

## Developing a Quick Win version of lesson study to accelerate pupil progress using guided writing

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### Introduction

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

As a Local Authority we were concerned that despite a lot of universal training and in-school support, the effective use of Guided Writing to impact on children's learning was not apparent. We had also recognised that there was a need to support schools in becoming self-sustaining and thought lesson study was worth exploring.

The Lead Consultant was inspired by this way of working as a result of training on NS CPD.

#### Who might find this case study useful?

- Headteacher
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- Subject leader
- Teacher

#### School or setting

*School:* Thirteen schools in Bradford

*Type of school:* Primary

*Local Authority:* Bradford

*Region:* Yorkshire and the Humber

#### Learners

*Year groups:* Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6

*Gender:* Both

*Performance:* Below age-related expectation

*People involved:* LA adviser, Senior leadership team (SLT), Subject leader, Teacher

*Number of adult learners:* 38

## What

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

- English - writing

### How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

We intended to impact on pupils' learning by using lesson study to improve writing, including Guided Writing, with a particular focus upon sentence level work as identified through use of Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP).

Initially we identified that we needed to work with the teachers to enable them to use APP successfully to identify the gaps in children's learning that were inhibiting their progress. Once identified, we worked together as part of the lesson study approach to plan guided writing sessions to address this gap. This meant that teachers were able to support each other by sharing their subject knowledge and trialling strategies that were familiar to one but new to the other.

As part of the lesson study process we wanted to demonstrate to the teachers that focusing on a small group of children would also impact on the learning of other children in the class. This was exemplified when during a guided writing session the teacher asked a child to explain his work whilst the other members of the group continued working on their whiteboards. Her comments were acted upon by the whole group who had been listening whilst working.

### What were your success criteria?

As a Local Authority, the aim was to ensure that pupils were working at age related expectations and for teachers to see how guided writing plays a crucial part in the writing process. We aimed to

- demonstrate to teachers the different aspects of guided writing in particular that a session could be devoted to structured talk and pre-teaching;
- model for teachers and SMT how focus work can have an immediate impact; and
- model the importance of SMT involvement in order to ensure the impact is maintained and good practice shared.

#### Success criteria

In schools:

- APP materials to show progress of focus children
- More children working within age related expectations
- Teachers using guided writing to accelerate children's progress in writing – evidenced by SMT feedback, planning scrutiny and lesson observations
- Children being better able to access and participate in literacy lessons with greater confidence
- Evidence of sustainability in schools

In Local Authority:

- All consultants using the lesson study approach to improve practice and build capacity in schools
- SIP reports showing evidence of impact of lesson study on teachers and pupils

In Yorkshire and Humber region:

- Consultants sharing lesson study practice at NS regional CPD

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

- Data comparison of cohorts
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment

## What did you do? What teaching approaches (pedagogy) did you use to achieve the intended impact?

- Assessment for Learning (AfL)

## Describe the teaching approaches you used

The lesson study approach to improving writing was used in order to develop capacity within schools by encouraging professional dialogue between teachers. It was felt that this approach was both manageable and effective so that teachers would be both enabled and inspired to continue to use it once consultant support was withdrawn. It was important that teachers knew both how the lesson study approach worked and the principles of guided writing beforehand.

The lesson study cycle included focusing on one class at a time but impacting on all (*italics indicates approaches used*)-

- Use of APP to identify gaps in learning. *Using a few samples of children's work and APP grids to identify lesson study focus areas or moderating completed APP grids to identify lesson study focus area.*
- Identifying a target group of children with similar gaps in learning
- Sharing of knowledge related to current phase of unit and previous learning, objectives for targeted group and always linked to current unit of work and with previous or future literacy lessons children's learning styles. *For example, there was a particular focus on using pedagogical strategies to engage kinaesthetic learners. The use of human sentences as part of pre-teaching with a group of seven boys and one girl fully engaged the children. There was clear evidence of progress; the children were able to see themselves as learners which raised their expectations. The teacher (NQT) now had a way forward that could be transferred to other aspects of literacy and the curriculum.*  
*Teachers shared proven strategies to engage children not taking part in guided writing in meaningful learning. Making use of strategies such as 'episodes of learning' (Extra Mile document) to impact on children's behaviour and learning*
- All those involved in lesson study planning a guided writing session taking into account all the above – *consultant leading teachers through the stages of a guided writing session*
- Consultant and teachers working together to gather and make resources to use during guided writing session
- Class teacher outlining focus children for other participants to observe during session – these could be quiet children, loud children, children who lacked confidence, children who were slow moving or children who had other difficulties
- Questions to ask children during the evaluation process devised based on the NS Lesson study booklet. *What did you enjoy most about the lesson? What did you learn? Would you change anything? Supplementary questions were developed as a result of lesson observations. These were shared and agreed before using.*
- Class teacher delivering guided writing session - *other participants observe pupil learning, notes were made to support evaluative post study discussion.*
- Consultant and teachers interviewing pupils to assess impact of guided writing session.
- Post session discussion to evaluate impact of guided writing on children's progress. *What progress did each pupil make? Was this enough? What about others in the group of learners they typify? How did the technique being developed help or hinder? What surprises were there? What aspects of the teaching technique could be adjusted next time to improve the progress of each pupil? What techniques should we try next time?*

This process initially involved planning the session one day and delivering and evaluating the session the next day or a couple of days' later. However, it became clear that this involved more than one teacher being out of the classroom for several hours which had an impact on both the class and financial implications.


**The Quick Win lesson study approach was therefore developed which involved two teachers working together to plan, deliver and evaluate a guided writing session in two hours . . .**

- 1 hour's planning (consultants' experience show that teachers need to come prepared with assessment and planning)
  - ½ hour delivery
  - ½ hour evaluation
- 
- Repeat above for second teacher

Feedback from teachers reflected their enthusiasm for the approach after seeing the immediate impact on their own children's learning which fed their desire to continue to work in this way. An unintended spin-off was that teachers recognised that on occasions they over-prepared lessons and this showed them that spending more time on clarifying what children needed to do had a greater impact than labouring on producing resources. An example of this was an NQT commenting that when she was observed she was told that she had planned too much and had too many resources and lesson study gave her the confidence to reduce planning and do more thinking.

(The guided reading example is below is included for additional information)

## Upload

 [Example of a guided reading Quick win lesson](#)

 [School visit note - lesson study approach with Y1 teachers](#)

## What did you do? What approaches to CPD and learning for adults were used?

- Lesson study

## Describe the CPD approaches you used

As a LA team we agreed that each consultant would use Lesson Study as a method of support in at least one school for a trial period. Evaluation highlighted that although each consultant implemented the key aspects there was some degree of variation. The one variation that appeared to have an immediate impact and won SMT and teachers over was the reduction in the time taken to implement Lesson Study. This meant that schools saw an immediate impact and for us a LA we had hit on a way of quickly winning over schools to use this professional strategy. A common comment was that it reduced the temptation to over prepare and become stressed. The lesson study approach to improving writing was used in order to develop capacity within schools by encouraging professional dialogue between teachers. It was felt that this approach was both manageable and effective so that teachers would be both enabled and inspired to continue to use it once consultant support was withdrawn. It was important that teachers knew both how the lesson study approach worked and the principles of guided writing beforehand.

When using the lesson study approach in schools, it was recommended working with two or three teachers who between them had good practice to share and also capacity to improve, one of which was a member of the SMT, ideally the Literacy Co-ordinator who would be able to continue using the lesson study once the consultant's support was withdrawn.

As well as teachers sharing practice, the consultant was able to support with ideas and activities. Some teachers were then motivated to deliver a staff meeting within school to share the approach and become leads when working with other teachers on lesson study. Most of the teachers worked with continued to use the practice and became 'lesson study champions' within their school.

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 [Lesson study: an overview by a partner teacher](#)

 [Photographs - lesson flipchart, teacher discussion](#)

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

- Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study Handbook for headteachers, leading teachers and subject leaders Ref: 00508-2008BKT-EN  
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/126431>
- Support for Writing – [Steps in Learning](#) , use of G/W elements
- At internal literacy team meeting lesson study developments in supported schools were shared, discussed and best elements transferred.
- Some use was made of the [Guskey model](#) (stage 1 &3 together and then stage 5 to support reflection)to facilitate embedding of practice in school. After input from a National Strategies consultant on the research carried out by Guskey, we decided to use this to support wider impact of LA delivered CPD in schools
- Improving writing with a focus on Guided Writing  
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/64444>
- [Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years](#) – Teaching units to support guided sessions for writing in English as an additional language Ref: 00068-2007KIT
- Bradford LA Talk Across the Curriculum Materials (contact [clare.reed@educationbradford.com](mailto:clare.reed@educationbradford.com) for further information)
- National Strategies' Talk for Writing materials  
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/163270>
- Jumpstart! Literacy by Pie Corbett

## Who provided you with support?

- External agency
- Local authority staff

## How were you supported?

Regional Adviser support and NS CPD

## Impact

## What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

As we were trialling the approach, our main focus was on teachers using lesson study to support the implementation of guided writing to impact on children's learning. We also wanted to ensure that teachers continued to use guided writing - lesson study provided a self sustaining approach towards this aim.

The overall impact on children's learning was that they were able to see that by focusing on a specific aspect of their writing during guided work helped them improve. This was further consolidated when the pupils were able to reflect immediately on their learning. In addition to this, most children were later able to transfer lessons learnt to other aspects of their literacy work and draw on this success in foundation subjects.

After using lesson study to demonstrate the impact of using guided writing to pre-teach, teachers observed the guided group in the literacy lesson immediately after the guided session and noted that the children who had taken part in the

guided session appeared more confident and happy, especially when they experienced success in the shared part of the lesson. These children also contributed more to the shared session.

The impact on children with English as an additional language (EAL) is through raised teacher confidence in identifying and addressing key elements of literacy that would make a difference to their progress.

## Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- 'Most importantly I witness the positive impact the lesson had on the pupils 'learning and gained further insight into what helps children to succeed.' (Literacy Coordinator)
- 'Opportunities to really focus on the learning styles and progress of certain children.' (Literacy consultant)
- . . . said she had enjoyed it all and understood how to use speech bubbles now. (Pupil)
- . . . said he had enjoyed the modelled telephone conversation . . . (Pupil)

## Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment

## Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes

## Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

The guided group work in one school was particularly successful as the children were able to transfer their orally rehearsed sentences to their whiteboards.

In one school, a pupil (boy) was successful in both the oral and the written activities once he had seen the 'modelling' and was keen to write.

In one school, a middle ability child made good progress during the session ... she became one of the most vocal of the group and was greatly enthused to write. The teacher said this most unusual for her.

The APP (Assessing Pupil Progress) sheets below are from one of the schools involved.

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 [APP sheets](#)

## What has been the impact on teaching?

When working with two teachers – one who usually received 'good' in observations and another who was in need of developmental support, the latter taught a good lesson as part of the lesson study.

After using lesson study to demonstrate the impact of using guided writing to pre-teach, teachers observed the guided group in the literacy lesson immediately after the guided session and noted that the children who had taken part in the guided session appeared more confident and happy, especially when they experienced success in the shared part of the lesson. They also contributed more to the shared session.

Lesson study was successfully used to highlight the importance of prior knowledge activation to engage children and improve their writing.

Teachers could see how the lesson study approach gives them the opportunity to discuss better ways of teaching, leads to a focus on learning and would be a non-threatening way to observe colleagues.

Teachers enjoyed the lesson study approach and thought it had a positive impact on their teaching. Further opportunities for lesson study would be beneficial. Teachers suggested working with partners from a different key stage or having the chance to observe their own children whilst the class was taught by the partner.

Teachers found the lesson study helpful, particularly in terms of planning together and assessing the needs of individual children.

## Thoughts you think are relevant to impact on teaching

Many of the teachers that took part in lesson studies agreed that they would like to continue working in this way as 'lesson study buddies'.

This method reduces the isolation of pockets of good practice that often occurs in schools as teachers are given the opportunity to disseminate their practice.

A particularly successful lesson study was carried out when a Reception teacher was paired up with a new Y6 teacher in a school where speaking and listening is high on the agenda. The impact was that the Y6 teacher effectively used various talk strategies that were used in Reception class to engage pupils in their learning.

The lead consultant had the vision that the lesson study approach would be an effective way to build a professional learning environment within school by facilitating discussion to enable subject knowledge to be developed and good practice to be strengthened and shared.

Also seeing the potential of strengthening the role of the subject leader.

Because the lead consultant tried it first, she was in a good position to share what had worked well and solutions to problems she had encountered along the way.

There was a 'snowball' effect within the team with consultants trialling it in stages and giving feedback at team meetings.

All literacy consultants will continue to use lesson study and there have been requests from other LA teams to shadow literacy consultants and to have an input from the lead literacy consultant.

## Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

- 'It feels like you are doing it with me ... not to me.' (Y4 teacher)
- 'All in all it was a positive opportunity to try something new, supported by other professionals with different knowledge and experience.' (Literacy Coordinator and Y1 teacher)
- 'Thanks for your help, we would not have got through (Ofsted) without support for planning and lesson study.' (Head Teacher)
- 'The more I work with lesson study, the more I realise its potential for developing capacity within schools.' (Literacy Consultant)
- 'I did view it tentatively at first and would recommend shadowing the process... I think it is a great approach now - and works.' (Literacy Consultant)
- 'The leadership describes the support as brilliant; the consultant has used the lesson study approach with four teachers...with a focus on writing.' (SIP report)

## Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Lesson study review
- Teacher perceptions

## Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Feedback from teachers reflected their enthusiasm for the approach after seeing the immediate impact on their own children's learning which fed their desire to continue to work in this way. An unintended spin-off was that teachers recognised that on occasions they over prepared lessons and this showed them that spending more time on clarifying what children needed to do had a greater impact than labouring on producing resources. An example of this was a Y1 teacher who had lost confidence and is continuing to embed lessons learnt during the lesson study – "I've got a lot out of this because we have worked together and it has been non-threatening. I shall definitely use the ideas. It will have a big impact on my teaching."

Teachers who initially worked on lesson study with me are now working with other teachers to share good practice. They have chosen to work as lesson study buddies and make lesson study part of their performance management cycle.

Images of teachers working together – permission to be gained

Image of questions

Literacy coordinators overview – permission to be sought

Reflections of an EMA consultant

## What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

- All who participated in the process at one school felt that this was a very useful process and the Literacy Co-ordinator will encourage Y4 staff to carry out and disseminate more widely at whole school level.
- The lesson study approach has successfully supported the building of positive relationships between Education Bradford and schools – there was unorchestrated feedback at a Headteacher briefing from a Headteacher who valued LA support in promoting this way of working
- The SMT of all schools involved valued the support after seeing the immediate impact on teachers' confidence and enthusiasm and the subsequent impact on children's learning and resultant change in teacher practice (this reflects research carried out by [T. Guskey](#) p. 383 para. 4 & 5, p 384 para. 1) . Another aspect that won the SMT over was that the time given over to the Lesson Study was manageable and meant that supply cover was not needed. This has meant that in many of the schools Quick Win Lesson Study is continuing to be used to develop good practice.

## Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on school organisation and leadership

Initially, lead consultant trialled the lesson study approach and developed the Quick Win version. This was then disseminated to the rest of the Literacy Team who agreed to also trial the approach with at least one school. Time was built into team meetings to feedback and evaluate the impact.

## Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on school organisation and leadership

'Shortest time possible seems to have most effect.' Consultant

## Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

- Having heard of the literacy team's work on lesson study in other schools, a locality has allocated a significant amount of money towards using the approach in schools which do not normally receive LA support
- Some Headteachers are filming lesson studies to use as a model of good practice within school

## Summary



## **What is the crucial thing that made the difference?**

- Being able to show teachers, SMT and LA officers that this was an efficient and immediate way of implementing change. It was also a means by which change could be sustained and effectively disseminated.
- By transferring an element of the recommended process to the school prior to the session, the teachers had ownership of the lesson study and the consultant time could be more focused.
- The Quick Win version developed as a result of evaluation of various lesson study sessions.

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

- Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study Handbook for headteachers, leading teachers and subject leader Ref: 00508-2008BKT-EN
- Improving writing with a focus on Guided Writing

## **What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?**

After trialling the lesson study approach to develop guided writing in schools, Bradford LA is now in a position to deliver CPD across the authority and other authorities. It is a work in progress.

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

1. Identify focus and outcomes of literacy/other subjects they would like to develop linked to School Development Plan
2. Identify teacher(s) who are interested in developing themselves professionally and trialling this approach
3. Ensure teachers know essential elements of lesson study
4. Develop a timeline for the lesson study
5. Agree how lesson study is going to be used across school following the initial study

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

- Several LAs already successfully using Quick Win version of lesson study within their authority as a result of presentation at subject leader and consultant meetings
- One consultant has made links with another authority and together they are going to deliver a session at an EAL hub
- Lead consultant to deliver CPD to other teams within the authority to develop their practice in using lesson study

## **Case study status**

Approved

## **Coordinator**

Lorraine Dawes

## Related case studies

[Accelerating progress in Year 6 using Leading Teachers Using lesson study as a whole-school approach to improving guided writing](#) [Essex Lesson Study: Improving writing through interactive learning/teaching with an emphasis on ICT](#)  
[Essex Lesson Study - Developing the Lesson Study model within School Differentiation and Guided Writing](#)

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