Planning for six lessons

The Planning Based on a *Language Planning Framework across a Topic*

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| 1. The Suitcase Kid | Description – The characters, the homes, the toys | How to describe people, places and things in a concise, precise using the noun phrase |
| 2.The Suitcase Kid | Dilemmas facing the main character in the story | How to express a character’s dilemma and express choice of action leading to the next set of events in a story focusing on the use of modal verbs |
| 3. The Suitcase Kid | Character descriptions of the main characters. | Develop vocabulary linked to making inferences in the text. |
| 4. Writing explanations | Support learners in writing a causal explanation | Use visual resources including key visuals |
| 5. Writing explanations | Model how writers write explanations | Use second strategy possible **dictogloss** to model causal or process explanation |
| 6. Writing explanations | Support learners in writing a process explanation | Use visual resources and key visuals to model process explanation |

*Vaughan Primary School*

Project

Planning

After an initial visit to the school on 20th May 2014, the first planning meeting was to set up the structures for medium and short term planning and teaching. The timetabling allowed for 1 day’s medium- term planning followed by 6 days teaching and short- term planning.

The session of partnership teaching was to be one hour in a Yr 4 class followed one hour in the parallel Yr 4 class with approximately half an hour evaluation of each lesson.

The overall areas of focus were to be

1.) 3 weeks on developing reading and writing activities around the book *The Suitcase Kid* by Jacqueline Wilson

2.) Strategies to support the writing of explanations.

The first section of the project therefore was to focus more on the grammar at sentence level, while the second section was to focus more on the text organisation.

**1. *The Suitcase Kid***

The focus of the lesson each week would be on an aspect of writing with another session on the following day, during which the strategies already tried out would be repeated. The other three lessons in the week during this three week period would be on reading and exploring the themes of the book. If the teachers needed help in devising reading strategies, time could be built into the project to provide this.

Introduction to planning.

The teachers were first introduced to the idea of language functions or cognitive language. They were only slightly familiar with this, but not how they related to planning. They were introduced also to sentence patterns that helped identify the language functions.

They were then introduced to The Knowledge Framework as a strategy for ensuring the planning of language across a topic. This framework also helps teachers to consider the range of language that can exploited at the same time and that EAL learners may not be familiar with or confident in, using.

The language focus for writing in relation to *The Suitcase Kid* was then planned using the Framework. It was agreed that activities would be developed to support

a) Descriptive writing (2 weeks). There is a range of descriptive writing in the book that could be used as a model for the pupils’ own writing.

b) The expression of dilemmas in stories. Another strong feature of the book is the theme of family break-up and how the main character attempts to deal with the predicaments in which she finds herself e.g problems and dilemmas

c) Evaluative writing e.g the modelling of the language of book reviews

Descriptive writing

The two elements would be

1). Factual description

2). Character description

**Factual description**

The characters, the homes and the main characters’ toy rabbit are described in detail. The focus for this section was sentence level work to support descriptive writing i.e the noun phrase to enable learners to write in a precise and concise way.

A range of strategies to support this were:

Active listening

Vanishing cloze

Loop cards to practise sentence structure

Classifiers and describers in noun phrases to allow writing to be more balanced.

Substitution tables

**In the succeeding lesson** the teachers trialled these strategies again: active listening, vanishing cloze, loop cards

**Character description**

The major focus of this section was a) making inferences from text about a characters’ behaviour b) identifying and interpreting the opinions of other people about a character and c) developing the vocabulary needed for *opinion* language.

The strategies included:

True/ false sentences – literal/ inferential meanings

Pair work using a table

Oral practice of structures

Writing frame

**In the succeeding lesson**

Trial similar activities in relation to another of the character’s dilemmas.

**Dilemmas and problem solving**

These focus on the language of decision making which is often expressed through the use of the modal verb.

Strategies to include introducing three different modal verbs and linking them to learners prior knowledge about decision making.

Looking at part of the story involving a dilemma and supporting learners use of language to to consider and express choice of action – could, would, should

Model language structures for writing.

Practise this language through real life situations.

Choose a section of the story The Suitcase Kid in which a character’s dilemma is strongly evident. Pupils work together to consider different choices of action depending on circumstances

**In the succeeding lesson**

Continue to practise use of modal verbs in relation to other character dilemmas in the Suitcase Kid and other contexts e.g School Trip

**Character description**

Return to the theme of character description but this focusing on character traits.

Strategies to include true/ false sentences to focus on making inferences about characters from reading.

Using a matrix with offered vocabulary which describes different characters in the story. Pupils select appropriate vocabulary and give reasons. Write a short character description using a framework.

**In succeeding lessons.**

A broader character description framework was used for writing a more extended character description.

**Book Review**

Resources were provided for the teachers on scaffolding the writing of a book review that should be available on the website but were not actually used in a lesson.

**Writing explanations**

This part of the project was divided into two sections

The development of materials to support the writing of:

1) causal explanations

2)process explanations

Card sorting activities were used to assess pupils’ ability to discriminate between explanations and statements and also between causal and process explanations.

Prior to the lessons, teachers were helped in identifying the types of written explanations, suitable texts for use as models and how to support the pupils in identifying the structure of each.

The major resources that were introduced to the teachers were key visuals that would aid both the deconstruction of information in a text or visuals and the reconstruction of information for writing.

1. Key visuals.

The use of a fishbone chart was modelled in a lesson on animal adaptation. This chart was used to scaffold the language of causal explanation. Pupils were shown how to structure the language from the chart orally as precursor to writing.

The use of the process explanation table was modelled to scaffold the process explanation through the deconstruction of a text and then the reconstruction of information.

**Dictogloss as a model for writing**

Dictogloss was modelled for the teachers as an extremely effective tool for developing pupils’ writing skills. As there was only one of the two teachers available on the day it was introduced, the activity was modelled in one lesson with the class teacher present observing. She then lead the activity in the second lesson.

**Evaluation of component parts of each day.**

**The Lessons**

The lead in each lesson was on the whole equally divided between consultant and class teacher. The modelling of the lessons and the activities, enabled the teachers try them out again the next day. The modelling of one lesson (dictogloss) enabled the observing teacher to try it out in the next lesson. Naturally the repetition of the lesson meant they tended to run more smoothly and within the time frame more effectively.

**Planning Time**

The whole afternoon was given over to planning for the next week. The planning for the lesson, the language planning and the activities were all designed within the time frame although additions were made at other times during the week. The teachers, having been shown the new resources had time to integrate them into the follow-up lessons.

**Evaluation time**

Half an hour was allocated after each lesson which gave the teachers in turn, a chance to evaluate the lessons; effectiveness of the resources, aspects of teaching and learning etc. They both indicated that they found the time very useful particularly as the lesson was fresh in their minds.

**The Project**

Both teachers made it clear that they had acquired many new strategies and learnt about many new resources that they would find useful in their teaching. As one teacher was an NQT, she found the experience particularly rewarding. The other, more experienced teacher underlined the usefulness in having aspects of grammar modelled in the lessons particularly helpful. They also found the modelling of the use of key visuals also effective. The other aspect that they valued, was the work on explanation writing, which was new to both. A teaching assistant who supports EAL learners in school, monitored the responses of some EAL pupils , both oral and written. She indicated that these learners had responded well to the activities both in terms of interactions in a group and writing attainment.

The teachers contributed to resources development by producing their own activities that had been demonstrated to them.