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Creative writing pedagogy: Can it be altered to increase the engagement of reluctant writers with the writing process?

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Creative writing pedagogy: Can it be altered to increase the engagement of reluctant writers with the writing process?

- Writing pedagogy – past and present
- Purpose & context of research study
- Pedagogical redesign
- Methodology
- Conclusions
- Future considerations

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Pedagogy

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Creative writing or writing by rote?

AF1 – write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts

AF2 – produce texts which are appropriate to task, reader and purpose

AF7 – select appropriate and effective vocabulary

AF8 – use correct spelling

AF5 – vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect

AF6 – write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences

AF3 – organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events

AF4 – construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs

“...writing is learnt, not taught, and the teacher’s role is to be non-directive and facilitating...through an encouraging, positive and co-operative environment”

Hyland (2002)

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What do pupils need?

Challenging targets set and reviewed



Understanding of targets



Feedback marking with 'next steps for improvement'



Opportunities for reflection time in lessons to review their progress



Planned opportunities for speaking & listening, including drama



A range of planning strategies and formats to draw on



Year 4

Genre specific features

Exploring examples

Modelling

Guided writing

Independent writing

Feedback

**Can the pedagogy be altered
to increase engagement with
the writing process?**

**How might this impact
reluctant learners?**

Year 4

Genre specific features

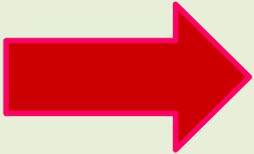
Exploring examples

Modelling

Guided writing

Independent writing

Feedback



Joint writing



- Collectively compos[ing]
- Fast-paced... [and] engaging
- Involves looking back and forwards
- Children relate style and structure to the effect being created
- Listening for linguistic accuracy as well as the impact of rhythm and meaning
- The class gradually builds a text, generating ideas, making decisions and double-checking the impact
- Shift from being in writer mode to generate ideas, into reader mode to check what works

Talk for Writing – What good Writers Do
Pie Corbett (2008)

Learners 'are explicitly engaged in the sort of activity that might occur within a writer's mind. They fish for words and phrases, pausing to select what works best, orally rehearsing and adapting the flow of sentences'

Corbett (2008)

'[Children] engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Statements and suggestions are offered for joint consideration. These may be challenged and counter-challenged, but challenges are justified and alternative hypotheses are offered...all actively participate and opinions are sought and considered before decisions are jointly made'

Mercer (2004)

Year 4 learners

Regular writing sessions throughout year

Learning behaviours across group observed
in range of writing contexts across a 10
month period

Core group of four boys

Pedagogy

Ethical considerations

Context

‘Language not only manifests thinking but also structures it, and speech shapes the higher mental processes’

Alexander (2000)

‘what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow’

Vygotsky (1978)

‘the child is not an isolated individual...[he] has to construct language but he cannot do this alone’

Halliday (2004).

“Writing does not stand alone as the discrete act of a writer, but emerges as a confluence of many streams of activity”

Prior (1998)

Meaning making as part of interaction with others

Methods

Sociocultural approach

Qualitative data collection

Theme analysis

Methods

Interviews

Eccles & Wigfield (2002)

Emergent themes

Any change over time

Observations

Participation – contributions to activity

Focus on task – writing time vs time not on task

Requests for support

Reflective journal

Participation – contributions to activity

Focus on task – writing time vs time not on task

Requests for support

Thematic data analysis

Data analysis

Thematic outcomes

Initial interviews

'it's [writing] like hard and boring'

'I don't really like it [writing]'

'sometimes I scared [when we are going to write],
sometimes okay'

'I'm not good at writing all of the time'

Data analysis

Thematic changes over time

Interviews throughout introduction of redesign

'I'm not good at writing'

'It's good when everyone is [asking questions]'

'it's more funner than before'

'I can do it now'

'I know how not to get stuck'

'I can think of more answers by myself'

Data analysis

Thematic changes over time

Interviews throughout introduction of redesign

'It's boring'

'The class writing is okay'

'Doing it together is fun'

'It's good 'cause I can do it better now'

It's better now and I can do it [writing] better

Data analysis

Thematic changes over time
Observations/reflective journal

‘...they would procrastinate significantly, occasionally distracting other learners...’

‘although they contributed little, their attentions did not wander’

‘they persisted in trying to communicate their ideas with the class, not only raising their hands but...rising up from their seat to draw more attention’

Data analysis

Thematic changes over time
Observations/reflective journal

‘He demonstrated an unusually high level of persistence, and interestingly did not seek an adult to help him with this, as he often does when he is not immediately successful in a task’

‘They seemed to be writing with a purpose’

‘...each followed the process we had used with a degree of confidence. Not one asked for adult help...’

Conclusions

All 28 pupils showed increased engagement with writing process

Focus group demonstrated increased confidence during joint writing sessions

Interviews indicated an increasingly positive attitude to writing

Behaviours altered over time becoming increasingly conducive to learning

Conclusions

Focus group evidenced increased determination in accessing learning tasks

Some evidence of increased independence when approaching tasks

While not fully analysed for purposes of study, written outcomes showed evidence of progress

Would indicate that joint writing sessions encourage engagement with writing process

Why?

Considerations for future research

No writing involved initially

All ideas valid

Child led – minimal CT input

CT as scribe rather than leading process

Learners not shown – they showed themselves

Why?

Considerations for future research

Quantitative research

Data ~ attainment ~ progress

Qualitative research

Written outcomes

Considerations for future research

Perhaps it is less what practitioners do, but, more significantly, what they don't, that can have the most significant impact in the learning environment

Thank you

Questions