Support learners in using peer assessment and self-assessment to evaluate their learning achievements

Peer and self-assessment are important forms of assessment that should take place in addition to teacher marking and other techniques. Because they encourage children to be independent and self-critical, they provide an extra dimension to learning that can fill out their understanding of the topic.

By involving all the children in a class in the constructive criticism and careful analysis of their own work, they can learn to understand their own progress and what the next steps should be.

Self-assessment and peer assessment activities need to have a very simple and clear core to them. The learning objectives must be straightforward and easily identifiable, and the purpose of the learning objectives must also be made clear. They need assessment criteria that they understand and that they can assess their work against; and their understanding needs to be checked regularly, to ensure that they know what they are looking for.

Peer assessments are usually considered to be a good starting point for self-assessment, because it tunes children into what they should be looking for in their own work.

- Make assessment criteria clear and accessible
- Promote critique as a helpful thing
- NO comparisons between pupils
- Make assessment criteria simple and specific

Supporting peer and self-assessment.
Making assessment criteria accessible

By splitting down the learning objectives and what the children need to know in order to achieve the outcomes, the assessment criteria can be made simple enough for them to follow. In most cases one or two criteria should be the maximum for any single piece of peer or self-assessed work. They should be very specific so that the children can easily understand them, and the purpose of the task should be clarified to ensure understanding.

Promoting collaboration and partnership in peer assessment

One of the most important things to remember about assessment in general, and particularly about peer assessment, is that there should be no comparison between pupils. How successful one child is against another can be due to many external and personal factors, and is not helpful information.

In addition, comparing more able children with less able children usually has the result of reducing the less able child’s enthusiasm for learning, and disengagement is soon to follow.

In order for children to adequately assess each other’s work, they must be able to look at the work and identify whether or not it fulfils the assessment criteria. They can also look at how the work relates otherwise to the assessment criteria, discussing the activities or exercises they have done, and how those link in with the assessment criteria.

How peer assessment and self-assessment helps learning

Children who understand what is needed to achieve a particular learning outcome are more able to attain it. Peer and self-assessments mean that pupils become more used to looking at their work from the point of view of the teacher and support staff, and this de-fogs the process and makes the purpose and point of the work more obvious.