

April 2016

Grammar for Writing: A Randomised Controlled Trial Study exploring the impact of contextualised grammar teaching

Exeter University are looking to recruit primary schools in your area who would like to take part in an exciting opportunity to boost writing outcomes in Year 6.

Please find below more detailed information on the research trial: who is funding it, the aim, what it involves and the benefits from participating.

If you do require further information, please do get in touch with Sara Venner, Research Fellow for the research trial via email: s.venner2@exeter.ac.uk or phone 01392 724863.

Research Trial Background

Researchers from the *Centre for Research into Writing*, based at Exeter University, have conducted several studies over the past 10 years exploring the relationship between explicit teaching of grammar in the context of writing, which has led to positive results.

This research trial, funded by the *Educational Endowment Foundation*, will explore the effectiveness and impact of this approach for students in Year 6, with a particular focus on FSM students.

The Benefits

The benefits for your school in becoming involved would extend to your school, your teachers and ultimately your pupils through:

- likely improvement in writing outcomes for Year 6 writers
- improving how writing is taught following 4 high quality CPD sessions by a team of experts
- support for children and teachers' grammatical knowledge
- teaching from two high quality schemes of work tailored to meet year 6 writing outcomes
- producing two pieces of quality writing which can be used as evidence in final KS2 writing assessments

Schools are eligible if they have BOTH:

- Schools with at least 29% FSM/Ever6
- Schools with a minimum of 20 students in Year 6

The Research Trial

The research trial will involve Year 6 teachers participating in CPD and teaching using the approach.

- **CPD** - participating Year 6 teachers will need to attend 4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days, which will: introduce the teaching approach, develop teachers' grammatical subject knowledge, and familiarise teachers with the two teaching units for the project: CPD day 1 is in September 2016, CPD day 2 is in November 2016; CPD day 3 is in February 2017; CPD day 4 is in May 2017. A modest contribution towards travelling costs will be available. The exact location of venues is yet confirmed.
- **Teaching** - Year 6 teachers will need to teach two fully-prepared units of work, developed by the Exeter team, the first unit focusing on fictional narrative and the following unit on persuasive writing. Both units would be delivered by the Year 6 teachers to their 6 pupils in the Spring Term of 2017.

Randomisation

Schools interested in participating in the research trial are randomly allocated to either the **intervention** group, who will receive the training, or a **comparison** group, who contribute to the data required for comparison.

IMPORTANT: All interested schools must understand that they could be allocated to either group.

Finances

- Schools in the **intervention** group will be asked to pay £500 to participate as a partial contribution to the costs of the 4 CPD days and the teaching materials.
- Schools in the **comparison** group will receive a £500 payment as a partial contribution towards buying in the CPD after the project has ended, if desired.

What commitment would this research trial require?

- Enthusiasm for improving grammar for writing and for your staff's own professional learning
- Involvement of all year 6 classes in the school
- Attendance at the four CPD training days (venues to be confirmed)
- Agreement to pay £500 for the CPD/teaching materials if in the intervention group
- Provision of baseline data for 2016/17 Year 6 students by the end of the summer term 2016
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding which specifies all responsibilities

When will this research trial take place?

The research trial will begin in September 2016, starting with the CPD. The narrative writing SoW will be taught after February half term 2017 and the persuasive writing SoW be taught after Easter 2017.

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