

Writing Fact Cards Professional Development Activities

Auditing professional knowledge and identifying priorities

Based on evidence and reliable research, UKLA's free downloadable writing fact cards tell you all that you need to know about writing. You can use them for whole school development or in teacher training to look at the writing curriculum as a whole or to target specific features of writing. These Fact Cards are the perfect starting point for discussion leading to short, medium and long-term plans to develop writing.

Download the Fact Cards from http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_fact_cards_on_teaching_writing/

The following sessions are based on the full set of Fact Cards for Writing. Suggestions are made for further reading to support planning for development.

Auditing professional knowledge and identifying priorities

You will need several sets of cards for this Activity (photocopying is fine) some sticky notes and a large sheet of paper for notes.

It's always worth talking through what a group of staff or trainees see as the current picture so that you can identify as priorities for action or further reading. To establish common principles across a year group you may want to ask people who teach the same age group to work together or, if you are looking at issues of progression, you may want to have all key stage 1 or 2 teachers working together.

a) Using all the Fact Cards, work in groups of two or three to sort the cards into a triangle in order of the most important/valuable aspects of writing at the top with those considered less important next and least important at the bottom until all are placed. This can create valuable discussion about priorities for teaching writing.

Have a look at what have been considered most important aspects – are they to do with meaning, creativity, awareness of audience, or are they more concerned with the technical aspects of writing? What do these priorities suggest about how all aspects might be seen as equally valuable?
or

b) Using all the Fact Cards, work in groups of two or three to lay the cards out in columns:

- Extreme left – I’m confident about this aspect/ have done some relevant work.
- Centre – I know a bit about this, but ought to find out more and try more ideas.
- Extreme right – I have to admit don’t know about it/ need to develop this aspect.

Of course, some members of the group may want to put cards in different columns according to their own sense of confidence about the particular aspect of writing. Add a sticky note to any cards where people feel different levels of assurance. Taking the cards in the left hand column, members of the group give examples from their practice, noting their ideas:

Successful practice	Things we’d like to try in mid-term plans	Keep for longer term plans
Fact Card Number	Fact Card Number	Fact Card Number

Ask two groups to share their discussions with each other, noting any issues that arise, for example, resources needed for developing mid-term plans. Senior managers will want to take note of the cards in the right hand column in order to plan for future development.

When the whole group comes together again, using the ideas listed in the left hand column, draw up a list of ‘non-negotiables’, starting:

We value the following in developing children’s achievements and confidence as writers....

This can be added to as work on writing progresses.

Managers/ senior teams will find the sheets completed during the activity a useful resource to help develop a clear plan of action for the mid-term and longer term. These plans will include provision of professional development time and support, opportunities to observe colleagues’ good practice and plans for following and evaluating developments, considering:

- Who will lead the development?
- When should plans for action be ready?

Who will be involved?

What actions might be taken?

What will be the overall timescale of the development (possibly a year)?

What support/ resources will be necessary?

How will success be evaluated?

The UKLA publication *Teaching Writing Effectively: reviewing practice* by Eve Bearne, Liz Chamberlain, Teresa Cremin and Marilyn Mottram also has some useful activities to support individual teachers/trainees or groups in developing effective practice.

You might also find it useful to have a look at the Writing element of *The Curriculum Review and Planning Tool* on http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_curriculum_review_and_planning_tool_available_as_a_free_download/

Specially for trainees – reflective practice

To pinpoint what you know and what you'd like to find out more about:

You can do this individually, but it's always a good idea to work with others to get discussion going and to share ideas about where to go to find out more.

Using all the Fact Cards, sort them into columns:

- What interested you?
- What surprised you?
- What would you like to find out more about?

These discussions might lead to you identifying a theme for an assignment and/or swapping ideas about useful books/ articles you've read or adding to your reflective journal/blog.

You might want to take a card or a couple of cards each and find a useful article to add to a group anthology of good articles about writing.

As well as the references listed on the UKLA website on: http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_fact_cards_on_teaching_writing/ the UKLA booklet *Teaching Writing: What the Evidence Says* will give you plenty more suggestions for reading. You'll also find the UKLA journal *Literacy* very useful for accessible research based on practice.