
Essex Lesson Study - Improving writing using Talk for Writing non-fiction texts

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Chapters

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Introduction

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

This case study describes work done as part of the Essex Strategy Support Teacher (SST) programme. The partner school had identified writing as a priority for its pupils. We decided that the benefits offered by Talk for Writing & Lesson Study were appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

Who might find this case study useful?

- Teacher

Contacts

- Author: Belynda Fellows

School or setting

School: Beckers Green Primary School and de Vere Primary School

Type of school: Primary

Local Authority: Essex

Region: East of England

Free school meals: 35 - 50%

Learners

Year groups: Year 3, Year 6

Gender: Both

Performance: Below age-related expectation

People involved: Teacher

Number of classes: 2

Number of adult learners: 3

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?

Our focus was:

- Yr6: Sentence structure and punctuation.
- Yr3: Use of time connectives, clear opener for paragraphs, events written in order, use of correct pronoun, use of adventurous vocabulary.

We intended to improve pupils' ability to write non-fiction texts. Greater use of descriptive language in writing which was well ordered, included time connectives, had clear openers for paragraphs, adverbial phrases and included adventurous vocabulary.

What were your success criteria?

For Year 6 focus group we were aiming at Level 4 for writing, ensuring that pupils reached this target.

For Year 3 we were aiming at the pupils making 2/3 of a level progress, moving them from Level 1 at the beginning of the Year to Level 2b or above.

PLEASE NOTE this page has three tabs - click 'Next tab' below or use tabs above to see Teaching approaches and CPD approaches

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

- Periodic teacher assessment

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

- Assessment for Learning (AfL)
- Other
- Use of pupil talk for whole-class teaching

Describe the teaching approaches you used

After the first observation visit, the pupils' writing was analysed by the SST and by the Partner teachers using APP grids and a range of writing from across the curriculum. We decided where the gaps were and what the focus needed to be for each group. We then planned subsequent lessons with a specific focus planned to enable pupils' learning to develop where it was needed. We observed that pupils in Year 6 had poor punctuation, little description, and poor written structure in their work. Year 3 work had poor sentence structure, little description and structure problems. We therefore decided to use Talk for Writing as a way of embedding writing skills across the two classes. We used the texts I received after attending a Pie Corbett training day with the Literacy Trust. The first was a text about dragons which each teacher enthusiastically introduced to their class. The whole class learned the story. Pupils story-map a text, playing games with it and learning it, recognising features, colour coding connectives, technical vocabulary, adjectives, learning actions for punctuation. This process is repeated with a similar text, this time about Sharks, and then writing is scaffolded for pupils through shared writing. Pupils then write independently about a subject of their choosing.

Partner teachers observed SST in her own class, as well as observing her teaching their classes and focus groups. Lesson Study model was adopted, teachers discussing focus pupils' learning after each session and deciding what type of teaching model was proving successful. Pupils were interviewed after lessons to gauge their reaction to methods used.

Upload

 [Literacy plan Y3 08.02.10](#)

 [Literacy plan Y3 15.03.10](#)

 [Literacy plan Y3 26.04.10](#)

 [Literacy plan Y6 08.02.10](#)

 [Literacy plan Y6 15.03.10](#)

 [Literacy plan Y6 26.04.10](#)

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

- Lesson study

Describe the CPD approaches you used

Lesson Study was used to support the learning of teachers. Working as a group of three teachers, we were able to identify gaps and foci together, discussing what we had seen and which teaching method was most useful to the needs of the pupils.

We also used APP to assess and moderate the pupils' work, and to decide where to move next.

Each of the six Lesson Study sessions started with Year 6 being taught by the SST and the Yr6 and Yr 3 partner teacher observed the focus group. After break each time the Yr 3 class were taught by the SST while the Yr 6 teacher and the Yr 3 teacher observed the learning of the target group. This process was flexible and towards the end of the visits, the SST taught the focus group while the Partner teachers observed their learning. This observation by a group of three enabled our discussion to focus clearly on the learning of the pupils, and discussions around where to go next.

APP moderation sessions were held by the LA SST co-ordinators, where writing was moderated by SST and partner teachers.

For more on the SST programme see 'Essex LA Strategy Support Teacher Programme: using Lesson Study to improve practice and progression' <http://whatworkswell.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/viewcasestudy/introduction?casestudyid=3094&recordid=2561>

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

- Improving Practice and Progression through Lesson Study DCSF. <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/126431>
- Senior Leadership Team CPD Day 4 (many resources on lesson study) <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/175012>
- Pie Corbett, Talk for Writing <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/163270>
- Assessing Pupils' Progress <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/assessment/assessingpupilsprogressapp>

Who provided you with support?

- External agency

How were you supported?

LA area consultant advised re future learning focus for partner teacher and SST.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

We have been really pleased that the quality of children's writing has improved.

Pupils have absorbed sentence structures and are now able to use in their own writing. Yr6 pupils are now confident using adverbial phrases, and adjectives and more adventurous vocabulary. The Y3 pupils' knowledge of language features within in texts is improved, as is the pupils ability to discuss orally a subject, vocabulary is extended and pupils are more confident in their contributions to group work. Pupils also increased their knowledge of when and how to use punctuation, which connectives were effective in which types of writing, and their ability to recognise features of non-fiction texts.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

Learning texts is having an impact on pupils structuring and recognising types of text.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

'This is a non-chronological report like the dragon one.' Yr 6 boy, referencing the Talk for writing Frost Dragon report used earlier in the year. He used the structure of the learned writing to structure his next piece of work.

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes
- Pupil consultation data
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

At the end of each lesson study the pupils were interviewed as to their views about the end of the lesson. These were informative for us as the pupils expressed their views about resources and teaching styles used. Most feedback was very positive, with pupils enjoying the range of resources and activities.

We are delighted with the test results for the Year 6 pupils, all did extremely well, one achieving a Level 5. In fact the whole class did very well achieving their end of year target. In Year 3 our target pupils have achieved or exceeded their 2/3 of a level progress.

Upload

 [Year 6 work samples A](#)

 [Year 6 work samples B](#)

 [Year 6 work samples C](#)

 [Year 6 work samples D](#)

 [Year 6 work samples E](#)

 [Year 6 work samples F](#)

What has been the impact on teaching?

Using the Lesson Study model with three teachers has provided us with a very useful experience. Observations of focus pupils' learning by a group of three enabled our discussion to focus clearly on the learning of the pupils, and where to go next. The two partner teachers could continue to sustain their discussions within school between SST visits.

It also impacted on my own teaching, allowing me the time to reflect on analysing pupils' work and the best techniques to use when working with specific groups. The Partner teachers benefited from using a wider range of resources, and reflecting on a wider variety of teaching strategies.

Thoughts you think are relevant to impact on teaching

Lesson Study model was hugely influential on the impact on the quality of our teaching. We all enjoyed the opportunity to observe pupils, analyse their gaps in learning and plan for those. The Headteacher also reflected on the benefits of the three of us working together, the two partner teachers became used to discussing pupils' learning.

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

'Structuring the texts has proved helpful for the pupils to recognise a non-fiction text.' (Partner teacher.)

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Pupils learning the texts allowed for language patterns to be embedded, so that when asked to write another report, they knew how to structure, organise and write the next report. Referencing the files of Yr 6 writing, each pupil shows an increase and improvement in the structure punctuation and connectives across the time of the Lesson Study.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

Talk for writing to be used across the school. Partner teachers will be working together next year, embedding the process.

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

Resourcing Talk for Writing, implementation throughout the school.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Curriculum development.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

Lesson Study Model, working together as a group to identify gaps in learning.

The Talk for Writing process involving pupils learning the text, and being able to recognise structure of texts as well as punctuation, connectives and technical vocabulary. The constant repetition of the process allowed the language patterns to be embedded and repeated later.

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

- Talk for Writing Pie Corbett training, materials.
- Non-fiction texts in a range of levels, appropriate to the learning need of the pupils.
- Lesson Study materials and information.

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- In total 6 Lesson Study sessions were planned and taught between October and April 2010.
- APP moderation sessions for SST and partner teachers.

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

- Familiarise themselves with Pie Corbett Talk for Writing.
- Collect resources / texts.
 - Choose a non-fiction text that had the features the pupils need to learn about.
 - Pupils given time to learn the text through story-mapping and repetition and games.

This process is best done over five days. The teacher also draws a story-map of the text to use with the whole class.

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

- Attending a Pie Corbett course run by the Literacy Trust.
- Planning Literacy with Talk for Writing as a regular non-fiction and fiction feature.

Case study status

Approved

Coordinator

Lorraine Dawes

Related case studies

[Essex Lesson Study - Developing the Lesson Study model within School](#) [Essex Lesson Study: Improving writing through interactive learning/teaching with an emphasis on ICT](#) [Essex LA Strategy Support Teacher: Using mentoring/coaching to improve practice and attainment](#) [Essex LA strategy support teacher programme: Using Lesson Study to improve practice and progression](#)

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