

Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln

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Workplace-focused Development

Drama (Mantle of the Expert) and Writing

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Abstract

This project took place over an academic year in a community first school in an area of high deprivation. The aim of the project was to develop the confidence and expertise of teachers to use Mantle of the Expert, as opposed to traditional literacy lessons, to improve writing opportunities and outcomes. It explored how an action research model could be used alongside coaching and mentoring to develop whole school writing policy and alongside the successes of such an approach it identified some of the challenges in effecting change in a school. It begins to highlight how integrating writing into a drama based enquiry curriculum can go beyond motivating children and have an impact too on standards.

Contextual statement

Since September 2010 the school in which this project is taking place has been developing its curriculum with the intention of placing Mantle of the Expert (Heathcote 1985) at the heart of learning and teaching. Alongside the head the school has a team of ten teachers with a whole class responsibility; an Access and Inclusion Manager, three part time teachers and two Higher Level Teaching Assistants. Within the team there are also sixteen support assistants. The whole staff are committed to using a “drama for learning” approach to engage learners, construct a relevant curriculum and improve standards: participating in extensive professional development in this area during this time.

As deputy head teacher my focus is on improving standards and promoting strategies which result in outstanding progress. Historically, even with an increased emphasis on writing since OFSTED (2010) highlighted a need for ‘more focussed opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their writing, by building step-by-step on previous learning,’ attainment and achievement data reported at the end of Key Stage 1 has been lower in writing than in reading and maths – see figure 1. The prominence of daily literacy lessons and the raising of the status of guided writing are not having the desired impact.

**AVERAGE POINTS
PROGRESS OF YEAR 2
CHILDREN**

YEAR	READING	WRITING	MATHS
2008	6.4	5	7.3
2009	6.4	5.5	6.7
2010	7.4	5.2	7.3

Figure 1 – The Average Points Progress of the Year 2 cohort ; 2008-10

However I have seen in my own class how Mantle of the Expert can motivate and engage children to write and how composition and effect can potentially be improved. Therefore, building on previous personal research on learning and teaching (Hinton 2011), I intend to support teachers to maximise opportunities to develop writing through Mantle of the Expert using coaching and mentoring to develop their confidence and expertise. I will evaluate whether, as a result of this project, standards in writing improve particularly in relation to purpose and audience. At a personal level my aim is to further develop my own classroom practice in conjunction with my knowledge and understanding of effective pedagogy. I also want to reflect on my leadership skills and through exploring research methods alongside coaching and mentoring, ascertain how to most effectively develop other staff. Furthermore a key aim is to develop whole school policy, primarily in relation to writing, in a way which is owned by the school community.

Engagement with the knowledge base

Writing... serves the function of helping us to organise and understand our lives and our worlds

(Cambourne 1998:184)

But what is good writing? The original National Curriculum for England and Wales states:

The best writing is vigorous, committed, honest and interesting. We have not included these qualities in our statements of attainment because they cannot be mapped into levels. Even so all good classroom practice will be geared to encouraging and fostering these vital qualities

(DES 1989:17.31)

I tend to agree with this and with Smith's (1982) argument that transcription and composition are both essential to good writing but that composition should take

precedence over transcription in the early stages of writing. Barrs reinforces the thought 'that the focus...is first and foremost on composition' (1987: 2). However the opinion of Grainger et al. (2005) that a balance of skills, knowledge and creativity is needed would seem a sensible one. Certainly views on what constitutes effective teaching of writing have changed over time from dictation in the Victorian age through the creative writing movement of the 1960s and the process and genre approaches of more recent years. What is certain is that teaching writing is far from simple and that written outcomes can come from creative and imaginative inputs as well as from what might be described as more formulaic or discrete activities. But does this mean schools should do both? Or is one more effective than the other? The key consideration for me is whether we want children who can write or children as writers.

Working in a school in a socially deprived area where attainment in writing is below national expectations has meant that, as Cole et al (2001) state is frequently the case in such schools, the National Literacy Strategy(1998) has been rigidly adhered to with the intention of improving standards. Although the strategy intended to address both the teaching of composition and transcription 'we have generally taught the second strand, the transcription skills and conventions, more fully and explicitly than the other' (Frater 2004:81). While teachers have developed their knowledge of form, function, grammatical features and linguistic terminology through the widespread training associated with the NLS, the fixed and prescribed approach (Frater 2000) has indeed resulted in somewhat 'disembodied teaching' (Grainger et al. 2005:4) and in teachers concerned most about following the given structure; with many battling against the 'imbalanced emphasis on literacy skills at the seeming expense of purposes and creativity' (Dadds 1999:16).

With a genre based approach such as this; where direct teaching is based on analysing the structure and language features of a text and using this as a model for writing, children's ownership of the writing can be questionable and they can be said to 'merely be playing the game called writing' (Grainger et al. 2005:8): evident through discussion with children in my setting.

In literacy you have to write their ideas [the teacher's].

Neither does the model fit with multimodal texts (Millard 2003; Bearne 2003) and digital learning of today as in reality genres are 'often blurred' and do not draw on 'the diverse landscape of literacies that currently exist' (Grainger et al. 2005:33). This is at odds with the curriculum we want to deliver at our school and the skills and attitudes we want to foster in our children through Mantle of the Expert. Indeed Barrs (1994) goes as far as to say that writing development can be stifled by the expectation that children will write to a set structure in their primary years and Martin (2003: 17) likewise warns against allowing genre theory to 'descend like a suffocating blanket' as it also 'carries the danger of authorial cleansing'. I find myself asking should we continue to teach skills, structure and form as our principal method of enabling children to write or will this knowledge develop more successfully through a wholly creative approach.

As Bearne says there is 'sometimes resistance to talk of developing creativity and writing' (in Grainger, Gooch and Lambirth 2005:ix) which she attributes to the style of teaching in the 1960s recommended by Langdon (1961), Ford (1963), Lane and Kemp (1967), Clegg (1964), Holbrook (1964) and Maybury (1967). It is often reported to have focussed exclusively on children writing imaginatively. However Robinson (2001) talks in more recent times of the need for structure within creative writing activities and this is reinforced by Grainger et al. (2005:44) who say that this way of working requires the provision of support and does not involve 'leaving them to their own devices'. They go on to discuss the positive impact of motivation to write through engaging and creative contexts where purpose and audience determine the choice of textual features. This is reinforced by both Barrs (1988) and Vygotsky (1978) who discuss the importance of such playful experiences as the precursor for writing; writing which is often accompanied by an authorial 'story muttering' (Vygotsky 1978:107). I believe that teaching children that these ideas are valued, that as a writer they have something worth saying and that their voice will be heard are the key to improving writing. As declared in *Growth Through English*:

Language is learnt in operation, not by dummy runs...in ordering and composing situations that in some way symbolise life as we know it, we bring order and composure to our inner selves.

(Dixon 1967: 13)

Surely it must hold true that without something to say knowledge of writing styles and transcription skills are redundant. In my own class I have seen Mantle of the Expert offer meaningful opportunities for writing which have been both urgent and important to the children and it seems possible then that writing 'will develop not as a matter of hand and finger habits but as a really new and complex form of speech' (Vygotsky 1978: 118). However these opportunities need to be maximised so that children make progress with their writing and therefore I now feel that employing a process approach may be an effective strategy to achieve this.

Bunting (2000: 7) explains that a process approach to writing 'views children as authors and treats their written work as creative and meaningful'. It is 'learning how to write by writing' notes Stone (1995: 232). This approach favoured by Donald Graves (1983) has audience and purpose at its heart and therefore involves children in exploring choices around genre and in writing with a clear sense of voice.

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on writing. It is the part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process

(Graves 1983:227)

Children take on more responsibility for their writing; learning 'transcription through composition, the skills through the process as a whole, rather than focussing on the skills first' (Graham and Kelly 1999:10). 'The writing-process approach simply stresses meaning first, and then skills in the context of meaning' (WETA 2008). To me this seems to mesh perfectly with writing as an integral part of process drama and hence Mantle of the Expert. To explore the potential impact of this approach further in our school, class based research would be needed.

Action Research

Action research involves 'learning in and through action and reflection (McNiff 2002: 15). Although there has been some doubt about its effectiveness in terms of development (Noffke 1997), more recently it has been shown to be a successful agent in professional learning and change within an organisation (McNiff 2002). For

this reason action research seems to be an ideal methodology for education and in this instance for exploring writing in Mantle of the Expert across the whole school.

Although Stenhouse (1975) and Ebbutt (1985) emphasise the notion that outcomes must be made public, I tend to agree with Oliver (1980) and Robertson (2000) that this is not essential and that action research can be for professional development and purely for action within a school setting especially because, as stated by Cohen and Manion (1980:174), it is 'situational' and therefore unique to a 'specific context' and involves solutions and practice which are particular to that circumstance.

However the collaborative and reflective aspects of such research are unquestionable and for me mean that action research can be used within coaching and mentoring. Indeed Robertson (2008) suggests that ongoing coaching can result almost organically in leaders' involvement with action research.

Coaching and mentoring

I think Andy Hargreaves encapsulates the ethos of coaching and mentoring:

Whatever our work, all of us can benefit from the perspective of a critical friend, a coach and advocate, who stands by our side, gives us pause to reflect, and helps us to eventually move forward

(in Robertson 2008: xiii)

Certainly within this project coaching from the head teacher as a National Trainer for Mantle of the Expert and likewise with the school Curriculum Leader for Dramatic Enquiry, has challenged me to reflect on my own practice and search for ways to influence learning and teaching.

Since starting to use a dramatic enquiry based approach to learning the school the leadership team, led by the innovative head teacher, has encouraged a culture of risk taking and this has proved to be vital for this project and for the development of learning and teaching generally. At a personal learning level the head teacher has provided what is described by MacBeath (1998) as critical friendship, by Covey (1989) as active listening and by Robertson as reflective interviewing in that dialogue with him has challenged me to refine my thinking at each stage of the project whilst 'facilitating ownership of the outcomes and process' (2008: 99). This

partnership has meant that the profile of the project has been kept high within the demands of a busy school.

Working closely with my immediate colleague; teaching within the same year group and both undertaking workplace projects, has proved vital as:

Joint planning... will lead to a more intensive dialogue about practice through which groups of colleagues develop their understanding together

(Robertson 2008: 42)

What has also been invaluable is the support from the West Midlands Network for Mantle of the Expert and the local colleagues undertaking similar projects. If reflection takes place solely within your own setting there is a danger of having a restricted view of possible action. Whereas within a varied group it is possible to exchange ideas and widen the viewpoints of everyone involved. Members of this particular group all act as 'facilitators of the learning process' (Robertson 2008) for each other: asking and responding to questions, discussing reading and sharing experiences has undoubtedly caused me to question my own practice and has enhanced my own learning. My knowledge of Mantle of the Expert, research methods and coaching have all increased as I have been incited to find out more through the support I have received.

Planning and carrying out the project

Realising that using Mantle of the Expert to maximise learning in writing could have the impact on standards missing in our school, a consideration of how to communicate this with staff and begin to effect a change on policy became inevitable. Lesson observations and learning walks had shown that teachers were becoming more adept at using a drama based enquiry method within classes: with good and outstanding teaching across the school. So the question arising was:

How to develop the confidence and expertise of teachers to use Mantle of the Expert to improve teaching and learning in writing: in terms of opportunities to write and the quality of the outcomes.

The action plan (Appendix A) focused on supporting teachers to develop writing through Mantle of the Expert and evaluating the impact of this on children's outcomes and attitudes.

The main concern was to ensure that the writing does not drive the drama work as seen in the work of Cremin et al. (2006) and equally importantly that staff took ownership of any change in policy.

Initially working with the head teacher to produce a vision of writing in our school seemed like a productive starting point, on reflection although the process was successful in resulting in a proposal for teaching and learning, other staff needed to have been involved and it was a mistake to try to move too fast on change. It was important after this not to fall into the trap of a supposed 'shared culture' being 'simply the values of leaders imposed on less powerful people' (Bush 2005:57).

Therefore the focus throughout the project became reversing the practice where staff look to the leadership team to provide direction within a core subject such as writing. In the past, especially when implementing the National Strategies, this has led to, as Robertson (2008: 99) has described, 'dependency or resistance, neither of which is conducive to rich professional development'. The aim developed therefore into wanting teachers to coach each other as part of the action research.

There was an impact on the sharing of theory with staff; with time being made available to share this with the whole team on a training day and consequently enabling discussion and reflection to start to take place. This was reinforced by writing in Mantle being on the agenda of weekly staff meetings to support teachers to raise any points or issues for discussion.

When gathering views at different stages of the project a questionnaire requiring teachers to describe their thoughts resulted in low levels of engagement. Through reflection and discussion with different coaches my conclusion was that this may have been too exposing for people. Hence I looked to incorporate a mixture of information gathering tools such as ranking statements, a discussion board on the school website and feedback with a buddy from a different teaching team.

As buddying work proved to be such a success when team teaching Mantle sessions this approach was also used when analysing children's writing with the aim of sharing good practice in a non-threatening way.

Figure 3 – A summary of staff improvement strategies for writing 2011

This was not representative of teachers across the whole school however, as only 33% of staff responded to the questionnaire. This was surprising as our staff are generally very open but discussions with coaches, including a conversation on Twitter, prompted me to consider staff as potentially fearful learners who although they participate in discussions around learning and teaching may be more hesitant to commit this to paper. As Rowan and Reason (1981) state, action research is always carried out with others and not on others and therefore I was impelled to rethink my approach. This demonstrated to me the powerful impact of reading and a personal learning network.

Following an in school workshop on the process of writing within Mantle (Appendix C), discussion around what teachers would like to know more about generated a number of key areas to explore further. The workshop was successful in improving teacher knowledge of writing in Mantle. The “Strengths and Areas of Concern” questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed as a result of this and given dedicated time for completion. It provided more reliable evidence of where we were as a whole staff. The ranking style of this type of data also enabled analysis to be visual and clear to everyone without personal, individual views being identified. A collegiate approach is advocated as being conducive to change and I was aware of the pitfall of appearing as a leader of the work with all of the answers!

The data indicated that teachers were most concerned about children writing in a variety of genres and knowing the next steps to improve their writing whilst working within Mantle of the Expert (Figure 4). I believe this links back to the rigidity of the National Strategies and the insistence on teaching specific units to specific groups of children. Even within a creative curriculum, teachers wanting their children to make good and outstanding progress are concerned that this will not happen if we move away from what has been consistently upheld by the Local Authority as the way to raise standards. A year later following numerous discussions and workshops this is still a concern although comments from teachers (Appendix F) show they are gaining in confidence for instance:

Describe something which you feel has worked well/ had a positive impact on the children's writing

Children applying different styles of writing and feeling that their writing has a purpose.

Also writing moderation (Appendix E) showed that children are actually writing in a wide range of styles within the Mantle of the Expert work across school as a result of support through this project around skilled planning. The opportunities and outcomes are evident. Hence my feeling is that the concern is one of **perceived** teacher confidence rather than outcomes. Writing for a purpose and client and therefore in an appropriate genre comes through strongly on the survey of teacher views which was completed by 90% of teachers. The anxiety lies around including a **range** of genre within **each** Mantle of the Expert sequence; which needs further discussion and input now.

Writing and Mantle – What are our strengths and areas of concern?

A – children applying skills and knowledge in their writing in Mantle
B – children writing with enough detail and with variety of sentence structure and vocabulary
C – children thinking good writing is neat writing with capital letters and full stops
D – children writing in a variety of genres especially narrative and poetry
E – addressing basic skills of writing through modelled writing or marking/ feedback
F – children having time to edit and improve their own writing
G – children doing their best; putting in enough effort on the quality of their writing and not being disengaged
H – allowing for “seize the moment” opportunities for writing rather than planned tasks
I – children being given choice over how and what to write rather than the writing being teacher led or over structured/ guided
J – children knowing the next steps – what they can do well in their writing and how to move it on to improve

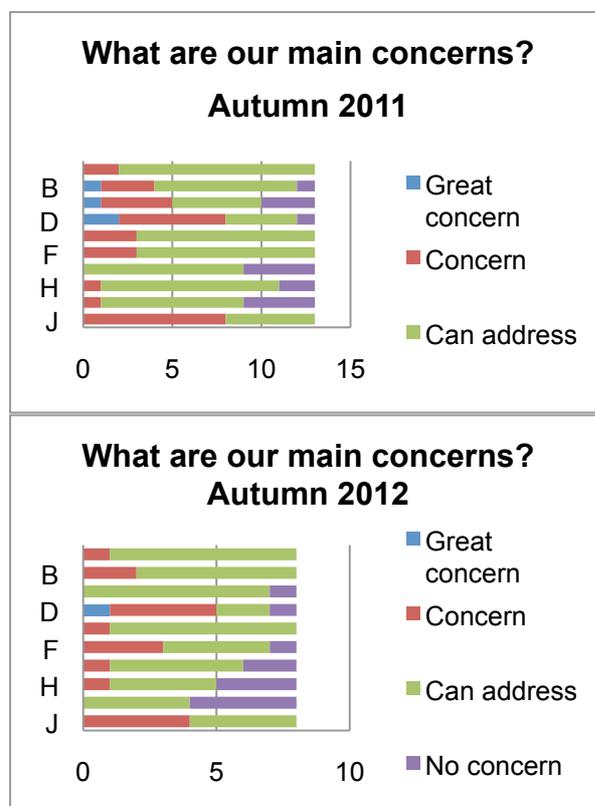


Figure 4 – A summary of staff views on strengths and difficulties with writing in Mantle

Data shows that general confidence around issues and in particular about the next steps in learning linked to writing in Mantle has improved greatly. Indeed analysis of written responses in a staff meeting at the end of the project (Appendix F) shows that feedback to children and guided group or workshop sessions with a specific writing focus as advocated by Graves (1983) are highlighted as current good and improving practice by staff. A comment from the head teacher summarises the feeling of the majority of staff now:

If we continue to build times when Mantle creates the opportunities, the wealth of writing experiences will further flourish.

Describe something which you are trying to do to improve the children’s writing in Mantle – Autumn 2012

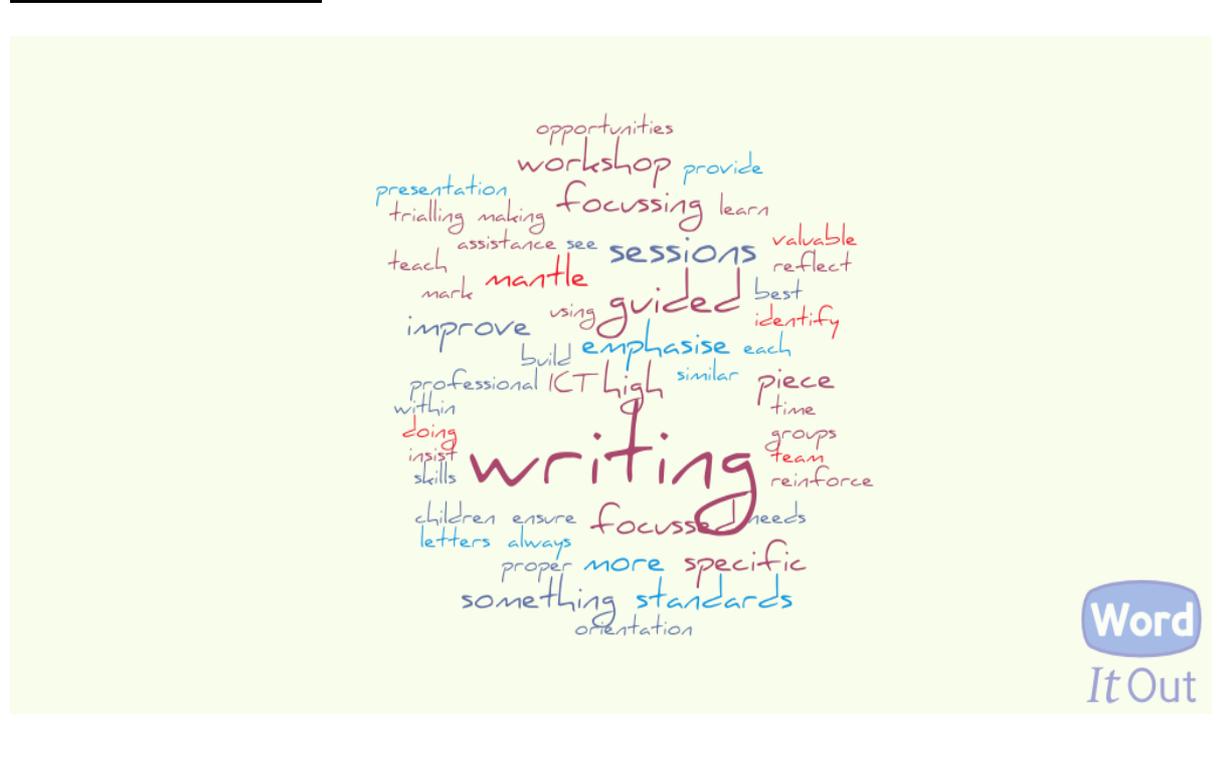


Figure 6 – A summary of staff comments on strategies to improve writing 2012

New and less experienced staff have less understanding of the theory behind Mantle of the Expert and supporting them to work within the school ethos and developing approach to writing is a continuing challenge however. The advantage of the team approach to this work though means that there is a wide support network for new staff to draw on.

Standards of children’s writing have improved since the focus began on writing in Mantle in the academic year 2010-2011. Reinforcement through this action research project has had an impact on achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 with progress

Year Group	Progress Since EYFS	Progress Since (Girls)	Progress Since (Boys)	Progress Since (FSM)	Expected progress NC Points	NC Points Attainment (National expectation)			
Year 1	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.6	4	9.0	9.1	7.8	(9)

at its best.

PROGRESS IN YEAR 2

YEAR	READING	WRITING	MATHS
2008	6.4	5	7.3
2009	6.4	5.5	6.7
2010	7.4	5.2	7.3
2011	6.9	6.1	6.9
2012	6.5	6.5	7

Figure 7 – Average points progress of the Year cohort 2008-12

Attainment in the Year 1 cohort is the highest it has been – in line with expectations.

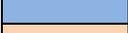
Key	
	Well above national expectation
	Slightly above national expectation
	In line with national expectation
	Slightly below national expectation
	Well below national expectation

Figure 8 – Progress and attainment in writing of the Year 1 cohort 2012

Similarly the gap between attainment and national expectations by the end of Year 4 closed significantly during the period of this project from 47% at expected levels to 70%.

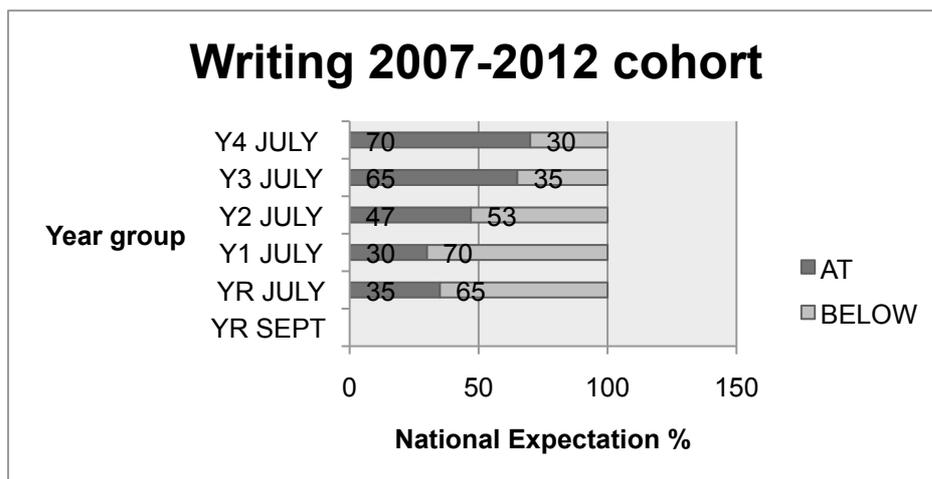


Figure 9 – Attainment in writing of the Year 4 cohort 2012

Children’s attitude to writing has improved and their enjoyment is clear to see in their comments on the end of year 2012 reports:

James: I enjoyed Mantle - when the flood happened in the garden centre and I am really good at writing now.

Luke: I enjoy Mantle - best of all was the flood one because I liked how I did my report.

Shannon: I enjoy the Mantle - I liked writing the incident reports about the flood.

Semere: I like writing stories on the laptops for Mantle of the Expert.

I strongly believe that Mantle of the Expert is the reason for this improvement in standards. A Key Stage 2 teacher noticed that the urgency to write for a client means that the children are keen to do their very best whilst another colleague from the same team reinforced this:

The contact with the client always produces a detailed piece of writing with more depth. The children are very keen to write their opinions and thoughts in relation to a Mantle. We always reinforce the fact that we are a professional team with high standards.

Sharing your learning, influencing practice and evaluating your learning

The project culminated in the short term at school level with a staff meeting during the autumn term 2012 (Appendix G). As already discussed the intended outcomes for children were achieved as there is evidence of higher standards of writing in Mantle of the Expert work in each Key Stage. It is felt by a number of teachers that the consistent teaching of phonics has also contributed to this achievement and whilst I agree that this has given children who are beginning to write greater independence I question the impact on overall standards as children's writing matures: the level of spelling is in my opinion the weakest aspect of their writing. Therefore follow up work is planned where scrutiny of writing from Mantle work will aim to pinpoint exactly the strengths and areas for further development. Also research will take place into how writing out of role, about the drama and for the drama within the context of the Mantle may possibly broaden the range of writing opportunities and therefore the confidence of teachers around the genres employed. The action research model has proved successful and is a model we wish to extend in school as it has resulted in everyone working on something at the same level. As a methodology for teacher-led development work it is recognised as discussed by Frost and Durrant (2003: 44) that:

It is not simply a matter of choosing to do something differently and then implementing practice...it is working with each other to learn how to get it right

The project has contributed to professional development in school and this in turn has had an impact on practice in the classroom. Through discussion, reviews of planning and informal drop in sessions in classrooms it is clear that writing has become more of an integral part of Mantle of the Expert work; not just with the aim of publishing but with a determination to maximise opportunities to develop children as writers. Staff are keen now to encourage in children the notion of writing as a process rather than an end product and have learnt that assessment and marking in role as the Mantle client can be effective and drive the improvement of writing. There are still questions to explore further such as how to balance the motivation, engagement and urgency generated through the Mantle work with the need to work

on a piece of writing to improve it. Opportunities to investigate this have already been built into plans for teacher buddying in 2013: this is part of the now ongoing action research approach developed in part through this project in school. Teachers are all coming to accept that regardless of experience or pay scale we all have contributions to make to school policy and we all have responsibility to improve our own practice.

The project has influenced the Writing Policy in school. It will change greatly as a result of the work in this project and its outcomes. It is being updated to reflect our views on the teaching of writing and is out for consultation with staff and the Governing Body now. Something I have taken on board personally as a leader is this notion of coaching; it would be quicker for me to write the policy myself but there needs to be staff ownership. Coaching from the head teacher has made me realise that change needs time and can be achieved far more successfully through subtle mentoring rather than hurried implementation.

Throughout school there has been differing understanding of coaching and mentoring as a strategy for development within the buddying programme. Although the support within pairs has been a valuable two way process, it has come through advice and collaboration rather than coaching. I feel that through engaging with literature and watching other people act as coaches I have been able to develop my own skills in this area and I will be able to continue to build on this. I try to stop myself saying what I would do or giving suggestions and adopt a more coaching approach. It will be discussed by the school Leadership and Management team whether this practice can become established; to permeate the supportive ethos but to enhance its influence on practice through the challenge of critical friends. Nevertheless this needs careful consideration and training.

My own professional learning throughout this project has also been disseminated through study days within our school. Practitioners from the local authority and beyond join us to observe practice, take part in a workshop on Mantle of the Expert and discuss planning. Writing within a creative curriculum is usually a key concern of teachers and so I refer to the work I have done when talking to them. The school has been awarded a quality mark as a Training School for Mantle of the Expert and this work contributed towards that award.

In addition to this I have worked with groups of students from two local universities within our school and at one of the universities. On both occasions I shared some of the theory behind Mantle of the Expert with a particular emphasis on writing. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive.

In April 2013 I will be part of a team working in schools in Palestine and hope to be able to use my experience to coach teachers there using Mantle of the Expert. The work carried out in preparation for this project and throughout its duration will be invaluable on this trip and help to give me a firm foundation to draw on when working in such a different environment to help facilitate change within their schools too.

In turn I expect the experience to provide an opportunity to reflect further on my own practice and deepen my own understanding of the impact of Mantle of the Expert on learners.

Ethical statement

I declare that I have read and adhered to the Bishop Grosseteste University College ethical policy

Signed

Own work statement

I declare that this portfolio is my own work and that all sources have been properly acknowledged

Signed

Appendix A

Action Plan

Overall aim To develop the confidence and expertise of teachers to use Mantle of the Expert to improve writing opportunities and outcomes.
Specific objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support teachers through coaching and mentoring to identify opportunities for writing in Mantle of the Expert.• Determine the impact of the fictional client on the quality of the writing.• Raise standards in writing across school.
Intended outcomes for students/ pupils Children will produce writing which is appropriate in terms of purpose and audience. College/ school Raise standards in writing. Raise the profile of writing across school and the children's attitude to writing. Yourself Develop my role as coach and mentor. Develop and extend my knowledge of the writing process and how this fits with Mantle of the Expert. Develop my knowledge of research methods.
Success criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are motivated to write and have a positive attitude to writing.• Teachers "Seize the moment" for writing within the Mantle of the Expert work.• There is a growing culture of coaching and mentoring across school.
Timescale January – March: plan and research April – June: complete the project July: reflect on the outcomes
Resources/ staff/ background reading Staff meetings Buddying/ coaching/ mentoring opportunities Reading on research techniques and on the writing process

Ethical considerations

- Staff names and views to remain anonymous
- Children's names to remain anonymous

How and where to share learning

Staff meetings
Leadership and Management meeting autumn 2012
Governors meeting autumn 2012
Staff website

Appendix B – staff questionnaire

Writing in Mantle

Describe something which you feel has worked well so far in your teaching of writing or something which has had a positive impact on the children's writing

Describe something which you are trying to do to improve the children's writing in Mantle

What do you think your children need to do to improve their writing?

How do you think we can help the children to know what good writing is or what good writers do?

What would you like to find out more about in terms of writing and Mantle

Appendix C – key slides from the initial theory based staff meeting

Characteristics of lifelong writers

- ◊ Initiates writing
- ◊ Has a sense of the power of writing
- ◊ Has a sense of history and of the future
- ◊ Has a sense of audience
- ◊ Initiates writing at home and to affect others
- ◊ Senses the appropriateness of writing in a variety of genres

Donald Graves

Key issues

- ◊ Motivation
- ◊ Engagement
- ◊ Time to explore, incubate, and share ideas
- ◊ Sense of audience and purpose
- ◊ Quality use of language and sentence structure
- ◊ Writing as a process not a one shot affair
- ◊ Risk taking in writing
- ◊ Independence and choice
- ◊ Mantle/ Literacy

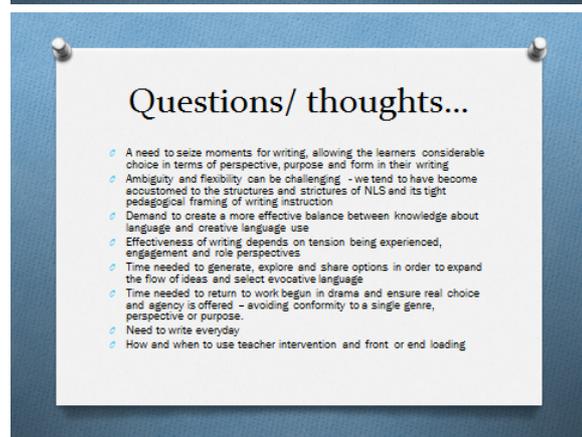
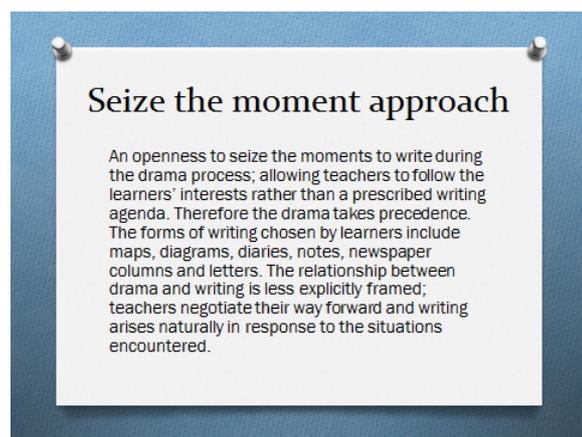
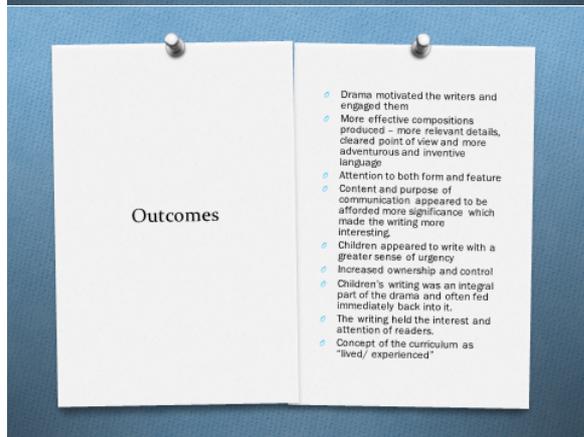
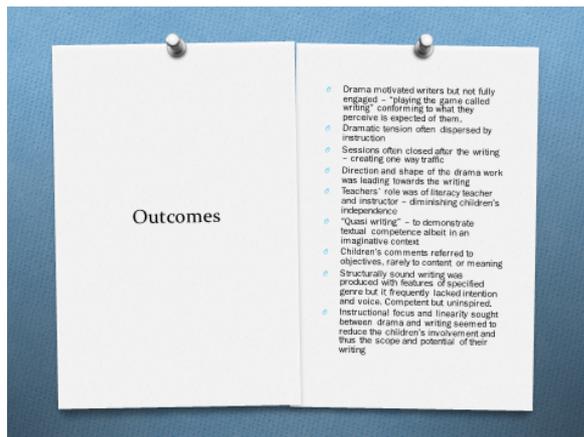
oro.open.ac.uk Connecting drama and writing: seizing the moment to write

Research on the relationship between drama and writing – comparing genre specific work and seize the moment work. [children aged 6, 7, 10 and 11]

The more spontaneous opportunities for writing were shown to impact on the writing in terms of tension, emotional engagement and incubation, strong sense of perspective and purpose. The children often chose to revisit writing begun in the context of the drama to reshape and develop it further.

Genre specific approach to writing

In this approach teachers work to align different drama conventions to particular forms of writing in order to ensure that the drama offers opportunities for oral rehearsal of the desired text type. Each drama is planned with a genre in mind and mini writing lessons are undertaken to remind the children of the features of the text type prior to writing.



Appendix D – strengths and areas of concern questionnaire

Writing and Mantle of the Expert

Area of writing...	Addressing this in Mantle concerns me a great deal	I am concerned about how to address this in Mantle	I think I can address this in Mantle	This doesn't concern me at all
Children applying skills and knowledge e.g. phonics, features of different genres, punctuation etc. in their writing in Mantle				
Children writing with enough detail and with variety of sentence structure and vocabulary				
Children thinking that good writing is neat writing with capital letters and full stops				
Children writing in a wide range of genres especially narrative and poetry				

Addressing basic skills of writing as a teacher, either through modelled writing or marking/ feedback				
Children having time to edit and improve their own writing				
Children doing their best; putting in enough effort on the quality of their writing and not being disengaged				
Allowing for “seize the moment” opportunities for writing rather than planned tasks				
Children being given choice over how and what to write rather than the writing being teacher led or over structured/ guided				
Children knowing the next steps – what they do well in their writing and how to move it on to improve				

Appendix E – writing moderation examples of the variety of genre in Mantle writing and the age of the child.

Wanted

The Big Bad Wolf



Planning Application



Name: Mrs Pig

What do you want to build?
brigs

Where do you want to build it?
at the woods

Why? So that we can save the
little pigs



Give details of building materials to be used.
because the big bad wolf

Please send plans with this application.

Yes
Mrs Ward
Yes

Chief Planning Officer

Kyra vaJar

Poster

Information Text – Reception

How to plant bulbs



get a pot



put some soil in the pot



put
put three bulbs in the soil



put soil on top the bulbs



pour water on it

Three Little Pigs

Jack
(Hach)

House Plan

What materials are you going to use to make the house? I am going to use bricks and glass

Why did you choose those?

to make it strong

What does the house look like?

It has 4 windows and a door
it has strong windows

Instruc

Now a pen sign in the water
 with the boy and the dog
 got the bar in the side
 the bin man Woodrow came back
 and they took the dogs
 to muck a foss. the boy said to the
 bin man sign in the tree I know
 know early the dog and the
 they went home Fred was
 back. U can't then. Went to bed



HELP
 Amazing Restorers
 Need help to find
 Green was family. descendent
 of Edward's family. Edward
 was born in 1874 we are
 looking for photos and artefacts.
 Please contact us on
 (01527) 527619 or email us
 on www.woodrow.office.worcs.sch
 Great advert - your chance of
 being really noticed.
 I hope we get some replies.
 Have you thought about where we will
 put the pictures?

Narrat

Persuasive writing – Year 1

15 MAR 2012

Franklin's Story (1)

First I was just a ball of wool. Then I was knitted by Edward's Nanny. Next I got wrapped up. I waited for a long time. Suddenly I got unwrapped and that is when I met Edward. I went everywhere with Edward. I went to the shop to get sweets. When we got in Edward drops me and goes to the fire to warm his hands. Then Edward went to boarding school. I was left at home. I felt lonely and sad. Then when mama and papa was packing to go to India. Papa found me and threw me. I think I should

Dear Miss Green, May

Sorry we upset you about the house. We promise to put some photos upon the wall to show we lived in the house. Please send some photos to put up. O's Edward as a grand and of other family members. Where would you like us to hang on the wall. Please put names on the photos.

from
Elise XXXX XX

Narrative – Year 1

Letter – Year 1

Dear diary

Today I have found my apprentice
his name is Nanaki. Oh and did
I tell yesterday I got a good
energy lightcaber well let me go
back to my apprentice Nanaki he's
great he can take out 20 robots
at 1se. And he can take out a
big steel door. And he can

ARISHA

Can you help us?



Do you know
this man his
name is Edward
Green. Why he got
married to
Eisie. Edward
went to a new
school it name
is Bonding
School.

He lived at
9 Kensington Drive.

What a lot
of useful
information!

Diary

Poster - Year 1

For your runway you should use carpet because
 as soon as you land you will just stop.
 your space craft will travel. ^{slowly} one
 rubber because it is fat. your space craft will
 travel to fast if you use wood because there's a little
 bit of friction. I think you should make sure
 your runway is carpet.

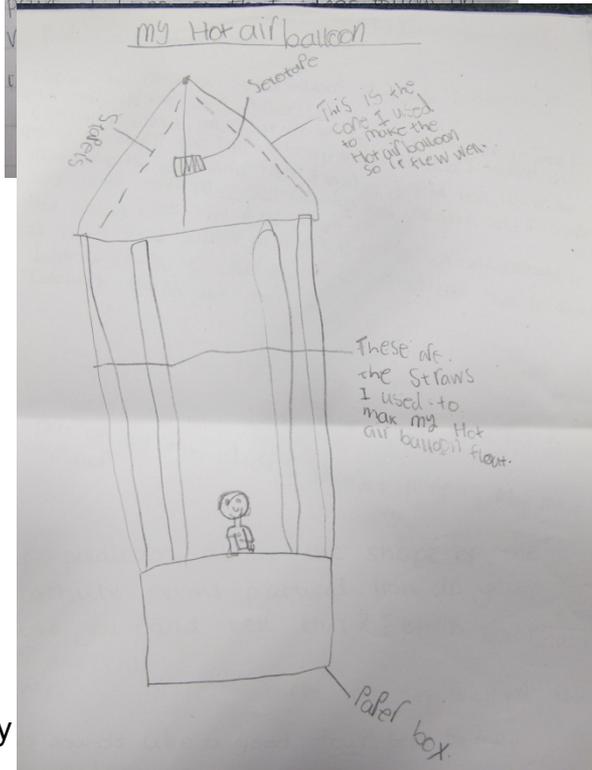


Scientific writing – Year 2

24.02.12

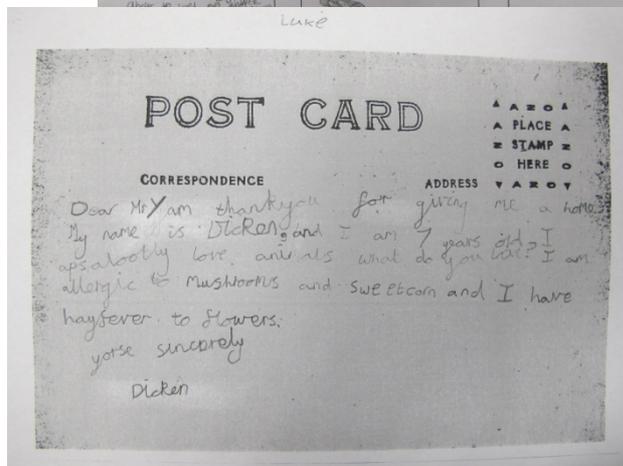
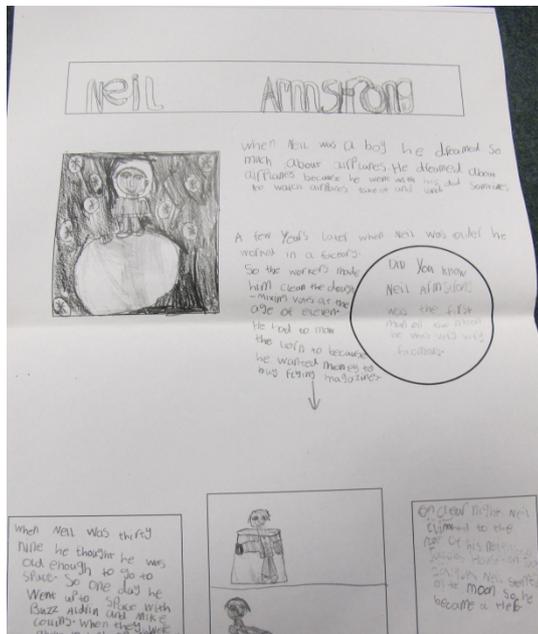
10. Space shuttles beeping
 9. Astronauts sleeping
 8. Planets spinning & stars winning
 7. Rockets blasting fire
 6. A few more shooting stars
 5. Big Audis trying to catch
 4. Little Humans itching their backs
 3. Big footprints on the moon nearly the size of a barbon
 2. Stars going to sleep everyone else tries to beep
 1. Little girl is going to bed she also dances with her ted.

☆ I really like how you have linked



Poetry

Diagram – Year 2



Fact sheet – Year 2

Post card – Year 4

Appendix F – summary of staff comments at the staff meeting in September 2012

Writing and Mantle staff views - autumn 2012

Describe something you feel has worked well/ had a positive impact on children's writing

- Writing for a purpose - inspires and encourages
- Emotional attachment to the task - keen to write
- Children applying different styles
- More regular opportunities for writing
- Purpose for quality/ improving/ editing
- Modelling - showing thought processes
- Opportunities to respond to written feedback and targets
- Marking in role/ contact with client - emphasises importance
- Variety of equipment and opportunities for developing early writing skills

Describe something you are trying to do to improve children's writing in Mantle

- More focussed writing groups - based on specific writing skills
- Build in more time for reflection on writing
- Using ICT to aid independence

- Emphasise and teach handwriting
- Seeing the value in each piece of writing eg even notes. Especially in relation to the story/ client
- Emphasise professional team in mantle so high standards - effort and presentation
- More opportunities for mark making in mantle

What do you think your children need to do to improve their writing?

- Apply phonic skills
- Group work on skills - more/ daily
- Punctuate with more accuracy
- Talk about their work - be more aware of their individual targets
- Develop perseverance when going back to a piece of writing
- Continue to instil a love of writing
- See adults as writers at every opportunity
- Confidence and motivation to use mark making equipment

How do you think we can help children to know what good writing is or what good writers do?

- Modelling genres and styles appropriate to the task with explicit reference to what makes it good. Show that we need to improve our initial ideas too
- Share good examples eg in shared reading
- Share children's examples - highlight positives
- Display or working board of good writing and prompts
- Read and collect examples of good
- Guided writing - focussed activities eg basic skills
- Feedback from the client in mantle - demands high expectations
- Self and peer assessment
- Acknowledging good writing at different levels individual, class, school

What would you like to find out more about in terms of writing and Mantle

- Time to reflect on writing but keep pace of mantle going
- Strategies for children with barriers
- Ideas for building in more fiction writing
- How a range of genres can be included/ covered in mantle or if this is important
- Challenging more able writers
- Using writing mantle as evidence of achievement/ attainment
- How spontaneous writing can be focussed on areas for improvement
- Progression of writing through school

Appendix G – staff meeting discussion notes September 2012

Look at the action plan - **the successes of the year**

- *learning walks
- *writing with a sense of audience and purpose
- *engagement and motivation to write – children's report comments/ Mantle etc
- *moderation evidence
- *most progress by the end of Key Stage 1 last year
- *highest average points score for KS1
- *last year Y4 from 35% at expectation to 70%

Two documents showing how much progress we have made over the year - **DISCUSS**

- *rating chart – shows genre and children knowing about progress to be the main concerns
- *question/ comment sheet - seems to be how we take the best of traditional literacy teaching and use it now to improve outcomes for children

***Genre** – over a year we can cover a wide variety of writing.

Plan writing opportunities which fit the context/ team/ commission whilst also allowing for choice.

*The W..... Way -writing is
a process not an end
product. It has an impact
on children seeing
themselves as learning
orientated*

Be creative with the mantle. Be confident to stop the story and write for the mantle. Write about the mantle, change roles. Write in response to the drama. WRITE OUT OF ROLE BUT WITHIN THE CONTEXT.

Build in texts to read which cover different genres – texts can be written by us to read in the mantle.

“Learning how to write by writing” - learning transcription through composition, the skills through the process as a whole, rather than focussing on the skills first.

Traditional genre based lessons - formulaic/ not true to modern day writing where genres are blurred. Children playing the game called writing.

“Creative” writing: Barrs - writing development can be stifled by the expectation that children will write to a set structure in their primary years. Robinson - need for structure within creative writing activities/ this way of working requires the provision of support and does not involve ‘leaving them to their own devices’.

But - there was a comfort in the structure of lit lessons. To move away from it is a challenge. Writing standards have not improved due to lit. strategy teaching though.

Already seen the benefits of writing in mantle – make these the way forward for teaching writing now.

Model writing in the context of the Mantle. Take writing from the mantle – out of the fiction and work on it in specific writing “workshop” sessions. Can others be doing tasks from the generic task grid? Or set up free choice writing sessions where everyone is writing. Use AfL to plan specific groups. Groups will probably be different in different classes but the overall context and focus can be shared within the class and across classes. Learning dialogue can take place – **performance management objective.**

Don't have the answers! Try things, find out what others are doing, share ideas... a team approach.

Planning

May feel more challenging – a change from routine!

In our overview of the mantle/ term/ half term plan for writing opportunities.

Writing should link to the mantle **context** as much as possible [that doesn't necessarily mean writing in role]without the need for separate literacy sessions with a different “theme”

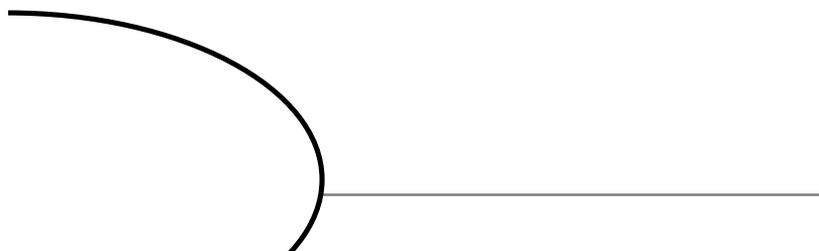
Weekly – plan sequences of sessions which are flexible in order to respond to need at the point of learning. So within a year group/ key stage everyone knows where the team is at and where each person is heading but there is personalisation for each class as appropriate.

Policy

Update the writing section of the English policy. Put it on the staff zone for comments.

Appendix H – school writing process

OLD MEANING

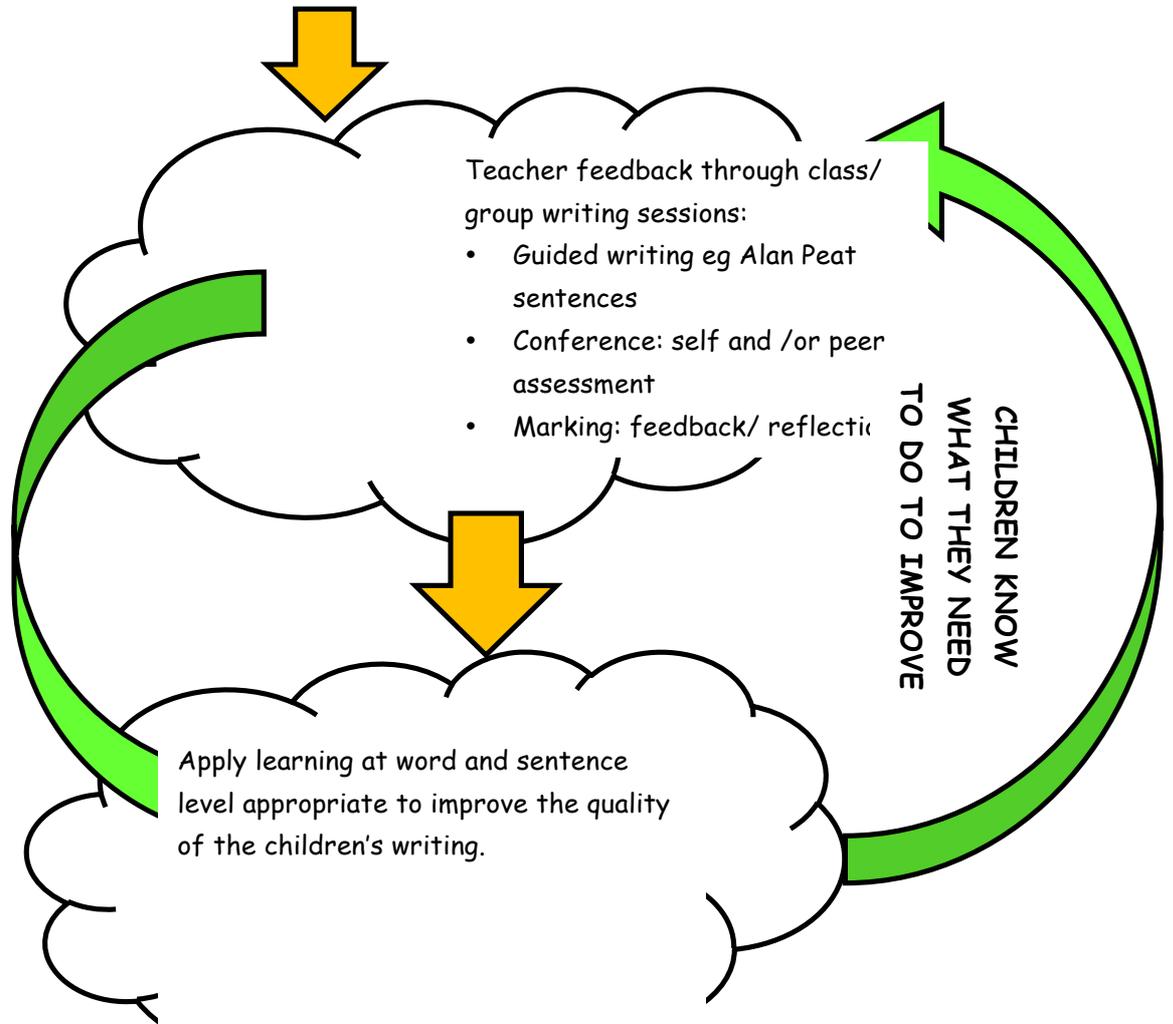


Hook: Writing for a purpose: opportunities with a clear sense of audience - Mantle of the Expert etc.

INCLUSIVE

FRONT LOAD:
Explore, review and focus on text structure, approach and features

CLIENT/ AUDIENCE DEMANDS IMPROVEMENT



Appendix I PLANS

TO BE SUBMITTED

Evidence for assessment as the driver for learning.
 Apply learning away from the point of teaching - assess.

FORWARD

OF YOUR FINAL

Please spend a few minutes reflecting and recording how the module and the assessed work has influenced your practice. Both positive and negative comments are useful to us in understanding students' needs and improving the course for future groups.

Do continue over the page if you are able to add extra detail. Thank you.

- What impact has completing this module had on you and your professional work?
The whole school policy for writing is now explicitly linked to our work on Mantle of the Expert. Writing opportunities within and about the drama work are being maximised.

- What impact do you think completing this has had or will have on pupils' achievements?
Their achievement in writing is the highest it has been since records in 2008.

- What impact do you think completing this module will have on the development of practice in your school/setting?
Coaching and mentoring is being extended in school. Professional development is taking on more of an action research approach. Writing in Mantle is being developed across school.

- What factors have helped/hindered you in completing this module?

Coaching from within school and outside school has helped. Being part of the leadership team has enabled me to keep the profile of the project high within school.

How to analyse results/ outcomes successfully was a slight challenge!

- Are there any ways in which the university college could have been more supportive in enabling you to complete the module?
Seeing examples of other projects would be interesting.

- What areas of enquiry do you now want to undertake?
Possibly how ICT can impact/ enhance work in Mantle of the Expert. Also how work in a socially deprived area in which I work compares with that in Palestine [exchange trip]

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