



CASE STUDY REPORT

Essex Lesson Study: Improving writing through interactive learning/teaching with an emphasis on ICT

Iffat Sardharwalla

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 improve writing skills in a school by introducing Lesson Study, using AfL and APP, integrating ICT, and providing resources from the Primary National Strategy.

Aims: The main aim of this development work was to improve writing skills in Year 3/4 by using Lesson Study, AfL and APP, integrating ICT, and providing resources from the Primary National Strategy.

Methods: The participants included a Headteacher, Middle Leader, National Strategies consultant, Senior Leadership Team, School Improvement Partner, Subject Leader, and Teacher. They worked together to improve writing skills in Year 3/4. Methods used included Lesson Study, use of AfL and APP for levelling and target setting, use of ICT, Take Five activities, and use of resources from the Primary National Strategy.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that Lesson Study has had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organisation and leadership. It has improved confidence in writing, enjoyment of learning, ICT skills, and self-evaluation. Test results and periodic assessments have shown that the target group is working at age-related expectations.

Implications: The findings suggest that Lesson Study has had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organization and leadership. It has improved confidence, enjoyment, and ICT skills, as well as test results. It has also increased teacher confidence in AfL and APP, and improved the classroom learning environment.

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; Cross-agency working; Leadership; Self evaluation and review; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL); English - reading; English - speaking and listening; English - writing

Introduction

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

School identified writing was as a weak area after analysing the data at the end of 2008/9. The school has been increasingly playing catch-up for the KS2 National Curriculum tests in Year 6. Headteacher felt that with support in Year3/4 the children would have a sound foundation to build on.

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
- Cross-agency working
- Leadership
- Self evaluation and review
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)
- English - reading
- English - speaking and listening
- English - writing

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Use of Lesson study to:

- Enhance Teaching Style: Knowledge, understanding and confidence in teaching interactively and integrating ICT in daily lessons
- Enhance Learning Styles: Children to experience and use a range of learning styles including ICT
- Assess rigorously (AfL and APP) to inform planning and learning/teaching
- Make good use of APP to allow children to take responsibility for their own learning by setting own individual targets
- Monitor that children are receiving regular feedback on the progress they are making and how to achieve their next steps in learning
- Improve classroom learning environment, including resources, to effectively support teaching and learning

What were your success criteria?

- Essex-based CPD for Strategic Support Teacher (SST) and Partner Teacher
- Lesson Study to be introduced in Y3/4 class
- Classroom learning environment e.g. colourful interactive displays, vocabulary, strategies

- Interactive resources and ICT integrated well in daily learning and teaching
- Take Five activities being used effectively as Early Morning Work linked to the genre being studied
- Use of Materials from National Strategies (Primary Frameworks)
- Teacher confidence in the use of AfL and APP for levelling and target setting
- Enjoyment of learning throughout the classroom and improvement in the children's self confidence and raised self esteem
- Children begin to self and peer evaluate and begin to set individual target setting with support
- Whole School mapping grids and Pupil tracking grids show that the target group is working at age-related expectations
- Impact on the whole class
- Underachievers (including SEN) moving towards age-related expectations
- Gifted and Able making above the expected progress

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

- Learning walks / study visits
- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupils' work
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

1, Lesson Study

- Implementation of Lesson Study and use of learning conversation to inform planning of learning and teaching, target setting, and assessment.

2. Assessment and Target setting:

- Implementation of Whole School Attainment Maps to follow children's progress across the whole primary school. Use of Summative and Formative assessment at key points to check progress.
- Implementation, understanding and rigorous use of AfL and APP to identify gaps in children's knowledge and to personalise learning
- Implementation of APP for individual target setting by teacher and children.

3. Learning & Teaching

- Support with planning and resources
- Implementation of Visual Literacy
- Integrating speaking and listening effectively
- Sentence level work: Effective use of Punctuation pyramid
- Spelling: effective use of spelling strategies and games
- Integration of ICT in the daily learning and teaching

4. Provision of Resources (including ICT):

- How to use and find resources from the Primary National Strategy material to support teaching and learning
- Collection of BFI clips

- APP and Afl resources (PowerPoint for writing; Unit plans with links to APP – reading and writing)
- Simplified version of Punctuation pyramid
- Spelling games and investigations and how to implement in class
- Progression in text types and Success criteria for genre

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

Leadership Pathways Programme (Leading through influence, Data & Beyond, Creative Resource Management)

Who provided you with support?

- Middle leader
- Senior management
- Subject leader

How were you supported?

- Funding from Essex Local Authority including Laptop
- Initial training by Essex Team and continual support throughout the year
- Support by the Headteacher, SLT and Governors to develop the role
- Support from Headteacher at Rivenhall Primary School

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

- Children's confidence in Writing has improved
- Enjoyment of learning – Writing sessions are seen as fun time
- Children more confident when approaching writing tasks and Early Morning Take Five activities
- Children learning to take responsibility for their own learning: APP is being used by children, with support, for setting individual targets
- Impact on test results

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Children's confidence has risen in writing and their enjoyment is clear by the fact that they look forward to their writing sessions. They have built skills of self evaluation and are able to set their own targets as such taking the ownership of their learning. Their ICT skills have enhanced as has their independent and shared learning skills. Their speaking and listening skills and working together skills have developed and apparent during group sessions. Enjoyment of learning together with the raised confidence and the skills gained, have resulted in improvement in writing - both quality and quantity. Writing is now more imaginative. Impact has also been on handwriting, spelling and reading.

The impact of the Lesson Study has been in all target children now working at their age related level and some have even exceeded the expectations (QCA; APP).

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

From Pupils

- "I love working on the computer. It is so much quicker"
- "It was such fun today. My imaginary animal was cool and I called it elegiranail!"
- "I can write so much better now. I love it when we work together because it gives me so many more

ideas”

- “Things that help me write well are: computers, working with others, pictures, DVDs”
- “When are you coming in next to teach us”

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Learning walks / study visits
- Observation outcomes
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Pupil observations, ‘Pupil perceptions of writing’ and class work shows that children are more confident and happy when approaching writing tasks. Outcomes from both tests data (QCA) and periodic assessments using APP support these observations.

2/3 level progress = 67% achieved the ‘End of year predictions’ with 17% exceeding expectations

From End of Yr3 to End of Yr 4

- One level progress = 33%
- 2/3 level progress = 67%
- Exceeded expectation = 17%

What has been the impact on teaching?

- Lesson Study created a positive learning and teaching environment
- AfL and APP being used effectively for planning, learning/teaching and target setting
- Learning and teaching is more interactive with emphasis on children talk
- ICT is being integrated well in learning and teaching
- Take Five activities being used effectively to improve sentence level work as well as to make children more enthusiastic about writing
- Plenary being used more effectively to consolidate and reinforce learning objectives and success criteria
- Classroom learning environment more interactive including vocabulary

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

From Teachers (In-reach and Outreach)

- "Dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of the children in our care, and is receptive and keen to adopt new ideas and resources. "
- "Keen to help members of staff develop their subject knowledge and is happy to contribute whenever possible. "
- "Is focused and driven in relation to overall school performance, and demonstrates a desire for the school to improve."
- "Regularly shares ideas and resources to do so with other staff members, and is always approachable should you wish to discuss matters further."

- "Regularly promotes best practise with and supports others in strengthening their own teaching."
- "The impact of the lesson study was very positive in raising self-esteem and enjoyment of learning for the target group and the whole class. This impacted on achievement which exceeded expectations."
"
- "She helped me to consider how a child's emotional state can impact on learning and gave me advice on how to discuss this with the children, which again has had a positive impact on their learning."
"
- "She has inspired me through her enthusiasm, ability to integrate ICT to enhance teaching and learning and generously sharing her interactive 'tried and tested' teaching and learning ideas and resources. "
- "She is very approachable and always offers support and encouragement to try out new ideas and develop others pedagogy."

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Partner teacher more confident in

- Integrating ICT into daily learning and teaching
- Using games and investigations for spelling
- Using strategies including punctuation pyramids to improve sentence level work
- Using dedicated time effectively for Take Five activities by linking them with the genre being studied to improve sentence and/or paragraph work and to reinforce genre
- Using APP and AfL materials for levelling class and test work and using these to set whole class, group, and individual targets

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

- Awareness of School Leadership of Lesson Study and its impact on school attainment and achievements
- Inter-school Personal Development Plan for Lesson Study which is being developed across the school
- ICT is being integrated across the school in all areas of the curriculum
- Learning & Teaching has become more interactive
- Learning environment becoming more child friendly and interactive.
- AfL and APP is being used across the school

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Lesson study records and visit notes illustrate the impact on the leadership and how working together has had a positive impact on school organisation.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- Lesson Study Approach to learning and teaching, where everyone involved is a learner
- Support from the Headteacher and the willingness of the partner teacher to integrate change in the daily learning and teaching

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

- Primary National Strategy material to support teaching and learning

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

CPD sessions by Local Authority Curriculum Adviser: Essex Team, Mathematics & Literacy Consultants

- Leadership Pathways Programme (Leading through influence, Data & Beyond, Creative Resource Management)
- Resources from: Local Authority Curriculum Adviser: Essex Team, Mathematics & Literacy Consultants
- Research: 'The Key', teacher.net, Dfes Standard site, TES, and a range of Literacy websites

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

- Discuss with Headteacher and the SLT
- Data analysis to identify the Year groups or classes
- Data analysis to identify target groups
- CPD for teacher taking on the project
- Identify staff who may benefit from Lesson Study
- Contact the Local Authority Curriculum Adviser: Essex Team, Mathematics & Literacy Consultants
- Contact the schools which has already taken part in the Lesson Study for advice and resources

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

- Build on SST role through continuing it in another school
- Implement Lesson Study more fully in own school
- CPD of teacher in own school
- Share interactive resources in Literacy with staff through school insets
- Share ideas and resources with other schools by inviting them to come and see our school at work.

Supplementary Materials

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

- Example lesson plan - Read, analyse and write Easter haikus
- Example lesson plan - To develop imaginary characters for a fantasy setting
- Magical creatures sheet 1
- Magical creatures sheet 2
- Super heroes presentation
- Lesson Study Record Example 1
- Lesson Study Record example 2
- SST visit notes example 1
- SST visit notes example 2
- Copy of initial pupil perceptions

- Copy of final pupil perceptions
- Easter Haiku poems
- Examples of Easter Haikus
- Pupil progress data
- Tracking grid for writing

About Camtree

Camtree: the Cambridge Teacher Research Exchange is a global platform for close-to-practice research in education. Based at Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, Camtree draws on high-quality research from around the world to support educators to reflect on their practice and carry out inquiries to improve learning in their own classrooms and organisations. You can find out more about Camtree and its digital library at www.camtree.org.

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.

Licence

This edited version of this case study is published by Camtree as a derivative work of the original under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Licence (CC-BY-NC 4.0). The structured abstract that accompanies it was generated by Camtree in 2023 using the OpenAI GPT-3.5-Turbo Large Language Model.