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subject leaders
and teachers in
secondary schools

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Pedagogy and Practice: Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

Unit 9: Guided learning

Teaching repertoire



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How to use this study guide

This study unit offers some practical strategies that teachers use to guide pupils' learning. The techniques suggested are tried and tested; they draw on both academic research and the experience of practising teachers.

By working through this guide, you can build your teaching repertoire step by step, starting with strategies that are easy to implement and moving on to those that will help pupils develop their skills still further. The unit contains 'reflections', to help you reflect on an idea or on your own practice, as well as practical tips and tasks to help you consider advice or try out strategies in your classroom. There are case studies to exemplify particular points, a summary of the research and some suggestions for 'next steps' and further reading. The final page invites you to reflect on the material and to set your personal targets for the future.

You can work through this unit in a number of ways:

- Start small; choose one class to work with. Ask another teacher to help by talking through what you intend to do and to act as a mentor.
- Work with another teacher or group of teachers who teach the same class. Work together on developing your approach to guided learning. After three weeks compare notes. Discuss which strategies are the most effective and why.
- Find someone to pair up with and team-teach. Design the tasks together and divide the role of teacher in the lesson between you.
- Work with a small group of teacher-researchers within your school. Use the guide to help you focus your work as a professional learning community. Record successes in your CPD portfolio.
- Identify sections of the unit that are particularly relevant to you and focus on those.

There is space in this study guide for you to write notes and responses to some of the questions, but you may also find it helpful to keep a notebook handy. For some tasks, you might want to make an audio recording or video of yourself in action so you can review your work more easily. You could add this, along with any other notes and planning that you do as part of your work on this unit, to your CPD portfolio.

The evidence of work you gather in your portfolio could count as points towards accreditation of an MA, or could support your application for membership of a professional body, such as the General Teaching Council of England (GTCE). It could also be used to support an application to reach threshold or Advanced Skills Teacher status.

You will need access to [video sequence 9, Guided learning](#), when working through this unit.

Guided learning

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Introduction

Successful guided work

When guided group work is a regular feature of lessons, pupils:

- learn to collaborate and provide feedback to each other on learning;
- take greater responsibility for sustaining discussion;
- are expected to contribute and build on each other's ideas;
- take on board subject terminology and learn to express and explain ideas clearly;
- reflect on their own learning and consider progress towards personal targets;
- feel a sense of achievement, which can be immediately confirmed by the teacher.

Common issues

The range of attainment and rates of progress in secondary classes widen significantly. Following whole-class teaching, pupils usually need further support and interaction with the teacher and each other to consolidate and extend knowledge, skills and understanding and to tackle misconceptions. However, unless this part of the lesson is carefully planned, the contact teachers have with pupils as the lesson unfolds can often be too fleeting, sporadic and reactive to have a significant impact on their progress.

Effective guided work requires a certain amount of advance preparation by the teacher, so that the particular needs of a group can be met.

Resolving the issues

Guided learning is a powerful procedure for pitching work at appropriate levels for differing groups within the class, so that all pupils make good progress. It enables pupils with SEN to be taught in inclusive settings and guarantees that the highest attainers also get close attention from the teacher on a systematic basis. Guided group work is most likely to be effective if the teacher:

- only uses guided groups when the particular lesson and stage of learning require it;
- organises guided groups so that the social and academic mix is appropriate, and explains this clearly to the pupils;
- trains the whole class to work productively and independently to allow the teacher to spend quality time with one group;
- understands the principles of guided learning and how to apply them in different contexts;
- is able to make effective use of a teaching assistant to support the rest of the class on a one-to-one basis whilst a guided session is taking place.

1 Organising guided work

What is guided learning? A springboard for independence

Guided learning is an instructional sequence for small groups which is integrated into lessons to provide a bridge between whole-class teaching and independent work. It is direct teaching and works best when pupils are acquiring and developing concepts or skills in a subject. It can also be used to consolidate and refine skills and understanding. Guided sessions are flexible and can last from 10 to 30 minutes depending on the nature of the task and objectives. It is not a discrete or separate programme, but is one part of a rich, challenging and coherent curriculum.

It is about pupils *taking control of their learning* through a managed process. In a guided learning group:

- pupils are grouped according to ability, or particular learning need;
- the teacher plans the session, which is structured to provide pupils with just the right amount of challenge and support so that they can begin to stretch themselves as learners;
- the emphasis is on supporting pupils so that they learn to work independently on a particular aspect.

Guided learning enables teachers to support and challenge pupils by intervening in a sustained and proactive way *at the point of learning*, as pupils read, write, talk, design, plan, make or practise. It helps to develop personalised learning since it is a means of tailoring teaching and learning to the needs of individual pupils. It does this by grouping pupils to provide structured support and challenge inside or

outside normal lessons to address aspects of progress and specific needs. Guided learning builds pupils' independence through focused intervention, interaction and collaboration.

In guided learning groups, the teacher does more than 'listen in', or 'join in'. It is a place where you continue to teach, but are much closer to the pupils – you can monitor their responses, and adjust what *you* say or do, and what you ask *them* to do or say, accordingly. It is assessment for learning in action.

As with all good teaching, good subject knowledge and assessment are prerequisites for an effective guided session. Groups should be formed on the basis of the stage of progress or point of need of the pupils. They involve a small group of pupils, usually between four and six, and can take place in or outside the classroom. They are led by a teacher or, with structured notes and guidance, a teaching assistant. Sometimes the teacher will remain with the group for the duration of the guided session, but this is flexible. At appointed times during the session it is possible for the teacher to circulate among the other pupils working independently to monitor and support their work.

For guided work to take place, an effective learning climate needs to be established with the whole class, including good behaviour and positive relationships, clear routines and a well-presented environment. Guided work is helped with the greater number of teaching assistants available in schools.

Once the rationale is established, the routines are in place and pupils accept that the teacher will at times spend more sustained time with specific groups, both independent and guided work become more productive as the outcome for both is a reduced dependency on the teacher.

Task 1

Becoming familiar with guided work

30 minutes

Watch [video sequence 9a](#). It shows a Year 8 English lesson, towards the end of a sequence of work in which pupils are being taught how to plan, organise and compose an extended piece of persuasive writing. The video clip shows the part of the lesson (approximately half an hour after the start) when the teacher joins a group of pupils and conducts a short guided writing session while the rest of the class work independently on their own writing.

The clip is a rich resource, and bears several viewings to yield the full extent of what occurs. If this is your first opportunity to see a guided session 'in action', concentrate during your first viewing on how the teacher has structured the session.

You might like to make a note as you watch to capture the 'stages' in the guided writing, which are based on the idea of an 'instructional sequence'. This is dealt with in more detail in the next section of this unit.

Now consider the following question:

How might guided writing be used across the curriculum?

[Section 2](#) of this unit provides some responses to this question.

Practical tips

What about the time?

The use of time for guided sessions will vary according to different subjects. In core subjects guided work could be used as part of a systematic and ongoing rotating programme, whereas in other subjects it could be used as a one-off focus to address identified issues in learning. This could be for challenging high attainers or tackling misconceptions or problems with progress for specific groups.

- Ensure tasks and resources are well organised, reducing the necessity for teacher intervention.
- Reduce the time of the guided session according to lesson length.
- Ask the guided group to do some preparation at home prior to the session.
- Ensure that the final share/evaluate/transfer stage of the sequence takes place as a critical part of learning, since this will increase the likelihood that the learning will be consolidated for application in other contexts.
- Start small: use smaller chunks of time and build towards more substantial guided sessions. Start with times when you would naturally 'break off' to visit the whole class.
- The strategy should ultimately save time if crucial misconceptions are resolved.

Practical tips

What about the rest of the class?

- Ensure pupils are clear about the purpose of tasks and the outcomes.
- Monitor the activities of the class.
- In the early stages of development, use support from a leading professional or a consultant, where possible.
- Arrange for extra adult support, for example from a teaching assistant, for lessons that include guided learning sessions.
- Make clear to the whole group the purpose of guided learning.
- Use learning partners.
- Use stimulating, engaging materials/tasks.

2 Comparing guided reading and writing

Guided reading is a time when the teacher structures and supports pupils' reading and response through a carefully planned 'instructional sequence'. The stages of the sequence with the teaching intentions are given below.

Guided reading can be used across the curriculum using both fiction and non-fiction texts. It can be used to develop investigation and research skills in a range of subjects using texts such as newspaper reports, encyclopaedias, textbooks and websites. In some subjects, for example history, using guided reading for fiction would also be relevant.

The structural sequence of guided reading provides a framework that can be used in guided sessions to develop skills and other aspects of learning in subjects, such as planning procedures in science or the design process in D&T.

Guided reading	
Learning sequence	Teaching intention
Introduction	to introduce the text to support recall to make connections to encourage prediction and speculation to recap on prior learning
Strategy check	to make explicit a range of reading strategies and cues to make explicit the learning objectives and outcomes
Independent reading	to monitor as pupils read, checking for accuracy, fluency and comprehension to give pupils focused attention (teacher-on-the-shoulder)

Table continues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to give pupils the chance to develop reading stamina and range
Returning to the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to go back to the text encouraging pupils to identify details and points which require clarification, exemplification or discussion to support pupils in developing critical and deeper responses to the text to use the text to review the application of a key reading strategy (such as re-reading, skimming, scanning) to tackle misconceptions to establish a critical dialogue around the text, exploring personal preferences and probing and extending responses to assess comprehension and the use of appropriate reading strategies
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to return to and reinforce the learning objectives to reflect on progress made and strategies used to prepare for further learning to transfer the skills and knowledge to other contexts to evaluate strategies and texts

In guided writing, the pupil writes with ‘the teacher on the shoulder’ providing support and intervention. It involves the teacher ‘handing the pen to the pupil’ but providing support *in the act of writing*, rather than leaving the pupil alone and then marking a finished piece (when it is often too late to tackle problems or act on missed opportunities). Guided writing has potential across the curriculum as it enables you to support pupils at the point when they are planning, drafting, composing or revising their writing. It enables you to provide specific support to tackle how pupils can express what they know. It is particularly useful when pupils are working on an extended piece of writing that requires them to sustain a line of thought, provide an explanation, convey an argument or provide a detailed evaluation. And it’s useful for pupils of all abilities. You can both support weaker writers, as well as challenge and extend those who are more proficient.

There are at least three types of guided writing session depending on the stage of the writing process being addressed: that is planning, drafting and reviewing. Only the drafting sequence is included here, since it is the stage that receives least attention.

Guided writing: drafting	
Learning sequence	Teaching intention
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to establish the task to identify prior knowledge to clarify the main features of the text to make connections to similar texts by other writers to confirm audience and purpose
Cue in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to refer back to planning for writing to provide a way in to writing to provide alternative starting points to highlight strategies for writing (e.g. visualising)
Try/improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to generate text to explore different possibilities for the text to identify key points in the text for consideration to open up linguistic choices and options to add, delete or substitute words, phrases, sentences to tackle misconceptions to mediate knowledge (about language) to move or reorder parts of the text to extend and develop, or shorten the text
Share/appraise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to praise and build confidence, identifying strengths to use terminology to generalise about language and writing to discuss writing with peers and with the teacher to assess the progress of the writer and the text
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reflect on what worked to return to and reinforce the learning objectives to reflect on progress made and strategies used to prepare for further learning to transfer the skills and knowledge to other contexts

The two sequences when placed alongside each other can be summarised as follows.

Guided reading sequence	Guided writing: drafting
<p>introduction to text</p> <p>↓</p> <p>strategy check</p> <p>↓</p> <p>independent reading and related task</p> <p>↓</p> <p>return to the text: developing response</p> <p>↓</p> <p>response and review (reading target and next steps)</p>	<p>introduction</p> <p>↓</p> <p>cue in</p> <p>↓</p> <p>try/improve</p> <p>↓</p> <p>share/appraise</p> <p>↓</p> <p>review</p>

Task 2

The structure of guided work

20 minutes

- 1 What are the similarities in the structure of guided reading and writing?
- 2 Do you note any potential applications of such an instructional sequence to the subject you teach?

Possible answers

- 1 Both structures:
 - represent an instructional sequence of key teaching episodes;
 - begin by establishing a focus for the task with the whole group;
 - move to supported application by pupils;
 - conclude with group reflection to establish progress and identify further learning targets.
- 2 By considering how learning works in guided reading and writing, it should be possible to explore how the sequence can be applied in other contexts. This is what you will go on to do now.

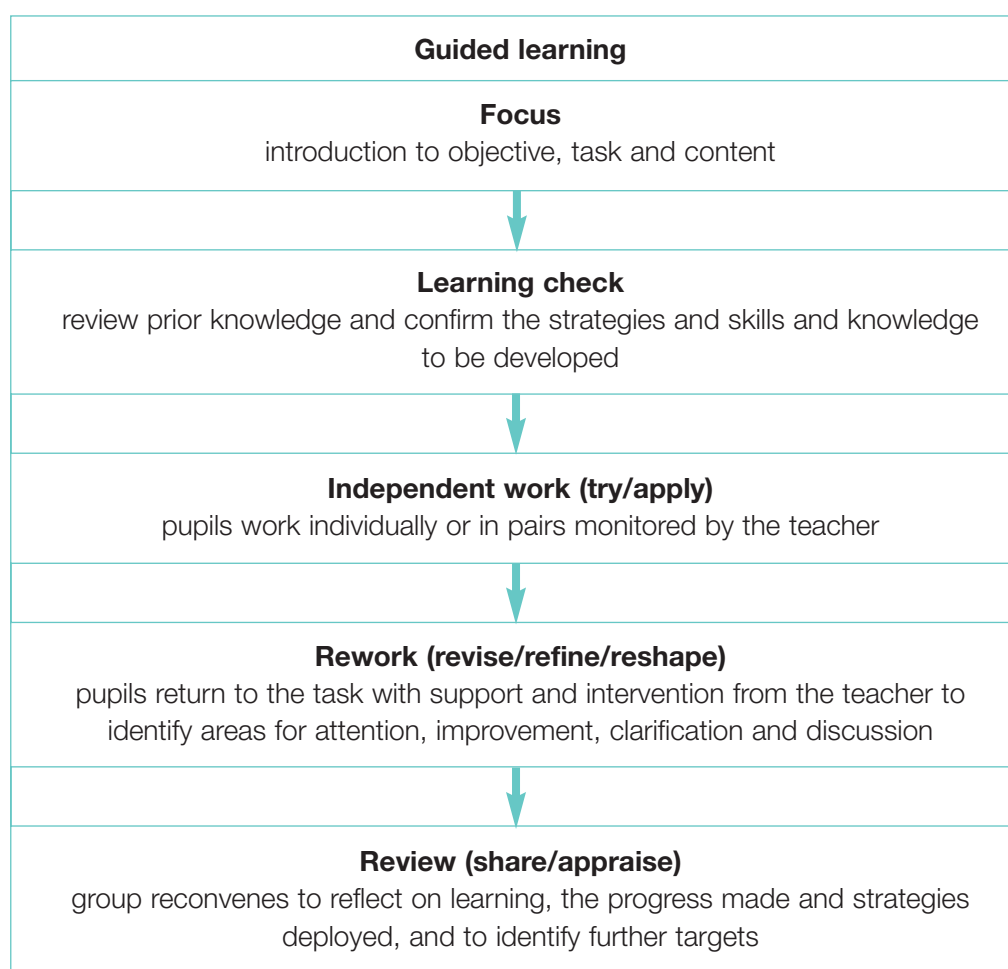
Practical tips

What about classroom routines?

- Make the learning objectives clear.
- Use whole-class starters and plenaries, reminding independent groups they will be feeding back at the end of the lesson.
- Make sure you are positioned to have regular views of the whole class.
- Start with groups you know well and with whom routines are well established.
- Use preparatory lessons to establish ground rules for those not in the guided group.

3 The guided learning sequence

The structural sequences of guided reading and writing have generic features. One possible means of describing this generic pattern is provided below. Each stage can be linked to and derives from the stages in guided reading and writing. This sequence provides a framework which can be used in guided sessions to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects across the curriculum.



The purpose of the introduction and learning check is to establish the task, identify prior knowledge and make explicit the strategies and skills which will be used in the session. In these 'focus' and 'check' parts of the session, the teacher also scaffolds the learning, handing over responsibility and control for the task to the pupil prior to the independent work taking place.

Then, as pupils undertake the activity, individually or in pairs (independence here means of the teacher, but not necessarily of each other), the teacher initially monitors, identifying strengths and possible areas for attention and discussion.

The pupils are then encouraged to return to the task, with support and guidance from the teacher or each other, to discuss and revise the work, refining their knowledge, understanding and skills. This part of the session is critical, and challenging for the teacher, since it is a point in which the instructional conversation between the teacher and pupil, if handled well, can produce significant developments and acceleration in learning.

It is crucial that pupils' strengths are indicated and that pupils are given the confidence and support to revise and reshape their work in a constructive and positive way. Misconceptions and obstacles to progress also need to be tackled. Pupils need to see this reworking and discussion of their efforts as an integral part of learning to bring about improvement and not a comment on inadequacies or incompetence.

The session concludes with group reflection on the progress made and strategies used, with the aim of reinforcing the learning objectives, discussing how the skills and knowledge can be applied elsewhere and identifying further targets for learning.

Task 3

Getting started

45 minutes

View [video sequence 9b](#) showing a guided session in a Year 7 mixed-ability class history lesson on King John. The focus at this stage is on why he could be seen as a bad king. The objectives of the lesson are to use evidence to support opinions and to write well-structured paragraphs.

Watch the video sequence and use what you know about guided teaching to consider the following questions:

- 1 How clear is the guided learning sequence?
- 2 What is the impact on pupils' progress?
- 3 How might the sequence be developed?

Commentary

- 1 The teacher uses the stages of the guided learning sequence to structure pupils' progress in literacy and in the subject. She ensures that significant time is provided for the share/evaluate/transfer section at the end to enable pupils to reflect on what they have learned and the approaches they have used.
- 2 The sequence shows pupils making progress in their use of historical evidence through improved vocabulary, sentence construction and paragraph organisation. They discuss and collaborate in pairs and across the group, and at times are given the opportunity to construct sustained contributions. The

[Task continues](#)

teacher enables them to refine and reshape their writing in order to orchestrate a range of historical information, and helps them to identify what they need to do to continue to improve when working independently.

- 3 In the early stages of the guided sequence, the teacher highlights the objectives and success criteria and enables pupils to activate prior knowledge. It may also be useful to confirm and model learning strategies more explicitly in this part of the session, for example how to make best use of the scaffolded support for the tasks.

There are three other video sequences you could watch involving art and design, D&T and MFL, which also illustrate guided learning in different subjects ([video sequences 9c, 9d, 9e](#)).

Task 4

Planning and trying it out

1 hour

Now plan a guided learning session in your subject, using the sequence. Choose a class you are confident will manage independent work well, and form a group that has similar needs or aspects of progress to be addressed.

You could use the chart in [resource 1](#), page 21 as a format for planning your lesson as it helps, particularly in the early stages, to plan explicitly the five sections of the sequence. You can, however, use any system which you feel is manageable and effective.

The guided group can have specific objectives for their session, or the same objectives as the rest of the class, depending on the purpose of the session, the focus of subject progression and the needs of the group.

Use the following list of questions to help you review how your session went.

- Did you complete all of the stages of the sequence?
- How well did the selected pupils respond?
- How well did they work as a group?
- What was the impact on their work?
- How well did the other pupils remain on-task?
- How well could all pupils reflect on their progress in the plenary of the class lesson?

Practical tips

What about behaviour?

- Establish clear expectations and standards (see [unit 1](#)).
- Reinforce expectations regularly.
- Praise and reward appropriate behaviour (see [unit 20](#) and [video sequence 20a](#)).
- Use learning partners (see [unit 4](#)).

Tips continue

- Establish protocols for group work/talk for the guided group and the rest of the class (see [unit 10](#)).
- Model the learning disposition (see [unit 6](#)).
- Make it clear that pupils will be expected to feed back from the guided group to the whole class and vice versa.

4 The principles of guided learning

Using guided learning is not about sticking rigidly to any given structure. The guided learning sequence is underpinned by clear principles for teaching and learning. Making these explicit will enable you to apply the guided learning sequence flexibly to suit your own subjects, contexts and pupils, rather than adhering rigidly to any given structure or timing.

Read the first part of the [summary of research](#) on pages 15–18 which sets out some of the theoretical principles that underpin guided group work.

Task 5

Using the principles of guided learning

90 minutes

Refer to the list of principles for guided learning which are outlined at the start of the [summary of research](#) on page 15. Plan and teach another guided learning sequence, keeping the principles clearly in mind, especially the idea of joint construction, using the group as a powerful engine to drive the learning beyond where pupils are individually.

Use the chart in [resource 2](#), page 22 as a means of evaluating how well your session went.

Practical tips

What about resources?

- Ensure resources for the rest of the class are organised and accessible.
- Use the learning environment as a support for learning, with displays, checklists and prompts visible, particularly for literacy and numeracy and also learning strategies.
- Use ICT as a support for learning.
- Organise resource and book boxes ('independence boxes') and equipment which can be carried between rooms.
- Ensure dictionaries, thesauri and other resources to support independent research are available.
- Plan the use and deployment of resources with colleagues within the department to support independent work.

5 The teacher's role

Task 6

Reflecting on the role

10 minutes

Considering the examples of guided learning you have watched so far, how would you describe the teacher's role in guided learning?

How does the teacher have a positive impact on learning?

The teacher as mediator

In guided learning the teaching is active and interactive. If guided learning is to work well then the intervention of the teacher to bring about effective learning is crucial. Such intervention to bring about a result in learning has been called 'mediation' (Vygotsky). The idea of mediation, or intervening, is a very important component of the teacher's role in fostering learning in general and guided learning in particular.

The teacher can be seen to be mediating at three important points:

- typically when the session is introduced, the teacher does a number of important things which help pupils make sense of the forthcoming activity – stimulating, activating knowledge, focusing, establishing relevance or purpose (connecting), instructing, scaffolding;
- during the activity as pupils are working: supporting, intervening, guiding;
- after the activity, where the full meaning/significance of the activity can be explored: articulating, making meaning, connecting, exploring, drawing analogies, generalising.

The diagram below illustrates the notion in relation to the five parts of the guided sequence.

Mediation				
Mediation		Mediation		Mediation
Focus/Check	→	Independent work/Rework	→	Review
stimulating		observing, challenging		articulating
focusing		supporting		making meaning
connecting		intervening		exploring
instructing		guiding		connecting
activating knowledge				generalising

The central section of any guided learning session involves the pupils doing the activity or task. During this time the teacher intervenes, supports, challenges, guides pupils through the work. The teacher will also be carrying out a number of active roles including listening, observing and assessing to be better informed about subsequent intervention; highlighting critical features of the task that might be overlooked; maintaining an orientation to the task; and challenging assumptions.

An important idea in guiding is to give only just enough help, so that pupils do not develop dependency. This has been termed *contingent teaching*. A guided group allows a teacher to attune more closely to the pupils in the group both the level of difficulty of the task and the challenge and support provided by the teacher. This means that pupils can grapple with challenging material, problems, questions and issues which may be beyond them individually. This constructive effort is critical in building pupils' capability and also in creating a positive disposition to learn.

The teacher is helping the pupils make sense of the learning material or stimulus and the learning experience. In this sense the teacher can be magnifying and sharpening the learning outcome. It should be added that, if presented effectively, guided learning provides an excellent opportunity to model behaviours of effective learning, teaching pupils the behaviours of lifelong learning.

Task 7

The active role of the teacher

1 hour

Revisit one of the video sequences which you have viewed and this time consider the teacher's role by answering the following question:

- How does the teacher intervene to move the pupils on in the learning?

You can use the following prompts and the chart in [resource 3](#), page 23 to focus your viewing, noting any examples of teacher behaviour which you think:

- help pupils make sense of the learning material;
- maintain an orientation to the task;
- attune the challenge and support to the group;
- teach pupils learning behaviours;
- sharpen and increase the learning outcomes.

Task 8

Observation

1 hour

Arrange to teach a guided learning sequence and be observed. The observer can use the chart in [resource 3](#), page 23 to make notes.

Then discuss the quality and nature of your intervention in the guided session with the observer. Treat this as a dialogue or coaching conversation, rather than one-way feedback from the observer.

Task 9

What about health and safety?

1 hour

Work with a colleague in your subject and conduct a risk assessment. What are the potential issues and how might they be overcome or minimised?

For instance:

Issue

Practical sessions in science or D&T

Possible solutions

- Only use guided sessions in non-practical situations.
- Use guided learning when there will be another adult in the room, e.g. consultant / NQT / student teacher. Treat it as a team-teaching opportunity.
- Use teaching assistants to run guided learning sessions or to monitor the rest of the class while you run the guided session. (Training may be required.)
- Use monitoring 'sweeps' at points during the guided session, moving around the rest of the class.

Summary of research

Principles for guided learning

The theoretical principles underpinning guided learning are consistent with those informing teaching and learning across the Strategy. They can be summarised as follows.

- Learning is a social activity in which talk is fundamental.
- Knowledge is jointly constructed and achieved.
- 'Scaffolding' provides support and focus through a gradual shifting of responsibility and control to the pupil.
- Metacognition, consciously focusing on and reviewing learning strategies and progress, is integral to learning.
- Language, thinking and learning are interrelated.
- Motivation and the disposition to learn are important parts of learning.
- Learning is structured into distinct episodes that follow a clear sequence which increases in cognitive demand.
- Teaching is designed to outpace rather than follow development.
- Teaching and learning are interactive, being part of a structured, focused dialogue between teacher and pupils and amongst pupils themselves.

The idea of social construction (the first two points and the last one) is based on the work of Bruner and Vygotsky. In simple terms, a group is capable of better solutions than an individual. The processes in the joint thinking and talk can gradually be internalised and applied by the individual, pupils rehearsing socially what they later can apply individually. The difference between what individuals can do alone and what they can do with the assistance of more capable peers or the teacher, Vygotsky called ‘the zone of proximal development’ (also translated more recently as ‘the zone of potential development’).

Scaffolding helps the learner to connect prior learning with new learning. It involves the teacher guiding pupils’ learning through interactive direct teaching (e.g. modelling, demonstrating and questioning) and also by constraining the tasks set to provide focus and support. Limiting the scope and freedom of the activity reduces ambiguity while retaining challenge, enabling the teacher to manage the pace and process by which pupils take increasing control of the task and the learning.

Metacognition is about the pupil taking control of their learning by integrating prior and new knowledge; solving problems individually and in groups; and consciously reviewing progress and strategies to check that the right information is being used, no incorrect assumptions have been made and there aren’t better ways of doing the task. It helps if pupils have a vocabulary for thinking and reflecting on learning. Metacognition is particularly important with tasks which are hard, and enables pupils to accept that learning involves uncertainty and difficulty.

Motivation is an important part of learning. Carol Dweck (2000), an American psychologist, has identified two main kinds of motivation to learning: performance orientation and learning orientation.

Learning orientation	Performance orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a belief that effort leads to success • a belief in one’s ability to improve and learn • a preference for challenging tasks • derives satisfaction from personal success at difficult tasks • applies problem solving and self-instruction when engaged in task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a belief that ability leads to success • a concern to be judged as able and a concern to perform • satisfaction in doing better than others or in succeeding with little effort • emphasis on interpersonal competition, normative public evaluation • helplessness: evaluates self negatively when task is difficult

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The performance-oriented learner is more likely to give up when the task is difficult or when receiving low grades. The learning-oriented learner, on the other hand, is more likely to persevere and show resilience, to be influenced by grades to a lesser

degree and to display other characteristics such as critical curiosity, creativity, and positive learning relationships and attitudes. Guided learning is therefore as much about building a positive orientation in the learner as about teaching skills or strategies the learner might use. Clearly, however, these aspects are interrelated since one means of bringing about a learning orientation is enabling pupils to achieve well and make good progress.

Language, thinking and learning are interrelated. Pupils' progress in language and literacy is affected by their capacity to think and learn. Language is also important in the development of information processing, reasoning, enquiry, creative thinking and evaluation. The teacher needs to use effective questioning to challenge learners to articulate their thoughts and to develop their thinking and learning by justifying and explaining their ideas and opinions. This has been called putting a 'press' on pupils' language.

The guided session is part of a broad learning sequence for the lesson or number of lessons, acting as a link between initial whole-class work and subsequent independent work. However, the guided session itself is also divided into clear sections to form a regular and systematic instructional sequence of its own (which is described in more detail through this unit).

Teaching is about accelerating pupils' development and learning so that they move quickly beyond what they can already do to new learning. The learning needs to be pitched so as to avoid, on the one hand, boring repetitive work, and, on the other, tasks and interventions that are totally beyond pupil capability. In cognitive psychology this is known as 'cognitive conflict'. All pupils need opportunities to struggle and think through challenging problems and issues. Teacher intervention needs to be skilfully judged so that pupils receive enough support to keep them going, but enough challenge to maintain a fast rate of progress. Guided learning, because it is focused on carefully selected groups, enables teachers to do this more effectively.

Guided reading and writing as the basis for guided learning

Guided reading is a recent development (during the last 30 years) and arose from approaches to the teaching of reading developed in New Zealand by Don Holdaway. These emphasised the collaborative experience of reading as a support structure to develop pupils' reading strategies and skills. Guided reading has been used with considerable success in the Primary National Strategy and the English strand of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy.

Guided reading creates a social context for reading and responding to texts. The teacher needs to give detailed consideration to the pupils' engagement and stage of progress so the text needs to be carefully chosen and teaching closely attuned to pupils' needs.

Guided writing differs from guided reading in that the teacher–pupil interaction in guided writing is often more akin to a small-group version of whole-class shared writing (that is, the teacher usually retains more involvement and control than in guided reading). The main thrust of guided writing, however, is to give control to the pupils with 'the teacher on the shoulder'.

Guided writing as a whole is not as well developed in schools as guided reading. This is partly because writing has traditionally been seen as a silent, solitary

and private effort on which there should be limited intrusion so as not to stifle pupil expression, originality and creativity. While this concern is understandable, many pupils find the move from whole-class teaching to independent writing difficult. So they do not achieve as well as they should when faced with the blank page or screen, even when provided with scaffolds such as writing frames. Guided writing challenges traditional assumptions since it uses discussion (teacher to pupil and amongst pupils themselves) to make explicit a writer's choices, decisions, tactics and skills, 'drawing writing into talk'. As the writing takes shape, the teacher opens up alternatives for pupils by discussing and extending the linguistic patterns and semantic options available to them and by highlighting that writing is an exciting process where texts can be improved and can create different effects and meanings through revisions and changes. As in guided reading, the small-group context assists the teaching in exploiting common concerns while attuning the teaching to the individuals within the group.

References

- Beard, R. (1998) *National Literacy Strategy: Review of research and other related evidence*. University of Leeds, 38–39. Available at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk.
- DfES (2002) *Training materials for the foundation subjects*, unit 11, handout 11.2. Ref. DfES 0350/2002.
- DfES (2003) *English department training 2003/04: Improving writing course handbook*. Ref. DfES 0399/2003.
- Dweck, C. (2000) *Self theories: their role in motivation, personality and development*. Psychology Press. ISBN: 1841690244.
- Harrison, C. *Roots and research, Key Stage 3 English*. Ref. DfES 0353/2002.
- Holdaway, D. (1984) *The foundations of literacy*. Heinemann. ISBN: 0868960144.

Next steps

This unit has explored an aspect of teaching and learning. You may wish to develop your ideas further, to consolidate, apply ideas in different contexts or explore an aspect in more depth and innovate.

Reflect

What have been the key learning points for you?

What has been the impact on your pupils?

Here are some suggestions as to how you may develop practice further:

- Identify possible opportunities for guided learning from medium-term planning. Select aspects of knowledge and skills that are particularly appropriate for guided learning sessions.
- Plan and teach a sequence of guided learning sessions for a particular class

over a half-term. Evaluate their effectiveness by assessing the progress of all the pupils in the class.

- Consider how you might apply in whole-class teaching the types of intervention you were using in the guided work (for instance using questions to mediate and exchange ideas across the group rather than between individuals and the teacher, or allowing sustained responses from pupils without teacher interruption or comment). Try them out with a class who are used to guided work. Evaluate the impact they have on the quality of whole-class interaction and the standards of pupils' responses.
- Present your work to other colleagues in the department or even to the whole staff. Be clear and candid about positive features which you found and also any problems and challenges to be addressed. Also provide evidence of the impact on pupils' learning and standards of attainment.
- The DVD that accompanies this material also includes three other extracts from guided learning sessions in the following subjects: MFL; art and design; and design technology. Having worked through this unit, you may wish to view one or more of these extracts and consider how guided work can enhance teaching and learning in subjects where there is a greater emphasis on oral work, and on practical activity. If your subject is one of those featured on the DVD, you may wish to use the video, and some of the material you have worked through, as the basis for a departmental meeting at which you consider the potential of guided work to improve standards in the subject.

For further reading, the following publications are recommended:

- DfES (2002) *Guided reading in English at Key Stage 3*. Ref. DfES 0044/2002.
- DfES (2002) *Group reading at Key Stage 3: material to support group and guided reading in Years 7, 8 and 9*. Ref. DfES 0674/2002.
- DfES (2002) *English department training 2002/03, Y7 Session 3 Improving writing* pp. 21–24. Ref. DfES 0313/2002.
- DfES (2003) *ICT in the Literacy Hour: independent work and guided reading*. Ref. DfES 0015/2003.
- Fountas, I. C. and Pinnell, G. S. (1996) *Guided reading: good first teaching for all children*. Heinemann. ISBN: 0435088637.
- Holdaway, D. (1984) *The foundations of literacy*. Heinemann. ISBN: 0868960144.

Setting future targets

Having considered your next steps, you may wish to set yourself some personal targets to support your own continuing professional development. You could use these ideas to inform your performance management discussion.

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Task 10

Setting your targets

40 minutes

When setting targets for the future you may want to discuss the possibilities with a colleague or your line manager.

Whatever you decide to do, you will need to consider the following.

- What are your objectives for the next year?
- What are the expected outcomes in terms of pupils' achievements?
- What strategies will you employ to achieve these outcomes?
- How will you track progress over the year?
- How will you know whether you have been successful or not?

Resource 1

Chart for task 4

Teaching group Guided group:	
Teaching objective(s):	
Resources	
Teaching sequence Focus Learning check Independent work Rework Review	
Evaluation	

Resource 2

Chart for task 5

Guided learning lesson:		Class:
Group:		
Objectives:		
Learning principle	Practice	
social		
interactive		
scaffolding		
metacognition		
episodes		
challenge		

Resource 3

Chart for tasks 7 and 8

Guided learning lesson:		Class:
Group:		
Objectives:		
Teaching	Practice	
Making sense of the learning material		
Maintaining an orientation to the task		
Attuning the challenge and support		
Teaching learning behaviours		
Sharpening outcomes		

