negotiated action emerge?

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