

Developing practice



To develop practice in the teaching of pattern in our setting, we selected a focus group of six children for a pattern intervention group. The children chosen had been highlighted as working on learning numbers to ten and many were not yet confidently or consistently recognising and ordering these numbers. I used the NCTEM 'Typical Progression of Concepts for pattern' to create my assessment/progression grid and assessed this focus group of children and their knowledge of pattern to pinpoint where they were in their learning. I found that half of the children were unable to continue, copy or make

an AB pattern while the other half were able to continue, copy and make their own AB pattern but not able to do the same with an ABC pattern. I began to work regularly with these children in 1:1 or small group situations to practise making patterns with different resources and in different ways.

Being a part time member of staff, I quickly realised that opportunities and time were an issue. Along with the other provision and events in school, opportunities to work with a pattern intervention group were restricted. At our Maths Hub session we talked about how our opportunities to develop pattern could be rolled out across the provision and the ways in which we could do this, for example pattern in the outdoor provision or having a pattern area in the classroom. In school, we decided to embed a 'pattern of the week' idea and set up resources on the maths trolley for children to independently access and participate in pattern activities. Both of these actions triggered us, as a staff team, to consider the opportunities to practise the 'pattern of the week' in our continuous provision and daily teaching (e.g. lining up for lunchtime). It made us more aware of the children's knowledge and understanding of pattern as we observed them experimenting with and exploring resources everyday.



Impact

We assessed the six focus children over time, closely plotting their progress. All of the focus children progressed with recognising and making repeating patterns. Some children had made confident steps in their learning at each assessment point while others made slower but steadier progress. By the third term, five of the focus children were confidently working with numbers to ten and two were confident with numbers to 20. Four of the children met 'expected' in the Early Learning Goal in Number by the end of the summer term. It was not just the progress in being able to recognise and make the different patterns that was apparent but so much more!



As we rolled out our teaching of pattern across the class and the year group, children in the focus group and their peers in the year group began to use the vocabulary and names for patterns and independently began to pick up everyday resources to make patterns. They were also motivated to identify pattern when they noticed it in the environment.

Key message

I feel that the most important thing that I have learned about pattern is there is so much more scope to the teaching and learning than I have been using. In the past we have practised and assessed whether children could make a repeating pattern with multilink cubes and never thought about the variety of different patterns that children can be introduced to and how children can practise pattern making in every area of the continuous provision. Children have been really interested and many have independently taken their learning in pattern to another level due to this self-motivation, interest and enthusiasm. The more opportunities that children get, the more likely they are to improve and this in turn will help them with building links in other areas of their learning. I will definitely start teaching my new class about pattern early in the Autumn Term next year as I believe pattern helps and supports children to make links in their learning, to develop their ordering and sequencing skills and to be creative mathematicians.

