AchieveAbility

Framework for whole institutional inclusive teaching practice

Contents

It has been shown that teachers...

There have been major advances in our understanding about how the brain operates and the processes of cognition in the past ten years. Some initial teacher training and CPD tend to provide less than adequate grounding in how the brain operates, how cognition takes place, what is meant by learning and learning differences. **It has been shown that teachers are generally therefore without this crucial underpinning knowledge necessary to plan whole class teaching and learning to incorporate learning differences within a class**. Equally, many managers in education are insufficiently conversant with the underpinning knowledge about learning and learning development necessary to develop a layered approach to managing pupil performance. Consequently some rely too heavily on data alone. The heavy reliance solely on data linked to secondary school strategies to focus mainly on those predicted to be within or close to the 5 A-C grades at GCSE, may mean that a whole cohort of learners with the potential to succeed, if their learning needs were appropriately addressed in whole class teaching, are being overlooked (East of England Report, Crabtree 2008).

Only those pupils with a learning difference which could be described as severe are generally being identified in schools and colleges. This concept of severity and discrepancy (from what is perceived as the norm) reinforces the idea that the numbers with a learning difference are small and require help from 'specialists' as opposed to mainstream teachers. **Schools and colleges would need to develop a whole school/ college approach to learning which embraces all learners**. The identification of those with Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) needs to be more rigorous.

The accepted figure for SpLD within the overall school population is 10% yet nowhere near this number are being recognised during their school career. Additionally, teachers should be supported to bring about the necessary adaptations in the delivery of the curriculum for it to be truly inclusive for all learners. SpLD learners need to be targeted within a whole school/ college approach, their potential better measured, interventions need to be addressed holistically and progress monitored accordingly. If less than the generally accepted figure of 10% is being identified, this needs to be picked up as part of the quality cycle.

The AchieveAbility National Network (previously a national HEFCE funded project) was responsible for a publication *AchieveAbility Interventions: A Framework for Whole Class Learning*. This publication was produced from the action research the Network put in place with Post 16 educational sector and Higher Education. The Interventions Framework, coupled with the training sessions and additional support provided by the project for schools and colleges were the main resources for the key projects developed by the Network to support an inclusive learning environment. The Interventions Framework is a publication and a training programme to support whole class learning in post-16 education. It consists of a booklet which contains principles, resources, descriptive background, examples of materials and a CD-ROM with further resources and a training programme.

The underlying premise is that teaching and learning aimed at supporting learners with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) benefits all learners in the class. The AchieveAbility pilot project which developed the materials demonstrated that, by adopting strategies proven to be successful with SpLD learners, teachers can have a big impact upon the achievement of all learners. Furthermore, they can also improve the educational experience of SpLD learners to enable them to bring their strengths to the classroom.

AchieveAbility Interventions: Challenging Behaviours 2008

AchieveAbility Interventions piloted a project in partnership with two of Her Majesty Prison Young Offenders Institutions in the North East of England. It consisted of a series of linked workshops to explore attitudes to self, education and rehabilitation with 20 young offenders. All the offenders were male. Over 98% of the population of young offenders in these prisons had a skills profile of either at or below Level 1 of the National Adult Literacy Core Curriculum and the participants had strong negative views about education.

One of the activities required the young people to explore their life history and experiences of education to create an autobiography which was shared with others in the group. All expressed in one way or another that they had never had the opportunity to explore and explain their own identities. "This is fantastic; no one has ever taken the interest and I have never had the opportunity to talk about myself in this way". The workshops engaged them in an innovative and interesting way to then enable and support them to reframe their ideas about education and training and encourage them to explore the possibility of education and training as part of their rehabilitation.

Key life themes appeared out of the process. Very few had a full-time educational experience beyond 13. A small number of the participants had come into the criminal justice system through either a single or a series of events on their part which culminated in an anti-social or illegal acts often to do with either violence or drugs. Less than one quarter had either sat or experienced the final year of GCSEs.

Nearly three quarters reported that school life was negative with a school history of incremental marginalisation terminating in some sort of exclusion. Most of the group explained that much of their time was spent mixing with others with equally peripheral social integration, and, once freed from regular school attendance, entered into a culture of nuisance amongst other peers from similar circumstances and subsequent drift from petty crime, police attention and eventually more serious crime.

During the writing phases of the workshops, nearly all the participants exhibited distinct signs of SpLD. None of the participants had been identified as such either at school or in the prison and none had ever had specialist support. During the skills assessment of the workshops all the participants displayed a range of strong intellectual abilities, intuitive thinking and higher order critical appraisal of evidence. All the participants completed the programme and two thirds engaged sufficiently to identify a potential route into higher education. However, their biggest fear about returning to education once outside prison was rejection. Not rejection based upon their overall prior educational attainment but rejection by their peers if their history of offending was to become known and rejection by teachers because their experience of education had been one in which teachers wanted to exclude them initially from class, and then, increasingly as time went on, from school.

David Crabtree and David Maguire

The Interventions Framework provides a structured and responsive approach to whole class learning.
That part of the training which introduced participants to the publication also made links to current educational initiatives such as personalised learning, functional skills and targets for participation in HE. Government policy on 14-19 education is for an, *'excellent system of 14-19 education; a system where all young people have opportunities to learn in ways which motivate and engage them and through hard work position themselves for success in life.'* (Department for Children, Schools and Families, website introduction, www.dfes. gov.uk/14-19/). Within current educational reform and development, inclusion, placing the individual at the heart of the system, and raising achievement are recurring themes. As defined in the Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group: *'Put simply, personalised learning and teaching means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's and young person's learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils - and their parents - as partners in learning.'* (Crabtree 2008- Executive summary for Intervention Framework)

This initiative for Post 16 Education has now been transferred to the Quintin Kynaston School and other schools in the East of England Region.
It looks to target secondary school aged children and attempts to arm them with strategies and skills they will be able to use across their lifespan in all forms of education.

Evidence for a whole institutional approach – the East of England research findings
The purpose of the East of England Aimhigher teacher training project was to train representatives from schools and colleges in the eastern region in whole class approach to inclusive learning. This was in response to the Government targets for greater participation in Higher Education. The aim of the project was to provide schools and colleges with an opportunity to engage in an active learning and learning styles approach to teaching and to support whole school/college approaches to raise achievement and widen participation. An expectation was that following the training, participants would incorporate aspects of the training and materials into whole class teaching and learning strategies. In addition to this, it was hoped they would pilot a localised and contextualised classroom based approach to inclusive learning in their particular school, college, or through a regional network.

FINDINGS

Findings from the series of training sessions
- There was a great deal of support from the senior managers who attended the training. Many identified the Interventions Framework and materials as potential additional resources to support whole organisation approaches to initiatives such as inclusiveness, the implementation of Functional Skills, improvements in attainment, the personalisation agenda and Every Child Matters; as well as providing them with a Toolkit for the implementation of SENDA, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001).

- Teachers felt that the requirements for inclusive learning and the developments suggested in classroom delivery were manageable.

- Participants who were not teachers or managers but were either in an advisory role or those whose main function was CPD, reported that they would make use of elements of the training or would endorse and pass the resources onto others to evaluate and use.

- Something else became very apparent at this stage but its significance did not come to light until later in the delivery of the training. This was that rather than classroom teachers and managers taking part as originally planned, sessions were mainly attended by managers and staff working in a learning support role in schools and colleges. Classroom teachers and senior managers in a curriculum role were in the minority. The majority of the participants were in a SENCO or similar role.

- In discussion about how they would make use of the training, this group generally felt that they were not in an appropriate position to action or suggest changes to whole class teaching.

- In each part of the region, the participant profile was similar; many more SENCOs than classroom teachers and those with a responsibility for supporting learning consistently identified institutional barriers which limited their ability to have an impact on classroom delivery. This pattern was repeated throughout the training in Norfolk, Cambridge and Bedfordshire.

Findings from the one-day training:

Following the training sessions, review sessions were organised to report on progress and share ideas. The review sessions came after the initial training with about one-full term between initial training and feedback. Part of the day was input on models of managing change in education with examples drawn from the original AchieveAbility pilot project. The major part of the day was given over to reporting on progress, exchanging ideas and for participants to network with others who had been through the training. It was found that the projects which schools and colleges had undertaken, following the initial training, tended to be changes in own professional practice or the use of information from the training to inform colleagues.

Examples include:

- Review integrated SpLD friendly methods into my teaching

- Review alerted SEN colleagues of resources

- Used slides and training materials for NQT training session

- Alerted SEN staff and others to the signs checklist

- Used materials on SpLD awareness for whole staff training

Participants had also integrated aspects of the training into other existing school/college initiatives. Areas identified included whole organisation approaches to inclusion, learning styles and learning support. There were no examples reported of the training being taken up within an organisation and being used in the way initially devised for a whole organisation approach i.e. working with a group of teachers using materials from the Interventions Framework to focus on whole class learning and then measuring impact.

The review sessions became an important forum for the delivery team to investigate the reasons for attendance mainly by SENCOs or similar.
The key questions which had arisen from the initial training became a focus for discussion at these review sessions and, as they were explored, emerging themes began to appear. Responses were often expressed in different ways and were masked by different terminology, institutional settings and cultures. However, as time went on and similar responses were consistently expressed, albeit in slightly different ways, it became quite obvious that something within the overall system of education, an institutional process, was operating. This institutional process distorted the delivery of the project towards attendance by one group over another. **It also represented a demarcation dividing teaching and whole class delivery of the curriculum from learning support**.

Participants reported that there were two quite separate organisational networks. In the process of marketing the in-service sessions, the redirection of mail towards learning support away from classroom delivery represented an institutionalised distinction and this distinction is an inherent response within the culture of schools and colleges. Put simply, classroom delivery was by and large the domain of subjects and thereby whole class teaching; whereas learning support was by and large the domain of individual learning support and 'learning problems'. **They felt that there is a general lack of understanding amongst teachers about how to support learners with SpLD within a whole class situation and believed that teachers would generally welcome this training.** However because they had not received the information about the training they were not in a position to attend.

There was a general agreement that teaching and learning support were generally organised within separate organisation 'silos' in schools and colleges. **This structural division meant that there was very little opportunity for either to impact upon the work of the other.** A significant number of participants cited that, because of the way funding operates or/and because of the structural and organisational division between classroom teaching and learning support, pupils with SpLD are perceived as a very small minority.

Classroom planning

This impact of a perceived small minority with a learning difference in the context of every other pupil meant that sometimes the small minority were not included within the class room planning

This was especially so because they also felt that the responsibility for the minority (with 'learning problems') lay with learning support. (SENCOs stated that pupils with different learning styles and needs were described within schools/colleges as "their learners", never the use of "our" i.e. a whole organisational approach).

This pattern of perception of *their learners*, (those in receipt of learning support), and the *majority* (those in the class and not in receipt of learning support), was sufficiently institutionalised as to remain even in those schools who had very high instances of pupils on the SEN register or with identified SpLD.

It was particularly noticeable when participants from two schools, one with above 50% on the SEN register and one with 65%, both reported that classroom teachers tended to regard the learning needs of identified pupils as the responsibility mainly of learning support and did not engage with the learning support function of the school to plan for inclusion. By and large, much additional learning support happened outside the classroom or, when in class, not as a result of joint planning between the teacher and SENCO, but as an on-going ad-lib process. AchieveAbility and AimHigher East of England decided to conduct a small scale research project to investigate this demarcation within institutions and educational structures to further inform other possible roll-outs of a similar project.

Follow up research

Towards the end of the AimHigher East of England teacher training project a number of key themes began to emerge. These related to the organisational and institutionalised barrier between classroom teaching and learning support. The degree to which teachers accept that they have a responsibility to change and adapt their teaching to suit the needs of all pupils and the processes that shape institutional priorities.

It was decided to engage in a small scale piece of research with participants through a mailed out questionnaire and some face-to-face and telephone interviews to find out more about these themes. It was small scale because time and resources were short due to the project coming to an end. The questions related to the roles of participants:

1. **The degree to which they had used the resources and materials from the initial training within their school/college/network**

2. **Their perceptions about opportunities at a strategic level to impact upon whole class teaching**

3. **The degree to which ideas about learning and the processes involved in cognition played a part in whole class planning.**

These general questions were incorporated into a questionnaire sent to all participants with follow up questions for telephone and face-to-face semi-structured interviews for respondents to the questionnaire who identified that they were willing to discuss further. The questions for a direct semi-structured interview by telephone or face-to-face were:

1. **What is your role and do you feel able to have a direct impact upon whole class teaching to achieve a more inclusive approach?**

2. **What opportunities do you think exist in this school/ college to bring about changes in whole class teaching to develop a more inclusive approach?**

3. **How much do you and your colleagues use contemporary knowledge about learning and the way the brain operates for cognition to plan the delivery of the curriculum?**

4. **What do you mean when you talk about pupil performance?**

What ideas emerged from this process?

In relation to the first question, their views were that:

- Many staff working in a learning support role already knew about learning differences, supported the idea of inclusion and had a range of strategies which, if applied to whole class teaching, would help teachers support learners with learning differences within a whole class situation.

- Teachers were sympathetic to the idea that it was important to address the learning needs of all the pupils in the class but perceived the organisational requirements of responding to this as a potentially massive burden.

- Teachers were willing to respond to the learning needs of all pupils in the class but tended to have only a limited understanding of learning and learning differences and so did not feel confident in changing their methodology.

- Teachers felt that changes in delivery constituted 'risk-taking' and, without explicit senior management support, were often not prepared to take such risks without some sort of safety net.

- Because teachers had not been provided with the necessary underpinning knowledge about learning and cognition in their training, they felt unprepared to deploy a range of learning strategies to their teaching

- Few staff interviewees felt confident about suggesting to colleagues that they incorporate active and multi-sensory approaches to learning.

IDEAS

In relation to the second question, the responses were:

- It was felt that because only small numbers of pupils with SpLD were identified in schools (and often these were the more severe or those with attendant behavioural difficulties), the practice of inclusive learning would continue to be through support outside whole class teaching in a special unit or section (sometimes called the inclusive learning section).

- Classroom teachers tended to focus their differentiation on those pupils predicted 5 or more GCSEs at grade C or above or those close to this target than those where the school data predicted a lower profile. This created a divisive approach as opposed to an inclusive approach.

In relation to the third question, all interviewees identified that:

- PGCE courses and CPD training for teachers had not adequately provided the underpinning knowledge about learning, cognition, or how the brain retains knowledge and information within the core of the course.

- Planning of the curriculum is based upon directives from government and the topics within the subject specifications.

In relation to the fourth question interviewees reported that:

- Teachers tended to discuss pupil difference generally only in terms of perceived ability (e.g. a personal assessment of IQ) and behaviour (either as a motivated pupil or not a motivated pupil).

- Indicators that may be particularly useful in identifying previously unidentified pupils are not often used. An example of such an indicator was drawn from CATS information by one interviewee e.g. 15 point difference between the verbal and nonverbal reasoning score at CATs.

- Most interviewees felt that many SpLD pupils (particularly those who are less severe), experienced school without the school either identifying or responding to their specific learning needs.

- It was recognised that generally schools do not identify pupils with SpLD except those with attendant behavioural difficulties.

- Amongst classroom teachers the idea of a whole class of pupils with many exhibiting learning differences was generally not taken on board although the concept was readily accepted by those in a learning support role.

- The main source of authority on pupil performance in schools came from pupil tracking data sources; the most quoted in the interviews was the Fisher Family Trust Data (FFTD). Interviewees explained that FFTD began in primary school and followed pupils through to the end of their school career. The basis for the originating index were results in early primary school based tests in which literacy skills played a crucial role.

- FFTD provided an index, or a value to each child and this index followed the child through primary and secondary school and was used to predict performance as well as review progress.

- Interviewees reported that Ofsted particularly held FFTD in high regard and, during inspection, would question the degree to which the school/class/ individuals were performing in line with the FFTD prediction. FFTD in Secondary Schools was used to benchmark pupil performance and there was an organisational emphasis by senior managers to ensure that pupils met their FFTD prediction.

- It was expressed by a minority of interviewees that pupils with SpLD, especially those with an unrecognised SpLD, may have had a depressed FFT index resulting in the possibility of low expectations as they progress through school.

The target learner group for *AchieveAbility Interventions: A Framework for Whole Class Learning* are, **in the main, those for whom necessary adjustments in teacher's methods and approaches to whole class teaching is the critical key factor for success.** What we already know about SpLD tells us that many of these pupils can be amongst the most able and talented. Participants in the project confirmed that many remain unidentified and that some of these pupils will have their true potential masked by the way pupil tracking data is used.

The impact of this is to reduce the institutional imperative to identify and support SpLD pupils and respond to their needs within whole class teaching. **Organisationally there are two silos, one for whole class teaching and one for learning support. This creates an institutional barrier between what happens in the classroom and what happens in learning support.**

This division into whole class teaching in one sphere and learning support in another separate sphere reinforces a concept within education of 'normal' learners, whose needs can be met in a class all experiencing the 'special learning diet', and those learners (a minority) whose requirements can only be met by specialists and be given a 'special diet'. Furthermore, when those who require a 'special diet' are in class with those having the 'same diet', it is perceived by the class teacher that the 'problem' is with the child with learning differences. **The institutional barrier between what happens in the classroom and what happens in learning support means that institutions may not be making best use of the perspectives of learning support expertise to inform the classroom delivery of teachers.** AchieveAbilty has set out a step by step approach to a whole institutional inclusive practice. Practice is drawn from work within an Inner London School: Quintin Kynaston.

Quintin Kynaston School: An Inner London case study
The Framework is set out in order of how the project was established at Quintin Kynaston School. Some steps were started and run simultaneously and often continuously, while others were stand-alone interventions/facets that needed individual facilitation. Steps 1-5 are administration steps which are integral for smooth running of the project from its conception. Initially the project started with an audit of provision that is currently made in relation to each of the areas of intervention/development. Results of that audit were then evaluated in terms of current good practise and areas for improvement, which drive the "update" mechanism of the framework. Embedding new and/or improved practice triggered another audit of provision and so the cycle continued as the multisensory teaching and learning became part of the school's holistic approach.
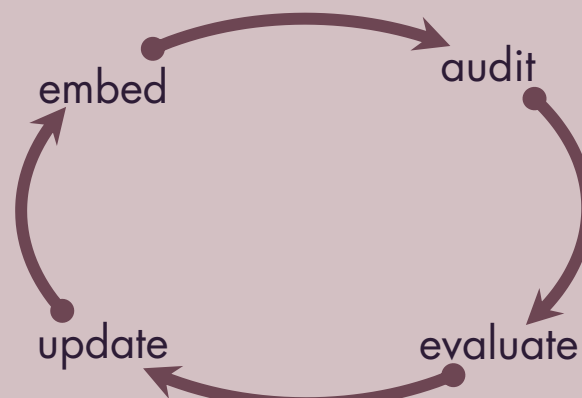
CASE STUDY

The framework is based on the actual workings of the project within Quintin Kynaston School and is broken down into a step by step guide with the hope of enabling schools to gain an understanding of how a similar project could work within their setting. While these steps were integral for the project at Quintin Kynaston School it is important that other institutions make changes and adaptations to the framework to best suit their students, staff and school.

In current stages of the project the focus has moved towards embedding practice within a whole institutional approach (i.e. ensuring that the school is operating from a multisensory teaching and learning philosophy and ensuring the staff are trained and comfortable in relation to this).

Step 1: Senior Management buy in

Ties with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are integral to the running of the project, particularly in terms of decision making and feedback to the Headteacher and the rest of SLT. Information dissemination to the rest of the school (i.e. at staff briefings, inset days, etc) is often more successful if a "top-down" approach is used whereby decisions, outcomes and information sharing is provided from SLT to Heads of Department and Directors of Learning (also known as heads of year) and then disseminated to other staff. This can help with the embedding process particularly in terms of getting multisensory teaching and learning issues raised in meetings across departments as well as being included in areas like teacher observations that may be linked with performance review/external reviews.

SLT staff involved with the project also have an important role in relation to the promotion of the project. Depending on how well known the project officer is to staff as a whole, initially information about the project and updates about it's progress etc, may have more meaning coming from an established member of staff with management responsibility. Once the project officer is comfortably in post and the project is established within the school, this responsibility can be handed to them.

"Bottom-up" dissemination of information is also important within the project position as the project officer will often have to feedback to the Headteacher and members of the SLT. Having a member of SLT involved with the project can make this process easier in terms of having a direct route through which to communicate information, and can make administration tasks (such as getting on agendas for meeting etc) easier.

Quintin Kynaston School Senior Leadership Case Study

Initial consultation regarding the project started with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Quintin Kynaston School. The SLT is made up of Deputy Headteachers who have various management and departmental responsibilities around and within the school. For the purposes of this project the Deputy Head with responsibilities for Inclusion, Extended Hours and Every Child Matters (ECM) was felt to be the most appropriate as initially student based intervention was to be based within extended hours, and the Personalised Learning agenda fit with ECM policies. While ties with the Inclusion department and with someone who is involved with ECM have been useful, it is not necessary to have a SLT member with these links be responsible for the project.

Step 2: Institution Audit

It requires senior management's active participation to link enhanced teaching and learning into a whole institution approach and to ensure that there is support for the project. The institutional audit poses three questions around identification and support for learners with SpLD and proposes the development of a notional baseline. The outcomes of the audit and the response to enhanced teaching and learning pilot by teachers using the Teaching and Learning checklist become the basis for a whole institution action plan for teaching and learning drawn from practice with SpLD.

The underlying basis of this approach resides with the view that SpLD learners, who span all ability ranges, represent an intellectual loss. Low rates of identification, insufficient support and inappropriate teaching and learning strategies operate against these learners realising their true potential.

Intellectual loss is not just with learners who are 'failing', many learners who are perceived as 'doing quite well' may well be SpLD learners with an intellectual ability to achieve at a higher level but are functioning in the classroom at a lower threshold. By making the curriculum more accessible to SpLD learners, they are more likely to be more successful. But, because difficulties faced by SpLD learners are not exclusive, they are to do with learning; the project has demonstrated that by making learning more accessible for SpLD students in a class, the teacher makes learning more accessible to all learners. The intellectual gains to be made by this approach are substantial and thereby contribute to achievement and raising the threshold of all learners.

The three questions are:
1. How successful is the process of identification?
2. What approaches are used to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to the needs of learners with SpLD?
3. How is SpLD awareness and information made available to managers, teachers, students and parents?

Step 3: Action Planning

Action planning is an important part of the project and will need to be done annually at least. It should be a collaborative process between all members of the implementation team/working group and needs to take into account what is to be achieved, how it is to be achieved, in what time frame and by whom. On completion the action plan needs to be available for all staff both within and external to the project. Reviews should be conducted annually with an evaluation of what has/has not been completed and how successful such components were. Recommendations as to what is left uncompleted can then be fed back into the action planning meeting for the following year.

The project also needs to have an overseeing body which is responsible for ensuring that the aims of the project fit with the overarching aims/values of the school.

Step 4: Staff Audit

In initial stages of the project the focus was on vulnerable groups of students who, due to their differences and difficulties, may have had trouble accessing the curriculum. As a result a staff audit was conducted to assess staff's knowledge of and comfort related to teaching students with SpLD. Results were used to look at the need for staff training and to identify what resources could be purchased to be used by staff. Questions looked at areas such as:

- Understanding of SpLD diagnoses and symptoms

- Understanding of the need for and how to differentiate work appropriately for those with SpLD

- Amount of professional development individuals had received in relation to SpLD and what they thought their current needs were

- How confident they were using technology within the school that may make lesson more multisensory and therefore easier to access

- Training needs in relation to technology (i.e. what they had previously received and what they would like to receive as further training)

CASE STUDY

Quintin Kynaston School Staff and Materials Audit Case Study
Given the multisensory nature of the project and the fact that teaching staff are very busy individuals, the staff and materials audits were both completed online. Staff were emailed a web-based (survey) through: www.freeonlinesurvey.com, and were asked to complete the audit. The online nature of the audit saw relatively high levels of participation (45 completed surveys) amongst staff and made interpretation of the results convenient as the website will turn results into powerpoint slides and excel data.

Results of Staff Audit:
The results of the audit gave the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator the following baseline information:

- Staff felt that their understanding of dyslexia was better than their understanding of Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia

- 75% of staff were "sometimes" or "often" differentiating for students with SpLD within their classrooms

- Most commonly used multisensory teaching methods used were interactive whiteboard and kinaesthetic tasks

- Majority of staff stated that they had a "partial" understanding of learning styles and the effect that they can have on learning

- 62% felt that they knew the learning styles of the students in their lessons and adjusted their teaching styles to reflect the ratio of styles

- 97% wanted training in relation to SpLD and Learning Styles

- 93% wanted professional development in relation to classroom/curriculum accessibility for students and learning styles role in same.

Step 5: Materials Audit

To gather information in relation to what multisensory teaching and learning technology the school currently had, and what may need to be purchased, a materials audit was conducted by the project officer. Audit questions looked at such areas as:

- What multisensory technology is currently available?

- What multisensory technology is currently being used?

- What additional resources are required?

- Are resources being used effectively?

- What is staff's knowledge of available resources and technology?

- Are staff using what is available to them?

- What is stopping staff from using resources that are available?

- Which staff are using them successfully and what are they doing that ensures success?

Results of Material Audit

The results of the material audit looked at staff's comfort levels with specific programs/technologies as well as ascertaining the following overall information about technology in the classroom:

- 92% of staff felt that it is important to use technology in classrooms to enhance the learning of all students

- 100% of staff disagreed with the statement that "only students with SpLD would benefit from me knowing how to use technology and how that will effect learning styles"

- 76% of staff agreed that they would benefit from more training in relation to optimising technology within the classroom

Step 6: Staff Training

Staff training is an integral part of the project that any school wishing to implement something similar will need to be able to provide. Training in both SpLD specific information and multisensory teaching and learning practices is needed to start the embedding practise across the whole school. Follow-up training will need to continue for staff on an on-going basis after initial training is completed. This is to ensure that with staff turn over and the induction of new staff that sharing of practice and dissemination of information continues.

The initial training session was an introductory session to understanding child development and contained information on how differences in learning came about. This session also looked at the usefulness of multisensory teaching and learning for not only SpLD students, but for mainstream classes as a whole. One member of staff from each faculty was asked to attend the session and then report back to departments in relation to what they had learnt, as well as to share the resources that they were provided with departmental colleagues. External participants were also encouraged to take back information they had learnt and disseminate within their schools.

CASE STUDY

Quintin Kynaston School Staff Training Case Study

A very important outcome of the initial assessments in relation to staff at Quintin Kynaston School was the desire by a significant number of staff to have additional training in relation to both SpLD and how to use in class strategies and technologies to support both these specific students and classrooms as a whole. As such Quintin Kynaston School has been pro-active in providing training for both its own staff and staff from other schools (see sharing practice section) which has taken place in the form of afternoon professional development sessions.

Observations of multi-sensory teaching at Quintin Kynaston School to support the sharing of practice
The aim of the observation was to identify features of multi-sensory teaching to then feed back to the school and integrate the outcomes into the planning for a staff development activity.

Observations.
• Teachers were very enthusiastic and lessons were delivered with vitality

• Lessons were well prepared

• Teachers knew the names of all the pupils and referred to individual pupils by name

• Differentiation within the planning and delivery of teaching and learning is perceived by all teachers in the school as critical for pupil achievement and development

• There were examples of smart boards being used with good effect and engaging learners. Two classes used media and moving images within the structure of the lesson. Of these, one teacher had effectively linked the film to the main learning outcomes of the lesson and the other teacher used film to engage the learners and interest them in the topic

• One lesson used a tactile learning approach as the main teaching and learning strategy and pupils seemed to enjoy the session with some very good individual pieces of work

• Teachers used praise with good effect ('good' 'well done' linked to individuals)

• There were many individual examples where teaching and learning was planned around the individual needs of pupils

• Teachers used starter activities to good effect linked to the topic of the class

• There were some good examples of linking the bigger picture to detail

• Examples of differentiation by support, differentiation by resource, differentiation by outcome and differentiation by task were in evidence

• Mind maps and spider diagrams were used both to capture what had been taught and to prepare the learners for learning

Key strategic questions to consider over the next two years:

How could the learning support function be more closely linked to classroom delivery and professionalised practice?

In many schools learning support is an increasingly professionalised service working collaboratively with teachers. The approach is to move away from merely being linked to individual pupils in a welfare function to that of supporting learning as an additional resource with specialised knowledge to complement the teaching within the classroom.

Key questions to consider at staff training:

- What role could learning support staff play in pre-class planning and preparation?

- What advantages would be gained by ensuring that pupils had more knowledge of their own preferred learning approaches?

- How could approaches like mindmapping be used to greater effect for showing the big picture prior to learning, capturing main learning points and pupils planning writing, speaking and discussion?

- If teachers and learning support staff are going to work in closer partnership what are the implications for:
  - The professional development of LSAs
  - Year 7 teaching and learning teams
  - Planning and preparation
  - A production base for classroom resources

- What could be the advantage of introducing key concepts as part of a themed approach in lower school e.g. culture (English, Art, RE, Maths)

Step 7: Embedding Practice

Throughout the project, the school has been focused on embedding multisensory teaching and learning practices within the current school ethos. While the project has been the catalyst for raising awareness and initially implementing different aspects of intervention (i.e. staff training and ambassador sessions) it is expected that once funding has ceased (if obtained initially), that schools will be able to continue with all the current interventions and continue to make multisensory teaching and learning a high priority.

Initial embedding has come from setting up the hub (both in a physical and virtual sense) in order to promote the sharing and dissemination of good practice amongst staff internal to the school. Having resources online has increased accessibility and availability of information and reduces the burden on teaching staff to have to find such information and strategies for themselves.

Initially online, information was in a format that could be placed on both the school intranet and internet sites for access, however as the project starting looking at ways in which to share information amongst other schools' the concept of "online" also encompassed the school's Virtual Learning Environment, Fronter.

Having SLT associated with the project has also helped with embedding practice within the school. It has allowed for "top-down" decision making to occur in terms of intervention, training and information dissemination which would all be difficult to embed from a "bottom-up" approach given the hierarchical nature of most school staffing practices.

Auditing school current practices is another mechanism which is useful when looking to embed practise. It is important for schools to know where their current levels of multisensory teaching and learning practise lie, where there is current good practise and where there is room for improvement.

Step 8: Whole School Assessment

Embedding practice needs to be a whole school approach and one of the most important notions that has come out of this project is the idea of whole school learning styles assessment. In order to move towards personalised learning and to arm teachers with useful information in relation to the students that they will be working with schools may opt to assess all students' learning styles at the beginning of the school year.

This information will then be added to baseline data that staff receive and will give them a basis on which to base some of their lesson plans and teaching methods. Such information may also have an effect on administrative concepts such as seating plans and grouping students together to complete tasks as well as allow staff to understand students preferences for working and completing non-assessed pieces of work (i.e. where assessments methods do not have to be standardised across age cohorts of students).

There is the evidence that as much as 60% of the prison population have an SpLD, 'Unrecognised Dyslexia and the route to Offending' (BDA and the Bradford Youth Offending Team 2004). This research demonstrated that the incidence of dyslexia increased with the severity of the offending. Of the sample group surveyed 60% were categorised as dyslexic and 30% of those had a statement of special educational need. These statements all related to behavioural problems not dyslexia. The report highlighted that schools were not making the link between frustration in the classroom leading to behavioural problems and this frustration being linked to learning difficulties thereby raising the likelihood that these learners might not be in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

This framework for whole institutional inclusive teaching practice has been devised to be embedded within the whole institution/organisation and to better include those who might and have dropped out of education, training and employment. Roll out of this framework is set to happen with other London Schools from 2009. The outcome is to ensure students have appropriate skills for learning and employment. This framework will be supplemental to the 'AchieveAbility Interventions Framework' devised for classroom practice.

The AchieveAbility Network also has a set of resources that can be sourced for staff and students. This can be found on the web site, **www.achieveability.org.uk** or by contacting the AchieveAbility office via **achieveability@westminster.ac.uk**

AchieveAbility is a National Network launched by host Barry Sheerman MP on 6th December 2007 at the House of Commons. The AchieveAbility President is Barry Sheerman, MP for Huddersfield and Chair of the Select Committee for Children, Schools and Families. The Director is Katherine Hewlett and the Officer is Kate Byford. The host HEI is the University of Westminster.

The purpose of the AchieveAbility Network is to ensure that there are appropriate learning opportunities to support and enhance the continuation rates of SpLD learners across sector. To this end it will initiate and participate in discussion and research, and develop projects in order to mainstream equality and access issues related to the involvement of SpLD learners across the educational sectors.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

- To share and disseminate best practice and information across the educational sectors

- To undertake collaborative research to bring value to the learning environment

- To promote staff awareness and provide training programmes

- To explore professional and political issues which will promote SpLD learner continuation across sector

- To lobby on and promote effective policies and systems to assist SpLD learner attainment

- To develop materials to support widening participation and teaching and learning for SpLD learners

- To highlight key issues that reduce the effectiveness of SpLD learners in their learning

- To identify and engage in proactive initiatives and comment to support SpLD learner attainment

Membership is open to staff from organisations interested in promoting awareness and meeting the needs of SpLD learners across sector: Teachers, SENCOs, Widening Participation staff, FE/ HE Academic staff, Disability Officers, Voluntary Organisations and Policy Makers in schools, FE, HE and community education.

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