

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

**FINAL REPORT ON THE OTLA PHASE 6 (ENGLISH) PROJECT -
DEVELOPING RESPONSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES IN
SUPPORTING LEARNERS TO DEVELOP CONFIDENCE WITH ENGLISH**
Springboard Sunderland Trust

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Final report - Developing responsive teaching strategies in supporting learners to develop confidence with English

Springboard Sunderland Trust



This project has focused on how tutors used formative assessment strategies to support English learners in both the Study and Adult programmes, following their journeys and tracking their progression.

Summary

We are a regional training provider delivering vocational qualifications alongside maths and English Functional Skills and GCSEs. We needed better information about how learners were progressing and how well they were achieving. We also needed to support learners through the self-assessment process, where they were encouraged to identify specific areas of weakness based on their progress in a lesson.

The Basic Skills team has worked with the help of vocational tutors where possible. All research has been carried out with the added aim of linking lessons to topical content addressing equality and diversity.

Rationale

We wanted the learners to take greater ownership of their own progression and unlock their ability to reflect on what went well and how they could get even better.

Alongside this, we wanted the learners to see the links between their vocational qualifications and maths and English as we believed this would improve their achievement in both areas and make basic skills – sometimes seen to be unnecessary to hard-to-reach learners – more achievable and enjoyable. We also set out to demonstrate to learners that these skills would help them in everyday life, and it was hoped that learners would be more motivated to retain a place on the programme.

Approach

Two maths and English tutors decided to trial new approaches with their groups. The intention was to begin at the start of the learners' journeys and reassess them when the project was finished. As we offer roll-on, roll-off programmes, we expected learners to be at varying stages in the process.

Tutors initially began implementing a WWW (what went well) and EBI (even better if) self and peer assessment at the end of lessons. This was to encourage the learners to reflect on their own progress after a taught session. Tutors reflected on their teaching practice and we regularly discussed how our lessons unfolded; providing and listening to advice from our peers where possible.

Some of the approaches were:

- Addressing controversial topical issues such as homelessness and poverty and making a biased statement (GCSE English)
- Providing learners with dedicated criteria for marking their own work dependent on the task (GCSE English)
- Using a target sheet at the beginning of the lesson with a main aim and space to write their own individual aims (adult probation).

By choosing to follow the above ideas, it was hoped learners would:

- Become more confident in voicing their own opinion and increase their personal development
- Think about wider social issues, listen to arguments they would not normally consider, and improve their social development
- Improve their study skills through applying specific marking criteria which address the needs of the question and thus evaluate their performance and identify their areas for improvement.

At the end of the project, we were satisfied that achievement had been made in these areas.

Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

From the discussions that took place between the Basic Skills team, it is clear that teaching, learning and assessment practices have been changed for the better.

In one class, following the GCSE English exams, the emphasis on exam-style questions was replaced by a learner-led, research debate-focused sessions which the learners appeared to enjoy. The effects of this inquiry approach can be seen in

the learners' workbooks – all previous exam-style questions are replaced with learners' research carried out independently or in pairs and there is significantly less rote writing, as it has now been replaced with debates.

Teaching questions were addressed to learners which required a more detailed response. In discussions, tutors focused on the question "why", prompting the response "because" from the learners, which opened up opportunities for them to give reasons in their verbal communication (and, hopefully in time, in their written work). Tutors have commented how the learners are very aware of this added emphasis on explaining their reasoning and are becoming more familiar with explaining with and without prompts from the tutor. In class, tutors comment that the difference is also noticeable in overall contributions to the session.

Learners who were previously very shy have become increasingly more confident in their abilities to contribute their opinions and take part in the lessons. Tutors are putting additional focus on the ability to justify word choices, phrases and other features of English. It was evident that the quality of the writing improved for tasks which required research and learners used facts and statistics more frequently in their own written work in order to be more persuasive.

Andrea noticed it can be easier to begin a lesson when learners are encouraged to set their own aims and objectives. Since setting their own targets, the adult probation English class have been able to achieve their aims more comprehensively with no evident negative effects to their learning. The tutor noted increased motivation reinforced by prior success when learners took ownership of their own progression. Andrea's class chose their own aims, decided which work to attempt and marked each other's work according to specific criteria to improve their own understanding of the subject.

It was occasionally quite difficult to prepare a lesson for such a potentially large number of varying aims, but it was worth the initial effort. Learners who could make choices displayed much more enthusiasm. It was noticeable that when learners were not given a choice, the reluctance to attempt the work was more apparent. However, in a following lesson, the same work could be among a number of tasks from which the learner would choose. When making their own selection, the learners became committed.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

This project encouraged an increased focus on vocational tutors and English tutors working collaboratively. The managers for maths and English and Study Programme assigned a maths and English champion to every delivery site. These champions were to be the direct port of call whenever there was a maths and English query e.g. how to differentiate feedback to an Entry Level 3 or a GCSE learner. While the idea of champions was not a direct response to the project when it was first conceived, by the end of the project, it had become a key factor in its success. The increased efforts to work directly with vocational staff meant that the three tutors in the maths and English team were joined in the project by another four vocational staff.

There has been increased communication between the vocational and English tutors through email, face-to-face contact and over the phone. In meetings of all staff, vocational tutors have been quick to praise the initial success they had making use of them and have highlighted instances of how this collaboration was successfully implemented.

Since the beginning of the project, collaboration between the two teams has also resulted in an increase in the bank of resources to enhance vocational tutors' sessions (see Appendix 1). Tutors also worked in collaborative team-teach sessions to improve the learners' understanding of topical issues such as homelessness, poverty and the idea of supporting charities. Tutors from vocational subjects commented on how they could take ideas and resources from these lessons and apply them to their own subjects confident in the knowledge it will aid the learners' understanding of their own subject.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

Throughout the entirety of the project, two learners were observed closely to monitor their progress. AB was preparing to sit the GCSE English exam for the fifth time and had been with Springboard for two years. She had additional one-to-one support in the past but still struggled to pass.

As previously stated, AB struggled to achieve grade 4 in the GCSE English exams and Jamie believed this was largely down to the writing section having seen her results. Her writing displayed a lot of potential for improvement, both in content (A05) and technical accuracy (A06) so this is what was focused on. Towards the exams, AB was still making avoidable mistakes in both and this was evident in her piece on the lighthouse (see Case Study 1).

On reviewing her work, it was clear it did not meet the intended purpose of being descriptive throughout and was lacking in more advanced uses of language. These issues were more prominent in the following piece on the forest where the problems appeared to be embedding themselves in her written work. Following this, a meeting was held with AB and actions put in place. She was instructed to focus on cyclical structure, a form of structure which reverts to the topic discussed in the beginning of the text. To make this easier, it was actioned that she practices describing the weather and circling key things in images from the internet. Her subsequent text, the lighthouse revisited, is consequently far superior in terms of content and accuracy.

CD progressed into GCSE English having completed Level 1 Functional Skills English. He had always found it difficult communicating verbally because of a stammer and his confidence fluctuated throughout education. His tutor recognised that he had difficulty communicating his thoughts verbally as well as in written form. However, on coming into the GCSE classes with the greater emphasis on inquiry and discussion, CD demonstrated great confidence – perhaps due to being in with some of his friends and feeling at home in the group – in speaking out and even commented on his own performance and confidence in his verbal communication. He has produced a written report from his own point of view to corroborate this increasingly positive mindset.

Learning from this project

The project gave tutors the chance to reflect on their strategies and make decisions that could have a positive effect in their future practice.

What went well:

- Increased motivation from learners and contribution in individual lessons
- Staff motivation increased as learner interaction improved
- Increased ownership of individual progress in lessons
- Easier for vocational tutors to find answers to maths and English queries with a designated champion to go to
- Stronger activity and engagement between tutors across teams
- Vocational tutors have a greater understanding of how to mark a variety of levels of work in regard to the English content
- Inclusion of more topical issues encouraged and improved learners' debating skills and confidence
- Opportunities to select tasks made it easier to engage reluctant learners
- Joint marking of work between English and a vocational tutor helped the vocational tutor to raise other vocational tutors' awareness of the English requirements

Even better if:

- Not all classes were capable of setting and working to their own aims and objectives without support. (To combat this, tutors provided learners with options.)
- It is harder to plan for classes where learners choose their own aims and objectives. The unpredictability of the outcome is always a problem in teaching and, while it can be difficult to work like this, tutors learned how to adapt through trial and error)
- Vocational tutors were more aware of the individual requirements of each level of English from Entry Level 1 to GCSE.

Learners appeared to enjoy the lessons more when they were given something topical to debate. The more controversial or thought-provoking the topic was, the more involved the majority of the learners became. However, some still chose to stay less involved, indicating that, no matter the subject, it is still largely in the hands of the individual to choose just how much they contribute. The added focus of "why" questioning combatted this fairly well when directed at those less involved.

Adult learners were particularly committed to setting and delivering on their own aims and objectives and this inspired healthy competition throughout the course. However, not all learners became more motivated by setting their own targets, with some abusing this ownership a little bit.

Vocational tutors were more able to easily find answers to questions linked to English because of the availability of the champions, and the collaborative efforts of both teams ensured they had a greater understanding of the differences in marking the work of a lower-level English learner compared to that of a higher-level learner. If more time had been available to each tutor, it would have been useful to work on an

individual basis with each vocational tutor so tutors knew exactly what they should embed into their own lessons.

Appendix 1 - Collaborative resources for vocational teaching in Warehousing

Warehouse maths 1

You are operating a forklift truck with a capacity rating of 1500kg. You are instructed to unload a pallet of goods from a vehicle. You inspect the pallet of goods and find further information. The information is as follows:

This pallet load contains goods to the total weight of 1300kg. There are 75 boxes with a tare weight of 2.5kg per box. Total packaging weight is 2kg. The pallet weight is 35kg.

1. What is the net weight?
2. What is the gross weight?
3. Is this pallet of goods safe to unload from the vehicle with the forklift you are using? Explain.

ANSWERS:

Warehouse English 1



ASDA

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4.0



Great colleagues

Retail Assistant forklift driver (Current Employee) – [Cannock](#) – 19 November 2019

Colleagues are great to work with
If you are willing there are opportunities for every individual it's a safe place to work
Uniform provided
If you are up for a challenge it's the place to be

4.0



Good company to work for

Fork lift driver and warehouse supervisor (Former Employee) – [Asda linwood](#) – 20 March 2019

Good company pay is not bad but some manager not good enough to be in charge is
always a chance if you want to progress in the company you get extra week holiday for
working over 10 years in asda

✓ Pros
Not bad pay

✗ Cons
Short break

3.0



It's ok

Fork Lift Truck Driver (Former Employee) – [Leeds, West Yorkshire](#) – 30 October 2017

Asda is ok if your in the back out of the way and left alone to do your job on the forklifts
is the best place to be you can have a laugh and get your work done

✓ Pros
Can do shopping after shift

✗ Cons
Money

1. Summarise the pros and cons to working at ASDA on the FLT.
2. Would you work at ASDA based on this screenshot? Explain.

Warehouse English 2



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Snapshot

Why Join Us

14.9K
Reviews

10.1K
Salaries

81
Photos

3K
Jobs

590
Questions?

1.0

Shame



[Forklift Driver \(Former Employee\)](#) – [Donabate, County Dublin](#) – 13 November 2018

Very bad place like a prison camp. Not recommended to anyone! Keep it place away. You are treated like a number in statistic not like a human. Nobody care about H&S

5.0

Fun place to work but is hard work



[Traning on manual hand forklift \(Former Employee\)](#) – [Dagenham, Greater London](#) – 6 September 2018

I was trained to use a manual forklift and a wrist computer for the job. I was only there for a week as I could not lift boxes above my head full of fruit/veg. Due to health and safety, I left after 5 days. The hardest part is the lifting the boxes onto high crates or cages. A very enjoyable job I loved it there even though it was for a short while.

✓ Pros

canteen, pension scheme, 10% card for personal shopping

✗ Cons

Heavy lifting and cold places to work

3.0

There was not fun at all



[FLT Reach Driver \(Former Employee\)](#) – [Lichfield](#) – 17 July 2018

This place was ok. It is a very busy warehouse. there is no time for any fun. You do same work everyday such as picking, no fun whatso ever. And also a long distance traveling. Lots of time consuming.

✓ Pros

yes, subsidised food and drinks

✗ Cons

It was a fixed shift pattern

1. What is meant by “like a prison camp” and “treated like a number” (first review)?
2. Would you recommend this job for somebody in their 60s? Explain.
3. Summarise the pros and cons to working at Tesco on the FLT.

Case Study 1 - AB Coursework

The following documents were chosen as they highlight progression of AB following 1:1 support, feedback and self-set targets. AB struggles in English, particularly with writing descriptively and creatively, and has sat the GCSE English exam multiple times. AB lost confidence in the creative writing following a lengthy absence from doing English lessons and needed to show fast improvement in the weeks leading up to the exams. The documents show initial attempts at descriptive writing and comparisons between the first and last attempts in the build-up to the exams.

Documents

- First attempt and mind mapped ideas
- Image with annotations
- Second attempt with reference to 1:1
- Final attempt showing progression and improvements

and that this wasn't going to turn out
the way I want it to, I want to walk
in ^{and} look at the ~~treasure~~ treasure.

The walls are so plain and are
falling apart the wallpaper has
been ~~so~~ ripped off and crumpled
on the floor, maybe someone was
going to move in until they saw
how ~~so~~ creepy it was and
haunted, even the mice run away,
what does that tell you? ~~That~~ it
wouldn't be a nice place to live.

22/40

w/o OS see ~~feedback~~ feedback sheet

11/10/19

A05

A06

Practice exam technique for a successful
creative writing piece.

Everyone in the household loves reading books
and has fun doing so. They have an hour
a day reading any book that they
would like to, even the dog wants to
be ^{a part} ~~apart~~ of it.

- Planning
- 2 pages
- Box picture up
- Sounds
- Mood
- Zoom in - Zoom out
- Think about what isn't in the picture
- End where you begin
- Repeated

In future, introduce
with short topic sentence
'A lighthouse stands ^{in the middle of the rocks} next to a lighthouse can
become very annoying ~~but~~ it does have its perks.
It is very beautiful to look at and it's a massive
building that helps boats ~~so~~ know where they
are, so it is very useful. Sometimes I even
get to go inside and look out at the ^{amazing} scenery
and watching up the twenty flight of stairs
before reaching the top. I feel very important
when going in the lighthouse because not a lot of
people get the chance to go into a lighthouse.

by the waves?

The fence is acting like a barrier protecting the land from the raging sea so that it doesn't get damaged. It also helps so that no one falls over and get snatched up by the sea or breaks the rough rocky rocks at the bottom. The waves are crashing against the barrier and soon there will be no barrier there to save the land.

personification

The trees are a good nature reserve for animals that just want to chill out and get away from the roaring sea. The owls are hooting on a night time like lions on a day time hunting for their prey. The trees make the other objects stand out because they are just so pretty and a glamorous green, and yelling yellow.

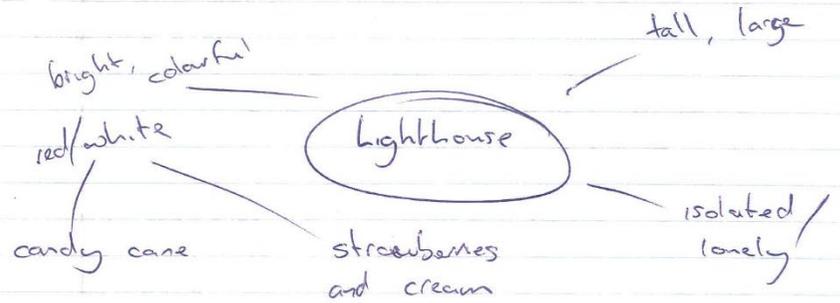
link with advanced punct

The house is like no other house, its pretty with its appealing bright colours, the bricks don't look like bricks - they look like stones. It has lots of windows to look out of - I mean who wouldn't want to look at that amazing scenery? Even the shed looks with its bright blue doors and discoloured bricks as if its been there since the 19th century about to collapse.

much more vivid here

The lighthouse has got a wall around it so that no unwanted guests can get in and mess with it and destroy it, (because that wouldn't just be dangerous for us it would be dangerous for other people as if there was no lighthouse the people or boats would probably crash right into the land, it's like a car in the dark with no headlights or street lighting there is just no way they will still be going in a straight line or even know where they are going.)

Ending seems more like a profile of what a lighthouse is!
Remember: your aim is to describe!



Describe!!!

C - L2 ↑ 19/24

Spag - L2 ↓ 6/16

17/40

! ? , ; : ... -

11/10/19

Paper 1, Question 5: Planning for descriptive writing

1. Box up the image.
2. What significant things do you see? Annotate.
3. Which senses can you bring in? How can you do this?
4. What mood does the image set? Continue this mood in your work.
5. Cyclical structure – end where you began. Has anything changed since you started?

Simile ✓
 metaphor ✓
 adjectives ✓
 repetition ✓
 onomatopoeia ✓
 Imagery ✓
 dramatic verbs ✓
 alliteration ✓



Friday 18th October 2019.

The geese are amazing animals - so pretty and perfect. They are like swans but even better and stronger.

The log cabins standing tall as ever with the luxurious lights lighting up the whole place. The ~~gorgeous~~ green door matching the green sceanary.

The boat is a lovely autum colour that lights up the lake making it look better. It's small and cute but still does a lot of work.

The lake is a lovely blue see through colour that everyone imagines what it looks like. (Seeing the fish jumping up out of the beautiful blue sea and jumping back in just swimming around.) not a full sentence

one sentence pair
The dogs just run around the moist green grass with not a care in the world rolling round getting the grass all over them.

one sentence pair
The sunset is as perfect as a picture the amazing colours in the sky, the perfect sunset for the perfect day.

Geese are amazing they just set the mood from sad ~~to~~ to happy once you see them because they are just ~~so~~ creative creatures.

We need to speak about descriptive writing.
See me on Friday for an in-depth analysis of this response.

Friday 1st November 2019

Self-assess your weakest areas and practice that area.

A lighthouse stands as tall as a giraffe.

The crashing waves are like a lion trying to get out of the cage.

The path is as ~~rough~~ ^{rocky} as a rock pool.

The fence is as old as an ~~ancient~~ ^{dinosaur}.

The house is beautiful like a whale.

The sky is ~~beautiful~~ ^{like} a firework.

The waves are crashing against the ~~rigid~~ ^{rigid} riggered rocks.

The fence is so jagged that it should have ~~to~~ fell down by now.

The house is amazingly beautiful.

Q5 lighthouse.

A lighthouse stands as tall as a giraffe. It lights up the sky with its powerful beam. The colours are ~~like~~ a candy cane and look like strawberries and cream. The lighthouse is as perfect as Christmas day.

The path is as rocky as a rock pool. It guides the people along the right path and on track. The green ~~and~~ and yellow moss makes it even more colourful than a ~~set~~ ^{see} of traffic lights. The rocky path is unsteady ~~and~~ on your feet and makes you feel wobbly.

The sky is ~~like~~ a firework. All the ~~the~~ amazing primary colours make the sky stand out. The clouds are a lovely light blue ~~colour~~ ^{sun set} that blends in with the ~~other~~ ^{sun set}. The sky is as pretty as a picture.

The waves are crashing against the rigid rocks. The sea spray that comes off it is cool and misty. The fishy small is strong and ~~hits~~ ^{hits} you in the face with power. They are angry.

The fence is so jagged that it should have fell down by now. It's not ~~as~~ strong and ~~steady~~ ^{roaring} as it use to be. There's not much life left in it. The wood ~~is~~ is

waisting away and ~~it~~ ~~can't~~ ~~finish~~

The house is amazingly beautiful.
The stained glass windows with the
patterns on are amazing to look at.
The roof is an orange colour that
~~merges~~ ~~with~~ with the trees surrounding.
The pillars stand strong supporting
the house. The house is a perfect
painting.

The ~~are~~ tremendous trees surround the
winding path. The wind makes the
tops of the trees dance. The animals
inside the trees sing along with
the movement. (They are ~~strong~~ and
call.)

~~The light is broken and doesn't shine as bright. The windows are smashed off the force of the wind. The paint is starting to fade like an off white.~~
The light is broken and doesn't
shine as bright. The windows
are smashed off the force of the
wind. The paint is starting to
fade like an off white.

verbal
feedback given

Case Study 2 - CD testimony

The following documents were chosen as they reference CD's personal reflection on the improvements made throughout their short time in GCSE English classes. CD has previously stated a sense of nervousness and fear when speaking out loud due to personal barriers and found school was often difficult due to these feelings. CD recently completed L1 FS English and has progressed into GCSE English following a great rise in confidence. CD is able to contribute a lot to lessons, even in spoken elements, and now relishes the challenge of giving their own opinion on difficult topical issues. The documents show CD's thoughts on their own barriers and recent progression as well as a personal testimony to the great work they are now achieving following the project.

Documents

- Questionnaire gauging CD's barriers to learning
- CD's testimony to the improvements made since being promoted to GCSE English

C [redacted] progress report (OTLA Project)

1. Which part of the English do you find the easiest?

Reading

Writing

S&L

2. Which part of English do you find the hardest?

Reading

Writing

S&L

3. How have you found the step up from L1 Functional Skills English to

GCSE English? I found it hard because I have never been in GCSE in my life & new people in the class but first the work was going to be really hard and it is.

- out of comfort zone - hard at first, never been top sat
- good atmosphere, everyone gets a say

4. What do you think has helped contribute to the way you have found this

step up? Good because I can get more out of it and better grades

5. How do you feel you do in group debates, what do you enjoy most about the group debates and what do you enjoy the least?

In the group debates I like getting my point across and arguing back and forward with other people.

- always trying to prove people wrong
- debate takes turns, let people have their say

6. Would you say your confidence has improved since joining the GCSE English class? Yes I do think my confidence has improved

- like to plan, feel confident - worried I wasn't writing enough but quality over quantity

7. What do you hope to achieve in the next 12 months of English?

when expanding on a job out of it.

on points - working - reading stock checks, spoken help - interviews instructions etc.
- forms, contracts, texts etc. speak

1) i found sat easy cause i like to take in a source
and getting my point across
- not confident in school - scary
- quite a few in class
-

2) i find writing hard because i can say something
but when i write it down i put the wrong things
- I like to talk
- bullet points would help
- plan one par at a time
- frustrated
- want to prove I don't need
to rely on people for help

CD progress report (OTLA Project)

So far, in the GCSE English, I have found the speaking and listening element easy because I like to talk in the group, although this wasn't always the case. In school, I wasn't confident. I found it quite scary talking in front of others even though there was only a few people in the class. Since moving from Functional Skills into GCSE English, I have grown in confidence when speaking as there is a lot of chances to debate and get my point across. This is something I can do as I feel comfortable in the group as it is a good atmosphere where everyone gets a chance to speak.

I find writing the hardest part in English where before I would've said it was speaking. Now I can say something but when I come to write it down my ideas all come at the same time and I often put the wrong thing down on paper. Now, I like to talk. I think bullet pointing what I say is something we can do in future and I will be setting my own personal target to do this. Jamie has given me the task of working on planning one paragraph at a time as I get frustrated when I have all these ideas and they don't make sense on paper.

I want to prove to everyone that I don't need to rely on others for help. I think in the GSCE English lessons I am definitely doing this. I found it hard at first coming from Functional Skills as I was out of my comfort zone but now I am doing well. My confidence has improved in speaking but also now I don't worry about how much I write, I care more about the quality of what I write. I like to plan as it helps me expand on things.

I hope in the next 12 months to get a job and I know English can help me achieve that. I know that outside of class I will need English in work, in getting work and in everyday life.