

Writing Fact Cards - Professional Development Activities

Talk and writing

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 Fact Cards 3 and 7. Suggestions are made for further reading to support planning for development.

Drama and writing

You will need several copies of Fact Cards 3 and 7 for this Activity (photocopying is fine) and copies of planning for the next unit of work/topic.

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.

Using **Fact Card 3**, ask the group to share experiences of using drama as part of the writing process: as a preparatory activity; during the learning; or when the writing is finished. What effect did the drama have on the writing process and finished product?

In year groups, plan to build more drama in to the next unit of work – it need not be in English/literacy but can equally support learning in other curriculum areas. Drama activities before even starting the work can build children's understanding of the concepts you wish to cover. Drama activities during the work can capture ideas and develop understanding of character, themes or ideas and a drama presentation at the end of a piece of

work can lead to thoughtful reflection on e what has been learned.

In small groups/pairs highlight areas on the planning where drama might be introduced/extended to enhance the writing process.

There is an excellent list of drama conventions for different text types on page 25 of the UKLA minibook *Drama: Reading, Writing and Speaking our Way Forward* by Teresa Cremin and Angela Pickard, as well as a whole section on drama across the curriculum. Chapter 6 'Planning for drama' is particularly useful for developing approaches to drama for writing. There is also a helpful appendix listing drama conventions.

If you wish to make a focus of developing drama, there is a section for self-review in The Curriculum Review and Planning Tool on http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_curriculum_review_and_planning_tool_available_as_a_free_download/

Talk and writing

As **Fact Card 7** points out: 'A silent classroom is not the best place to learn to write'.

Although there are differences in the structures of talk and writing, the purposes for each in the classroom are very similar:

- talk to explore ideas is used in a similar way to jottings, helping to get ideas going and capture thoughts
- giving information is much the same in both talk and writing
- the text structures of extended narratives, debates or playscripts parallel the structure of told stories, presentations and acted scenes
- talk is also invaluable for reflection and evaluative talk can provide a firm base for written reflection.

(From the UKLA book *Teaching Writing Effectively: Reviewing practice* Chapter 8)

Time for talk of all kinds is essential if writing is to have voice, clarity and coherent structure but teacher modelling is the key to learners being able to use talk to support the range of writing tasks they need to tackle.

Ask pairs/ small groups to consider where talk enters their plans for the next unit of work. How is talk being included to explore ideas; to give information; to narrate, debate, persuade, perform and to reflect? Are there any gaps? Plan to include all aspects of talk listed above and decide on how the impact can be evaluated.

It is difficult to monitor one's own modelling of talk. Get together with a colleague and plan to observe each other, noting particularly how you:

Model the language of texts: how do you introduce specific terminology about texts and language in your teaching?

Demonstrate thinking aloud: How do you share your thought processes and opinions about your writing?

Ask questions: Do you vary those needing a precise response with those inviting reflection or speculation?

Encourage children to ask questions: How do you make opportunities for children to formulate their own questions and ask each other questions?

When you've had a chance to observe each other and feed back your observations, plan to develop an area (just one at first) of your modelling of talk for writing. Decide on a time when you and your colleague will observe each other again and note any developments in practice.

Jacqueline Harrett's UKLA Minibook *Tell me Another... Speaking, Listening and Learning through Storytelling* is useful for looking at talk across the curriculum.

The Curriculum Review and Planning Tool also has a good section on talk and writing: http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_curriculum_review_and_planning_tool_available_as_a_free_download/

Specially for trainees – reflective practice

Talk and writing

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.

What experience do you have of using drama in the classroom as part of the writing process? Or of observing teachers using drama? What effect do you think it had on the quality of the writing? You might want to note any questions you have about using drama to support writing and plan to research the area. The UKLA minibook *Drama: Reading, Writing and Speaking our Way Forward* by Teresa Cremin and Angela Pickard is an excellent practical starting point.

What have you noticed about your own experience of talking ideas over before (or after) writing? Does it help? Why? – or why not? What implications might your own experience have for teaching writing?

There is a very useful section in the UKLA book *Teaching Writing Effectively: Reviewing practice* to help sort out ideas about the different ways that talk can support writing.

If you want to research this further, 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.