



Joint Practice Development Summary

Background

The Joint Practice Development strand of the Loyne Learning Alliance (LLA) was designed to provide five schools with seedcorn funding to undertake action research within their schools to explore how staff could support each other in developing their practice. There were two main approaches adopted.

- > The Coppice SEN School, The Loyne Specialist School and Mossgate Primary School all explored the Lesson Study approach which had featured in the national primary strategy (DfES, 2008).
- > Red Marsh Special School and Staining Primary School explored reflective practice and peer coaching which is regarded as a useful strategy to complement other peer to peer activity (Lofthouse, et al. 2010).

There was no prescribed structure for the action research projects and schools valued the freedom to explore their respective joint practice development project knowing their would be an opportunity to discuss findings and experiences at the end of the year. All schools successfully engaged in a project that had increased teachers:

- > awareness that they could generate their own solutions as well as appreciate the value of collaborating on specific teaching and learning issues;
- > confidence and understanding in respect of planning and the difference between mentoring and coaching;

JPD project Success Criteria

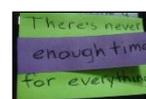
Teachers reported that adopting an action research approach to the JPD projects *'made you think in a different way'* another said *'it was refreshing to learn about research and theory'*. One teacher said involvement in the project *'was not necessarily about a quick fix, it was about an exploration of the topic the freedom to do this was refreshing'*. Some schools felt involvement in the project gave extra weight to the activity and others had linked it to their School Improvement Cycle.

There was agreement that success was linked to the flexibility permitted, several stressed the importance of having *'the freedom to be able to tailor it'* to your school and circumstances. Funding influenced



accountability and encouragement, *'money means it must happen, and this is an extra encouragement'*. The end of year workshop was also a motivator knowing that we were expected to share results at the end of the year. Support from the Head teacher was vital

and gaining 'buy in' from participating teachers clearly influenced the benefits they gained as well as the potential impact on pupils' learning. Time factors influenced the number of staff involved and how the project was organised, for example, for one school *'it was important it fitted into the school day'*, and for another the importance of dedicated time to undertake coaching activities was regarded as important.



Training in the form of individual CPD courses and inset from external training providers provided a stimulus and access to resources that schools adapted to suit their circumstances. One school reported that *'external evaluation has helped to avoid bias'* and the tendency to only focus on the positive. A serendipitous meeting, of staff from two schools earlier in the year, had provided an opportunity to talk about the research with another school; this had provided reassurance and a chance to review progress during the year. Schools reported that the projects were helping to bring about a *'shift in school culture and interest in research'*, this enthusiasm is a good basis for LLA to explore creating a research network.



Thanks to participating schools



Joint Practice Development Workshop

Prior to the JPD workshop schools completed a short proforma that summarized their project with respect to training, resources developed, budget expenditure, dissemination and sustainability and identified key findings. In July 2013, eight staff representing the five schools participated in a JPD workshop that was designed to:

1. Share experiences of undertaking a research project and identify research and evaluation support needs;
2. Identify how schools intended to continue initiatives in their school;
3. Generate key messages that might be communicated and transferred to other schools;
4. Explore ideas for how we measure impact for teachers, pupils and schools;
5. Identify ideas for future research foci for similar projects in the Loyne Learning Alliance.

Key messages from the individual school proforma and JPD workshop are outlined below.

School	Training received and cascaded within school
Coppice	Staff meeting to explore the concept of lesson study – its origins, details of the process and research findings regarding the potential for raising standards for pupils.
Loyne	Meetings with staff who were involved, before and during paired work
Mossgate	Staff meeting time at the beginning of the project and half termly updates for staff involving discussion about learning and the next steps with the project.
RedMarsh	Two external delivered twilight workshops on role of reflective practitioner, coaching and evaluation findings for all teaching staff
Staining	Cascaded external coaching training attended by one member of the team to the four classes participating in the process

School	Resources generated during the project and available for
Coppice	A PowerPoint based on lesson study cycle and its origins (based on guidance taken from <i>Improving Subject Pedagogy Through Lesson Study</i>) Coppice Lesson Study Proforma (although this was later adapted by teaching staff)
Loyne	Two lesson observation sheets: Term 1 Learning observation sheet simplified for Term 2
Mossgate	Adapted proforma from external Headteacher training
Red Marsh	Copies of handouts from inset, checklist of behaviour coaching questions (BYE-GAP) devised by staff, and evaluation report BP 2 (Houghton, 2013).

The JPD funding allowed schools to release staff to engage in the project activities. Schools benefited from training on their respective focus, one school commissioned external training to introduce the project, three schools used the opportunity to implement ideas they had acquired from a previous training course.

Budget spent on ...	Coppice	Loyne	Mossgate	RedMarsh	Staining	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Release staff time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Training materials				✓		1
<input type="checkbox"/> External Trainer				✓		1
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at course	✓	✓	✓		✓	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading and research	✓	✓				2

Dissemination and sustainability plans

All schools had discussed the project with their teaching staff and several discussed plans to continue or extend the project in the following academic year. All schools also planned to share findings with their governors and three indicated a willingness to offer inset or discuss their project with other schools.

Key Messages for Coaching [C] and Lesson Study [LS]

- Having a clear focus helped to support the implementation process for example, application of writing across the curriculum. [LS]
- Monitoring and providing support is important for ensuring the focus of the project is retained, changing practice can be challenging and it is easy to fall into using existing approaches. For example, staff reported it was difficult to focus on one particular aspect of a lesson because they are used to making general observations of one another [LS];
- Planning and preparation are key to success – *‘It was challenging to split the lessons up into stages and plan how each child would be expected to be responding at each stage’*. [LS]
- Changing a school culture and ensuring engagement benefits from whole school training [C], where this is not possible it is helpful to roll project out to enthusiasts to minimise resistance and also to manage staff time and cover aspects involved. [C and LS]
- Designating time for the Lesson Study planning sessions or Coaching Conversations was very important and helped to signal that the project was valued by Senior Leaders. [C and LS]
- Think about which teachers worked together and where possible provide opportunities for staff to choose who they work with ideally either on the basis of personal preference, or informed by their expressed strengths and areas of development. [C and LS]
- Teachers welcome focusing on pupils’ learning rather than teacher performance [LS]
- Power relations real and perceived associated with status and other responsibilities within the school can influence the extent to which teachers and / or Teaching Assistants work together, for example, staff being coached may be unwilling to raise concerns about their area of specialism [C], or within a lesson study question a more experienced colleague. [LS]
- Consider use of SLE or external coach to provide full length coaching sessions [C]
- Have the coaching time closer to the training [C] Build in longer time for the training and more practice [C]

Impact of project on staff and pupils

- Teachers have a shared understanding of the terminology associated with mentoring and coaching
- Teacher using the coaching techniques with Teaching Assistants (TAs) has resulted in TAs taking greater responsibility for supporting learning
- School has developed school coaching checklist and class teams have used coaching techniques and adopt a whole class approach to solve behavioural challenges
- Staff use of coaching techniques in their personal lives as well as in school, thus supporting staff well-being.
- One teacher found the lesson study experience was *‘useful to learn more about including communication aids and switches in lessons. The study has given [name of teacher] more insight into the level the students are working at and how they understand more than is initially apparent’*.
- Another teacher made *‘a Smart board activity to add two sets together with dice to roll, fish to make sets and numerals to move’*. Reflecting with colleagues on the activity helped identify ways to improve the experience and enhance pupils’ learning.
- Sharing good practice - *“Another good outcome of the lesson study was that one teacher saw another use Platform maths resources ... and is going to look at them and use them in her lessons”*.
- Teaching staff have collaborated more than ever before. They have learnt a lot from one another yet they also have become ‘critical friends’ - sharing some challenging professional discussions.
- Staff have observed aspects of pupil learning behaviour that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. For example, the impact that pupils can have on each other’s learning.
- Teaching staff have considered more carefully the effective deployment of TAs in the classroom and this has highlighted aspects of our provision for further development, e.g. communicating success criteria to teaching assistants, training for TAs and an audit on the TAs deployment.

Professional collaboration	Staff reported that they felt secure and had 'ownership' of the process and did not associate it with any of the feelings normally associated with more formal observations.
Time	arranging focused time to work collaboratively during the school day meant that staff felt that the project was valued by the senior leadership team
Relevance	Matching teachers together in relation to their own identified strengths and improvement areas meant that it was more purposeful e.g. they were learning about something that they could use in lessons.
External evaluation	Including someone external allowed the teachers to comment in confidence ... this revealed things we would not necessarily have found out

Projects

For further details about the specific projects or to obtain resources developed and used by schools.



The Coppice: Improving the use of challenging lesson targets to maximise pupil progress through planning and Assessment for Learning

Contact: Sarah Seddon Deputy Head Teacher Email: deputy@coppice.lancs.sch.uk



The Loyne Specialist School: Lesson Study as a basis for improvement of literacy, numeracy and to support areas of development

Contact: Julie McGrath, Assistant Head Teacher Email: j.mcgrath@loyne.lancs.sch.uk



Mossgate Primary School: Using Lesson Study to improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning

Contact: Chris Lawler, Head Teacher Email: head@mossgate.lancs.sch.uk



Red Marsh Special School: Encouraging reflective practice through peer to peer learning

Contact: Catherine Dellow, Head Teacher Email: head@redmarsh.lancs.sch.uk



Staining C of E Primary School: Coaching: Scaffolding teachers to impact on pupil learning

Contact: Jennifer Shoulder, Deputy Head Teacher Email: j.shoulders@staining.lancs.sch.uk

Future Plans

The JOD workshop generated a number of possible areas for development including:

- Schools adapting their own model or approach based on insights obtained from colleagues e.g. inclusion of learners in the feedback process; using the Lesson Study process with teachers in another school;
- Schools extending their project to include other teachers within their school, or disseminating their findings to governors and other schools
- LLA exploring a future JPD focusing on involvement of Teaching Assistants to impact on pupil learning

References

DCFS (2008) Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study Handbook for headteachers, leading teachers and subject leaders available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110202093118/http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/132730>

Houghton, A. (2013) *Encouraging reflective practice through peer to peer learning: Briefing Paper 2*, Lancaster available at: <http://www.loynelearningalliance.co.uk/Projects.html>

Lofthouse, R., Leat, D. and Towler, C. (2010) *Coaching for teaching and learning: a practical guide for schools*, CFBT / NCSL



Learning Alliance website: <http://www.loynelearningalliance.co.uk/>

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Loyne Website: <http://www.loyneschool.org.uk/Loyne>



Reference this briefing:

Houghton, A. (2013) *Joint Practice Development: Summary*, Lancaster available at:

<http://www.loynelearningalliance.co.uk/Projects.html>

