

Bushloe High School Case Study: Literacy in PE

Background information

1. In the first year of the KS3 National Strategy, Bushloe High School in Wigston, Leicestershire decided to focus on non-fiction writing. Initial concerns were expressed that some departments (such as PE) might not be able to make a contribution to this focus.
2. After discussion with the PE Adviser, the Literacy Consultant met further with the Head of PE to further investigate ways in which PE could help with developing the writing skills of students. It was recognised as being very important that this should not be 'writing for the sake of it', but that it must make a contribution to the development of the students' PE too.
3. The Head of PE was aware that her store-room contained many piles of worksheets and pieces of paper that had been generated by students during wet-weather lessons, cover lessons and as one-off exercises. These were not marshalled in any way and seemed to have no further use beyond the lesson in which they had been generated.
4. Report-writing and parents' evenings can be extremely busy for PE teachers, as they teach large numbers of individual students. It was felt that it would be useful to have access to the written work of students at these times.
5. Another factor linked with the weekly lesson was that students could not always accurately remember the planning work they had done the week before. This was often the case in dance and in gymnastics.

Moving forward

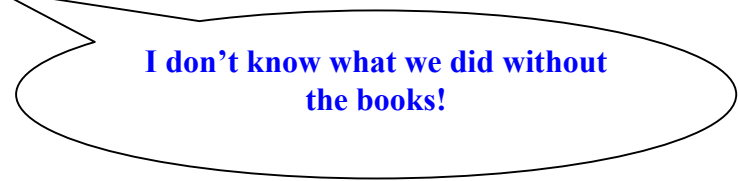
1. It was decided that for the incoming Y7, an inexpensive exercise book would be issued. Students would be expected to bring this to all PE lessons, just as they would take writing materials to other lessons.
2. The book would not always be used. There would obviously be problems with trying to use a pen and paper on a windswept, rainy field!
3. Lessons where the exercise book would be most used could include:
 - Gymnastics
 - Dance

- Athletics
 - Planning and evaluation
 - Wet weather
 - Cover lessons
 - Students incapacitated through injury etc
4. It was anticipated that all of the uses on this list would have a positive impact on students' performance in PE. At the same time, these writing activities would all make a contribution to the development of students' writing.
 5. It was also anticipated that this could have a strong effect on writers whose enthusiasm for PE was far greater than for writing! It would demonstrate that writing is important in the world of sport.
 6. An additional benefit could be that students would be more prepared for the writing tasks linked with GCSE PE, should they opt to study this in Y10.

Evaluation

1. The Head of PE decided to introduce the PE exercise book to *all* years (6 – 9).
2. By the summer term, it was clear that there had been benefits for the students in terms of their PE.
3. It is not possible to measure the effect of more writing in PE upon the students' overall progress, but work sampling across the curriculum showed that there was much more awareness of writing from most areas of the curriculum, including PE.

The Head of PE commented at the Leicestershire LEA PE Conference in July 2003



Photocopies of the students' work are available from the Leicestershire literacy team. Call Linda Eady on 0116 265 6663. These include work on aerobics, fitness testing, dance, athletics personal best times and orienteering.

Thanks go to Lesley Jennings and her team at Bushloe High School.

Brenda Ainsley, Literacy Consultant.
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