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CASE STUDY REPORT

Planning for progression using the Support for Writing materials

Liz Irvin

This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to use the 'Support for Writing' materials to ensure progress through whole class and guided precision teaching, within a unit of work, to support teachers with resources, strategies and activities for target groups of pupils.

Aims: The main aim of this CPD was to use the 'Support for Writing' materials to ensure progress through whole class and guided precision teaching, with the intention of developing resources, strategies and activities to support teachers with target groups of pupils.

Methods: Participants were teachers from various schools who attended CPD sessions to learn about Support for Writing materials, APP and AfL principles, and how to use them to improve pupil learning. Methods used included CPD sessions, gap task contributions, teacher assessment, pupil work, and teacher evaluations to measure progress and impact on learning. Resources such as Primary Strategy Consultant support, websites, and Power Points were used to support teachers.

Findings: The main findings of this CPD are that teachers have developed greater understanding and confidence in teaching text structure, organization, and paragraphing, and that pupils have become more engaged and motivated to write with greater detail and confidence.

Implications: The findings of this CPD suggest that using Support for Writing materials, APP and AfL principles, and visual literacy, drama and speaking and listening activities can help motivate pupils to write confidently and with growing independence. This has had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organisation and leadership.

This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.

Keywords: Primary education; Assessment and target setting; Creativity; Transfer and transition; English - reading; English - speaking and listening; English - writing

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

This continuing professional development (CPD) was developed in response to nationally and locally identified concerns about pupil progress at upper Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The intention was to use the 'Support for Writing' materials to ensure progress through whole class and guided precision teaching, within a unit of work. We wanted to develop the gap task 'Planning for Progression' booklet we had begun in 2007-8 further, to support teachers with resources, strategies and activities for target groups of pupils.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Head of school improvement
- Headteacher
- Middle leader
- National Strategies consultant
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- SIP (School Improvement Partner)
- Subject leader
- Teacher

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- Assessment and target setting
- Creativity
- Transfer and transition
- English - reading
- English - speaking and listening
- English - writing

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

- Enhance teacher subject knowledge through practical application of the 'Support for Writing' resources, Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) and Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles.
- Provide a context for writing creatively to improve writing skills in Strand 10, Assessment Focus (AF) 3 and AF4.
- Motivate pupils to write confidently and with growing independence using visual literacy, drama and speaking and listening activities.

What were your success criteria?

Teachers to be able to:

- identify a target group of children
- plan and teach a unit of work matched to their personalised learning needs
- monitor their progress
- measure the impact on learning
- present their findings across the LA.

Pupils to be able to:

- present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events (AF3)
- construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs (AF4)

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Pupils' work

Describe the CPD approaches you used

CPD Outline

Part 1 Content - QualityFirst Teaching; APP; Support for Writing; Precision Intervention; Set Gap Task

Part 2 - Participants to undertake Gap Task in school

Part 3 Content - Gap Task feedback/discussions; Blooms Taxonomy (developing reading comprehension); The Teaching Sequence Bubbles; The Writing Quadrant; Talk for Writing

During the CPD, teachers explored the teaching approaches listed above. They identified which approaches would be most appropriate to use with their identified target group, and have the greatest impact on their writing outcomes. The teachers were fully involved in the activities, as "the pupil" to demonstrate the effectiveness of varied teaching approaches.

We (consultants) provided the resources to support the units of work.

We provided opportunities for participants to network and share good practice.

We supported teachers in improving planning for writing using the Primary Framework.

Gap Task

At the end of CPD Part 3, we collected gap task contributions from the teachers. These included samples of pupils work, teachers planning, completed APP guidelines, photographs, interactive whiteboard flipcharts and any other relevant materials produced by teachers for their chosen unit. Teachers also provided a completed gap task proforma.

The proforma asked: "which group was identified and why; what they did and what the impact on learning had been; how the task could be changed to improve learning in the future."

The gap task contributions were collated for each year group and sent for printing. All contributions provided were included in the three year group volumes and the proformas introduced each individual school's section.

Teachers were also asked to consider how they would use the SfW materials in their future planning and teaching.

So that teachers could share their contributions, a CD was also produced and attached to the books for each year group.

The CDs will enable teachers to personalise the resources with ease, so that they match their pupils learning needs.

The content of each year group booklet is the original work from the schools and has not been altered in any way.

What CPD materials, research or expertise have you drawn on?

Primary Strategy Consultant support

Who provided you with support?

- Leading teacher

How were you supported?

Prior to Part 3 of the CPD, a Lead teacher and an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) were asked to use the Support for Writing materials within a unit of work of their choice.

They presented the teaching approaches they used and the impact they had on pupils' learning.

Impact

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

The focus on an unfamiliar person from history eg Grace Darling or Walter Tull:

- Engaged pupils by starting with a picture
- Pupils working co-operatively - use of KWL grids; QUADS; Enquiry
- Use of "post-it paragraphing" to organise notes
- Explicit, relevant and appropriate links across the curriculum
- Gradual development of the teaching sequence providing opportunities to talk, question, research then write.
- Pupil curiosity and eagerness to be a 'detective', to discover the character in the picture, their life and importance in history
- Providing opportunities to use a range of drama techniques to improve writing

To summarise, a quote from a Year 3 Teacher:

The children were engaged from the start. It was clear they felt full ownership over their learning as they wanted to know more about the person. Breaking each step down into sections, which were then easily adapted to fit the target, allowed not only myself but the children to see the links, and take steps to meet the target, being aware of why they were doing it.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Quotes from teachers:

The children independently and confidently wrote their own information text using paragraphs.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the unit of work because it worked so well with their topic work. We saw them using their literacy skills in their other work.

The majority of children are still paragraphing in their writing and have a clear idea why they are doing it.

Children very excited and motivated, lots of good quality discussion, questioning and answers.

Much more detail from boys with excellent descriptive and technical vocabulary used.

More reluctant writers were keen to write and to improve language.

By the writing stage, the children wanted to write because their confidence had built up and they had a bank of knowledge to use.

Children who were reluctant speakers were more willing to share their thoughts.

The children have also begun to write in paragraphs in other units of work.

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

As this LA CPD focused on a unit of work and its teaching approaches, evidence of impact on learning is not immediate. But the materials teachers brought to Day 3 provided evidence of impact on pupil learning.

ON the Summary page are sample extracts from the year group school gap task books. We thank Brookside Primary School, Etchells Primary School, and St Mary's (Marple Bridge) Primary School Stockport for sharing their contributions on this website.

What has been the impact on teaching?

Greater understanding and confidence in teaching text structure, organisation and paragraphing.

Strengthened planning opportunities, making relevant and appropriate curriculum links for writing

Greater impact on learning was evident when the teachers had identified a target group and taught to their specific learning needs

Increased teacher demonstration writing

Growing use and familiarity with the Primary Strategy Framework site

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

Quotes from Teachers:

The Steps for Learning helped with differentiation and scaffolding of AfL for children so that they knew their next steps more explicitly.

Questioning strategies for developing comprehension and guided reading.

Using post-its to build up ideas then transferring these to create sections/paragraphs.

Making teaching exciting again! Step by step ideas for building writing.

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from planning
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

There is evidence from teacher evaluations, discussions and the gap taskbooklets of teachers:

- greater focus on planning and learning in the reading and writing AFs identified through APP
- use of Support for Writing
- use of Text Types
- use of Steps in Learning
- use of writing targets linked to Strands 9, 10 and 11 and objectives for differentiation
- use of activities to support learning eg KWL grid, post-it notes, conscience alley, hot seating, Photos

as stimulus for writing, etc.

Evidence from the 'Planning for Progression' books show:

- the use of ICT eg IWB flipcharts
- curriculum links made with DT; History; Science; Geography
- use of APP guidelines
- use of a range of planning
- adaptation of unit to use Support for Writing with a Narrative focus
- pupils note-making; photographic evidence; pupil targets.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

Shared understanding of expectations and outcomes in schools across the LA as part of a three-year developmental model:

- 2007-8 focused CPD and gap task with Yrs 1, 3 and 5
- 2008-9 focused CPD and gap task with Yrs 2, 3 and 4
- 2009-10 focused CPD and gap task with Yrs 1 and 2 together, Yrs 4 and 5 together leading to the embedding of key pedagogies in teaching and learning to raise standards in writing across the primary phase.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

There is a growing culture of sharing practice between colleagues across the LA.

The gap task has taken on "a life of its own!"

Teachers eagerly contribute, await its publication and delivery of their personal copy of the Gap Task Booklet to share in school.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

The entire CPD is part of a strategic LA approach to raising standards over 3 years. Supply funding is available for gap task when a participant attends the Part 3 session. All participants are expected to contribute to the gap task booklet - you don't receive a copy unless you contribute.

Acknowledgement of contribution is recognised in the booklet with the participants name and their school.

Teachers liked that colleagues had given permission for them to 'magpie' their ideas, resources, planning, IWB flipcharts, etc. from the gap task booklets, relevant to their year group.

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

- Websites previously listed and CPD
- Power Points from Yrs 2 and 4.

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- 'Planning for Progression' Gap task booklets
- Websites previously listed
- CPD Power Points from Yrs 2, 3, 4
- 'What works well' proforma for participants to complete which included sections on: Which group did you identify?; Why was this group identified?; What did you?; What was the impact?; If you used the SfW

materials again, how would you use them?

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

- Secure funding and time to ensure the gap task can be fully completed by teachers.
- Identify year groups for CPD.
- Invite schools to take part in CPD.
- Set a CPD content outline and expectations of participation.
- Set aside time for planning, acquiring and collating resources.
- Set aside time for preparing, organising and publishing costs of the year group books.

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

Third year of the LA strategy offers specific CPD to Years 1 and 2 together and Years 4 and 5 together building on the Support and Talk for Writing materials.

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Part 3 Gap task proforma
- Year 2 CPD Part 1
- Year 2 CPD Part 2
- Year 4 CPD Part 2
- Year 4 CPD Part 1
- Year 2 sample Gap Task Book contribution
- Year 4-5 sample Gap Task Book contribution
- Year 3 sample Gap Task Book contribution

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About 'What Works Well'

This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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