

Module 2 Review

After completing Module 1, I felt spurred on to put my action plan into practice. When looking at my action plan it seemed as though it would be relatively straightforward to put into practice. However, as is often the case with teaching, other tasks can get in the way and you have to prioritise your workload. One of the points on my action plan that I prioritised was to support students with completing their citizenship action. This has changed dramatically since my return from Maternity leave as students no longer gain credit for their role in raising awareness of a particular topic, they are simply assessed in their exam. This has made it much more difficult for my less able, SEN and EAL students. One of the ways that I have tried to support students with this is through working with 'The Politics Project'. This has allowed my students to engage in meaningful conversations with politicians on a range of levels and ask them questions related to their chosen citizenship action. The Politics Project is something I discovered during my maternity leave, just like the MTPT Project, and has been so beneficial to making politics and active participation in society to come alive in my classroom. Our local MP and MEP have expressed a desire to support students with their Citizenship Action as a direct result of our involvement in 'The Politics Project'.

Another area of my action plan was to raise the profile of Citizenship across the school. I personally feel that this is the greatest area of success from my action plan. Engaging with 'The Politics Project' has definitely raised the profile of Citizenship across the school. Students I don't teach and members of staff have been asking about what we have been doing, and the 'Digital Surgeries' that we have taken part in have been covered by local press and 'The Big Issue'. I recently won 'Teacher of the Year' at the UK Parliament awards. This was an incredible honour and something that I am incredibly proud of. My school were thrilled with my award and it has definitely raised the profile of the subject, not only across the school, but also with parents and carers. At a recent Parent's Evening, many parents asked about my award as they had seen it in the paper and enquired as to what the subject involves. It has also encouraged me to continue with my aim to ensure that Citizenship is seen as a valuable subject to both staff and students. Prior to my maternity leave, I would never have even thought that I would have had a nomination, let alone been chosen as the winner. Winning the award after having my daughter has shown that starting a family doesn't mean the end of your career! It means so much to have been chosen at this stage in my career, especially when I had had doubted how I would be able to be a good mum and a good teacher at the same time. The opportunity for networking at the awards ceremony was fantastic and has provided me with several opportunities to become involved with people and groups that will directly benefit my students. I have also continued to use Twitter to share resources and illustrate just how important the subject is. This has become an invaluable resource and I'm struggling to remember a time before Twitter!

In terms of raising attainment at KS4, we will be waiting on this year's results in August. One thing that was done, was to change exam boards. We feel so far that this has been the right decision for our students. I was particularly concerned that with our previous exam boards, some of the content of the sources used in the exam were particularly difficult for our EAL and SEN learners. Looking at the past papers for the exam board we have changed to, they look as though students will be able to access them more easily as the wording is more straightforward and the case studies more relevant to their experiences.

Another positive impact of my action plan was improved engagement at the intervention and revision sessions I arranged earlier in the year. This is something that I have been working hard on and have spent a great deal of time creating bespoke resources for intervention sessions based on the students that I felt would benefit from intervention for a particular topic. I have had a core group of students

that attended each session without fail and they have said that they have found working as part of a small group to focus on a certain topic has really helped them and has given them the confidence to take a more active role in lessons as they know they are on the right track. In addition to after school interventions, I have also run two revision sessions during the half term and Easter holidays. Both sessions were well attended and it was nice to see the dedication of the students.

We have also seen numbers of students opting for Citizenship at GCSE at a sustainable level, which I believe is down to ensuring that lessons are engaging and through raising the profile of Citizenship via some of the key actions I identified in my action plan.

I am currently in the middle of developing the SOW for KS3 (another point on my action plan) so that students are better prepared at KS4. Our students now begin KS4 at the start of Year 9 which has meant that a huge amount of teaching resources have needed creating, along with assessments. Changing exam board at KS4 has also been more challenging than I would have thought. I had hoped that many of our resources from the previous exam board could have been used, however, there were an awful lot of topics that we had never taught before. This has meant that I have had to do a lot of research on areas that I was unfamiliar with. While I have found this interesting, it has been very time consuming alongside creating whole topics of work. This is something that will be on-going as I am continuously reviewing our schemes of work and trying out different teaching ideas.

GCSE results had been an area that I had become increasingly concerned about. Under the old specification, the success of students was incredible. However, as the specification changed, (moving away from 40% coursework and 60% exam, to 100% exam) I found that it didn't meet the needs of our learners. With many learners having EAL or SEN needs, we needed to find something that would better suit our students. After looking at changing exam board during my completion of Module 1, as a department we made this a reality. This year will be our first set of result under the new exam board. We are hopeful for student success, but I personally feel that the students who are currently being taught GCSE Citizenship will gain the most, as we have had time to embed the new curriculum and really get to grips with topics that we had not previously taught. We hope to be able to build on this, year on year, and ensure that the performance of students at GCSE will reflect the hard work that is put in on a daily basis by myself and my colleagues.

One of the barriers I am currently facing is the all too familiar problem of money, or lack of. Feeling inspired following my involvement in The Politics Project, I have decided to organise a Citizenship fair for my current Year 10 students as a way of showcasing their work, but also allowing them to speak to students, members of the public, politicians and other people who hold a position of power about their chosen action. I feel that this will really help to cement their learning and give them plenty to write about in their exam. In order to be able to carry this out, there are resources that would need to be purchased as my school does not currently have them. When I looked into this I was told that it was too expensive, despite explaining that once the resources had been purchased, they could be used for years to come. My only real option now is to either fundraise or look into sponsorship from local businesses. This will obviously add to my workload, but I am keen to make it a success.

Another barrier has been regarding intervention sessions. I had tried to be organised in terms of inviting students to after-school interventions and as soon as the issue was raised in school, I selected the students that I felt would benefit from attending a small intervention group and informed the relevant members of staff. However, a couple of weeks into running the interventions, I was told that the students I had selected would no longer be able to attend as they were needed elsewhere. An intervention timetable had been drawn up by a member of SLT, along with the names of students that would be attending each session. All of the students I had selected had been assigned intervention sessions for different subjects. This came as a huge blow as it seemed as though my subject was being

seen as less important than others and that I was being penalised for being organised and beginning my interventions promptly. Although the earlier sessions had been well attended, I was left with no students from my target list which left me a little disheartened.

Completing Module 2 has provided me with the opportunity to review my current position and has encouraged me to look at things I may previously have shied away from. I have recently looked at another job, and while I don't feel that this is the right time for me on a personal level, it is something that I will certainly look at in the future. For the moment, I am enjoying my current role alongside being a Mum and I feel that taking on more could alter the work-life balance I have worked so hard to achieve. This is something that I discussed in my coaching calls and have come to realise that this is a value that is of the upmost importance to me. I have also felt encouraged through my coaching calls to challenge myself a little more within my current role. I have decided to approach our new head teacher with regards to an alternative curriculum he has been looking at. I have previously taught in a behavioural school, and at my current school have taught classes that have been made up entirely of EAL and SEN students. Ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed is something I am passionate about and I feel that if I was able to involve myself in an alternative curriculum in some form, I would be able to further demonstrate the values I believe are integral to teaching.

Through Module 1 and 2 of the CPD provided by the MTPT Project, I have been able to review my practice in a way that I hadn't previously had the opportunity to do. It has encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and examine the impact of the work I do, beyond GCSE success. Undoubtedly, this has provided me with the tools to ensure that my next appraisal for pay progression will be focussed on more than just pupil outcomes. I will be able to provide SLT with a more detailed picture of my practice and demonstrate to them how committed I am to ensuring that all learners receive good quality, engaging learning opportunities regardless of their starting point.

I have recently been accepted onto training to become a Teacher Ambassador for Parliament. I'm really looking forward to the training, which will be an intensive three-day course at Parliament. Following the training, I am expected to work collaboratively with both staff and students from other schools and raise the profile of the subject. I feel that this clearly demonstrates my commitment to teaching and developing my practice.

The day that I discovered the MTPT project towards the end of my maternity leave has been one of the most pivotal moments in my career. The realisation that the work I had been doing during maternity leave could be accredited and the support that was offered is more than I could have hoped for when I first read about the MTPT project. I would encourage anyone on maternity or paternity leave to consider undertaking the CPD as I know first-hand, just how beneficial it is.