Teaching for Mastery Lesson Design at

Wadsworth Fields Primary School

A Primary Case Study

Teaching for Mastery Lesson Design Work Group

One of the biggest challenges facing schools as they adopt a teaching for mastery approach is how to design lessons. Working collaboratively with practitioners from across the East Midlands the project, we began by identifying the key features of mastery, before exploring a route through a lesson, that allowed teachers to link these together in a coherent manner. Essentially we were looking at how to turn theory into outstanding classroom practice. Though our research often went much wider what is captured here in these case studies, each participant school was asked to focus in on one aspect of lesson design, how it has been incorporated into classroom practice, and the impact it has had on learners.

Overview

As a school, we are still early on in our journey with mastery. Over the last few years, we have worked on a number of aspects within school to focus on developing staff confidence as well as ensuring children are met with a range of representations and problems to ensure a deeper understanding. We have initially engaged with the project through developing lesson design within two classrooms, with the focus being on tweaking and developing a model that can then be delivered throughout school in a way that enables staff to confidently take children on a conceptual journey. As with many other schools, our challenge lies in current school priorities and ensuring we can deliver these changes in a manageable way, amidst a timetable of other developments.

“Our biggest success so far is that more children are being exposed to questions and lessons that will develop their ability to be a good mathematician, using smaller areas of content and going further with these, rather than before where historically this was aimed at the higher attaining children.”

What we did at Wadsworth Fields Primary School

<u>Focus</u>

Through the lesson design project, it became clear within our school that the biggest focus was on how to use lesson time most effectively, ensuring that children were active and engaged whilst ensuring that all children were coming on the same journey and being exposed to the same opportunities to develop and deepen their understanding.

<u>Initial concerns</u>

One of my initial concerns in trying to keep the class together for longer was whether certain children would become ‘bored’ or disengage with lessons because they saw it as being too easy, whilst also ensuring we had evidence that children were able to complete certain objectives.

After around a week or two, this was quickly dampened by the enthusiasm of children within lessons, with children enjoying the chance to do some guided practice but also know that their thinking was going to be challenged and that they were going to see the same problem in different contexts.

Through the guided practice in their books, it has meant that children are able to show whether they understand a certain objective, without then having to complete a set of questions to demonstrate this.

What this looked like in the classroom

The biggest change this year has been within the individual structure and design of maths lessons. Previously, we would have a teacher talking at the front for a while with some practice before children then went off and applied it to an independent activity.

Now, there is a mixture between teacher talk and child talk so that the lesson flows with talk- do- talk- do. Throughout, children are being exposed to different questions and models within the same context and are able to apply these through the guided practice. This has meant that I have a greater understanding of where children are in my class and means everyone is being exposed to deeper discussions around the maths.

Impact

By focussing in on the lesson structure and use of talk- do- talk- do, we have been able to seen an impact on children's learning and understanding, including:

- Children showing higher levels of engagement (including comments in their books about what an enjoyable lesson it was) as they are constantly discussing or solving questions;
- Children feeling more confident about maths – They know they are going to experience success in the lesson and be able to apply this to 'trickier' problems;
- A prevention of holding children back to evidence for assessment – Through guided practice and independent questions, the evidence is there for children who are then able to move on to applying content in different contexts;
- 'Levelling out' of children – With all children being exposed to challenging questions, there has been a shared discussion amongst all attainment groups, with a range of children contributing different, efficient methods;
- Pacier lessons – The continual switch between teacher and child has led to pacier lessons where it is harder for children to 'switch off' as they are soon back on another task or discussion;
- Improved teacher knowledge – By continually looking at how problems can be represented differently, individual staff knowledge has been improved.

Summary and next steps

The focus on lesson design within the classroom, and the planning that goes through this has had a significant impact within the trialled classrooms. Children are much more engaged with their learning as they are in constant discussion or finding answers or explanations for various questions. The teacher isn't then having to work with groups who haven't fully understood during the 'initial input' with this having been removed. Instead, lessons are fluid as children gain a good level of understanding and then take this further through a range of contexts.

Within school, our next steps will be to look at rolling out the concept of mastery lesson design within all classrooms. This will include ensuring all staff are confident in being able to unpick how to design an effective lesson, to ensure that all lessons have a mastery theme running throughout them and to think about the conceptual journey children are going on through the lesson. Much of this will focus in on the presentation of the lesson, considering the questions, representations and content that is used and how a small piece of content can go a long way within a lesson or sequence of lessons to create confident mathematicians.

More Information

For more information about this project, or other workgroups and opportunities available through the East Midlands West Maths Hub:

Visit our website: http://www.emwest.co.uk

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