

Title

Which group of children does Talk 4 Writing methodology have the most beneficial impact on?

Purpose of the research

Talk for Writing is a well-known method of helping children to improve their independent writing.

“Talk for Writing, developed by Pie Corbett, supported by Julia Strong, is powerful because it is based on the principles of how children learn. It is powerful because it enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version”.

Our purpose was to raise attainment in writing across four schools in Wiltshire in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Groups of children were tested to find out which are most receptive to this method of writing.

ARE (n = x);

The research design

A pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design was used in which pupils were exposed to the same intervention and assessment process. The independent variable ‘different pupil background and characteristics’ was defined with five levels to the IV:

- IV Level 1- Children working at Age Related Expectations (ARE)
- IV Level 2- SEN- Special Educational Needs
- IV Level 3- DL- Disadvantaged Learners
- IV Level 4- LA- Lower Ability Learners
- IV Level 5- TMA- Higher Achieving Pupils

Limitations

A small sample size was used. The children also undertook the assessments in the same room and this therefore gives potential to them influencing each other’s final assessment outcomes.

Methods

Participants and sample size

- Amesbury Archer - 8 x Year 1 children
- Amesbury Archer - 8 x Year 2 children
- Alderbury School - 7 x Year 1 children
- Alderbury School - 6 x Year 2 children
- Harnham Junior School - 9 x Year 3 children

Procedures

Talk 4 Writing was taught in 3 settings using the same methods.

An assessment of children’s written work was taken at the start of the project ‘Cold Write’.

The children then had three weeks of exposure to the ‘Talk for Writing’ strategy.

At the end of the three weeks an assessment of children’s written work was repeated ‘Hot Write’.

Materials (and apparatus)

The Papaya that Spoke – story map.

Little Red Riding Hood – story map.

+ SPTO skills for assessment

Conclusions and recommendations for future research

None of the results were significant. This was to be expected because of the small sample sizes. Despite this, there were wide differences in effect sizes when the different pupil groups response to the single treatment was compared. The treatment had a positive moderately large effect on TMA pupils compared to DL pupils (r = 0.412). In complete contrast, the treatment had a moderate negative effect on LA pupils compared to ARE pupils (r = -0.255) and on TMA versus SEN pupils r = -0.263). Teachers need to think carefully about which pupils will benefit most from ‘Talk for Writing’ and take into consideration individual pupil differences to make careful professional judgements. Additionally, extending the more able with further activities and developing their independence and greater depth learning within the talk for writing methodology.

Results

An initial two-tailed Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA indicated that the overall effect across all condition was non-significant (p = 0.2). This was followed by bonferroni adjusted (α = 0.0045) separate Mann-Whitney U tests (table 1).

	Effect Size	p-value
ARE vs SEN	0.312	0.106
ARE vs DL	0.290	0.173
ARE vs LA	-0.255	0.387
ARE vs TMA	0.065	0.732
SEN vs DL	-0.025	0.922
SEN vs LA	0.059	0.528
SEN vs TMA	-0.263	0.285
DL vs LA	0.073	-0.513
DL vs TMA	0.412	-0.240
DL vs ARE	0.173	-0.290
LA vs TMA	0.291	0.343

Table 1 – separate Mann-Whitney U tests for the five groups in the present study.



