

Case Study

North Lanarkshire

Bellshill Cluster Group

Cardinal Newman High School

Holy Family Primary

Sacred Heart Primary

St. Columba's Primary

St. Gabriel's Primary

St. Gerard's Primary

The Context

Bellshill Area Primary schools and Cardinal Newman High School have a long history of liaison, which has focused on bridging the attainment gap between the two sectors.

Research Q/Mission Statement:

How developing shared methodologies can impact on functional writing attainment between primary 7 and S1.

Starting Point

Bellshill Area Primary schools and Cardinal Newman High School believe very strongly in the practice of sharing methodologies through liaison and establishing critical friendships. As a result of an audit carried out in each school, Head teachers decided that functional writing was an area of the curriculum that required attention and demanded increased liaison to ensure continuity of practice in each school. This was to encompass the idea that pupils should be encouraged to learn how to write across the curriculum in primary and secondary school. (For more information see appendix 1).

We set up a cluster group of the five primary seven teachers and an English teacher from the high school who together with the adviser for English in North Lanarkshire, would work on producing a set of lessons on Functional Writing. This group was able to meet for six weekly sessions due to the goodwill of headteachers and the principal teacher of English at Cardinal Newman.

Our roles at this stage were to pool resources and experiences in order to work out a series of lessons on Functional Writing which would comprise methods of learning and teaching such as, modelling texts, pupil conferencing in trios and increased interaction between pupils and teachers. Each lesson was to be delivered by both the secondary English teacher and the primary seven teacher in a co-operative teaching/learning environment. The aims were to encourage greater pupil autonomy over their own work and corrections, thus reducing teacher marking/intervention and the culture of excessive redrafting. The main source of model texts and ideas was the Trish Wilson Writing Pack – Developing Functional Writing. (For more information see appendix 2).

The Development

Beginning at the beginning

In January 2003, the Cluster Headteachers held a meeting to discuss the forthcoming project. In March/April 03 the cluster team itself then held six weekly meetings, where we met in the afternoon to compile resources and lesson plans. We worked specifically on a different aspect of Functional Writing each week, having decided to focus on four distinct types: writing instructions, letters, newspaper articles and reports, as these were most likely to be encountered across the curriculum. We decided that newspaper articles should act as a benchmark piece that every school had to cover during the secondary English teacher's visit. We were relieved to be joined on two of these occasions by the English Adviser, who offered ideas, practical resources and encouragement.

By the end of the six weeks, we had a pack of lesson plans for each of the four types of writing, copies and acetates of model texts, worksheets, writing frames for planning and checklists for pupil evaluation.

In June 03, we had a timetable of visits to be made by the English teacher to each primary, which was drawn up by the head of the lower school at Cardinal Newman. Each primary would have a block of six weekly visits of one and a half hours, followed later on in the term, by a follow-up visit of three weekly visits. At this point, we held a final meeting to arrange which of the types of functional writing would be covered during the first block of visits. (For timetable of visits see appendix 3).

Impact of the work that was done – Evaluation and Evidence

The cluster group felt that the visits had been carried out successfully, with plenty of material for the pupils to work with, and sufficient time for final pieces of writing to be published and presented.

The following Quality Indicators are taken from HGIOS:

QI 3.2 Learning and Teaching

- Range and Appropriateness of Teaching Approaches
- Teacher/Pupil Interaction

Evidence

- Each lesson comprised a wide range of activities, including modelling texts, allowing mixed ability trios to conference for ideas, using highlighters to indicate good points and areas for improvement in their peers' work at the planning stages and during later stages of writing.
- Pupils were encouraged to write on/label models of texts, which were displayed on OHP during whole class discussions. This involved a great deal of interaction in the classroom with pupils taking a more active participation in class lessons.
- We have included photographs of such activities taking place (see appendix 4).

QI 3.3 Pupils' Learning Experiences

- Personal responsibility in learning, independent thinking and active involvement in learning
- Interaction with others

Evidence

- As above. Photographs included in appendix 4.

QI 3.5 Assessment as Part of Teaching

- Judgements made in course of teaching

Evidence

- Before pupils began planning and writing individually, they were given the opportunity to conference in trios for ideas. This practice of conferencing was repeated after the planning stage so that this early intervention exposed possible problems/misunderstandings, and judgements could be made as to whether writing should proceed or the teacher should address the whole class again.
- This informal peer assessment encouraged greater independence and effort on the part of all pupils, rather than their reliance on teacher intervention and correction. Pupils spent more time thinking and listening to each other, and teachers spent less time talking at pupils and then correcting common errors.
- Again, we have included photographs of such activities taking place as evidence of this (see appendix 4).

The Implications – what next?

Our long-term aims are to widen the scope of this project to encompass primary six and S2, as well as primary seven/S1, and to involve another secondary subject teacher. This will tie in with our initial aim of promoting writing across the curriculum.

Next Steps

When the current primary seven classes move into first year, we will be monitoring progress, and any slippage that may have occurred. This will include continuing the functional writing principles of the pack into English classes, by incorporating them into the existing “Myself” unit in S1.

It is hoped that we can disseminate these methodologies and materials amongst primary six staff and secondary English staff. We are aiming to share these methods of writing across the curriculum with all principal teachers of departments in Cardinal Newman, so that modelling of texts and conferencing of ideas becomes common practice across departments and schools in the area.

Final Word

Everyone who is involved in this project is extremely concerned about the sustainability of the venture. It is clear that we will need the continued commitment of the local authority and staff, in addition to greater flexibility of timetables to ensure that all of this work remains meaningful within the context of learning and teaching.

Functional Writing

Primary/Secondary Link

Contents

Writing Instructions

Writing Letters

Writing Newspaper Articles

Writing Reports

Instructions

Lesson 1

Textual analysis of instruction models – layout, genre and vocabulary.

Models – How to Grow your own Tomatoes, Magnetic Poles, Euro Games, Pizzas and Mini-Stepper –

Using models on OHP to circle instruction words.
Focus on genre markers.

Discussion of strengths and weaknesses in these models.

Homework – one model kept back for follow-up homework exercise based on genre markers that have been elicited from pupils during trio and class discussion.

Sources

Trish Wilson - Developing Functional Writing,
Collins
NLC Eurown Currency

Lesson 2

Recap on previous lesson.

Task – sequencing instructions to match the pictures:

How Do You Do That? Writing Instructions Making Bread

Pupils to work in trios on one of the tasks above. Perhaps one could be kept back as a homework activity.

Sources

Curriculum Bank

Lesson 3

Rewriting Instructions

Chunky Chips model to be used as demonstration on OHP with whole class contributing to discussion on how to improve the instructions so that they are clearer.

Trios to work on rewriting **Shepherd's Pie** as instructions.

Pupils then work on **Changing a recount into instructions** (daffodil text) for homework.

Sources

Scholastic

Collins

Literacy World

Lesson 4

Using frames provided in the pack, pupils are to write their own set of instructions. Topic may be chosen by the class teacher or pupils may choose their own.

Conferencing and improvement opportunities throughout this activity.

Sources

*Maureen Lewis/David Wray – Writing Across the Curriculum
Frames to Support Learning*

Lesson 5

Presenting and Publishing

Pupils edit and improve their instructions, perhaps using a pupil example on acetate for class to correct together.

Pupils invited to present their instructions to the class.

Letters

Lesson 1

Trios to discuss and highlight **Writing Letters** worksheet to find out what the common letter writing mistakes are, according to the Information Officer. In this way, trios will discover the rules for writing formal letters as they read and discuss the text.

Use **Writing a Business Letter** to refer to the rules.

Use **Layout** letter on OHP to elicit the features of a formal letter and have the pupils label these on the OHP.

Have A3 version of this letter displayed after this activity.

Sources

Scholastic – Non fiction writing projects

Lesson 2

Pupils to look at models – **Kate Downing** and **Dear Mr. Jones**.

Textual analysis of these for language and layout features in trios.

Use **Writing a Business Letter** rules for reference during this activity.

Sources

*Edinburgh Council “A Case for Writing”
Functional Writing 5-14 – Letter*

Lesson 3

Using frames to plan (conference) and write a letter regarding local ecological issue. Word banks and checklists available to trios as they work.

Sources

*Edinburgh Council “A Case for Writing”
Functional Writing 5-14 - Letter*

Newspaper Articles

Lesson 1

Model local newspaper articles as stimuli.

Trios scan these for key genre features.

Only dealing with features of layout at this stage.

**Models for layout: Update,
Motherwell Times
Porto Paso
Breakfast Cereals**

Activity - Brave Sarah Saves Sister's Life.

Use this text as written.

Trios to rewrite text into a front page article, using genre features of **layout** only.

Sources

Trish Wilson – Developing Functional Writing

Literacy Homework Activities

Heinemann Homework and Differentiation File

Collins

Lesson 2

Match the headlines activity.

Pupils are then to create the opening sentence for each heading on the following sheet:

Mermaid Caught by North Sea Trawler
Ice Lolly Shock
New Law Bans Pop Music
Top Scientists' Amazing Breakthrough
Mystery Bug Hits School
Giant Hedgehog Scares PM

Feedback session on this.

Sources

Literacy World

English Alive Stage 5

Lesson 3

Now to look for key features of **content**.

Highlighting emotive words, third person, tone, type of news.

Models for Content –

- Jumbo Chaos**
- River Terror**
- Bank Robbers Foiled**
- Difficult Journey to School**
- Breakfast Cereals**

Sources

Trish Wilson – Developing Functional Writing

Curriculum Bank

Heinemann Homework and Differentiation File

Lesson 4

Final outcome will be decided at the time, using frames enclosed in the pack.

Sources

Functional Writing Planner

Target Literacy Oxford

Reports

Lesson 1

London Zoo model text on OHP for pupils to highlight key features during class discussion. Spaces available for pupils to add subheadings for each section.

Elicit key features of **layout** and **content** from the pupils.

Source

Literacy World Stage 3

Lesson 2

Pupils 'correct' **models: Frogs,**
The Honey Bee
How the Ear Works.

Pupils to restructure these to be more organised.

Badgers worksheet used to introduce spidergram planning. Pupils fill in the spidergram.

Sources

Trish Wilson – Developing Functional Writing
Reading for Meaning 4

Lesson 3

Penguin information to be reorganised into a more detailed spidergram.

Then show how spidergram can be used to lead into a chronological plan, using **Reports booklet** and **Planning sheet D.**

Pupils to write a report on Badgers or Penguins, using information provided on these worksheets.

Final outcome – report on a school visit/local attraction.

Sources

Edinburgh Council “A Case for Writing” – Functional Writing 5-14 Report

Sources of Materials

Collins

Curriculum Bank

Edinburgh Council "A Case for Writing" 5-14

English Alive Stage 5

Essentials for English

Skills in English, Homework and Differentiation File, Heinemann, 2000, Lindsay McNab, Imelda Pilgrim, Marian Slee

Literacy World Stage 3

Literary Homework Activities

North Lanarkshire Council Eurown Currency

Reading for Meaning 4

Scholastic – Non fiction writing projects

Target Literacy and Target Literacy – Teacher's Book, Oxford, 2000, Rodger Lane

Trish Wilson Writing Pack, Developing Functional Writing

London Zoo

London Zoo is an integral part of the Zoological Society of London, which is a worldwide conservation, scientific and educational charity.

London Zoo is one of the most important zoos in the world. It has an extensive breeding and conservation programme. There are over 12, 000 animals in the zoo, a considerable number of which (116 animal species and over 1000 bird species) are in danger of extinction in the wild.

However, conservation costs money, so London Zoo has fundraising schemes to help provide some of the finance. These include membership subscriptions, Lifewatch and Animal Adoption. As well as supporting conservation programmes, the money raised from these schemes helps to pay for veterinary care, breeding programmes and scientific research.

Inside the zoo are numerous animal enclosures and displays. Amongst these are the famous Mappin Terraces. This enclosure was first opened in 1914 as a bear exhibit. Recently it has been redesigned, and today the Mappin Terraces are home to sloth bears, Hanuman langurs and Reeve's muntjac.

London Zoo is situated in Regent's Park, in north west London. It is open every day of the year except Christmas Day and can be reached by tube, bus, waterbus or car.

Note Making

Penguins live entirely in the Southern Hemisphere. Many people think they live only in cold places, but some sorts of penguins live as far north as the equator.

Penguins are comical looking birds. When on land they stand upright. From a distance, they look like people wearing dark suits! The Emperor Penguin is the largest type, standing over 1 metre tall. It has orange-yellow markings on the side of its neck. Along with the Bearded Penguin and the small Adelie Penguin, it lives in the Antarctic. King Penguins live much further north and are used to a warmer climate. These are the most common sort of penguin found in zoos. Other types of penguin include the rockhopper Penguin, the jack-ass Penguin and the macaroni Penguin.

Although penguins are unable to fly they are excellent swimmers. Their stiff narrow wings are used as flippers. They can swim on the surface of the sea and underneath it. They chase fish and catch them with their sharp pointed beaks. On land they move more slowly. Sometimes they slide down slopes on their stomach, pushing themselves along with their feet.

Penguins live in large flocks. They have very few natural enemies, although the Leopard Seal sometimes catches swimming penguins.

Breeding penguins will lay one or two eggs. Some sorts of penguin keep the egg balanced on their feet, with a flap of skin covering it to keep it warm. Other sorts lay eggs on the ground, or even in tunnels.

Where found – S. hemisphere. Not just cold places.

How they move – can't fly. Swim well – move slowly on land.

What they eat -

How they look after their eggs -

How they live -

Types of penguin -

Sources of Materials

Newspaper Articles

Update

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

Motherwell Times

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

Porto Paso Times

Literary Homework Activities

Breakfast Cereals

Heinemann Homework and Differentiation File

Brave Sarah

Collins

Match the headlines

Literacy World

Bank Robbers Foiled

Curriculum Bank

Jumbo Causes Chaos

T. Wilson Pack

Difficult Journey to School

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

River of Terror

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

Newspaper Articles Planner

Functional Writing Planner

Writing Frame

Target Literacy Oxford

Newspaper Headlines

English Alive Stage 5

Reports

1 & 2 London Zoo

Literacy World Stage 3

Structural and Linguistic features of Reports

Literacy World Stage 3

Frogs

Models for Functional Writing – T. Wilson

The Honey Bee

Models for Functional Writing – T. Wilson

How the Ear Works

Models for Functional Writing – T. Wilson

Badgers

Reading for Meaning 4

8 & 9 Note Making 1 and 2

10 Pupil Planning Sheet.

*Edinburgh Council “A Case for Writing”
Functional Writing 5-14 Report*

Letters

1 Writing Letters

Scholastic – Non fiction writing projects

2 Writing a Business Letter

Scholastic – Non fiction writing projects

3 Layout – Romeo and Juliet Letter

4 Kate Downing Letter

*Edinburgh Council “A Case for Writing”
Functional Writing 5 – 14 - Letter*

5 Dear Mr Jones

As Above

6 Word Bank

As Above

7 Word Bank

As Above

8 Pupil Planning Sheet

As Above

9, 10, 11, 12

As Above

13 Letter of Complaint

English Alive Book 3

14 Paula’s Problem Page

Curriculum Bank, Scholastic

Instructions

1 Structural & Linguistic features of instructional texts

Literacy World

2 How to Grow Your Own Tomatoes

Collins

3 The Magnetic Poles

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

4 Euro Game

NLC Euroown Currency

5 Pizzas

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

6 Mini Stepper

Models for Functional Writing. T. Wilson

7 How Do You Do That?

8 Writing Instructions

9 Making Bread

Curriculum Bank

10 Chunky Chips

Scholastic

11 Shepherd's Pie

Collins

12 Daffodil Recount

Literacy World

13 Evaluating Instructions

Literacy World

14 Making a Kite

Essentials for English

15 Around a Country Park

Essentials for English

16 A Walk

Scholastic

17 Game Instructions

Curriculum Bank

18, 19, 20 Instructions, Recipes and Explanation Planners

David Wray Writing Frames

21 Explaining Clearly

22, 23 Looking at Instructions/Writing Instructions

Carol Vorderman

24 Instructions Planner

Functional Writing Planners