

How does the use of success criteria impact on the teaching and learning of writing?

An action research project by Emma Rogers, involving the work of teachers in Y1/2, Y3/4 and Y5/6 classes in Lincolnshire Primary schools.

November 2004 – April 2005

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Abstract

The booklet 'Success criteria in writing' was sent out to over 200 schools in Lincolnshire. It gave guidelines and suggestions to teachers wanting to introduce success criteria into their writing lessons. In this project I aim to assess the impact of success criteria on children's writing through a series of lesson observations and interviews with children and their teachers.

This action research paper is based on the work of 4 class teachers from November 2004 to April 2005. The classes were all mixed ability and mixed age classes and ranged from Y1/2 to Y5/6.

The aim of the project is to answer two questions;

What impact do Success criteria have on children's motivation to write?

What impact do Success criteria have on teachers' professional learning?

This paper initially sets the scene by discussing the background and theoretical understanding of success criteria. I will then outline in detail the methods used to collect evidence and evaluate their effectiveness.

This paper then goes on to discuss the results and the conclusions that can be drawn from the evidence gathered from observations and pupil interviews.

Finally, the paper provides a critical reflection on the methodology that has been adopted. The paper goes on to reflect upon the research carried out and discusses possible areas for further work.

Introduction

Many Lincolnshire schools are beginning to develop Assessment for Learning practices, driven partly by the training session run by Shirley Clarke in February 2004, and more recently the DfES materials 'Excellence and enjoyment; teaching and learning in the primary school'.

One of the key areas in Assessment for learning is the use of Success criteria. That is, using a summary of the key points children need to understand as steps to success in achieving the learning objective. These success criteria provide a framework for dialogue with the children, around which teacher, self and peer assessment can revolve.

Many teachers have decided to begin using success criteria in writing sessions. The grounds for this are varied, but include reasons such as;

- they draw together the learning from the whole two week Literacy unit;
- they enable children to self and peer assess their writing accurately;
- they focus the teacher's marking of writing.

Many teachers have also found that including success criteria in their short term plans focuses their teaching, as they have a much clearer plan of how the children will succeed.

Through my work as a Teaching and Learning consultant I have supported schools in developing success criteria. Teachers have often found it a challenging and, to begin with, a time consuming process. At a time in which schools are 'streamlining' planning practices and addressing issues of workload, we as a School Improvement Service need to ensure that the recommendations we make are manageable and valuable. We need to be confident that the effort teachers make will have a significant impact on teaching and learning.

"They must have a positive impact on children's learning and the teacher's teaching – they must make a difference to be worthwhile."

Shirley Clarke (1998: 2)

Literature review

success criteria as described in Clarke (2001) 'to make the children absolutely sure about what is in the teacher's mind as the criteria for judging their work'. Clarke's learning teams in Gateshead have found the use of success criteria effective in raising attainment, particularly with the lower attaining children;

'SC give a clear structure and focus children on success. Helped children with independent work. Had a huge impact on the less able children in that one teacher...was amazed at how the less able achieved so well – probably because teacher opened the children up for more of a challenge to which they responded well – exceeded teachers' expectations by making the SC accessible to them.'

Learning Team (2004) 'Assessment for Learning project'. WWW

http://www.shirleyclarke-education.org/learning_teams_update (26 June 2004)

Research questions

In order to answer the research question and make a judgement as to the impact on teaching and learning it was necessary for me to focus on two sub-questions.

Firstly, I wanted to find out the extent to which teachers' own professional learning was improved. As Black et al (2003) noted in their research into formative assessment;

“As the teachers in the project became more thoughtful ...they became increasingly dissatisfied with their practice... All these lessons ...created opportunities for students to reveal their own understanding of the criteria for success to their peers and then to improve it. But it is important to note that these opportunities did not arise naturally – they were the result of careful planning and structuring of the lesson by the teachers.”

This led to the following question being set;

What impact do Success criteria have on teachers' professional learning?

In order to judge the extent to which teachers' planning practices had altered, I took these key indicators from The Primary National Strategy;

‘Although the successful teacher knows that children’s learning is the priority, there can be a danger in believing that if all the planned tasks have been carried out, learning has happened. Focusing on learning at the planning stage means:

- *Being clear about the learning and teaching objectives in planning and sharing them with children, their parents and carers;*
- *Planning the key focus points for the teaching and the learning (the success criteria) and involving the children by making them aware of, and even part of, the creation of the agreed success criteria;*
- *Making sure that the context is designed to enable the learning objective to be fulfilled;*
- *Being confident to adapt the planning and teaching at any time if the learning objective, based on assessment in the lesson, is not being fulfilled.’*

Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years, Assessment for Learning(2004: 30)

The other key factor in this research project was finding out to what extent success criteria impact on the children's learning in writing lessons. Learning, however, is a complex process to judge against, with many influencing factors. For the sake of this project it was essential that I was able to define which aspects of learning I expected to see change in.

The Primary national Strategy has defined 12 key aspects of learning. In this paper I intend to focus on *motivation*. Teachers often cite motivation as the main factor which differentiates a successful writer from a not so successful one. Writing is a complex and time consuming skill, and only those children (and adults) that see it as a worthwhile, manageable and enjoyable task will persevere to create a really effective piece of writing.

So in this paper I intend to answer the second question;

What impact do Success criteria have on children's motivation to write?

To identify motivated pupils I will refer to indicators of motivation taken from the Primary National Strategy.

Children may indicate they can;

- *Sustain an activity for the intrinsic pleasure it provides;*
- *Carry out an activity to achieve an anticipated outcome;*
- *Plan, execute and finish an activity for the satisfaction of having created or learned something;*
- *Work for a reward;*
- *Set their own rewards;*

- *Recognise their achievements and celebrate them;*
- *Focus, shift and sustain their attention, resisting distractions when appropriate;*
- *Organise the resources they need to complete a task;*
- *Recognise how different learning opportunities or contexts affect their motivation.” Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years, Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning (2004: 46)*

Methodology

Research methods which involve teaching and learning are problematic. Once I'd established generic key indicators as outlined in the previous section, I needed to refine these and then decide how these could be observed. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil and teacher interviews would all be necessary in order to build up a comprehensive picture of change and development over time. Tabled below are the key indicators and methods of recording change I decided to use.

What impact do Success criteria have on teachers' professional learning?

If Success criteria had an impact on teachers' professional learning I would expect to see;

Indicator	Method	Details
Clear learning objectives (taken from NLS teaching objectives)	Short term planning scrutiny.	Collect samples of short term plans before and at the end of the research period.
An appropriate context for learning, which is carried over a 2 or 3-week unit (e.g. a report about the Romans)		Discussions with teachers/questionnaire, e.g. Has your approach to planning altered? Has your own knowledge and confidence in teaching writing developed?
Adaptation to short term plans (notes, post-its or changes)		
Marking which relates closely to the children's achievements and areas for improvement.	Scrutiny of work.	Collect samples of writing from target children at beginning and end of research period. Focus on teachers' comments and their impact on child's learning.

What impact do Success criteria have on children's motivation to write?

Using the indicators for motivation (PNS 2004: 46) I could record;

- The difference in sustaining writing through quantity of writing completed in a given time;
- Sustained attention within a writing lesson through lesson observations;
- Interviews with pupils to identify any development in their recognising and celebration of achievements.

Indicator	Method	Details
Sustain an activity for the intrinsic pleasure it provides.	Comparison of writing.	Written work sampled at beginning, middle and end of research period.
Sustain their attention, resisting distractions when appropriate.	Lesson observations	Target children observed. Record number of positive interactions with teacher, peers. Record number of off task behaviours. Observations at beginning and end of research period.
Recognise their achievements and celebrate them.	Pupil interviews.	Target pupils asked; Which aspects of writing are they good at? In which areas have they improved? How

		do they know? In which areas would they like to improve? Interviews beginning and end of research period.
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Data collecting methods

Each teacher choose 6 children whom they judged to be under-performing. For some classes this meant six children performing at below average expectations, whilst other teachers chose children who were performing at age-related expectations when higher attainment was expected. These became the target children about whom all the data was collected. Data was collected in a number of ways.

Lesson observation

Lessons before, during and at the end of the project were observed and pupil behaviour recorded. During the lessons I recorded the time on task or off task (with behaviours such as doodling, looking away or talking), how often children put up their hands, how often they were distracted (by other children or external events) and recorded any positive or negative interactions with the teacher (see Appendix 2.1 and 2.2). This was intended to give a picture of children's motivation and whether any change had been made over the time of the project.

This proved to be a useful record of the lesson, and was interesting for the teachers to reflect on the lesson afterwards. It is often difficult for teachers to recognise small signs of distraction or off task behaviour of one or two whilst teaching a whole class. On analysing the data I realised it was only necessary to focus on the number of distractions and off task behaviour. By counting the off task behaviour we can assume the remaining behaviour was on task. By counting the number of distractions I could make begin to make a judgement as to children's interest and motivation in the lesson. However the recording is entirely subjective – I decided whether children's behaviour was on task or off task. Whilst the children are writing this is relatively easy to judge, but for parts of the lesson, for example whilst they are *listening*, it is impossible to judge whether they are listening or daydreaming! Fiddling and doodling have been found to be essential for some children to aid their listening ability – so recording this behaviour as off task may be incorrect. So it is important to realise that this data could well be misleading.

Pupil interviews

The target pupils were interviewed after the first and last lesson observations. The questions I asked at the beginning of the project were;

Do you like writing?

Which aspects of writing are you good at? How do you know?

How would you like to improve your writing?

The children were interviewed as a group rather than individually as this would give them more confidence when speaking to a stranger. However I was also aware that their answers were influenced by the answers of others. It was also very difficult to speak to the group of Y1/2 children who found answering the questions quite tricky. At the end of the project I decided not to interview them in a 'formal' situation, but instead chatted to them whilst they were working in class. This proved to be more effective.

At the end of the project I asked;

Do you like writing?

Are you better writers now than when I visited in November?

Your teacher has been using success criteria. What do you think about it?

The children's answers were very useful and I was pleased with their honesty and reflectiveness. Their responses were crucial to the findings of the project.

Work samples

Examples of the children's work were collected with the intention of making comparisons in order judge children's enjoyment of writing (for key indicator - sustain an activity for the intrinsic pleasure it provides). This proved problematic however. The children were involved in many different types of writing, the amount of time they had to write varied and their enjoyment of different genre also meant that direct comparisons would be misleading. Whilst analysing the data all these variables were taken into account.

Teacher questionnaire

The teachers were asked to answer questions at the end of the project (see Appendix 3.1). The validity of questionnaires can sometimes be unreliable because respondents may not be willing to answer the questions. They might not wish to reveal the information or they might uncomfortable with answering honestly. It needs to be made clear that a negative response is just as useful as a more positive opinion. I was also well aware that I was adding to the workload of already busy teachers so tried to keep the questionnaire brief, where a more detailed questionnaire would've given a more detailed picture. I am extremely grateful that they all took the time to complete the questions and gave honest, thoughtful responses.

Data analysis

Tables to show number of distractions and off task behaviours of each child during the three observations.

Class 1*

Observation	Number of distractions			Number of off task behaviours		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Child 1	0	6	1	7	5	3
Child 2	0	Abs	3	6	Abs	4
Child 3	0	-	-	4	-	-
Child 4	0	-	-	4	-	-
Child 5	0	9	2	4	5	2
Child 6	0	1	1	1	0	1

* The organisation of this class changed during the observation periods, with a different teacher and groups being withdrawn.

Class 2

Observation	Number of distractions			Number of off task behaviours		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Child 1	6	0	0	2	1	0
Child 2	1	1	1	2	0	2
Child 3	1	1	2	2	0	0
Child 4	1	1	1	1	0	0
Child 5	0	2	1	1	0	0
Child 6	2	6	4	2	1	1

Class 3

Observation	Number of distractions			Number of off task behaviours		
	1	2	3*	1	2	3*
Child 1	6	0	0	6	4	0
Child 2	4	0	1	5	3	1
Child 3	5	0	0	3	4	0
Child 4	4	0	0	2	4	0
Child 5	6	0	2	4	4	1
Child 6	4	0	0	2	2	1

* This was not a full hour lesson observation.

Class 4

Observation	Number of distractions			Number of off task behaviours		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Child 1	6	0	6	8	8	1
Child 2	11	0	4	11	8	1
Child 3	6	0	0	4	5	1
Child 4	6	0	5	3	0	0
Child 5	3	0	0	2	1	3
Child 6	5	0	1	2	5	1

What does this data tell us?

Overall, the data seems to indicate that the number of distractions and off task behaviour fell within the target group over the period of study. It is interesting to focus on particular children to understand the impact on individuals.

In Class 2, for example, the data for Child 6 shows that the number of distractions and off task behaviour fell slightly by the third observation.

Looking closely at the lesson observations (see Appendix XXXX) we can discover that in the first lesson he had a combination of off task and distracted behaviour alongside high numbers of hands up and positive interactions. This shows, perhaps, an understanding of work with out the need or motivation to take part all the time. He was on task for the majority of the independent work, but after 5 minutes needed to leave his seat and check work with the teacher before continuing.

In the second observation, he was on task for the first 45 minutes of the lesson (the whole class session) but then became distracted six times during independent writing. In the third observation he was distracted twice, but avoided distractions on 3 occasions and remained on task for the entire thirty-minute independent writing session. This demonstrates a significant improvement in motivation, showing he is now able to;

- Sustain an activity for the intrinsic pleasure it provides;
- Carry out an activity to achieve an anticipated outcome;
- Plan, execute and finish an activity for the satisfaction of having created or learned something and;
- Focus, shift and sustain his attention, resisting distractions when appropriate.

The increase in motivation is not so easy to see in other classes, particularly in those classes where there were other changes taking place. In class 1 and class 3 some of the target children were withdrawn from the classroom for extra support or were being taught by a different teacher for part of the observation. This undoubtedly will have had an impact on the effectiveness of the action research and is reflected in the children's attitudes in the child interviews.

Pupil interviews

Class 1

When asked 'Do you like writing?' on the first interview, all children answered 'Yes' or 'A little bit'. It is interesting that, when asked the question again in April, two of the

children now answered 'No'. Likewise, in the first interview, all the children could name a text type they were good at. By April, a further two of the children answered 'I don't know' to the same question. Initially it seemed surprising that, despite the teachers' use of success criteria the children now appeared to have less information about their own abilities than before. Furthermore, when I asked 'Are you better writers now than when I came in November?' all the children answered 'No'. I believe it is significant that when I asked the final question 'Your teachers have been using Success criteria. What do you think about this?' three of the five children did not know what success criteria were! The Y6 children in this group were able to explain 'She means those checklist things' which finally elicited the following responses;

'I don't really use that'

'You can see what you haven't done – you can tick things off'

'If you forget to do something it reminds you.'

These children had been taught by two different teachers since the study began and it seemed that the way the teachers referred to, introduced and dealt with success criteria were different. It seems likely that this had had an effect on the impact the success criteria had had.

Class 2

When asked 'Do you like writing?' on the first interview 4 of the 6 children did not like writing long stories, but all enjoyed some forms of writing – 3 enjoyed spelling, 2 enjoyed 'bubble writing' and 2 also liked handwriting. On the second interview the answers were similar. When asked in the first interview if they were good at writing 5 of the 6 children thought of themselves as a good writer. 4 of those 5 gave handwriting as the reason they were good. They all saw handwriting as being the most important indicator of a good writer. In the second interview when I asked 'Are you a better writer than when I came in November?' the responses were extremely positive. Not only did they all answer 'Yes' (or 'Totally' or 'Definitely!') they were all able to give detailed information about the areas in which they had improved, for example;

'I write more interesting vocabulary'

'I write complex sentences...I use more conjunctions'

'My describing words are better and I remember what I've learnt in other lessons'

'I use the success criteria to edit my work at the end of each paragraph'

It was encouraging that the children were now considering the content of their writing as well as the handwriting or effort it took to write.

The answers to the question 'Your teacher has been using success criteria. What do you think about it?' were even more positive;

'Success criteria are very helpful. If you forget your ideas you look over and get your idea again or even more ideas.'

'When you forget things you read it and remember things like paragraphs. I look at them lots of times.'

'I use success criteria. They helped me a lot because if I read my work I set myself a target. I used success criteria today to make it more interesting and use more formal language'

The children were also keen to tell me about how the teacher uses success criteria to mark their work. They were motivated to achieve their success criteria as this led to team points and good comments from the teacher;

'When she reads our work she can see we've achieved our success criteria and we get team points.'

The teacher in this class had developed her use of success criteria so that the children now generated their own criteria in writing lessons. I asked the children whether they preferred having success criteria they had decided themselves or criteria which had been written by the teacher. All but one of the children preferred having their own criteria. They recognised the importance of understanding the terms and vocabulary involved and that 'sometimes teachers write something you don't understand'.

It was clear in this interview that the teacher and children had spent time talking about success criteria and that the children had become used to reflecting on their own progress. They understood the purpose of the success criteria and were now beginning to create, assess and improve their writing independently.

Class 3

This was the youngest class in the study so the second pupil interview was an informal talk during the lesson. During the first interview four of the children said they enjoyed writing. One said he liked writing at home more than at school as he gets 'peace and quiet'. The fifth child liked it 'a little bit' and also mentioned the noise in the classroom affecting his concentration. All of the children were able to talk about areas they would like to improve. In the third lesson observation, all the target children said that their writing had improved since I asked them last time. I asked about the success criteria. All of the children were able to explain in part what they were and how they helped;

'If you get stuck it will help you'

'It's something that tells you not to forget stuff – it helps you.'

These children had not got to the stage of generating their own success criteria. Instead the criteria were given to them on a poster before they began their independent writing tasks. However, they were involved in marking work alongside the teacher who had set aside time during the week to mark enlarged work as a whole class exercise. So, clearly there was some engagement with the success criteria, but at the moment their emphasis was clearly on checking and assessing work rather than to use them during the writing process.

Class 4

When asked 'Do you like writing?' all the children answered 'Yes'.

All children responded with a text type when asked 'What is your favourite thing about writing?' ie poems, stories, instructions. All children were able to think of something they were good at. Most knew because they had received team points whilst others attributed success with amount of effort eg 'I'm good at thinking up ideas. Ideas come quickly – other things I struggle with'. In the second interview, the answers were very similar – they all enjoyed writing. All the children thought they were better writers now that when we'd met in November. Whilst most recognised an increase in team points and positive teacher comments, one child attributed the improvement to success criteria;

'Before you came we didn't have success criteria. It helps you mark your own work and see what to do better.'

The answers to the question 'Your teacher has been using success criteria. What do you think about it?' were positive;

'Once I did a really bad piece of work, then my teacher told me the success criteria and then I did it really good.'

'It helps you to remember – you can flick back and look and put adjectives in or whatever.'

'The teacher asks us – *What do you think the success criteria could be?* and we have to really think. If we've done it we put a circle round it and then put an improvement prompt.'

'The success criteria is up in the classroom all the time to remind yourself while you're working. I look at them once when I start and then at the end, and about three times in the middle.'

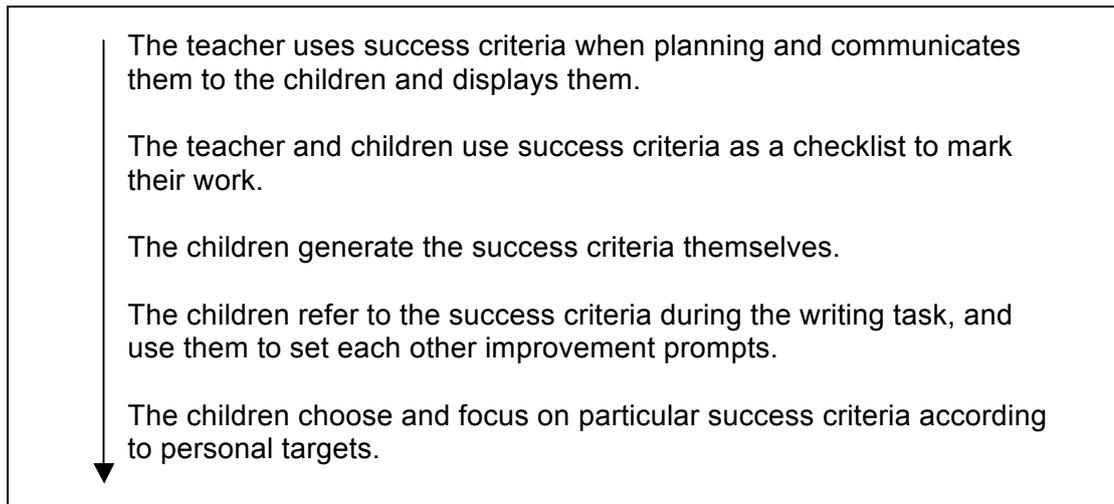
It was clear in this interview that the teacher and children had spent time talking about success criteria and that the children had become used to reflecting on their own progress. They understood the purpose of the success criteria and were now beginning to assess their own and others' work and improve independently.

What do these pupil interviews tell us?

The response from the pupils was mixed and their responses seemed to relate directly to the way in which the success criteria were presented to the class. Those children that spoke about the process with most enthusiasm were those which had had most involvement in the process. This backs up Shirley Clarke's opinion;

'The importance of inviting the children to create the success criteria ... is that it involves them still further in their own learning. They have been asked, effectively, to link the learning intention with the task instructions. They then have to decide how the two are synthesised to create success criteria – a much more challenging learning experience than simply being given the information.'

The pupil involvement could be roughly mapped on a 'scale of development' thus;



Work samples

It was intended that a comparison could be made between pieces of writing which could show children's ability to sustain an activity for the intrinsic pleasure it provides. However, as mentioned in the previous section, making a direct comparison of work completed before and at the end of the project would not be appropriate due to the amount of variable factors such as genre and length of time to write. Moreover, the children themselves were able to identify text types that they were motivated to write and those they were not.

It is possible though to see areas of development in the children's writing which lead me to concluding that using success criteria does enable the children to; 'plan execute and finish an activity for the satisfaction of having created or learned something' in the sense that there is clear evidence in their work of accurate and more critical reflection and evaluation, leading to determination to improve. Take Child 5 in Class 4 for example. The children in this class had been asked to evaluate their writing since September using a traffic light system where (in the words

of the children) *'you put green if you understand it, orange if it is sort of OK and red if you don't know something or if you didn't really understand'*. When I first visited in November, Child 5 had marked his writing with a green mark and when I asked him why he explained;

“ Because of the words I put in it...I put good words in it.”

The writing (Appendix XXXX) is short (showing, perhaps a lack of 'intrinsic pleasure') and is one complete sentence. The teacher felt that this child was under attaining and was capable of much better writing. Later on, in his writing in March, there is a noticeable improvement. Here he has been encouraged to show (using a code of dotted rings and circles) where he has met the success criteria. This is clearly not only a longer, but more interesting piece of writing showing elements of enjoyment and pleasure in the word choices and sentence structure. He gave himself a green mark for this writing also. Further development is evident in April (see Appendix XXXX), when he has written a poem. On the first day he has circled his use of similes and adjectives (the success criteria), given himself an improvement prompt – *To describe words and use adverbs* and graded himself 'O' for orange (sort of OK!). The following day he is able to redraft and improve the poem before finally achieving a 'G' for green.

In other classes the development had not gone so far. Child 6 from Class 2, for example also evaluated himself as having succeeded in his work in February (Appendix XXX) yet the letter is short and contains few details. Comparing this with a formal letter he wrote in April, we can see his writing has improved. In this writing activity he was asked to choose his own success criteria from a whole class set. Checking against the criteria he chose, he gave himself a 'thumbs up', meaning he had met his criteria. This wasn't true, he clearly has not written a conclusion and has missed some punctuation – he has possibly achieved seven out of the nine criteria he set himself. So although his writing has improved, and he appears to be more motivated to write longer and more interesting pieces, he is not demonstrating the critical and reflective skills of Child 5.

What do the work samples tell us?

Overall, all the target children demonstrated some improvement in writing, either through the length of completed task, or by the quality of the writing. Most children – about 80% - made progress against National curriculum levels, a third of a level's progress for most whilst some children (four from the twenty-four) had improved by two thirds to a whole level. However, this alone does not point to an increase in motivation.

The children that made greatest improvement in their writing were those that were self-evaluating more accurately. This was most evident in the classes where the children were involved in peer or self marking against success criteria. It seems that by becoming more critical of their own work they became more (rather than less) motivated to improve.

Teacher questionnaires

Class1

Class2

The teacher had noticed an increase in motivation of four of the six target children. One child in particular was described as *'Highly motivated'*. Another was described as;

‘..now more aware of what is expected of him. He knows what to write. He still has difficulties but his confidence has improved when tackling written tasks.’

The teacher had noticed that two other children were on task for longer sessions. Overall she felt the children had gained a more concrete understanding of the features of text types and that they were more aware of sentence and grammar features, although this was not always evident in assessment tasks.

When asked about her own professional learning she noticed that her teaching had become more focussed on the technical aspects of writing – and recognised a need to balance these aspects with exciting and interesting features of language. She noticed an impact in both the planning and assessing of writing lessons;

“I now plan for the children to be more involved in establishing their own success criteria for their writing..I give the children more opportunities to assess their work against their own success criteria and redraft their work afterwards before I get involved myself in working through their writing. My marking is clearly focused against 2 or 3 elements of the success criteria.”

Class 3

The teacher in class 3 did not notice any changes to the target groups motivation and recognised that improvements in their writing were probably more as a result of intervention programmes than success criteria. However, there had been a noticeable change in her teaching and planning.

When teaching she had become more focussed and emphasised the features of writing. The questions both she and the Teaching Assistant asked were directed by the success criteria, which she felt had had an impact on the children’s writing. She found that thinking about success criteria when planning enabled her to break learning intentions down into more manageable steps and think through the process her children would need to go through to achieve. The success criteria have also enabled her to structure her feedback with a purpose beyond ‘Well done’. With these younger children it has been difficult for her to find the opportunity to provide children with ‘closing the gap’ statements but recognises that her weekly system of whole class marking against success criteria is beginning to benefit the higher attaining writers.

Class 4

The teacher has noticed an improvement in the children’s motivation, although he believes motivation still depends heavily upon the genre.

“Using success criteria and marking their own work against them gives all the children an element of success...when they mark their own work they all gain an element of success and it helps them to devise improvement prompts. It focuses their thoughts about the writing by having to devise their own success criteria.”

He feels that using success criteria has altered his approach to the Literacy hour. Allowing the children to devise their own success criteria takes time and to ensure they are able to do it he “*drops hints*” in his teaching input. This has altered his approach to planning as he needs to now consider the learning objective and success criteria before planning his teaching input ensuring it is more focussed. He makes time for much more assessment by the children and his marking has become much more focussed.

The changes he has made to his Literacy teaching have led to significant changes to the whole-school approach to Literacy and other subjects.

What do the teacher questionnaires tell us?

Most teachers found that using success criteria had had some impact on their children's motivation to write. This was generally due, not to the success criteria alone, but alongside the opportunity for self-assessment. It had least impact on the motivation of the year 1 and year 2 children and in this class the self-assessment also proved to be more problematic. The greatest impact appears to be on the children with higher ability than attainment – children who had been 'coasting'. All the teachers recognised that the success criteria had had an impact on their planning, teaching and feedback. Most teachers were now allowing more time for the children to reflect before writing (in order to generate success criteria) and after writing to assess and redraft. All the teachers recognised that they were providing more focussed teaching, questioning and feedback.

Conclusions

As outlined in the Abstract, I intended to research one main question;

How does the use of success criteria impact on the teaching and learning of writing?

which was then broken down into two sub-questions;

What impact do Success criteria have on children's motivation to write?

What impact do Success criteria have on teachers' professional learning?.

What impact do Success criteria have on children's motivation to write?

The data collected show mixed results. However, the main findings were;

- Evidence showed that children using success criteria became more likely to avoid distractions, sustain a writing activity for longer and be more aware of their achievements.
- Children showed stronger signs of motivation to write in those classes where the children were involved in generating their own success criteria and assessing their own work.
- Children found the success criteria useful when they were used regularly and consistently by all their teachers and when all the teachers used the same terms and vocabulary when discussing success criteria. These included terms such as Checklist, Success criteria or Things to remember.
- The greatest impact on motivation was seen in those children working at or slightly below age-related expectation. The least impact on motivation was seen in children writing at well-below-expected levels in writing.

What impact do Success criteria have on teachers' professional learning?

The data from teacher questionnaires, looking at plans and observing lessons clearly shows a change in teachers' planning, delivery and assessment of writing lessons.

Reflections

Being part of the project has meant that I have persevered to make the use of success criteria successful for the children.