

Self-assessment: Mark schemes and checklists



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What's the idea?

Activities where students assess their own work, using mark schemes and checklists, to support learning.

What does it mean?

This is a feedback method where students assess their own work using checklists and mark schemes.

This form of self-assessment can empower students by shifting the focus away from teachers (and examiners) as 'owners' of knowledge. It gives students a deeper understanding of what is required from them, as well as a sense of ownership over their learning. A thorough understanding of mark schemes also means students can approach challenging tasks with confidence and independence because they know what is being asked of them and how to deliver it.

What are the implications for teachers?

Students must be explicitly trained in self-assessment; it is a skill that needs to be mastered over time. Here are two resources that can help:

Checklists and 'student friendly' mark schemes. Translate official mark schemes into accessible, 'student friendly versions'. These are useful to introduce and develop self-assessment skills before eventually engaging with official exam board language.

Start by unpicking an assessment objective and use this to create a checklist of criteria for students to identify in their own work. These can be presented as questions, for example, 'Have I given an example to support my point?' Once students become confident with the modelled lists, they can be differentiated and developed in more depth.

Official mark schemes. These can be quite daunting at first, but a

solid understanding of examiners' language can be transformative for student confidence and performance.

Unpick them together: identify keywords and phrases which are repeated and compare the descriptive words used at each level. For example, you can help students grasp the difference between 'clear understanding' (level 4) and 'thoughtful developed consideration' (level 5) in English Literature GCSE.

Collect examples of student work which exemplify each level and encourage students to practise applying the mark scheme to these. Try using highlighters to text-mark or colour-code mark schemes or ask students to translate them into their own words.

Top tips:

Once you have taught the language of official mark schemes, use it as a regular feature of classroom dialogue and questioning. The more fluent students become with this language, the better.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Andrade H and Valtcheva A (2009) Promoting learning and achievement through self-assessment. *Theory Into Practice* 48(1): 12–19.
- » Didau D (2011) Formative assessment and the mark-scheme. Available at: <https://learningspy.co.uk/assessment/formative-assessment-and-the-mark-scheme/> (accessed 26 October 2018).
- » Shepard LA (2005) Linking formative assessment to scaffolding. *Educational Leadership* 63(3): 66–70.
- » Sherrington T (2017) *The Learning Rainforest*. Suffolk, UK: John Catt Educational Ltd.