

Action Research



Staff: Sarah Archard, Sol Goremano and Jessica Walters

Date: November 2022 – June 2023

Title: What effect does an active teaching approach have on the reading age and attitudes of pupils?

Key Words: Reading, Active Teaching, Month on Month Progress, Independence, Literacy.

Summary This project is designed to look at the pedagogical approach of 'active teaching' and the effect that it has on pupils' reading ages; specifically, those pupils who are behind their chronological ages. One of our school development priorities was to improve the percentage of pupils who are achieving at least month on month progress in their reading. To do this, we used GRaSp time (Grammar, reading and spelling time) and Read Write Inc; which is a daily slot that provides pupils with the opportunities to develop their reading skills. During this time, pupils work in smaller groups allowing teachers to give specific, in-depth feedback. Learners also have the opportunity during this time to develop their independence.

Action Research

Context:

Llanrhidian Primary School is situated in the Gower Peninsular six miles from the city of Swansea. There are currently approximately 161 pupils on roll from the ages of three to eleven. Llanrhidian pupils are grouped by progression steps into 4 Pods. This research on active learning aims to look at appropriate pedagogy according to the stage of the pupils.

Active learning is a process where students learn using a range of skills including reading, writing, talking, listening, asking questions and reflecting (MacDonald and Frank 2016). Passive learning is where learners simply receive information and does not receive feedback (MacDonald and Frank 2016). Research shows that we learn through a mixture of passive and active learning. However, this enquiry is based on finding the best teaching and learning style for improving reading skills when pupils work independently. The research clearly shows that learners' views and opinions need to be central to this enquiry as well as tracking their reading ages; providing

Action Research

both qualitative and quantitative data. The use of trust trio professional development process, allows staff to work with a range of pupils, gathering their views and making observations about how effective the provision is. Pupils were also given the opportunity to express their views using online forms using a likert scale.

The main intended outcome of the project was not only to improve reading ages but also to understand when best to use active approaches in our classroom and when best to use passive.

Aims and objectives:

A whole school monitoring found that pupil progress and participation in reading could be improved. The research aims to look at ways to engage pupils and enable progress through different activities and techniques encouraging them to be more effective and independent.

Research:

<https://grdjournals.com/uploads/article/GRDJE/V02/I09/0036/GRDJEV02I090036.pdf>

https://langcog.stanford.edu/papers_new/macdonald-2016-cogsci.pdf

<https://northgowerpartnership.com/3-16-progression-2/>

Strategies:

The research uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

- Analysis of reading ages
- Staff questionnaire completed
- Questionnaire completed with older pupils
- Pupil evaluation school team (PEST) evaluation on reading
- Teaching trio observations (GRaSp teaching)

Outcomes:

Following early findings, the curriculum team discussed ways to improve pupil participation and increase active learning. It was decided that we would make use of Bloom's taxonomy questions linked to the cluster approach of Learn, Understand, Apply (LUA). Our school has moved to LUA questions based on Blooms in collaboration with the NGP partnership. Further information about LUA can be found at <https://northgowerpartnership.com/3-16-progression-2/>

Action Research

LUA questions to support reading were developed alongside pupils in progression step 2 and 3 and shared with other pods. This approach allowed pupils to engage with their own learning and access the appropriate level of challenge. In addition to differentiation, the questions engage and challenge the pupils at the different stages of learning, understanding and applying.

Reading Age Data Outcomes:

Reading age data from the autumn term showed that 56% of pupils from year 4 to year 6 were making at least month on month progress in their reading age. Our school development target was to raise this to 80%. This reading age is calculated from a multiple choice reading test. Summer data shows that at the time of the test, 80% of pupils were making at least month on month progress in their reading. This data shows that our target was achieved.

Questionnaire with pupils and staff:

For links to pupil and staff questionnaire results, please click the following link:

<https://www.llanrhidian.swansea.sch.uk/final-data/>

PEST (Pupil Evaluation School Team):

To view our pupil evaluation videos, please click the following link:

<https://www.llanrhidian.swansea.sch.uk/our-pest-work-2022-23/>

Teaching Trio Observations Outcomes:

Early observations of GRaSp activities showed that a minority of pupils were not choosing the correct level of challenge; either choosing an activity or task that was too easy or too difficult. Observations also showed that a minority of pupils were struggling to organise themselves and therefore were not completing the task. Observations also showed that a minority of pupils were not intrinsically motivated enough to complete the task. It was also noted that there was a mixture of planned activities for children to practise their reading skills independently using paper and or digital technologies. Most independent activities were passive rather than active and did not require the children to collaborate, write, discuss or ask questions.

Final observations showed that nearly all of independent activities planned across the school during GRaSp time were active activities. Activities such as adobe spark and engagement with the North Gower 'LUA' teaching progression, through questioning. Final observations also showed that nearly all pupils were able to

Action Research



successfully select the right level of challenge. Nearly all pupils were engaged in their learning and were able to complete the task in the given time.

It was also noted that staff during this time worked with a focus group of pupils and were able to give sufficient in the moment feedback to those on independent activities. This remained unchanged since the baseline, however the school have implemented 'Dysgwr Heddiw' where learners are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning after the session. This is where pupil/teacher dialogue is used to give effective feedback. The use of adobe spark also means digital feedback can be given to be implemented in the next session. Pupils working within a focus group continue to receive high quality feedback and nearly all learners are challenged and engaged in their learning.

Learning points:

A key emerging recommendation from this project is that in order to keep our learning varied and our pupils interested we must consider a range of teaching strategies in all areas of learning. This will support progression of our learners and help to improve their intrinsic motivation. Pupils must be taught so that they can learn, practise so that they understand and are given opportunities to apply their skills.

Next steps:

To carry out action research into how LUA can support other areas of the curriculum and align feedback policy with LUA assessment tracker.

Contact details:

Archards6@hwbcymru.net
Waltersj97@hwbcymru.net
GoremanoS@hwbcymru.net

Please also see our school website for research project:

<https://www.llanrhidian.swansea.sch.uk/national-professional-enquiry-project-22-23/>