



East Renfrewshire Council

St Ninian's High School and Our Lady of the Missions

Building Bridges Case Study

October 2004

Contents

Summary of Actions to August 04

Summary of Actions to Sept 04

Report from Librarian

Teacher Evaluations and Pupil Exemplification

Conclusions

Appendix

Building Bridges Case Study: Actions to June 2004

There are two schools currently involved in the East Renfrewshire Building Bridges project. Our secondary school St Ninian's High School and one of our associated primaries Our Lady of the Missions. It is anticipated that our other feeder primaries become involved on successful completion of the pilot project in June 2005.

The vision for our project was influenced by a number of factors, many of them shared by others here today. National priorities in terms of literacy were clearly at the root of our decision to focus on attainment in writing. The cross-curricular nature of the project meant functional writing seemed the obvious area for concentrated and concerted effort with our History department and this suited well the aim of the primary who hoped to better integrate language work and topic work to allow for extra reinforcement of the literacy skills taught routinely in the language class. As our school had introduced the national qualification courses in S3 and S4 rather than Standard Grade, our English department had already embarked on a reworking of the S1 and S2 courses to smooth the pathway between 5-14 and Intermediate courses. The Building Bridges project came at an opportune moment for us as it offered us time to develop an already ongoing interest in the reading and writing skills required by the new assessments, both internal and external, of the Intermediate courses as well as an opportunity to connect with our primary colleagues to ensure our S1/S2 courses were as effective as they could possibly be. Also in view of our experience of the NQ courses, we noticed the pressing need for pupils to be confident of their own skills and be able to apply them independently in quite stressful timed situations that required problem-solving capabilities. We felt this above all had to change our methodology in the lower school. In our teaching of writing, the benefit of redrafting was gone; increasingly, we had to highlight the importance of effective planning and the accuracy of first drafts. The skills of summarising and using one's own words to display understanding, the ability to analyse language and comment on effects, the confidence to convey in writing one's own opinion in reaction to the ideas of a text had to become second nature for many of our pupils. In short, the key skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation all united by the ability to express these in writing became the focus of our project. We felt the ideas embodied by these terms specific to NQ English courses could be interpreted across the curriculum at every stage- an idea that dovetails with Professor David Wray's work on *Literacy in the Secondary Curriculum* a work that has helped to form the academic basis of our Building Bridges project.

There then is our vision! It took a long time to settle on the basics and as we make progress with the project we encounter obstacles and make small amendments. Above all, our experience so far has taught us that we cannot do everything in one go. That to be effective or at least to put something into practise, we have to be ruthless in restricting ourselves to the achievable within two years and hopefully forward plan so that the work we begin is carried on as part of usual curriculum development and staff training.

Setting the parameters of our study was a huge challenge. Together, we audited the type of functional writing done typically in each of our classrooms. From the grid above, we decided to focus our attention on the genres already embraced by the History department in their work with S1 and S2. We restricted ourselves then to the leaflet and discursive genres in S1 and the report and critical essay in S2. We agreed to produce jointly teaching materials for these particular genres and also to suggest teaching methodologies that from the experience of our colleagues seemed effective. In addition, we sought out relevant academic papers and in-service materials that could become a useful resource within departments. We further agreed that when piloting materials we would collect exemplars of both pupil and published work to be used in a variety of ways, for example, as a teaching tool for pupils or exemplification for staff. These would then be used to supplement the teaching genre materials so building up a resource particularly suited- in terms both of content and language aims - to the department in which it was being used. Finally, we began to compile a bank of comments to help teachers to give useful formative assessment on pupils' writing. These were not prescriptive and could be adapted to suit individuals' work but we felt the existence of them promoted the idea of formative assessment and also created consistency between departments also in terms of assessment, our librarian, Donna Baird, has made contact with

Dr Richard Parsons of Dundee University and we are hoping to introduce his self-assessment programme into the school.

In the primary, work proceeded in similar lines. Our primary specialist studied textbooks currently in use in the school and selected those units of work that most suited the Building Bridges project. Where appropriate, she supplemented these with for example, lessons on grammar. She also embarked on a study of topic work aiming to identify opportunities for developing reading and writing skills. This is still in progress. Also in progress is a plan to introduce into P6 and P7 the Passport reading programme devised by our librarian. The scheme aims to encourage reading of a diverse range of texts both fiction and non-fiction. Each time a pupil reads a particular genre and fills in a review sheet, she or he is rewarded with a sticker to put in the passport. The scheme can be utilised in a range of ways to award prizes to classes, groups or individuals if wished.

This was the first stage in our project and is now near to completion. As you can see from the examples, we produced a range of materials on reading skills like how to find texts, how to use texts effectively, how to note-take, guidance on selecting and organising material, how to use one's own words and so on. We felt this input was absolutely necessary for History as well as English as too often teachers in both departments would complain that pupils simply copied from the internet with little attempt, knowledge, confidence or motivation to complete research effectively. We all felt it was crucial that in a world where our children are bombarded with information from all sources that they are taught how to understand, analyse and evaluate that information so they control it and not the other way round. In terms of the writing skills, we looked at conventions of genres and within each one considered the selection of appropriate ideas, use of supporting evidence, the choice and use of language and the related technical skills as set out by the 5-14 criteria.

In terms of the methodologies suggested, we based many of our ideas once again on the work of David Wray. His approaches to modelling and scaffolding were recommended. We pointed also to various strategies in the 'Black Box' booklets and selected sections from the Raising Standards folder. Teachers in the English department who had piloted and adapted materials set their embarrassment aside and wrote up their experiences, warts and all, to be shared around their colleagues. Their openness in doing so was much appreciated as it helps to create a cross-curricular team-spiritedness and willingness to try something new, which I think is essential for this type of project to succeed. As we all know, no one person has all the answers and what works with one class does not necessarily do so with another. Thus, having said that we are there with the materials we have to acknowledge, with no sense at all of failure or disappointment, that the materials will have flaws and will need to be adapted as the pilot period goes on and beyond. This is the very essence of creativity and challenge that keeps our classrooms places of innovation.

We are about to embark on the second leg of the project where we put materials and methodologies into practise across the year groups. In S1, our classes are mixed ability while in S2 they are set in English though continue as mixed ability sets in the History department. In the primary, language groups are set but topic work takes place in a mixed ability setting. As a result of the class groupings, there will have to be some differentiation of materials so they can be used across the ability range. This will be largely the responsibility of class teachers though some work has already been done on this namely in the report writing pack for S2 where we acknowledge the help of the New Horizons Writing Pack produced by Glasgow.

Despite the fact the material will be used by all pupils, our case study will focus on certain pupils, ten from each year group whose progress will be monitored in terms of attainment and enthusiasm for the work as expressed in their self-evaluation of courses. Pupils will be identified on the basis of National Tests and teachers' professional judgement of working levels. The type of pupils we are particularly interested in are familiar to us all. In S2, they are the children who have difficulty developing ideas in writing beyond the basic statements of fact yet who orally and perhaps in terms of reading show a more secure understanding than they are communicating on the page. They are the pupils who are likely to come into S1 at D3/E1 and who may just be short of or just manage achievement in writing at E by the end of

S2. Although attainment at E is considered average by S2, from our teaching of the Intermediate courses in S3 and S4, we realise that this type of pupil does struggle with the writing demands of these courses: the timed element, the emphasis on writing relevantly to a question, the internal assessment. We feel that the materials we have devised as part of the Building Bridges programme may help them particularly to develop confidence and capability to move onto the Intermediate courses more smoothly.

In conclusion, we hope to achieve the aims stated at the start by focusing on the process of writing. We believe we will develop pupil confidence by teaching key reading and writing skills across the curriculum. We will highlight the importance of formative assessment as a way of raising attainment by encouraging teachers to make explicit statements of next steps to pupils. Already we realise that to do so we must convince curriculum planners that less is more if skills are to be thoroughly taught and reinforced. This is perhaps, long term, one of the most far reaching consequences of the project as it puts literacy at the centre of educational practice by making language skills as important as specific subject content.

Summary of Action June 2004 to September 2004

Planning of Teaching Timelines

To be successful, the Building Bridges Programme had to be properly incorporated into the S1/2 curriculum. From a practical point of view, it also had to work within the History rotation schedule. By referring to the rotation dates, it was clear when classes should have the BB teaching input in English to prepare them for the similar writing tasks in History. The advantage in making English fit with History was that History was then in the position to reinforce writing skills previously taught by the language experts. This boosted the History teachers' confidence in the programme and their willingness to embrace the active teaching of writing skills whilst imparting their own specialist knowledge.

The challenge then became how to fit the Building Bridges Programme into the S1/2 English curriculum. In S1, there was only little reworking required. The English teacher involved in the BB project had been asked the previous year to head a group to revise the S1/S2 courses in line with the switch to NQ courses in S3. The focus of the revised S1 course was writing. The functional aspect was already covered by teachers and all that was required was that teachers forward plan with reference to the BB timeline. This did not prove troublesome.

In S2, the situation was more complex as classes in English are set while in History they remain mixed ability. As a result, there was significant difficulty in arranging for the same tight correlation between departments for all pupils. The solution was to look at the English class lists and find out the composition of each one. For example, how many pupils from say 2@1 were in section 4 and so on across the whole 10 sections. This was very interesting and is something that would bear greater scrutiny elsewhere should it be found to be repeated in successive years, as it became clear that in a number of classes at the extremes of ability there were an abundance of pupils from particular classes. This clustering of pupils meant it was possible to ensure that a significant number of a particular English class would be in History on a particular rotation and thus plan for the BB teaching at that time. Clearly, while generally workable now, this is not ideal. There would seem to be two possible solutions. One, to set in History - although even then there may be no guarantee that the set in both subjects would be the same; or, two, to extend the scope of the project by taking it into the rest of the social subjects to get blanket reinforcement.

Selection of Pupils for Case Study

Once the timelines were set, the target group for the case study had to be selected. Although the programme would be taught to all pupils, it was decided to focus on the impact on certain attainment groups. We picked pupils randomly from the target groups and ensured they came from different teachers. Ten pupils were picked from each year group in each rotation. In S1, we chose pupils who had just attained level D in writing in May 2004. It was hoped that with the reworking of the S1 curriculum to highlight writing and the implementation of BB that we would be able to heighten attainment by shortening the time it took for them to achieve Level E. In S2, our chosen pupils were those in the lower to middle stages of moving from D to E in writing. In this case we wanted to ensure as many as possible benefited from moving to E by the end of S2.

Although a concrete measure of the success of the project would be the raising of attainment, it was not the real consideration. Actually, what was deemed far more valuable was the creation of a culture of confident, creative and independent pupils prepared for the challenges of NQ courses in S3. This had to be made clear to all teachers and to many pupils for whom the upping of a level seems so important. To try to combat the stranglehold of the end-product, we aimed in our materials and recommended methodologies to focus on the process of writing highlighting that to pupils by praising and displaying examples of effective notes or plans as much as final drafts.

Putting Into Practice

The first rotation of the project is currently underway.

Building Bridges and the Library

Peer Assessment

The peer assessment scheme is currently under review. The success of this scheme will be found in the utilisation of the appropriate bank of questions and answers. The nature of the scheme is such that certain styles and content of questioning lend themselves to peer assessment and others do not. The library and English department are currently looking at questions that can be taken from "The Quest" and applying them to the scheme. Once an initial set of results are obtained then other departments such as History will be brought on board.

Reading Passports

The printing department of the local authority is currently costing the reading passports. The Primary school will then have to make a decision on numbers initially participating within the Building Bridges focus years. The librarian will make a series of visits to the primary to promote the scheme to staff and students.

Resources

Funds have been made available through the scheme to purchase the reading passports and related materials such as genre stickers, promotional materials and prizes. Furthermore funds will be used in the Secondary sector to support the History and English department through the purchasing of relevant resources. It is also intended that Pupil Publications be created – folders of pupil produced exemplars for the Primary and Secondary sectors that can be held in their respective libraries.

Conclusion

The inclusion of the librarian in this scheme has been a welcome addition. Using the library transcends departmental barriers and provides a common working ground for all. It also provides the expertise when looking to resource the programme.

Evaluation S1 Building Bridges Programme

- Class:** Mixed ability S1 class with range of working levels in writing C-E.
- Aims:** To develop functional writing skills and make connections across the curriculum.
- Methodology:** I began the functional writing programme during the first weeks of term. As pupils were new to the school, I decided to use a substantial amount of group, pair work and class discussion in teaching the writing skills to help the class get to know each other.

I spent two periods on genre. The first lesson, I distributed a whole range of leaflets around the class. In pairs, pupils selected three different ones that appealed to them and spent most of the period discussing them. I asked them to look for common features regardless of topic. At the end of that period, we held a class feedback session where we collected our ideas on the board. The next period, we wrote down the features - headings, sub-headings, short sentences, simple language and so on and the reasons for these techniques in the jotters as a reference for the next task. I decided I wanted the pupils to make a useful and attractive display of what they had discovered. I showed an exemplar of a poster about the leaflet genre that I had done and asked the pupils to complete something similar in groups of three or four. This time, I arranged groups to get a mix of ability in each. I displayed their posters in the class and sent some to their History teacher to display there too. I told the class we would be writing our own leaflet to show how well we'd understood the genre. I gave them a choice of three topics: a place they'd visited, a hobby, how to look after a pet. I asked them to bring in information either photocopied from a book or printed off the Internet for the next week. Our librarian, who is involved in the project, kept a computer free especially for this class one break time and one lunchtime to help them. I printed some information myself in case.

The next week I spent two periods on planning. All pupils brought material as asked. We began the first lesson with class discussion recapping on our understanding of the previous week's work but also discussing our own topics, why we'd chosen them and so on. The rest of that period was concerned with individual work on deciding on the audience for the leaflet; the purpose of the leaflet and at least four sub-heading we would use to help select and organise material for our own leaflet. I went round the class to discuss/help individual pupils and by the end we all had a good idea of the type of information we wanted to include.

The next period, we began again with class discussion. Pupils volunteered their sub headings and we discussed how best to order these so that the information came in the most user friendly order. I gave out the homework to prepare a very visual representation of the structure of the leaflet. Again I showed an exemplar, this time produced by a pupil from the previous year when I'd done a lot of work on planning skills with my then S1. We then moved to the gathering of information. I modelled this on the board and using an OHP to show how I decided on and used a key to isolate the information I wanted to use. The class saw how the colour coding helped them to apportion information to the correct sections of their leaflet. They spent the rest of the period making their own key and using it on their printed information. Some did not finish and I asked them to do so for homework.

The next set of lessons commenced the following week. Pupils took their plans and added bullet points beneath their sub-headings to outline the content of each section. At this point I took in the plans and added them to the wall display. I told the class we were going to take a brief break from the writing and concentrate on reading. I selected a close reading passage from a course book: Close Reading 11-14 and spent the remainder of this period and the whole of the next on the reading skills of skimming, scanning and close reading. As it was the September weekend, I issued no homework.

This is the point to which the class has got in the functional writing programme. I have planned the subsequent lessons though these will take place after the Learning and Teaching Scotland deadline. I intend to move back to the pupils own information and will ask them to apply the reading skills in pairs each helping the other by reinforcing the information found and recording it in a grid format in their own words. I expect this to take two lessons. I then intend to ask the pupils to write their leaflet in their jotter. I will ask them to have in front of them the following: their jotter with the components of the genre as discussed in Lessons 1 and 2; their plans completed from home work and now removed from the wall; their grid of notes completed the previous week. I will ask for the leaflet to be completed in class within two periods. Earlier finishers will be asked to read until the two periods are up. Once marked and assessed, I will ask pupils to redraft for homework and make the leaflet as attractive as possible. I intend to half our display sending one half to History. I have asked that the History department send me half of theirs in return for my wall.

Evaluation

Due to the fact that the programme is ongoing, there are some limits to my evaluation. Nevertheless, I feel positive about the work done to date. The class is currently shared with another teacher. We decided that one of us would teach the imaginative writing component of our S1 course and the other would take responsibility for the functional aspect. The courses would be run simultaneously so that pupils would study each genre for two periods with a library period in the middle of the week. Although this may seem onerous for pupils, in fact it has worked well for all concerned, adding variety to the teaching and writing experience and allowing ready comparison between the functional and imaginative genres.

I felt the use of paired and group work was particularly useful for pupils at this stage in the year as it did help to form relationships within the class. When given the choice, pupils always opted to co-operate with each other. The class discussions were lively and focused. I was pleased at how much enthusiasm there was for looking at the leaflets in pairs. Independently of me, pupils made many good observations about the writing styles even picking out the use of hyperbole and puns - though not using that terminology! They readily concluded that most of the leaflets while trying to inform with facts also tried to sell or market their product or attraction to particular people. In defining audience they were precise - suggesting groups like parents with small children, teenagers, tourists, people interested in history, active people and so on. Making the posters about the genre helped to reinforce the conventions learned and made a bright and useful display for the class in English and History. I felt that this really helped pupils to make the connection between the type of writing in the two departments.

I hesitated in letting pupils choose their own topic for a leaflet basically because it's easier for the teacher to control the lesson if everyone is producing the identical end product. I do feel though that making choices is important - not just in motivating pupils but in developing their confidence in trusting their own intellectual judgements. I also felt it reinforced the key idea of the Building Bridges Programme that regardless of topic - from looking after a budgie to holidaying in Bath- the writing skills are the same. I think it paid off in that every pupil came to class with information on the date they were asked to do so.

The planning aspect of the lessons was met with some reluctance. Most of us, it turned out, hated planning and thought it was a waste of time. I include myself in this because I know I am often guilty of working out my thoughts as I write and not before. What I do know is that it is easier to convince a class sitting exams that they should plan to check they know the

answer before they write. In S1, we don't have the same sense of urgency - nor should we - but it makes it harder to teach planning meaningfully. In the event, I think it will be an advantage to have a break between the planning and the writing of the leaflet. It is enough time for the pupils to forget their intentions and actually need the plan to remind them! Also, the timed aspect means I can suggest they tick off sections on the plan as they complete these as a way of keeping up a steady working pace.

The colour coded note taking worked well as the pupils were familiar with making up and using a key in other subjects. Working in pairs to try to put the underlined information into their own words will present a challenge I think. I intend to get each pair to ask each other a set of key questions for each sub-section of the leaflet i.e. What is this section about? What information does the reader need? Why does the reader need this information? And the other pupil to answer these without recourse to the source material. I intend to adopt this strategy, as I believe pupils find it easier to use their own words whilst talking. I find resorting to memory concentrates the mind on the important facts whilst the need to explain something to another person helps to add the detail and clarify one's own understanding. We'll see if it works.

As for the reading techniques, I covered these in close reading because I felt it was easier for everyone to be using the same short passage to practise on. The class found this quite hard though I think they did welcome the change from writing. I really think these skills take a long time to perfect and I will return to them throughout the year in our reading programme. It was enough for us to introduce the idea that reading is a very active process and that concentration and speed can be improved by adopting certain strategies.

I am aware that my evaluation has been based very much on my impressions of pupils rather than the hard fact of raised attainment. I think the latter is unlikely at this early stage in the year and anyway, as previously stated, the teaching is not yet complete. I would say there was an appreciable amount of enthusiasm from all pupils for the tasks in the way that they approached them and the way that they liked to meet the deadlines set within class and for homework. I feel myself that the emphasis put on the process of writing was helpful for the weaker students in particular, as they welcomed the small achievements on the way to the end product. Within the group selected for the case study, there was quite a range in attainment and attitude at each of the various stages in the process. I found that when these pupils were put together or with others at the same level, they found it hard to maintain focus on the task in hand and needed to be directed on a number of occasions by the teacher. Yet when they were put with pupils of greater or lesser attainment, they made more progress as far as independence of learning and organisation was concerned. Of course it isn't possible to draw any particular conclusion from this but I found it interesting to note nonetheless.

From my own point of view, I must admit a previous preference for imaginative writing yet I enjoyed teaching functional writing more this year than ever before. I feel I took a more 'creative' approach to the task than I would have done usually and I really found myself interested in the sheer diversity of interests in the class when pupils were allowed to choose their own topics. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that it was far more revealing of the personalities in the class than the standard personal writing tasks we usually give on entry to S1. I also really enjoyed the fact that I learned about what was happening in History. It seems so much more sensible to work together in this way.

Building Bridges – Evaluation of S1 Pet Leaflet End of September 2004

- Class:** Mixed ability S1. Working levels ranging from C1 to F1.
- Aims:** To encourage independence in writing by teaching the skills of note-taking, planning and genre conventions to enable pupils to write an informative leaflet.
- Methodology:** Pupils were just beginning S1 in August. Nothing could be taken for granted regarding prior learning of skills identified above. All of these skills had to be clearly identified for the pupils, practised and consolidated en route to writing the leaflet.

The unit began with a 'curriculum vitae' where pupils introduced themselves to their partners by providing personal information. This information included details of pets owned. This led to whole-class, teacher led discussion on pets. Pupils were given one week to bring in relevant information on an animal of their own choice. Five pupils did not do this and had to be provided with additional support from the teacher and librarian, e.g. a book box of relevant information. These pupils felt at a disadvantage as a result of their disorganisation or inability to meet the demands of the homework task. This occurred due to the fact that this was the first piece of homework, apart from reading homework, given in S1 and also took place before the pupils had been through the library induction programme, or indeed had even been to the library. Therefore it did not allow pupils the chance to access the library's materials to enable them to meet the demands of the task. It also took place very early in S1 and placed an instant pressure on the class to research a subject independently. This will be easier for pupils later in the year as they will have practised these skills within the class and the library before being asked to do so as a homework task.

Having selected a pet and having found or been given research on that pet, focus was placed upon the reading skills needed to process this information effectively: skimming, scanning and close reading (see material appended). Most pupils coped well with these tasks and, because the material chosen was on the subject of pets, remained aware of the overall purpose for which these skills were being developed. Certain pupils of working level C in reading found the tasks extremely challenging and needed additional support to enable completion. Ideally, extensive differentiation, a far slower pace of work and targeted cooperative teaching would help to ensure that the specific needs of those with learning difficulties were met more effectively. Due to the timescale regarding preparation of materials; the need to have completed delivery of the overall project to meet an end of September deadline for feedback; the lack of opportunity to liaise with Support for Learning before preparation and delivery of materials, these pupils did not show evidence of being able to consolidate these skills.

The next stage in the process was to focus upon note-taking skills: the selection of relevant information and using own words to express understanding (see material appended). They worked on these skills and, once again, the majority of pupils coped well with the task set; however the pupils working at Level C found the task extremely challenging and needed additional support. They were then reminded of the task and given ideas for categories of information they may wish to include in their leaflet (see material appended). They subsequently noted down information under these headings, selecting from and processing their research material. This task was interesting as it revealed the value of the research carried out so far and gave pupils guidance on what information they still required to find.

Having focused upon reading skills, note-taking skills and having researched the subject of their leaflet, we now focused upon awareness of the genre of the leaflet. Leaflets on a variety of subjects were issued and pupils were assigned to work in pairs. The task focused upon the identification of the generic characteristics of a leaflet (see material appended). The pupils were encouraged to summarise their findings by completing a paragraph on the genre. The pupils working at Level C coped slightly better with this task having benefited from paired discussion.

The pupils were then focused upon planning for their specific leaflet and encouraged to be selective regarding the information they wished to include. They were encouraged to mind map with information organised in distinct areas, which would then become sections. A sample plan is

included. Pupils were made aware that the process of planning and writing was important, as well as the end product.

The pupils have not yet completed the leaflet due to time constraints. The deadline for completion is mid October. Enclosed, as indicated, are the teaching materials used, the redrafted plan and photocopied work from a targeted pupil's jotter, which provides evidence of each stage in the process outlined above.

S2: Independent Writing using Building Bridges

Methodology and Materials – E Cox

Exemplar Work from candidate B190

Class:	Set ranging in ability in reading from E1 to E3 and writing from D2 to E2 (working levels at end of S1).
Aims:	To encourage independence in writing by teaching note-taking skills, reading skills, an awareness of genre conventions and planning. To make pupils aware of the skills involved in writing such a piece
Methodology:	Apart from the production of a Drugs Leaflet prior to the Summer Holidays, this is the first piece of extended writing the class has embarked on. For the Drugs Leaflet, pupils had taken notes in an organised way using bullet-points and tables. At the start of August, the context was set for further development of cross-curricular skills, which hoped to foster more independence in writing.

Unit began with teacher leading the discussion on a comparison between the image of the shark in “Finding Nemo” and “Jaws”. Pupils discussed the key differences between both and started thinking about whether the shark was a misunderstood creature. The class brainstormed all associations they had with the shark. Pupils then noted down the key skills they would be developing (note-taking skills; the use of topic sentences; the use of linking words and phrases and different reading skills – close, skimming and scanning) and the end product – a discursive essay on the shark being misunderstood.

Using the “New Horizons in Writing 5-14” pack and adapting it to suit the needs of ability in this class, pupils started to focus on note-taking skills. They noted down the key rules and referred to these when investigating different species of sharks. Pupils planned a grid where they noted information about the shark’s name, size, habitat, important features and whether it was dangerous or not. This grid was illustrated with photographs of particular sharks. The tabular format introduced them to a different way of taking notes, while the allocation of space ensured that they followed the key rules – no sentences, brief phrases and key points. As can be seen from the attached exemplification, candidate B190 coped well.

Following on from this exercise, pupils were asked to think of unanswered questions concerning each species of shark. This formed the basis of a small research task organised with the school librarian and completed for homework. Pupils were asked to find as much relevant information as possible and encouraged to illustrate their homework. Candidate B190 invested considerable time and energy into this task. This information was fed back to the class and pupils now had a complete grid.

After looking at note-taking skills, pupils were asked to consider the need for good topic sentences in their writing. They looked at exemplar sentences and decided why they were good by focusing on key words and phrases. A grid structure for answering questions on topic sentences was used to help consolidate their note-taking skills. Pupils also worked through exemplar material and focused on the linkage used. They noted down linkage vocabulary and identified when to use it. This task also introduced pupils to facts and details about the Great White Shark, which could be used in their final product.

Reading Skills were then examined; pupils focused on skimming, scanning and close reading skills. They organised their notes under headings directed by the teacher and used bullet points to make notes clear and focused.

Currently, pupils are focusing on the techniques utilised in a discursive essay. They have begun to take focused notes on key areas for the essay. Pupils copied down a clear framework for writing

which detailed possible sources of information. Using key articles from the Horizon Pack, pupils have been asked to quote key pieces of information and then put this information into their own words. The first article "The Great White Shark" or "White Death" concentrated on the way Spielberg ruined the Great White Shark's reputation. Using visual stimuli, pupils have to decide how accurate the film's depiction of shark behaviour is. They took detailed notes that will be shared with the class.

Evaluation

Pupils are enjoying investigating the 'gruesome' subject of sharks and have found the research process interesting. Not only did pupils participate in the tasks in class but, without instruction, they brought in newspaper articles, video clips, information cards and images to help in the construction of their final essay. The fact that pupils worked of their own volition confirmed that this subject and task was interesting and motivational for this class.

At this stage, it is difficult to assess how successful the final product will be. However, as can be seen for the exemplar work attached, pupil B190 (working level E1) is exhibiting a strong and clear understanding of the tasks and meeting the challenges head on.

Evaluation: S1 Building Bridges Programme

Class:	During the first Social Subjects rotation, two First Year classes were involved in the Building Bridges Programme. They were mixed ability classes with a range of working levels in writing.
Aims:	Development of functional writing skills and the establishment of connections across the curriculum.
Methodology:	Pupils began working on their Ancient Egypt reports in the third week of term. The objective of the report is to allow pupils to carry out independent research on an element of the course that has been covered in class, or an aspect of life in Ancient Egypt of their own choosing. Findings are presented in report/leaflet format. As co-operative teacher for both of these classes, I was able to work with half of each class at a time.

Initially, I spent half a period with each group. This allowed me to outline, briefly, what was expected of them and how one would go about producing a report. Pupils were allowed to look at examples of previous pupils' reports and were given a variety of books on the topic to give them ideas. We discussed strengths and weaknesses of previous reports and this led us into a discussion of some of the difficulties involved in research (especially the use of the Internet) as well as issues over converting research into pupils' own words. I then introduced the idea of careful planning and structuring as a means of supporting and guiding research and production of reports. Pupils were then asked to choose a topic for their reports and were given the opportunity to discuss ideas and exchange information in groups.

On the next occasion, I spent a full period with each group. At this stage, planning/structuring templates were introduced and pupils were given the opportunity to focus on this element of the process. Again, I provided pupils with some exemplar materials (attached) and gave them the opportunity to develop their own plans. Pupils were encouraged to work in pairs/groups. I hoped that this would help to enable them to identify particular areas that would require further in-depth research.

At this stage, pupils were given a date for submission of reports/leaflets. Unfortunately, as the department is still going through the process of developing materials and, also, because of time restraints, I was not able to deliver the research skills element during this rotation. It is anticipated that, with careful planning, preparation and resourcing, the department will include this element in the next rotation.

Evaluation

Any conclusions at this stage are, to some extent, tentative, reflecting the fact that we are very much taking our first steps in the Building Bridges initiative.

Within the History department, I am still going through the process of resourcing, while also attempting to implement and evaluate. The first Social Subjects rotation has allowed us to focus on what can be achieved in the time that has been made available. This experience to date has demonstrated the positive and constructive potential of the different elements of Building Bridges to develop functional writing skills.

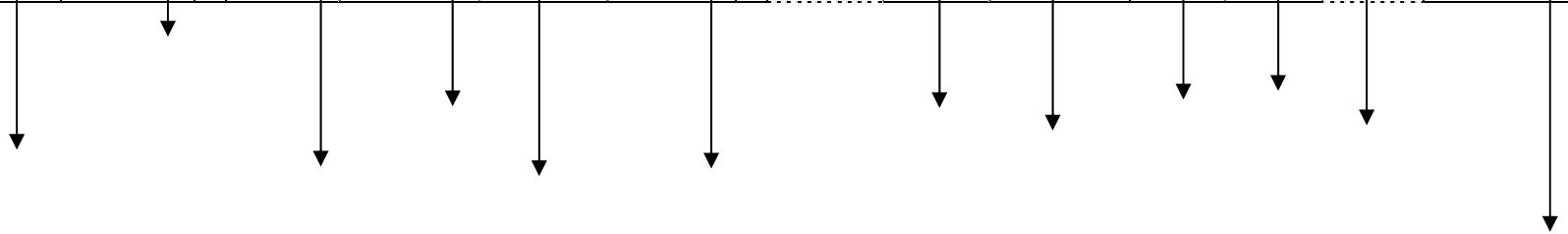
Even by this stage, I feel that pupils are beginning to recognise the importance of planning research; they are also improving the structure of their written work. I hope that, as a consequence, pupils will have greater confidence in tackling extended written tasks. Furthermore, pupils (and teachers) are able to see connections across the curriculum and can recognise that there are shared language skills in History and English.

DEVELOPING SKILLS THROUGH GENRE

P6		P7		S1		S2		S2	Skills taught and reinforced
LANG	X-CURRIC	LANG	X-CURRIC	ENGLISH	HISTORY	ENGLISH	HISTORY		
	Environmental Studies - research	Issue of topical interest	<u>Report</u> - school	<u>Leaflet</u> - to inform	<u>Leaflet /report/ research</u> Ancient Egypt	<u>Discursive Essay</u> – Animals Unit - treatment of <u>Report</u> - various from 'Eyewitness'	JFK- investigation	By end of S2, pupils should be able to:- <u>Write discursively</u> To consider a range of opinions on an issue and come to a reasoned conclusion.	<u>Research</u> : using library/internet to source key texts; reading skills – skim/scan/close reading; <u>Note-taking</u> – using own words, organising notes appropriately; selecting from notes
Eulogy Letter to the past		Letter to PSA For and against HW		<u>Poster</u> Drugs unit Formal letter Dog fighting	Scottish Wars Of	Persuasive essay/leaflet Fox-hunting Drugs unit		<u>Write persuasively</u> To convince a reader of one's own point of view.	<u>Planning</u> : selecting questions; using the question to plan a response; highlighting/mind-mapping/using diagrams/tables/brainstorming to focus on key ideas; supporting ideas with evidence
Lifts Infant monitors		Escalator Children		Reviews Private reading Literature assessments	Independence	<u>Critical essay</u> On literature x3 Personal study	JFK Investigation	<u>Write critically</u> To construct a response in line with a question using appropriate evidence to support one's view.	<u>Writing</u> : awareness of genre conventions to ensure appropriate style and tone e.g. use of emotive language, use of facts and opinions, use of critical terminology, bullet points, headings, sub-headings, topic sentences, linking words and phrases, aspects of sentence structure – rhetorical question, statement, suggestion, hypothesis, cause and effect, use of imperative, tense and so on.
				Genres above and personal/ imaginative writing curriculum		Genres above		<u>Write formally</u> To make appropriate grammatical/lexical choices depending on audience, purpose and genre	Self-Evaluation: as an integral part of learning, pupils should be helped towards making sensible judgements of their own performance/attitude and effort with a view to setting their own targets in conjunction with teachers.
Nelson Spelling	National Literacy	Collins Primary		"Spelling Matters"		"Knowledge about		5) <u>Write accurately</u> Display confidence in	

Success maker	Strategy Spelling Bank	Grammar and punctuation		Successmaker		Language” “Comprehension to 14” Successmaker		basic skills of spelling, punctuation, sentence structure
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Primary 6		Reading						Writing								
Term		Comprehension			Knowledge about Language			Knowledge about Language Writer's Craft				Phonics/ Spelling				
		Personal / Imaginative	Functional													
Aug - Sept	Complete New Ginn 360 Level 10	Literacy Centre	Literacy World Non Fiction	Time-tabled	Focus on Comprehension Book 3	PGP & Punct Book 3	National Literacy Strategy Grammar	Shorter School Dictionary Skills	Time-tabled a. b. c	Essential Texts Book 3	Primary Writing Book 2	Scholastic Aspects of the Writer's Craft	Scholastic Non Fiction	Primary Writing Book 2	Building Bridges	Nelson Book 4 20 Units + 3 checkups
Oct - Dec	Start Ginn Level 11	6a	a. b. c	Time-tabled a. b. c	8 weeks 1 - 8			16 Units 1 - 16	Time-tabled for classes a, b and c							
Jan - Feb	Approx 16 week block	6b								1 unit per month						
Feb - March					6 Units 9 - 14	5 Units + Progress Test A (Assess) 9 - 13		12 Units 17 - 28								National Literacy Strategy Spelling 18 Units



April - June		6c			8 Units 15 – 22	7 Units + Progress Text B 14 – 20		9 Units 29 – 37								
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Primary 7	Spelling	Reading	Writing	Punctuation & Grammar
Term				
August - October	Group 1 & Group 2 Consolidate Nelson 4 Group 3 & Group 4 Dolce/Common Misspelt Words list Successmaker	Group 1 Ginn Level 12 Focus on Comprehension Group 2 Literacy Centre The Wolves of Willoughby Chase Focus on Comprehension Group 3 Literacy World Stage 4 Under Bomber's Moon Scholastic Comprehension Group 4 Ginn Level 11 (continue or new resource) Scholastic Comprehension	Group 1 Group 2 Group 3 Group 4 Building Bridges in Literacy to include Literacy World Essential Texts Primary Writing Scholastic Comprehension for Writer's Craft Scholastic Imaginative Writing	Group 1 Collins Primary Grammar & Punctuation 4 Nelson Grammar 4 National Literacy Strategy Grammar Group 2 PGP Unit 4 Group 3 PGP Book 4 Group 4 PGP 4
October - December	Group 1 Collins Dictionary Worksheets 9-14 The Student's Guide to Writing (Frequently Misspelt Words) Group 2 Collins Dictionary Worksheets 1-4, 9-14 Group 3 & Group 4 Consolidate Nelson 4 Successmaker	Group 1 Selection from Essential Texts Literacy World "A Christmas Carol" Charles Dickens Group 2 Ginn Level 12 Group 3 Literacy World Stage 4 Non-Fiction Scholastic Comprehension Group 4 Literacy World Stage 4 Eerie Encounters Scholastic Comprehension		
January - April	Group 1 & Group 2 National Literacy Strategy Group 3 & Group 4 Two-Way Spelling Bk 4 Successmaker	Group 1 "Classic Sherlock Holmes" Arthur Conan Doyle Group 2 Ginn Level 12 Group 3 Literacy Centre The Wolves of Willoughby Chase Focus on Comprehension Bk 4 Group 4 Literacy World Stage 4 Under Bomber's Moon		

		Focus on Comprehension Bk 4		
April - June	Group 1 & Group 2 National Literacy Group 3 & Group 4 Two-Way Spelling Bk 4 Successmaker	Group 1 Harry Potter Group 2 Literacy Centre The Story of the Treasure Seekers Group 3 Ginn Level 12 Focus on Comprehension Bk 4 Group 4 Literacy World Non Fiction "Quakes & Floods" Big Issues Focus on Comprehension Bk 4		