

Practitioner Enquiry

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When assessing writing against the literacy benchmarks, one aspect is that children can spell most commonly used words correctly. At the beginning of my enquiry my P2 cohort were struggling to ensure they were spelling the first 100 HF words correctly (Fry's). Though their visual recognition of all words was superb, they could not apply their visual memory when spelling them in writing, instead relying on phonetical versions. This was reducing the quality of their writing.

Aim: To improve the accuracy of the Primary 2 cohort's spelling of the first 100 High Frequency words to 85% by end of January 2018.

Method

To collect data I relied on collecting a mixture of contextual writing, and isolated spelling examples. All data collected was quantitative and analysed on a weekly basis, identifying where HF words had been used within writing and whether or not they were spelled correctly. Before beginning the test of change an isolated spelling test of HF was given to collect a benchmark score for each child, and to identify target words.

Process Change

Change 1: Instead of weekly practise of spelling patterns in spelling tests, lists of HF words given home to practise.

Change 2: Introducing visual displays and table prompts for HF words to be used during writing times.

Change 3: Scheduling multi-sensory learning opportunities for practising spelling of HF words in class.

Achievements

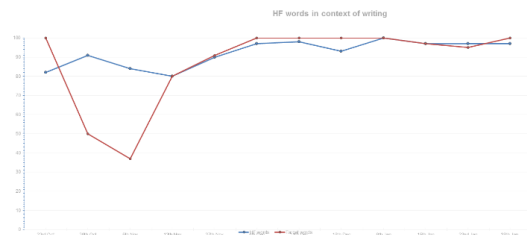
I have developed analytical skills and the ability to develop a system for collecting and analysing data. Additionally I have deepened my understanding of strategies that can be used to encourage children to develop their retention of spelling patterns.

I am particularly proud of the improvement children have shown in their writing, with more accurate spelling and more care taken when checking their work.

Key Learning Points

The first thing I have learned is that when implementing an intervention such as this it is necessary to timetable specific times to do so in order to embed it in practice, otherwise it can be easy to slip into regular habits. Additionally, you have to be aware that though you may be getting positive effects in one area, there could be unexpected impacts on other areas of learning. I have learned it is important to monitor this in order to find a balance in interventions.

Results

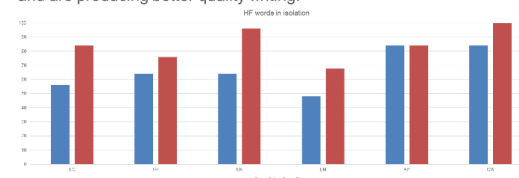


This run chart shows the amount of HF words correct within the context of a piece of weekly writing. The blue line represents HF words in general, and the orange the words targeted for practise. As you can see there is an improvement in all results from week 4 onwards, where visual displays and table prompts were introduced, suggesting this was the most impactful intervention.

Conclusions

Below is a before and after comparison of the isolated HF word test, taken in Oct and Dec. While a final test is still to be taken to see final improvement, I believe from here it is clear that my aim was met.

Although only two children are above the targeted 85%, all but one have shown a dramatic improvement in the accuracy of their spelling and are producing better quality writing.



Scale / Spread

This will not be spread beyond my classroom, however has given me multiple strategies to use with other classes in the future to improve the quality of writing within my classroom with the aim of raising attainment in literacy.