



What happens when learners set their own success criteria?

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What did you do?

With my S3 geography class of 16 pupils I spent 6 weeks with a focus on the success criteria within the lesson and referring to it at the start, during and end. Pupils also had a mix of teacher led, class led and individually led success criteria.

After the starter of each lesson, I spent 5 minutes explaining what we were doing in the lesson and why. This helped to set the scene. The first 2 lessons I set the success criteria. We paused the lesson once during the lesson and again at the end to reflect on the success criteria and give it a tick once the pupils felt like they have been successful. During week 2 after I explained the lesson the whole class created a shared success criteria and this was reflected on like the first week.

Week 3 and 4 saw the pupils set their own success criteria to suit their level of learning and their own individual targets. In week 5 I went back to setting the success criteria to help them develop examples of what it looks like before week 6 when they set their own.

As highlighted previously, the setting of their own success criteria was not the only target but also to address the success criteria at least twice during the lesson.

Why did you do it?

Success looks different to every individual in a class. Although a success criteria can be differentiated e.g. 'All, Most, Some' (Crichton and Medaid, 2016) this splits the class into 3 groups. By asking pupils to set their own success criteria they are being in control of their learning and eliminates grouping pupils.

I often find that pupils are not engaged in a lesson during the success criteria. This is arguably the most important part of the lesson as it allows them to know what success looks like and therefore the purpose and direction of the lesson (Black and Wiliam, 1998).

Furthermore, there is a need to raise engagement in the 2021-2022 School Improvement Plan and therefore I thought that this could stem from clear direction in the lesson. If a pupil can see they are being successful, there is an increased chance for them to stay engaged as they are feeling accomplished.

Finally, from reflecting on my lessons I wanted to make them more pupil led. This links to engagement as if the learning is coming from them, they could be more likely to strive to achieve the target they have set themselves.

What has happened as a result?

From my observations the pupils became more engaged in the lesson. They would ask more questions about the lesson and would stay on task better to make sure they could put a tick next to the success criteria.

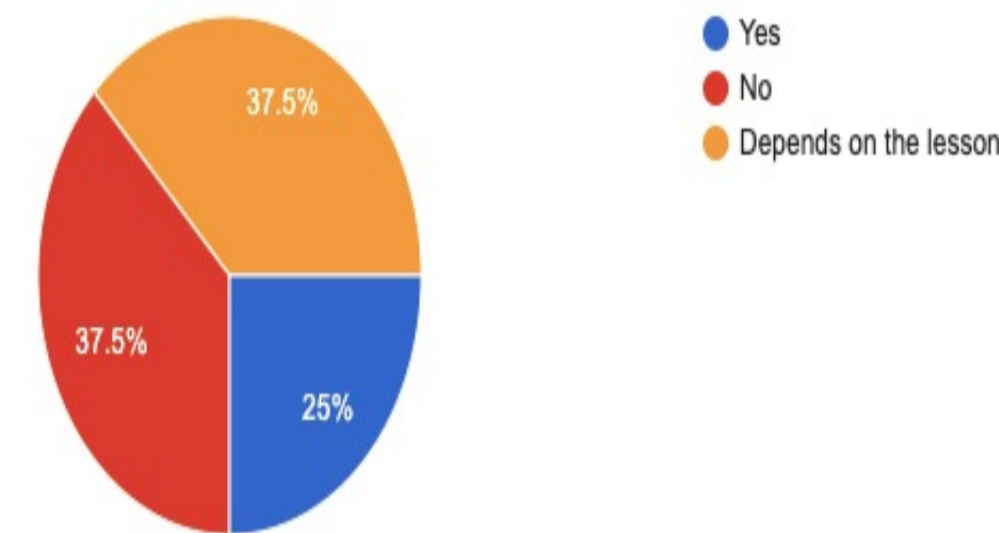
During the first lesson I asked the class 'what is a success criteria?' and the first response I received was 'something every teacher has on their board at the beginning of the lesson.'

At the end of the 6 weeks, I asked the same question to the same pupil. He said, 'something to help us know if we are learning and if we have achieved the learning intention.'

The class filled out a Google Form at the end of the 6 weeks and an example of 2 of the questions are below.

Do you prefer setting your own success criteria?

16 responses

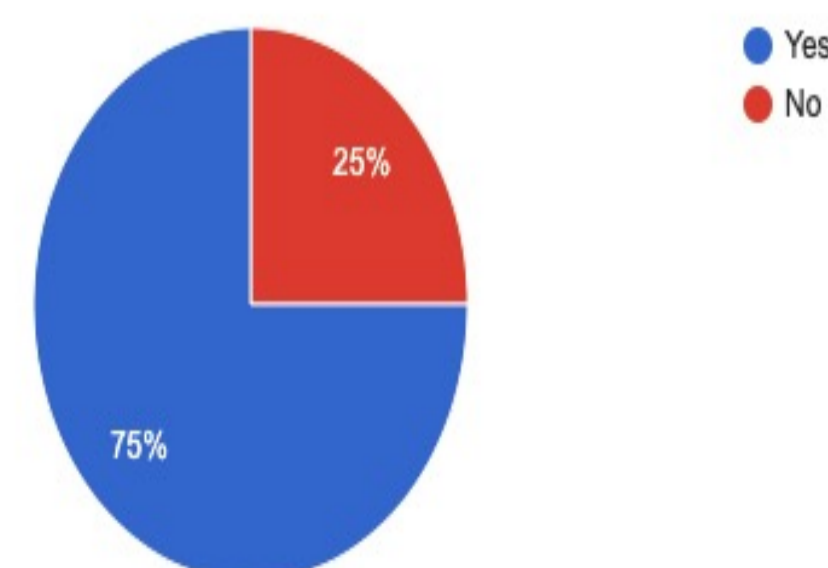


Although only 25% selected 'yes', I believe that this may have increased overtime as it was a different type of learning for all the class. 75% in total did not object to setting their own success criteria.

The pupils found setting their own success criteria hard. This is understandable as although I told them what we were doing in the lesson it was hard for some of them to imagine. 1 pupil said, 'how will I know how to be successful if I don't know what I am doing'. I learnt throughout this enquiry that my delivery of 'setting the scene' needed to be very clear so that the pupils could see the path. The 'depends on the lesson' response was because some lessons were easier to write a success criteria for and for me to explain than others.

Do you view the success criteria more important than you did previously?

16 responses



The answer to this question and from observations demonstrated how engaged the pupils were. I wanted this enquiry to help pupils in their future learning and for them to gain a deeper understanding for the purpose of the success criteria.

I found this enquiry very useful not just for the pupils learning but also for my teaching practice. As a result of this enquiry, I believe the class have become more independent in their targets and I have become clearer with my instructions regarding the direction of the lesson.

What are the implications?

This is a small class of 16 pupils and therefore this gave me time at the start of the lesson to explain the direction of the lesson and therefore allow them to think of their own success criteria. The class of 16 has no behavioral or obstacles which could cause disruption. If I did this again, I would use a bigger class of 30 to see what the effects were.

I am going to continue to implement the success criteria into different parts of the lesson as from this enquiry I have realised the benefit of putting it in throughout the lesson rather than just the beginning and end as it allows the pupils to see the direction they are going in and to reflect on the lesson so far. It keeps them engaged as they do not become 'lost' in the lesson and therefore this will hopefully aid in raising attainment, another factor in the School Improvement Plan.

I will also include pupils setting their own success criteria for lessons which have a clear direction as it is a different style of learning and enables pupils to develop metacognitive skills.

References

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Contact Details

