

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Continue to engage with a wide range of relevant literature to build own viewpoint.	A wide range of relevant resources has been visited to inform my research and build my own point of view.
Targed/Target 2	Consider developing counter arguments when critically evaluating the impact of your own practice.	Critical evaluation of educational research literature has been carried out to enrich my counter arguments.
Targed/Target 3		

How a School Develops One Aspect of its SDP: A Report That Critically Reflects on the Actions, Impact and Evidence Base

Introduction

School development plan (SDP) is undertaken to improve the overall programme of the school. It is a policy of every school to improve the standards of education as well as the students with the knowledge they impart (Welsh Government, 2014). A school sets a vision and undertakes certain steps to achieve it, which ultimately leads to improve the standards and the learning outcomes post the plan is being achieved (ibid, 2014).

The school development programmes can be done for anything which ultimately brings out a better change for the pupils in the school (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, 2017). Most of the schools set up an authority that reviews this development plan after frequent intervals to see whether they are still any shortcomings in the plan which can be improved accordingly (Education Authority, 2020).

At my placement school, the plan is reviewed by the authority during the year to evaluate the achievements (using qualitative and quantitative data), to see the deviations and then to

reflect on action and improvement required for the next steps. There are also additional plans which are linked to the learning areas (where each learning area has their development plan) and driven by the senior team and Assistant Headteacher who oversees Teaching and Learning.

The SDP focuses and reflects on learners and community, taking into consideration the school context and pupils' socio-economic backgrounds which may have an impact on their academic achievements.

The School is a mixed, comprehensive and pioneer school in South Wales (Estyn, 2018), with 1766 pupils and is rated as Green according to the National School Categorisation System (My Local School, 2019). There are 7.8% of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, around 12% have special educational needs, nearly 25% come from different ethnic minority backgrounds (other than White British) and over 20% speak English as an additional language (Estyn, 2018). Thus, the school set one of its SDP priorities for Teaching and Learning (2018- 2021) to focus on EAL.

Literature Review

Learning and Teaching are meant to be equitable for all. Thus, SDP is significant to ensure that there is inclusion for all the students. Yet, it is necessary to complement school development that links different parts with one another and the wider communities (Ainscow et al., 2012, p. 203). There must be local efforts to ensure systems are equitable which needs to solve the wider inequalities within the society (Children's Rights: a Teacher's Guide, n.p). Furthermore, educators working in the school setting have the responsibility of ensuring education for democratic citizenship and human rights (Brett et al., 2009, p.3). The introduction of English brings equality and settle the socio-economic differences within the school. Therefore, children's rights need to be incorporated with the curricula and to the normal teaching practices. According to Conteh (2018, p. 5), the relationship between teacher and pupils is the key when teaching an extra language, to ensure the empowerment of the pupils through the learning process, making it moves toward the right perspective of multilingualism.

According to Mathew Effect (Margolin, 2018, p.3), in learning, the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. When pupils fail at an early age of reading and writing, they dislike reading going forward, thereby becoming poorer in knowledge and those who read become stronger and read more making them richer in knowledge (De Graaf, 2019, p.21). Yet, developmental changes are more sensitive to a written personal narrative. Thus, the Mathew Effect suggests that for students to be verbally productive, there is a need for extra support to

perfect the writing achievements (Rigney, 2009, P.3). The support needed may ensure the teachers empower students to be independent learners, so that they can take more time to learn beyond the classroom (Javed, 2017, P.34). Pupils who have English as an Additional Language achieve less in reading, writing and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Demie, 2018, p.142). While those who are English speakers perform better.

In my placement school, there are students from different minority groups. In order to achieve equity for the learners, there is a need to empower English learning as a method to create equality within schools. The ability to empower learning beyond the classroom is the key to achieve better performance (ibid, p.140). Yet, cognitive-emotional characteristics are also impacted by social structures because of emotional support and feedback (Siraj & Mayo, 2014, p.1).

Additionally, parents are the key stakeholder who may provide the headteacher and teaching staff the necessary support to implement an effective SDP (Government of Ireland, 2010). Therefore, involving parents in learning of EAL may offer support to pupils, making it easier for teachers and learners (Whalley, 2007, p.1). With globalisation changes, there is a need for coping which starts in the lower level of education. The need for having English use is important to cope with global changes. The teaching of EAL in multicultural schools can be rewarding in a positive way (Premier & Parr, 2019, p.33). Teachers are always willing to give their best in teaching. However, diversity in the classroom may hinder them for the fear of appearing insensitive or challenges in dealing with different values (Arshad et al., 2012, p. 3). Currently, with the socio-economic challenges, a good SDP needs to be a constant exercise, where all the stakeholder reviews and plans on improving the performance is implemented on regular basis. The major effective SDP needs to be comprehensive by assessing the needs, prioritising the needs and using the data to make decisions (Hanover Research, 2014, p.7).

According to Hanover Research (2014, p.1), three evidence-based models suggest how school development planning can be guided. First, is the Daggett System for Effective Instruction which guides the transformational leadership by giving focus across the entire system of education and developing the instructional effectiveness to improve performance. Second, Results-Oriented Cycle of Inquiry is a process that focuses directly on the outcomes and stimulates learning from successes and diagnosis of the problems. Lastly, the Balanced Scorecard Model which helps in strategic performance with objectives translated into vision and mission.

From the literature, several themes come up with the SDP, which includes the engagement of the community for empowerment and support of the students (Ainscow et al., 2012, p.

203). Also, parents' involvement is required to support educators improving student achievement in the plan. The relationship between the teachers and learners in the introduction of the English language should aim to create a substantial relationship that helps students do more than classroom work in perfecting the learning (Conteh, 2018, p.1). In all learning environments, School Development Planning is significant and can be achieved in different ways, including Daggett System for Effective Instruction, Results-Oriented Cycle and Balanced Scorecard Model (Hanover Research, 2014).

Developing an Action Point

In my placement school, the process of setting and implementing SDP is made-up of two approaches: *Top-Down* and *Bottom-Up*. The school believes that combination and collaboration between the two approaches is necessary to achieve an effective SDP. For instance, when the school developed iLearn curriculum, it came from *Top-Down* approach based upon Welsh Government instructions¹. The school then created its vision of the new curriculum through the middle management team who worked in collaboration with senior team. On the other hand, Donaldson's suggestions (2015) came from teachers' revisions and pupils' feedback (*Bottom-up*). Altimetry, the deputy head teacher combines the qualitative data, which consists of teachers' input of pupils' attainment, estimated grades (Value Added Measurement)² along with qualitative data which comes from reviews, inspection reports and government policy.

Since in my placement school, there are several ethnic languages that students use as their first language. Despite the use of English within the school, at home, they switch to another language. That shows the difference with those whose first language is English since they show fluency and better understanding. The SDP thus takes several stages to bridge the gap of pupils' attainment and ensure equality, the development plan of EAL learners is the key to the school.

The first stage is a self- evaluation with the main aim to compile a comprehensive report about the current state of the school. Heighten awareness to the community on how and why the school is running and the context in which it operates (Feldhoff et al., 2016, p.11). The data provided by the self-evaluation thus guides and informs the decision-making process.

¹ As recommended by Donaldson's '*Successful Future*' document, (2015).

² The Value-Added Measurement is a comparison between estimated result and actual result when we look at student's expectation, (taking into consideration the school context in relation with the wider community).

The data provided is then analysed to establish the internal strengths and challenges, opportunities and threats presented by the external environment.

Data analysis entails review on the mission, vision and aims, the context factor, the curriculum provided how the EAL is planned and the coordination in implementation. Yet, educators becoming more involved in the implantation plan, their organization and development determines the success of EAL learners. As indicated earlier, parents' incorporation in the EAL development plan is equally important to that of educators (Javed, 2017, P.44). Therefore, the school-home relation with parents' community link needs to be established.

The overall management structure must be able to accommodate and facilitate the needs arising from the pupils having EAL. The strength is guided by the equality of education for all pupils. The incorporation of the communities and parents opens the opportunity for development and positive outcomes from the plan.

Nevertheless, the review and evaluation of the current state of Learning and Teaching in the school, helps in making an informed decision into the second phase which is designing. The information obtained in the data analysis is changed into objectives (Feldhoff et al., 2016, n.p). In this case, the gaps identified in the EAL learners and how it affects the overall performance in school are turned into objectives. The objectives are communicated to different stakeholders that include trustees, principal, teaching staff, board of management, support staff, students, parents, and the local community. The participants review the objectives and raise their concerns before approval. After all the concerns have been incorporated into the objectives an action plan is designed with the help of the stakeholders. The school aims to teach lessons using English. The educators explore and use various teaching and learning styles to improve performance, since students have various levels of understanding and suited to different types of learning styles. The principal sets the standards to be attained which is the improved spoken and written English among students. Further, the parents and the wider communities will allow the use of English within and outside a school setting and support the children in advancing their writing and speaking skills using English. The board and trustees approve what the parents, community, support staff and students agree on improving the performance for the EAL learners.

To ascertain how well the plan can be attained, several methods can be used and help in guiding a step-by-step implementation. In this case, Daggett System for Effective Instruction (2017, p.3) provides the leadership with the focus across the entire education organisation and supports instructional effectiveness to improve achievements. The board of management has the authority to give instructions on the implementation and how the plan

will be achieved by the students and the teacher. SDP requires collaborative efforts of the stakeholders but the principals, students, and the teaching staff mainly focus on implementation while the rest support by providing funds and a conducive environment.

Lastly, post approval, the implementation phase is the actual carrying out of the action plans. In this stage structure and procedures are set and communicated to respective teams (Scheerens & Demeuse, 2005, p.14). The teachers and students are encouraged and advised to help them take the task positively. The structure, organisation, and coordination of staff can affect the implementation in the right way and can fail the whole plan. Therefore, to improve and encourage the EAL learners, the principal equips the teachers with the materials they need, such as books and any other requirement that can aid in improving the teaching of English to the learners are provided. Also, a positive attitude is important among students and their perception of the plan affects performance. As illustrated in the Matthew Effects, (Protopapas et al., 2016, p.4), it is likely that when EAL learned to get the wrong attitude towards the plan, they will read less and become disengaged from learning. Then train the content with relevant skills and ensure that other schools in Wales having the same project are used for a benchmark to help eliminate the problems in time.

Reflection and Evaluation

With the emerging global changes, the use of English becomes necessary to equip the pupils for the future and helping them integrate into the global changes (Gardiner-Hyland & Burke, 2018, p.2). Furthermore, improvement of English learning unites the differences both in the school and community level, since the students with the help of their parents were able to embrace the school plan and work collaboratively with the educators (Brett et al., 2009, p.1). More employment has been implemented, since more English experts were needed to help the existing workforce in accomplishing the action plan. Through the whole process of the school development process, there was a collaboration from all the stakeholders, particularly from the parents.

In the education sector, all the stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring that all is done in the right way. It was important for EAL learners that the school to focus on English learning, since it affects the whole teaching and learning process. When students are unable to read or write correct English that affects the way they understand while learning and the way they perform in the overall unit. A four-step process was used in the development of the plan which includes self-evaluation, data analysis, designing an action plan and implementation (Hanover Research, 2014, p.3). The review and evaluation of the current status helped identify the strengths of the school in carrying out the action plan, threats, and weakness that can lead to failure of the whole initiative. Through the SWOT analysis, the data was gathered

on the preparedness and the gaps that need to be filled for the successful implementation of the plan. As identified in the analysis, the community plays an important role in settling the differences among pupils in the school by encouraging the use and learning of English for all students.

The school development process was conducted in the right way and with the actual implementation and monitoring, the school will experience the difference in the whole education system. As the development focuses more on implementers that is the students, educators, and principal, there is less emphasis on the support team particularly the parents. Ainscow et al., (2012, p.199) suggested that parents play a role in the successful implementation of the project. When parents are involved, they can empower and support beyond the school's use of English and mastering content. Through it is likely that the support will be offered in the right way. Also, the school-home parent link needs to be strengthened to meet the expectations. The current review on the teacher-student relationship was not given much attention to the gathering of data. Teachers are expected to have a positive relationship so as they can empower students while learning. This could be the major gap that the school is facing despite lightly looking into the matter.

Conclusion

The report outlines the different stages of school development planning which include self-evaluation, data analysis, designing and implementation of a Welsh School. Successful improvement of school requires involving all the stakeholders and ensuring that they take up their roles in development. Focusing on the EAL learners, the trustees, board of management, community, and parents work to support the teachers, students and leadership to implement the action plan. In a school that has many students having English as their second language, the improvement of teaching and learning techniques can help increase fluency. Specifically, when the community and the parents are involved in the whole process of developing a plan, they embrace the changes and support the student in acquiring more knowledge and using English to speak. That is why it is important to incorporate that in the process. In the future, the knowledge acquired in the development of a school plan will help me in making changes in the education system in line with my profession. More importantly, I understand the complexity of the process and the stakeholders to be involved. The development process will be of much help in advancing my profession and assisting in policy development in the education sector.

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