

School of Teacher Education

**THE HOPE CHALLENGE PROGRAMME**

**Secondary**

**CASE STUDY: WRITING**

Rainford High Technology College, St Helens

Lead: Karen Rogan

*Improving Writing intervention and developing 'pedagogies of enactment' to progress PGCE  
Secondary Trainees' teaching*

**TARGET GROUP:**

A Yr 7 nurture group of 14 pupils, identified as having low literacy levels, particularly in writing.

**AIMS:**

1. To investigate the impact of a range of writing pedagogies which aim to develop pupils' ability to generate more detailed ideas for writing, and to use these ideas to plan and structure extended writing outcomes.
2. To establish how the application of these writing pedagogies support the development of trainees' deeper understanding of the barriers to extended writing and how to surmount these.

**TIME FRAME:**

The project was delivered over a series of 6 afternoons. PGCE English trainees' enactment and application of the pedagogies continued to take place during their second placement three months after the initial project

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

During the teaching sessions the Liverpool Hope English tutor modelled a range of pedagogies around narrative poetry to focus on pupils' understanding of 'story'; PGCE English trainees practiced and adapted these approaches with the pupils enabling them to experience a wide range of learning activities, including: responding to visual stimulus, using 'Talk for Writing', 'boxing up' planning and scaffolding of writing and independent application (silent writes).

### IMPACT:

Although it is difficult to progress pupils' learning significantly in a short time frame, benchmark and end of project data showed that 85% of pupils' writing had improved in structure and organisation and in their ability to generate ideas for narrative writing. This was progressed through the range of pedagogical practice above but of particular effect were the trainees' use of modelling, 'Talk for Writing' and time limited 'silent writes'.

The impact on pupils' attitudes to writing was captured by observations made by the classroom teacher who described the following behaviours of the pupils:

- 'They grew in confidence; developed ideas; were inspired; no longer see writing as 'scary'; are open to editing and redrafting work' and she was 'surprised at concentration levels during independent writing'.
- Pupil feedback also referenced a growing confidence in writing and a particular enjoyment of 'silent writes' where they felt there was space to think.

One of the foci for the Yr 7 pupils' writing was their use of connectivity and sequencing of ideas; they made some improvement in this but this remained challenging for them and was an area selected for reinforcement by their classroom teacher after the project.

The secondary trainees progressed their practice very effectively and continued to apply and enact the range of pedagogies during their second teaching placement conveying a sophisticated insight into pupil's metacognition commenting that, 'it isn't just about selecting the connective –it's about their understanding of where their story or argument is going, so they need another box to help them articulate and then write this- it's about the cohesion'. Other comments show how trainees reflected

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on their pre-conceived assumptions about pupils abilities, In 'boxing' up I had to teach them to bullet point they had no concept of how to note take'

Further comments focused on the application of these pedagogies; 'I am currently teaching descriptive writing with my GCSE year 10 class. A pupil who has ASD struggles to place himself an 'imaginary' situation. On one of the first lessons I asked pupils to produce a piece of writing about being on a beach and he noted that we were not on a beach therefore he could not produce the piece of work. Thus, in the following lesson I had numerous stimuli and lots of Talk for Writing incorporated in the lesson. I played beach sounds in the background throughout and as a class we planned on the board discussing sensory description using imagery on the screen. This really benefited the pupil with ASD and allowed me to realise how to promote the same outcomes within the class.'

### SUSTAINABILITY:

The planning of the lessons led to discussion with the class teacher and Head of Department regarding the appropriate use of literature and pedagogical approaches for pupils with low literacy levels and the role of 'story' in their lives. This led to further discussion which supported the development of the whole school reading plan and the role and development of the school library. Trainees have furthered their understanding of pedagogies and their impact on pupils' learning and have applied these in second placements and hopefully beyond.