

Writing Fact Cards - Professional Development Activities

Grammar

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/

This session is based on Fact Card 14. Suggestions are made for further reading to support planning for development

Grammar

You will need several copies of **Fact Card 14** for this Activity (photocopying is fine), as many recipe books as can be found – ask each colleague to bring one ; small sets of poetry books suitable for the different age groups taught; a large sheet of paper for notes and the planning for the next unit of work.

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 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.

Ask colleagues in groups of two or three and exchange memories of how they were taught – or how they learned – grammar. Some may have felt completely baffled until they came to learn another language or until they started to teach grammar themselves. What were the most effective ways of learning grammar – exercises or finding out how grammatical features affect meaning? Many teachers agree that the kinds of grammar exercise

they might have done in school themselves did little to help them understand how language works.

Still in small groups, using the recipe books, ask colleagues to take any recipe and list the verbs. What kind of verbs are they? Why might that be? Now take a different recipe and find all the prepositions. Try reading the recipe without prepositions – what would the effect be? Using the poetry books suitable for the age of their class, ask the group to choose a poem that they might use to teach a particular grammatical feature. It might be an adjective search or an investigation into how adverbs affect meaning or about punctuation. Working from a good example in a piece of shared and enjoyable reading is the most effective way of investigating language in use – which is just what grammar is.

UKLA summarises the process of teaching grammar in context as the REDM sequence: reading and investigating texts, explicit teaching of grammar and investigation of particular language features through discussion and exploration in order to imitate and personalise them to make controlled choices about the effects children want to achieve in their writing.



Collect a list of ideas of how colleagues have taught grammar in this contextualised way. Using the plans for the next unit of work, ask the groups to add notes about teaching a particular grammatical feature through the REDM process. Set a date for meeting again to review the work and to add to the list of effective strategies for teaching grammar in context.

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The UKLA publication *Teaching Grammar Effectively* by David Reedy and Eve Bearne is an excellent resource for teaching grammar in the context of meaning. All the case studies, vignettes and ‘Quick and Easy’ examples follow the REDM sequence and all the grammatical features required in the National Curriculum for English in key stages 1 and 2 are included. The Resources section of the UKLA website also has a series of articles by Jim Crinson about teaching grammar in context.

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.

Exchange memories of how you were taught – or how you learned – grammar. You may have felt completely baffled until you came to learn another language. What were the most effective ways of learning grammar – exercises or finding out how grammatical features affect meaning? Many people find that the kinds of grammar exercise they might have done in school themselves did little to help them understand how language works.

How confident are you about using and teaching grammar? If you're unsure about any particular grammatical feature, get hold of any novel, magazine, poetry anthology, cookery book or manual and find examples of that feature in use. Work out a 'rule' for how and when to use it and what effect it has on meaning.

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- Reading and investigation
- Explicit teaching
- Discussion and experimentation
- Making controlled writing choices

Gather examples you have seen of teachers teaching grammar in a similar sequence.

You'll find the UKLA book *Teaching Grammar Effectively* by David Reedy and Eve Bearne very useful for ideas of how to teach punctuation in the context of meaning and for definitions of grammatical terminology. All the case studies, vignettes and 'Quick and Easy' examples follow the REDM sequence and all the grammatical features required in the National Curriculum for English in key stages 1 and 2 are included with plenty of ideas for teaching.

As well as the references listed on the UKLA website on: http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_fact_cards_on_teaching_writing/ you'll find the UKLA journal *Literacy* very useful for accessible research based on practice.