

Pupils' achievements exceed their expectations

compelling evidence from a new approach

Imparting knowledge through more of a pupil's senses and personal aptitudes is achieving some arresting results.

Cramlington Community High School, in a post industrial disadvantaged area, with children of average ability, has taken GCSE results from the mid 50% to above 70% in around five years, using "Accelerated Learning".

This bulletin aims to bring you aspects of learning theory, research findings and practical methods you can use in the classroom.

All departments are now well into the introduction of three part lessons at Key Stage 3 and already staff have had many excellent ideas for starters and plenaries. One of the purposes of this bulletin is to provide a means by which staff can share their ideas and help each other rapidly amass a broad repertoire of starter and plenary resources.

However, it is intended for more than this. Unless you have qualified recently then it is likely, like me, that you never had a great deal of training in learning theory - how pupils learn. Yet there has been a lot of research in recent decades which has produced many practical techniques. And there is **a great deal of evidence that these techniques make huge differences to pupil motivation, the quality of life for the teacher and to pupil performance.**

A number of staff have already expressed an interest in "Accelerated Learning" and it is hoped that they will share their discoveries through this bulletin. Also, useful web sites will be linked to the school web site's 'accelerated learning pilot' page.

Everyone has a tale to tell of an idea that worked really well. We are also perhaps a little reluctant to put our ideas forward as if we somehow know more than our colleagues how to teach. However, we all have valuable insights to share and if we do all share them, our teaching will benefit and above all, the pupils we serve will benefit.

If you would like to contribute, please either speak to me, drop me a note or send me an email (homework.dropbox@ntlworld.com). Thank you.

F Thompson

Find the Accelerated Learning Pilot web page:

www.allsaints.tameside.sch.uk

click "learning links" and then click "accelerated learning pilot".

Why not do the on line check to find out your own Multiple Intelligence?

WHAT IS "ACCELERATED LEARNING"?

"Accelerated Learning" is an umbrella term for a series of practical approaches to learning.

These theories draw from a range of disciplines including: the study of aspects of brain function, theories of human attention and motivation, the psychology of optimal performance and intelligence theory.

Accelerated Learning carries with it the expectation that, when properly motivated and appropriately taught, **all learners can reach a level of achievement which may currently appear beyond them.**

It provides a breadth of proven life-long learning skills based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we ought to be learning."

www.alite.co.uk/whatis.htm

(Link on college web site)

Why teach thinking skills?

Management Today - Aug 1997
Over the course of the Twentieth Century in the USA the proportion of knowledge workers rose from 17% to 59%, with those involved with handling material things halving to 41%. The trend is set to continue.

Tomorrow's employees will be doing what robots cannot do, which means their work will call for sophisticated intelligence.

Caine & Cane, making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain

We are in a post-industrial society where it is impossible for a youngster without skills, without school skills, to get a job with which to support a family.

Lisbeth Schorr, Within our reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage

An extract from:

Working Inside the Black Box

- Assessment for Learning in the Classroom
-Kings College, London 2002

Questioning

"I had become dissatisfied with the closed Q & A style my unthinking teaching had fallen into, and I would frequently be lazy in my acceptance of right answers and sometimes even tacit complicity with a class to make sure none of us had to work too hard... They and I knew that if the Q & A wasn't going smoothly, I'd change the question, answer it myself or only seek answers from the 'brighter students'. There must have been times where an outside observer would see my lessons as a small discussion group surrounded by many sleepy onlookers."

James, Two Bishops School

The key to changing such a situation is to allow longer wait time. Many teachers find it hard to do this - they have to break their established habits and, as they change, the expectations of their pupils are challenged:

"Increasing waiting time after asking questions proved difficult to start with - due to my habitual desire to 'add' something almost immediately after asking the original question. The pause after asking the question was sometimes 'painful'. It felt unnatural to have such a seemingly 'dead' period, but I persevered. Given more thinking time students seem to realise that a more thoughtful answer was required. Now, after months of changing my style of questioning I have noticed that most students will give an answer and an explanation (where necessary) without additional prompting."

Derek, Century Island School