

Why whole school TEEP?

By Sharon Simpson, *Baverstock school, Birmingham*



Last year we decided to take our whole staff through Level 1 training. By this point we had 14 staff at Level 1 after the 5 day training and a waiting list of eager staff which would have taken several years to satisfy. It was also clear that the list would not diminish. This is part of our journey as a school, we paved the way through some hard earned successes, building towards a culture of learning from each other, to create the right climate for our whole school TEEP.

How did we get to this point?

Having taken a number of staff through TEEP at a previous school and seen the improvement in both confidence and results

Mike McDermott (leader of CPD) and myself were anxious to pilot TEEP at Baverstock We had no TEEP staff and no commitment at that point to training. An email to Dee secured us 2 places at Cramlington for Level 1.

We did not pre-select teachers, instead used staff meetings and after school and lunchtime drop-ins to 'market' TEEP. Interested teachers were asked to apply for the places and the Head selected 2 from the list of applicants.

The 2 staff selected were told, as were all who applied, that we were investing in them and they would need to invest their learning back into the school and have an impact beyond their own classrooms.

Over the following 3 years we sent a further 14 staff for Level 1 training, again focussing on those who expressed a real desire and commitment to attend.





School Context

We are an 11-19, larger than average mixed secondary school in South Birmingham. Our learners are mainly white; working class and living in social housing.

Our school is in an area of high social deprivation. Significant numbers of our learners arrive with lower than average Key stage 2 scores.

We are a National Challenge school that emerged from Notice to Improve 18 months ago. For the first time this year we achieved results well above the 30% with English and Maths target, with a significant improvement in the percentage of students achieving 5 GCSE grades A*-C, although 95 % of learners achieved 5 GCSE grades A*-G including English and Maths (a figure typical for our school).

Pay Back

By the time we had reached 8 trained staff, our first 2 had achieved Level 2. Our Level 2 staff were already delivering INSET sessions to NQTs, ITT students and new staff.

For a number of years we had been using external 'companies' to run skills based learning sessions prior to exams for some year 11 students. They were fine but not as tailored to our students as they needed to be. Our Level 2 teachers identified this as an area for development and over the next 6 months wrote our own (differentiated) 'learning seminar' courses, which they delivered to all year 11 students. The feedback from these sessions was so positive that they were tasked with writing seminars for year 10.

We are now at a point where learning

seminars are delivered for every student in years 9, 10 and 11 and for year 6 students as part of their induction. They are delivered by a number of staff who have observed and co-delivered as part of their training in school.

Our English department have written their own seminars which are delivered for targeted year 11 students prior to exams (delivered for the past 2 years).

What about years 7 and 8?

Three years ago, the first 8 TEEP Level 1 staff, led by our Level 2 teachers were asked to write a learning skills course for our year 7 students. We know our students, not just through their data but through observation and feedback. They need a boost on entry in literacy, collaborative skills, self-management, self-discipline, etc. We allocated 1 hour a week of curriculum time to teach the course.

It was well received during school inspection and students liked it.

We extended it into year 8, the same team wrote the year 8 course. This team came from across the school, including Science, English, PE, Maths, RE.

We added another hour to year 7 to focus on developing numeracy.

A Learning Culture

To move forward we have to know what we are good at, at every level of the school, share it, change it, grow it. Regular cross department sharing of good practice was irregular.

Several years ago we began something we call 'layered learning'. Basically its 'show and tell'. Once a week in whole staff briefing a member of staff shares a piece of learning,

a resource, a technique etc that worked well in their classroom. (Layered learning is always accompanied by breakfast for everyone!) Initially we focussed these around themes, the key areas from our school improvement plan or our Notice to Improve, for example assessment. They helped us spread good practice much more quickly, ideas and resources became used more quickly and adapted more effectively across the school.

It also promoted the idea of staff learning from each other, irrespective of experience or job title.



We have had teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors and students all deliver 'layered learning'. The sessions delivered by students or by teachers and students in collaboration have been incredibly powerful!

We have a briefing session once a week in departments where the focus is 'layered learning'.

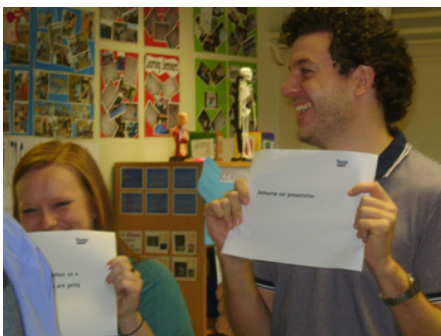
This commitment to learning from each other helped pave the way for whole school TEEP and our next steps.

Whole School TEEP— The Mechanics

So we had momentum, high demand and some real successes.

Initial conversations were had with Dee and I pitched the whole school TEEP idea to the senior leadership group. Dee and Diane Henson came in to school to meet with myself, a lead Level 3 teacher and the Head.





Next:

We spoke to all staff and launched our intentions:

- Train all teachers
- Use 3 INSET days
- Allocate virtually all our entire professional development budget for the year

Essentially we would say no to other courses, unless they were very exam board specific and could not be accessed any other way.

We tried to include everyone, paying part time staff to come in if they were not due to work on the days we allocated and contacting any teachers on maternity to make sure they were invited if they were able to attend.

The 3 Days

We have always maintained that TEEP is the most powerful professional development opportunity available for teachers and we wanted to ensure the right climate for learning.

4 rooms (as spacious as we could find) were allocated and our staff divided into cross curricular groups, about 25 in each. We ensured they were uncluttered, fully resourced with everything the trainers would need. Sweets on every table, bottled water and flasks for tea and coffee set up at the start of the day and replenished over the lunch break; baskets of fresh fruit as well as the usual biscuits; a buffet lunch. No interruptions at all during training unless there was a major emergency that needed someone from senior leadership. The Head's PA was charged with deciding what would constitute an emergency! (We had no interruptions).

Follow Up and Next Steps

- 1) Our TEEP Level 3 teachers met with teaching assistants, cover supervisors (we employ our own cover staff), and learning mentors and wrote a TEEP course tailored for each group. Their training started in school before we started our first day of whole school. It was important to us that no group be left out.
- 2) We divided our staff into learning groups, based around the underpinning principles, chaired by 2 staff and run along the lines

of extended layered learning. Essentially in learning groups teachers could present an extended layered learning related to the underpinning principle or present a lesson or topic that the group could help them plan. They ran for 7 one hour slots.

Any resources were put on a staff shared area and integrated into whole school 'layered learning' sessions.

- 3) We will train all new staff to Level 1 through twilight sessions and INSET day time from September 2010.
- 4) Approximately 15 staff trained to Level 2 standard— in December 2010, using part of a training day and a Saturday.

Layered learning continues to extend, learning groups continue into this academic year

Why Whole School TEEP?

I hope the answer has come through the article. However, it is based on the belief that we must invest in teachers. That this is the best professional development because the framework enables teachers to be creative, because it gives a framework rather than a rigid list of 'do this' or 'don't do that'; it connects the strands of quality teaching and learning. It gives challenge and used well gives the perspective of everything it means to be a learner again.

And yes - it helps to move satisfactory to good and good to Outstanding!

Whole School TEEP for Baverstock - because we were ready.



Impact

Initial school review (all teachers observed) shows a move –particularly at this point satisfactory to good. For us it has helped shift some 'stuck' points, lessons were more engaging.

We have better quality and more regular sharing across and within departments.

Continued development of teachers - especially the understanding of our strengths and areas we can share as well as develop.

The best results we have ever had this year, launching us well above national challenge

benchmarks. Significant improvements in English, Maths and Science.

Is all this down to TEEP training? Well it can't be, our staff work rigorously to support our students and remove barriers to their learning and progress, but we have applied as best we can the principles upon which TEEP rests for a number of years and I stand by the assertion that this represents the best investment in teachers and those who fully invest make great gains.

Lessons

The 'rogue' member or members of staff who can make things difficult. Make sure there is a quick and clear procedure for dealing with any problems or uncertainties either before or during training.

Make sure the rooms allocated have plenty of space. One of ours was a bit too small, we used a room next door for 'break-out' work and breaks after reviewing the first 2 days.

Be clear—TEEP is not a panacea, hard work and commitment are essential.

Stick to the criteria set with staff at the outset, don't be side-tracked.

Quick Quotes from our staff

"I leave TEEP training with new ideas, raised confidence and increased awareness – Thank You"

"Level 1 has restored my confidence and re-enthused me to try new ideas in all my groups – not just the ones I feel 'safe' with"

"Excellent team building and a real sense of togetherness that should carry forward"

"Informative, enlightening and engaging. It has enabled us to share ideas and learn from each other"

"I have found a more joined up way of teaching which I really enjoy. I especially like the focus on applying learning which was out of balance before"

"I have changed a number of aspects of my teaching. I have noticed a difference and I think the learners have. Not tiring but refreshing"

"Taken out of my comfort zone, without feeling too discomforted".