

Gillingham Partnership Formative Assessment Project 2000 – 2001

Extract 6

Suggested Ways Forward

Well-expressed learning intentions

It was observed that in classes where the learning intention was ‘well-expressed’, children tended to have a better grasp of what they were expected to learn. These children tended to see the sharing of learning intention as having a positive effect on their learning.

Well-expressed learning intentions contained words associated with learning (thinking/using the senses/using tactics) such as “*We are learning to:*”

- *know that...*”
- *understand that/how...*”
- *know how to work out...*”
- *know what strategies to use for...*”

Sometimes children were redrafting work with the aim of improving it. In those cases well-expressed learning intentions began with...

- “*We are aiming to be able to...*”
- “*We are aiming to get better at...*”

It was less helpful in the promotion of a learning culture when the learning intention was expressed as the activity. e.g:

- “*You are going to go on a hunt and find things that begin with the letter ‘A’ or ‘a’.*”
- “*We are going to be using adding on and taking away to play maths games today.*”
- “*WALT: Make a list of words found in the text which contain 3 or more syllables.*”

In these cases, teachers were describing the activity children would be doing but not what they would be learning through that activity. Children are often interested in the task but may not know what they are supposed to be learning. It is also not helpful to say “The WALT is...” because that sounds like the content of a task and not about learning.

In classes where teachers used a blank bubble and wrote up the learning intention in front of the children reading it slowly, there was more attention from children. The children from these classes were also able to state the learning intention for the lesson.

Structuring the introductions to lessons

For a new topic, for example:

- a) Tell children what the topic is e.g. *'The topic for today is all about...'* (followed by interesting input/ visual props/ pupil contributions etc)
- b) Introduce the learning intention *'In this topic/As part of this topic we are learning to..'*
- c) Introduce the activity *'What you will be doing for your activity/ies today is* (Describe tasks)
- d) Here's a practice run (give a practice run)
- e) Assure children their independent task is just like the practice
- f) RETURN TO THE LEARNING INTENTION MOST IMPORTANTLY & STRESS VERY EXPLICITLY: *'By doing that task you will come to know how to / you will know more facts about'* (USE WORDS LIKE KNOW, UNDERSTAND, KNOW HOW TO WORK OUT, KNOW WHAT STRATEGIES TO USE. BE MORE EXPLICIT :eg.....*know whether to use adding or subtracting; know which icons and in which order to click them to get into the paint programme; understand which axis to read first for co-ordinates)*
- g) Introduce the success criteria – *'How will I know that you have(refer to learning intention)what will I see ?'* Suggest these words are written on the visual display of learning intentions and success criteria as a prompt for the teacher.
- h) If not satisfied with children answers, cite the criteria emphasising knowing, learning, thinking, or using skills and linking those back to the learning intention.

For a continuing topic, for example:

- a) Tell children what the topic is
- b) Show briefly how it follows on from/ is linked to/ connects to previous work (EMPHASISE CONTINUITY OF LEARNING, possibly through use of an ASIDE then repeat as above)