NCSE PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2025/26

SCHOOL RESEARCH SUMMARY

School name: Ramsgrange Community School

Practising teacher lead: Laura Miskella

Research theme: Outcomes, Teaching and Learning, Supports and Resources, Leadership and Management.

Research aim: To enhance the learner experience of first-year students with literacy difficulties through teacher implementation of inclusive classroom strategies in the English class.

Methods

A mixed-methods research design was used.

Qualitative methods included focus group interviews with teacher participants (Special Education Teachers (SETs) and English teachers), and focus group interviews with student participants.

Quantitative methods included questionnaires completed by SETs, English teachers and student participants, pre- and post-intervention.

In total 110 participants were involved including teachers, students and parents. This included 103 students (4 x first year English classes), a team of SETs (1 lead teacher (SET) and 2 x SET colleagues), and 4 x English teachers.

Research findings

The research carried out during this practice-based research programme indicates that students, particularly students with additional educational needs in the area of literacy, respond positively to the utilization of inclusive classroom strategies.

Many benefits were observed for student participants namely, increased levels of focus, enhanced quality of teaching and learning and heightened confidence levels.

Teacher participants reported positive observations of student engagement, work ethic and enthusiasm during the intervention period. They also noted a fulfilling networking experience as a result of their engagement with the research team and commended the willingness of colleagues in sharing inclusive classroom strategies and offering advice for differentiation.

Top 3 findings

Improved focus:

Students
While these strategies were being implemented in their class, 91% of students remarked they are more focused in class as a result of these strategies being utilised.

Teachers
Teacher participants reported a decrease with zoning out or lack of focus for students, leading to an improvement in the overall classroom work ethic and behaviour of students.

Enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning:

Students
Students reported that the inclusive classroom strategies improved the teaching and learning in our school overall (67%), while the majority of students reported that they would like to see these strategies used in other subject areas (69%).

Teachers
Teacher participants commented that they are now more reflective in their teaching practice having implemented this concrete tool for supporting differentiation in the classroom.

Improved confidence:

Students
67% of student participants remarked that they were confident in contributing to whole class discussions as result of using the inclusive classroom strategies. 91% of student participants remarked that they were confident in their comprehension of new topics covered in class when using these inclusive classroom strategies.

Teachers
Teacher participants reported that there was a marked improvement with regard to confidence in answering questions in the English class.
The scaffolded nature of the inclusive learning strategies served as a writing frame for students, assisting them with the initial, pre-planning stages of written work.

Impact and Benefits

The findings of this practice-based research programme were overwhelmingly positive.

Having analyzed the data and showcasing the data to our school's Teaching and Learning committee, the findings were presented at the opening subject department planning meeting of the academic year. Each subject department were provided with a booklet of resources that have been utilised in this project. It was decided to embed the inclusive learning strategies as a whole school initiative, whereby every subject department would aim to use at least two of these strategies with each class group. This initiative has been linked with our school's DEIS targets under the literacy pillar and will be reviewed mid- year.

As a result of engaging with this research project, links have been strengthened between school committees and subject departments. The sharing of resources has further promoted collegiality in our school.

Having showcased the findings of our school's research project at the NCSE conference, further research opportunities have arisen to network with researchers from the HEIs involved with this practice-based research programme.