

Action Plan

I have completed a range of CPD whilst on maternity leave, primarily focussed on formative assessment techniques, direct instruction and the use of low stakes testing to increase student retention of knowledge. Upon my return I intend to use all of these techniques, however I have decided to use low stakes testing as the focus of my MTPT action plan. By completing my maternity CPD I have read research papers and blogs, and listened to podcasts which explained that research has found that the use of regular, low stakes testing increases pupil retention by enabling them to revisit topics regularly and to quickly identify which topics they are succeeding in, and which need more work. I anticipate that by using tests, my pupils will improve their half-termly test scores and their weekly homework scores (which are a series of questions on what they have covered previously over the last year I believe, although this has changed whilst I have been away).

I return to work in mid-December, and I anticipate that I will spend the two weeks before the Christmas break covering lessons or observing my new classes, or finding out about policy changes since I have been away, with me commencing teaching my own classes at the start of term in January, although this has not been confirmed. If this is the case then I will use December to decide which classes I will target, taking into account whether I will be their only teacher or if it is a shared class, and if I have any parallel classes that I can use as “control groups”. I am hoping to have two classes to run the trial with, one class which I can do pre- and post-topic tests to show progress in a topic, and another class with which I do weekly tests which cover what they have already learnt in my lessons. I anticipate that these will be done in the style of “exit tickets” so that I can use them for future planning; if everyone is getting the same questions wrong then I can reteach that topic.

In January, I will begin their first lesson back using a survey to identify how good they think they are at recalling topics in maths. I will also spend part of the first lesson explaining the approach that we will be using and justifying it with some evidence. This should allow me to have support from students and if they (or their parents) have any concerns these can be addressed early on.

Every month I will do an informal evaluation and make changes as required – for example should the timings of the tests or the format of the answer sheets be changed, and every two months I will survey the pupils to see how they feel it is going, and whether they feel that their retention is improving. Again, I can make changes if I feel that these are necessary. At the end of the academic year I will do a more formal evaluation as part of my MTPT Project review, and ask pupils to complete another survey which I will use as evidence. Pupils will have weekly consolidation homework (which the department decides in advance) and half termly formal assessments and I hope to see their scores improving more so than my control group’s scores do. The homework and assessments have changed this year so I will need to return to work before I can see how reliable they will be as evidence. I hope that the pupils’ confidence in their recall will have improved since their survey completed in January.

In order for my action plan to be successful, I need to ensure that my head of department will support me. As yet, she has not replied to my email asking whether this would pose any problem, but there is no reason why it would be a problem, and I imagine it will be welcomed due to the research behind it and our school’s issue with poor pupil knowledge retention. I also need pupils to support it, which is why I will dedicate some time to talking through my reasoning in the first lesson. Many of the podcasts I listened to suggested using this approach, explaining that pupils were likely to be more supportive if they knew the reasons behind a teaching style change. I will also need parents to be supportive, however since these will be low stakes tests (similar to spelling tests) with well supported research behind them I am not expecting many issues and I will be more than happy to discuss it in more detail with any parents who would like more information.

In terms of potential barriers that might prevent me carrying out my action plan fully, my main thoughts will be on how my part time timetable will fit in with this; I am unlikely to be a class’ only teacher which does complicate things as I would prefer, for the trial, to work independently on this to reduce any variables. I am not yet sure which classes I will be having so I cannot make formal plans and will need to be flexible on my return. However, if necessary I can timetable tests to be in my lessons and keep the other teacher up to date with

independently on this to reduce any variables. I am not yet sure which classes I will be having so I cannot make formal plans and will need to be flexible on my return. However, if necessary I can timetable tests to be in my lessons and keep the other teacher up to date with how the tests are progressing. Although I am expecting staff, parents and pupils to be supportive, this is not a guarantee and may potentially be an issue, though again I believe that I can overcome this by explaining what we will be doing and why. Using half termly assessments as evidence will depend on what format the assessments take, although I think that using these alongside homework and survey results I believe they will provide evidence overall.