

June 2006

Professional Development Activity Undertaken

To introduce the pedagogy of Co-Operative Learning into a primary 3 and 4 composite class in a small school and to assess its effectiveness using an Action Research approach.

The need was identified by

- the anticipated introduction of the new Revised Curriculum
- the teacher having an interest in developing social skills and interaction amongst pupils.

Outcomes in Terms of Improved Practice by the Teacher

I am now more knowledgeable about the different Co-Operative Learning techniques available and which methods lend themselves more easily to teaching in a primary composite class.

I have gained a greater insight into how to manage and organise pupils, time, resources and activities related to Co-Operative Learning.

I have become more reflective about my own skills and am able to evaluate both my own practice and the performance of pupils with more confidence.

The History scheme of work has been revised and updated to incorporate the Jigsaw technique into the delivery of the Life in the Recent Past topic.

Outcomes/Benefits in Terms of Improvements in Pupils Learning Experiences

Pupils of all abilities have developed good communication and teamwork skills and are more confident when making contributions to group tasks.

Pupils have experienced group activities which promote positive interdependence and inclusion of their peers, regardless of ability level.

Pupils have contributed to group presentations of their work using Education Technology programs not used in the school before.

Pupils have undertaken activities which promote more independence in their learning, especially in decision-making, working with others, being creative, problem-solving and self-management.

Pupils have been consulted by the teacher and have provided feedback on the effectiveness of particular types of Co-Operative Learning lessons.

Evaluation of the Professional Development Activity

I will submit a Dissertation based on the above research as part fulfilment of a Master of Science in Education Technology course.

The activity has also been included as a target for my PRSD appraisal and, following meetings and classroom observations, has been evaluated by the Principal.

How Experience, Skills & Knowledge Gained Have Been/Will Be Shared With Other Teachers

There has been consultation with the Dissertation Supervisor throughout the academic year. Copy of final Dissertation will be available in QUB Education Department library.

Staff meetings within the school have taken place, which have included Co-Operative Learning and the ongoing Action Research project on the agenda.

An information meeting, consultations and classroom observations with the Principal have taken place throughout the year.

Reflection on Value and Effectiveness

Personal Benefits – research has allowed me to adopt new methods of teaching in certain curricular areas and to revamp a Scheme of Work. New resources and approach has ‘refreshed’ delivery of content. It has also helped me to become more reflective about what I do and how the pupils engage with each other and their learning.

Pupil Benefits – It has helped them to become more independent from the teacher in their learning and has shown them that their peers (regardless of ability) have worthwhile contributions to make. Social and teamwork skills have been developed more fully than without the Co-Operative Learning experience having taken place.

Future Plans

To introduce some successful Co-Operative Learning activities into the English (Writing) Curriculum, in order to develop and improve independent writing skills.

To continue to develop the social skills of pupils, by using Co-Operative Learning techniques.

To encourage and share information with colleagues in school who have already expressed an interest in Co-Operative Learning pedagogy.

Signed _____

Date 28/06/06