Literacy and Numeracy Project: Penguin Cluster

Professional Learning (PL) Days 29 and 31 May

Dr. Peter Brett; Associate Professor Rosemary Callingham and David Shorter
What is this project about?

- Department of Education funded;
- Four clusters across the State;
- Different, negotiated action research projects in all four clusters;
- Targeted PL as a response to analysis of student NAPLAN data across the cluster;
- Piloting of changes to teaching approaches;
- Evaluation of the innovation.
Working Project Title

How can more focused planning – at the strategic, year group, and classroom level – deepen student understanding around comprehension of information texts, persuasive writing and the language of mathematics and contribute to wider improvement in children’s achievement in literacy and numeracy?
Big picture outcomes

• Building capacity and the pedagogical subject knowledge (PCK) of teachers;

• Changes in attitudes, expectations and elements of professional practice in literacy and numeracy through whole-staff professional learning and engagement;

• Greater use of data in planning for progress in literacy and numeracy.
Brief review of cluster activity to date

• Project aims and purposes clarified;
• Pre- and Post-testing arrangements agreed;
• Specific areas of focus for this cluster agreed in relation to both structural and pedagogical dimensions;
• Good links between the three schools, NW Departmental leaders, and lead teacher in place;
• Lead classroom teachers identified;
• Initial PL agenda agreed – two days of work in late March resulted in detailed action research agenda and agreement to work with wider Year 5-8 team of teachers;
• Project has reached ‘take-off’ point for planned interventions from June-September......!
Using Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Success as a project guide

• Value of the ‘unpacking the organizing elements’ diagrams for Literacy and Numeracy (p.14 & 17)
• Value of the ‘Conditions for learning’ reminders
• Value of the benefits of ‘Data Informed’ approaches to teaching and learning
• Value of reminders of key elements of the school improvement literature

UTas role

- Providing research evidence of effective Literacy and Numeracy whole school approaches which encourage ownership of data and effective planning at different layers of operation
- Specific PL inputs linked to the identified areas of pedagogical focus
- Helping you to structure action research
- Tracking and measuring outcomes
- Monitoring throughout and writing up results
Negotiating Process and Outcomes

- Establish a community of professional learners (Mulford, 2008)
- Communicate with schools about what they and their communities want to happen (Day et al. 2009).
- Success is more likely when school communities are provided with opportunities to be proactive rather than reactive, are involved in decision-making through an open and supportive structure and are trusted, respected, encouraged, and valued (Hughes 2009).
- Develop a shared and monitored mission; focusing on implementation and continuous improvement in quality learning for all students (Burgess & Berwick 2009).
What did we achieve from first two PL days?

• Focused upon big picture planning for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy and lessons from research;
• Analysed different video examples of good teaching practice;
• Considered progression issues in both Maths and persuasive writing through reflection upon children’s work;
• Fine-tuned some research questions to guide our action research.
Key common features

• Whole class interactive teaching
• Highly structured teaching episodes
• Engaging hook/starter activity
• Dynamic/visual pair or group task
• Planned questioning and transitions
• Embedded assessment for learning
• Purposeful student talk
• Well structured plenary sessions which consolidate learning
What are we aiming for? Case study of success (1) (Castleton & Moss, 2009)

• “Only one school provided a clear articulation of beliefs about literacy, focusing on the importance of explicit and systematic teaching, the use of a range of approaches, and other such beliefs about teaching. This school also presented the most comprehensive and sophisticated schedule of assessment, showing very clearly how these beliefs would be translated through classroom practice into measurable outcomes, and who would be accountable throughout this process”
Case study of success (2)

- Key to success was a layered approach. At the first layer, all teachers were involved in RTBCTG and whole-school professional learning. Building ownership was important with all staff having the opportunity to discuss and formulate plans for developing teaching and learning. The second layer was the formation of literacy teams across the school, with responsibilities for particular Year/grade levels and some specific and targeted interventions. One fundamental aspect of the success of this ‘layered’ approach was the interaction between staff in each group. The use of data regarding student performance in literacy was central; teachers and literacy support teams identified specific students in each class who were underperforming in literacy, and developed specific intervention strategies for each class/student.
By the end of the two May PL days, the cluster aims to have:

- Reflected upon the utility of Professional Learning inputs on aspects of numeracy and literacy and their possible application in the context of the cluster’s work
- Fleshed out the action-based research projects that will run from May-September;
- Identified some specific roles and responsibilities of different school members of the group in terms of driving this project.