

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Does the use of slow writing improve the quality of a Year 7 group currently operating around level 4/5?

Introduction

The research conducted was carried out in an English medium school in Neath Port Talbot. School X provides education for pupils aged 3-16 and has around 1,226 pupils on role within the secondary school (Estyn, 2018). In 2018 the percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Maths at key stage four was 27.9%. The participants involved in this study were twenty-five students from a top set Year 7 English class consisting of both girls and boys. The majority of the students within the class are currently working at a level 5 with some working at level 4. The research question ‘Does the use of slow writing improve the quality of a Year 7 group currently operating around level 4/5?’ was used as it has been noted that whilst the majority of pupils can write at length, the quality of their written work is preventing them from holding a more secure place within their current level or from moving up into the next level. A slow writing intervention will therefore be used to see if it can aid the improvement of the quality of written work by getting pupils to think more about how something can be written and not just what can be written.

Literature Review

The director of the National Institute of Adults Continuing Education Cerys Furlong, stated that in 2010, 12% of the Welsh population had not reached the level 1 threshold in basic literacy skills thus showing the need for the improvement of literacy skills of adults in Wales (2015). Despite this statistic seeming low, it is too high to ignore as 12% of the Welsh population do not have the basic literacy skills which are needed to succeed and function in society (National Literacy Trust, 2017). This is furthered by Estyn that argue people with low literacy skills can become ostracised from society (2017). It is therefore important to go to the root of where literacy skills are taught and assessed: schools, define what is meant by the term ‘literacy’ and identify ways in which these skills can be taught through the education system to enhance these vital skills. The National Literacy Trust define literacy as “the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.” (2017). This shows the importance of literacy as it underpins everything that pupils do within education and beyond. It is therefore vital that pupils have well-developed literacy skills to ensure that they can communicate in daily life to the best of their ability. Without these literacy skills, pupils can be disadvantaged and left to struggle within the school system, in the future in the job market, and from helping their children with their own learning later on in life (National Literacy Trust 2017). Estyn, recognised as inspecting quality in standards in education in all schools within Wales, too value the importance of literacy. Estyn argue that to ensure young people can communicate effectively, thrive in society, and make sense of the world around them, good literacy skills are essential (2017). A report carried out by Estyn based on progress with literacy policies over the last seven years found that upon inspection, in schools classed as ‘better’, pupils’ literacy skills were a key priority within the school. It was also reported that in these ‘better’ schools, there were opportunities throughout the pupils’ school career to develop reading, writing, and oracy throughout each academic year (Estyn, 2017). It was reported that an improvement in literacy

is the most successful when literacy improvement strategies are used school wide, across the whole curriculum, and in all subjects. From all of the schools reported on, within the three strands of literacy, it was found that writing was the weakest strand and Estyn advised that schools should address this issue in the future. Therefore, knowing that the improvement in literacy is the most successful when used across subjects and that the writing strand of literacy is in need of the most improvement, it is argued that it should not be solely down to English departments and teachers to try and solve this issue. As Matt Bromley (2017) argues, all teachers are, and should be teachers of literacy to ensure that all pupils can access education successfully. As all subjects have written components to their curriculum, and Estyn have identified the weakness of pupils' writing and the importance of improvement in this area, all teachers should therefore be trying to improve the written work of their pupils.

Improving the written work of pupils within secondary schools can take many forms but it is important that researchers and teachers identify exactly what aspect of written work needs improving. This is because, for example, if pupils need help with extended writing, a focus on spelling will not help the pupils progress with writing at length. Wray (1993) found that pupils often focus on their writing as an end product and do not put much thought into the actual writing process which is also an issue identified with the participants chosen for this study. It is therefore important for the focus of this research to improve the quality of pupils' written work, focusing on how something is written. This issue was also identified by Didau (2012) who argues that pupils try to write as much as they possibly can in the time frame given, but to actually produce quality in their written work, they need to "approach each word, sentence and paragraph with love and attention." This is furthered as he argues that pupils will write in the most straight forward way that they can to get all of their ideas down onto the paper, which often does not lead to a high quality of written work (Didau 2012). The issue is not what to write but instead how to write it. Didau (2012) coined the term 'Slow Writing' as an intervention for teachers to use in order to overcome the need of a finished product at the expense of a lack of care for how something is actually written. As slow writing is a relatively new concept, it has not yet been widely explored resulting in a lack of literature surrounding the intervention. As it is similar to a writing frame as teachers give specific writing prompts, literature surrounding writing frames will also be used (Twinkl teaching, 2019). The slow writing process involves teachers giving the pupils a topic and they must complete a set of sentences in which they are told what to include which will in turn form a paragraph. For example, sentence one must include a simile, sentence two must include a three-word sentence, sentence three must include a compound sentence etc. Different features such as punctuation, sentence types, grammatical features and rhetorical devices etc are used. The structure can be modified to fit the purpose and need of the activity at hand. This may include the amount of sentences, the features included, the amount of steps, if features are for sentence or paragraph level etc. Pupils must then think about how to construct their sentence, ensuring that they include the particular feature in the sentence/paragraph and that it makes sense with the rest of their work (Didau 2012). Boswell (2016) also identifies the importance of the writing process and how teacher modelling can strengthen it, thus improving the written work of pupils. This is furthered by Thandi (2019) who argues that the modelling process shows pupils the thought processes that they too need to go through whilst writing, something which they may not have been told had modelling not been used.

Like Wray and Lewis (1998) argue, the frame or structure is not rigid or unchangeable and it is important that pupils know the structure can be modified to their own accord and feel confident enough to do so. This ensures that pupils do not feel restricted with their writing as

the framework is known to be guide and not a set of rules. Consequently, if it is viewed as a set of rules, a curbing of pupils' creativity and originality could occur and like Fones (2001) argues, frustration will occur from pupils being told exactly how to write something.

Slow writing is a drafting process in which pupils can go back and modify their sentences to improve them. Because of this, pupils have the time to discover new ways of writing their original thoughts, thus improving and making advancements on their ideas (Hyland, 2008). Furthermore, Didau (2012) argues that this allows for pupils to focus on their technique and pupils may in turn feel more confident and experimental with their writing. This is furthered by Wray and Lewis (1998) who also argue writing frames improve the self-esteem of pupils as they will feel they can write successfully as they have an element of guidance from the teacher. The writing frame may steer pupils away from only focusing on the end product and writing in the simplest way possible (Didau, 2014). Additionally, the earlier the structure is introduced and the more it is used, the more familiar it may become to students and they may remember it more easily due to it being used frequently. This is furthered by Campbell and Parke (2018) that used a writing frame over a twelve-week period and found that writing frames did prove useful in increasing the grades of a low achieving class. As the class were described as low ability, it is questionable as to whether a class of a higher ability would need to use a framework over the same period of time to gain improvements in results. This is furthered by Myhill (2001) and Daly (2002) that argue the overuse of a writing frame can create more issues that it can solve.

Within the classroom, writing frames/slow writing can be used with pupils working in pairs, groups, or as a class. Social constructivists would argue that using the framework with pupils socially interacting with one another would be the most advantageous way to use this framework. This is because pupils would be able to use the writing frame, use their own knowledge and build upon one another's knowledge by sharing ideas leading to collaborative learning (Vygotsky, 1978). If a pupil could not think of an idea for the required sentence, a discussion could be had with other members of the class to construct the sentence, instead of the pupil being left to not create that given sentence. It may also help build the pupils' confidence with using the framework as pupils could help one another when the framework was firstly introduced, meaning that they would not have to navigate it alone. Struggles could be overcome as groups instead of individuals being left behind. In addition, it is argued that writing frames help all children with differing abilities showing that it is an inclusive approach in which all members of the class can use (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Fones 2001). This is advantageous within the classroom as an intervention that all pupils can use and benefit from is worthwhile and does not leave out any pupils in the classroom. That being said, Wray and Lewis (1998) later argue that not all pupils in the class need to use writing frames. It can then be questioned if all pupils within the class should use it? If a student already has a good quality of writing, whilst improvements can always be made, should they too be told to use this writing frame? Or, should they be left to decide themselves about how they should write their written work? As like Fones (2001) argues, pupils can be put off writing if they are not given enough creative freedom.

Writing frames/slow writing are types of scaffolding. The scaffolding is put in place to help the learner accomplish something they cannot do alone (Bruner, 1986). Scaffolding is temporary and should therefore be taken away when pupils are able to complete the task alone and knowledge of how to do something increases (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Hammond, 2001). Pupils should be monitored so that the scaffolding can be taken away at an appropriate time. It needs to be ensured that pupils do not become overly reliant upon the scaffolding as eventually, it must be taken away from every pupil within the class regardless of their confidence with the framework. The taking away of a framework is also important as like Daly (2002) argues, the over application of a framework when it is not necessary can undermine the confidence of a writer. This is troublesome as pupils should not feel hindered by a framework when writing but should instead feel they have creative freedom. Pupils do want to use their own ideas and their own language when writing (Daly 2002). Practise without the writing frame but using the features must be a task that pupils accomplish as this will mirror what must be done in final written pieces: remembering the features and using them without the framework in front of them as a guide. Practising writing using the features but not the actual writing frame could be a way of monitoring the use of the features to see what is being remembered and used well, and what is not remembered so well and what aspects need improving. This could then indicate if certain pupils could have additional features added to their framework or if it should be kept the same to allow for all pupils to progress at their own rate, as like Daly (2002) and Fones (2001) argue, the overuse of undifferentiated frameworks can cause frustration in pupils.

Despite the literature to suggest that a writing framework/slow writing improves the quality of written work, could it be argued to be a utopian idea of improving the quality of written work? (Didau, 2012, Wray and Lewis, 1998, and Campbell and Parke 2018). Just because pupils include certain features in their writing, it does not mean that they are used effectively and will produce an overall higher quality piece of written work. The certain features may be used incorrectly or to a low standard, thus showing that by simply using certain features, improvement is not a guarantee. Furthermore, the process of redrafting may be too timely within the strict time constraints for extended pieces of written work that pupils already struggle to master. Pupils may become fixated on one feature within a sentence and in turn may not feel able to move on until that sentence is perfected. Also, pupils may spend too much time trying to remember every feature mentioned in the structure at the expense of actually writing. One way to combat this, as Fones (2001) argues, could be to use a structure that is simple so that pupils can easily memorise it so that they can easily access the structure without causing any stress, as the main focus needs to be on the actual writing and not the remembrance of a framework.

School Policy and Practice

In School X, the percentage of pupils achieving at least a GCSE at grade A*-C in English in 2016 was 53.5%. The percentage of pupils achieving this is shown to be on the decline as the percentage decreased to 44.6% in 2017, and has decreased even further to 35% in 2018 (My local school, 2018). Whilst no official school or departmental policy has been introduced to tackle the issue of the low percentage of pupils obtaining an English GCSE, it has been noted that practices have been put in place within the English department to try and combat this decrease.

One practice, whilst not being included in the English department policy, but has been identified, is the use of writing frames and slow writing. In schemes of work for year 7 through to year 11, writing frames are often given before an assessment is carried out in prior lessons for pupils to review so that they can see a possible essay structure and what features they could use and like Wray and Lewis (1998) argue, they give pupils an overview of the task they must complete. The use of writing frames in School X is not solely used for assessment purposes as it is also used in the classroom to help pupils better structure longer written pieces of work or to improve the overall quality of written work. Slow writing is often used in these lessons to enhance the quality of written work, especially when vocabulary needs enhancing, which is often evident in lower sets. That being said, upon observation of a range of English lessons, the use of slow writing has been used in multiple mixed ability classes. This supports the work of Fones (2001) that argues writing frames benefit all pupils as it is an inclusive way for all pupils within the class to progress at their own rate and may be the reason as to why it is used often with these particular classes.

The use of writing frames will vary depending on the task at hand. Multiple structures have been seen and some have taken the form of having opening sentence starters, a topic of each paragraph and in other instances, slow writing has also been used. The use of a writing frame could inhibit the creativity of pupils which like Fones (2001) argues, can cause frustration as they are being told how to write their own essay, yet this does not have to be the case. In School X, writing frames are used simply as a guide for pupils to use and they are aware that whilst it is useful to follow the given guide, it is not forbidden for pupils to diverge from the given structure, ensuring that creativity is not curbed and that originality is still supported like Wray and Lewis (1998) argue, should be how pupils view the structure/framework. This is a useful approach as like Fones (2001) argues, written work is often the best when the framework is used but individually modified by the pupil themselves. School X also use the writing frames/slow writing structure as scaffolding to help the pupils progress in their writing. Like Wray and Lewis (1998) and Hammond (2001) argue should be done, the scaffolding is eventually taken away when the teacher sees fit, as it is and should only be used as a support until the pupil is confident and can complete the task. This is furthered by Daly (2002) that argues, the application of a framework when it is not needed or an over application of a framework can cause frustration which may even lead to a disregard from the framework altogether.

Methodology and Ethics

Participants

For this study, twenty-five Year 7 pupils in a top set English class were selected for this study through the use of convenience sampling. Mills, Gay, & Sperling (2016) describe convenience sampling as “the process of including whoever happens to be available in a sample” (p. 656). Convenience sampling was chosen due to time constraints, access, and availability, ensuring that a participant group could take part efficiently (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016 and Swanson and Holton 2005). Whilst convenience sampling is argued to be less representative of a whole cohort and can often only show results from a particular group, it was the only method of sampling suitable to ensure that the data collection could be carried out within a particular time frame due to knowing that I had access to that particular class (Swanson and Holton 2005). This may not have been the case had I chosen to use another method of sampling (Research methodology, 2019 and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007). I therefore had to choose the specific Year 7 top set class as they were the only class I had enough time with to pre-test, teach content, use the intervention, post-test, and that an assessment was taking place whilst I was on placement.

Slow writing frame-work

To make sure that the intervention of slow writing had the best chance of improving the quality of the pupils’ written work, the features included in the frame had to be fit for purpose: improving the quality of writing. Research was carried out to find what features could do this. The Welsh Assembly Government (2010) created a document (LNF) providing guidance on the teaching of writing skills. The characteristics of effective writing were: engagement of the reader, use of a range of sentence structures, use of stylistic features, choosing and using appropriate vocabulary, and using punctuation to clarify meaning. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF), a document designed to help teachers embed literacy into the curriculum, was also consulted and similar characteristics to the guidance from The Welsh Assembly Government (2010) were found. The LNF states writers’ writing should: engage the reader, use multiple sentence structures, choose varied and interesting vocabulary, and use a range of punctuation to clarify meaning (Welsh Assembly Government LNF, 2010).

Therefore, the characteristics from both documents influenced what was used in the slow writing frame to give pupils the best chance of progressing. The features used in the slow writing framework used for the Year 7 class were: simple and compound sentences (using a range of sentence structures), similes and metaphors (stylistic devices), punctuation marks including speech marks and an exclamation mark (range of punctuation), and an ambitious verb, adverb, and variant of said (ambitious and interesting vocabulary). All of these things, if carried out in an effective way, could create an engaging piece for the reader.

Usually, the framework consists of a set of sentences with one feature to use per sentence, thus creating a paragraph with all of the features included (Didau, 2012). This was modified (see appendix A) so that the framework instead of having one feature per sentence, had one or two features per paragraph. This modification was made as I did not want a focus to be on the features within the first paragraph only at the expense of the quality of the rest of the piece. This way, the features would possibly be used more fluidly and naturally throughout the whole written piece. To prevent a curbing of creative freedom, pupils were told that the framework was a guide and did not have to be followed like a set of rules (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Fones 2001).

Procedure

The procedure was set out in a way to try and ensure that within the given time frame, pupils had been taught the relevant content and had used the slow writing framework. Firstly, the participants were pre-tested to understand their current attainment levels. They were given the assignment title and had to complete the assignment without any preparation or guidance. Secondly, the assessments were marked and recorded. Later, the LNF (Welsh Assembly Government LNF, 2010) and The National Assembly for Wales' (2010) guidance was consulted to identify what pupils had lacked or not included which could have gotten them a better mark. After that, the slow writing framework that would be used in the post-test was created based on the identified features from the two aforementioned documents. Thirdly, content lessons based on the assessment brief were carried out. Fourthly, the slow writing intervention was introduced and the framework was modelled to the participants to understand the process (Thandi, 2019 Boswell, 2016). Participants then partook in using the slow writing framework and a whole class participation approach was used (Vygotsky 1978). The same features were used but were based on a topic different to that of the actual assessment so that pupils became familiar with using the framework itself. Finally, the post-test took place with participants having access to the slow writing framework created specifically for the post-test. The use of pre and post-testing was used to see if any differences occurred in pupils' test results after the slow writing intervention was used. The benefit of using this method is that the intervention of slow writing can be seen to be (or not be) a possible cause or a relation to the possible increase in the quality of written work. Whilst it cannot be definitively said that the intervention is the cause of a result, there may be an indication of a link. It therefore must be ensured that there is not a claim of the intervention alone causing a certain set of quantitative results as whilst it may be partly the reason, we must be aware and acknowledge that other factors may also play a part (Thomas, 2009). The quantitative data analysis will further this as generalisations about the study will be made, and again, an exact causation will not be identified and named as fact as cases are always different for each individual (Hughes, 2014).

Ethics

To ensure that the research carried out was ethically approved, a research application was taken to the official University review board for confirmation that all procedures carried out were ethically acceptable and to further ensure participant safety. (CIRT, 2019). As participants were under the age of eighteen, School X contacted parents to give information about the research and how this would affect their child. Parents then gave their consent allowing for their child to participate in the research.

In addition to parental consent, informed consent also had to be given by participants. To ensure participants were fully aware of their rights and expectations as a participant, they were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedure they would take part in as participants, how confidentiality would be ensured, and how they could pull out of the research at any time (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007). Pupils then verbally gave their informed consent to participate and were assured that they did not have to take part if they did not wish to (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007).

To guarantee pupil confidentiality, no names of participants were used. Pupils were instead named through a numbering system to ensure the anonymity of participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007). To further ensure participant confidentiality, the assignments used within the research were stored on a password protected USB stick so that only the researcher had access to the work.

Evaluation

Structure of lessons

The first lesson consisted of pupils being given the assessment title and writing their response to the assessment title without being taught any content or being given any expectations or success criteria for the piece. The assignments were taken in, marked, and features that were not used/not used very well and linked to the LNF (Welsh Assembly Government LNF, 2010) were noted and included in the features used in the slow writing framework.

The following three lessons concentrated on content and aspects needed for pupils to be able to write a successful recount. An element of behaviourism was needed for these lessons due to new content and ideas about the genre of recount writing being taught. Even though some disagree with the behaviourist approach, like Biesta argues, 'If you don't know what you're looking for, how can you look for it? (2012, p. 40). Pupils could not be expected to write a successful recount if they were not familiar with this genre of writing and had not been taught what was needed to make it successful.

Then the lesson that used the intervention of slow writing was used. The starter consisted of a slow-writing framework being put on the board and pupils were asked what they thought it

was and why they may need it. This was done as like constructivist Piaget (1929) believes, people make meaning themselves through self-exploration. I wanted to see if pupils could identify, work out the structure, or its use as this then allowed me to pitch my lesson about the slow writing process appropriately. I believe this was a useful start as even though pupils did not understand the reason for using the framework was to improve the quality of the writing, they independently worked out that each sentence was to be followed as it was a framework to use whilst writing. An advantage of this was that I was able to pitch the lesson to the right level.

Following on, I modelled using the slow writing framework and spoke aloud my ideas, as like Thandi (2019) argues, pupils need to be shown the thought processes they need to go through to complete the task. I completed the whole paragraph of the slow writing framework. This allowed for pupils to ask questions throughout the whole modelling process whilst understanding why I was making certain choices. I believe it furthered the pupils' understanding and gave them confidence to try and use the framework for themselves as I could hear them telling their partners their ideas for the following sentence. It suggests that modelling helped them to quickly understand how to use this slow writing framework.

Upon noticing that the majority of pupils within the class were telling their partners their ideas, I decided to get pupils to work alone and fill in the slow writing frame individually as like Paton (2011) argues, working in silence allows pupils to concentrate better. Despite the previous show of confidence, multiple questions were asked about what could be used and what the best idea was showing that working individually straight away was not advantageous. I decided to use the work of Vygotsky (1978) and use a social constructivist approach to complete the framework. Line by line, pupils discussed with their partners their answers and as a class, the highest quality sentence was chosen. The writing framework was inclusive as it allowed for all pupils' knowledge to be built upon which would not have been the case had I left pupils complete the framework alone (Wray and Lewis, 1998). Working as a class also worked as a drafting process as after one straightforward answer was given, multiple pupils gave multiple answers that each were more experimental and built positively upon the last as confidence grew (Hyland (2008) and Didau 2012). Pupils were not as focused on the end result, but instead on perfecting each line with the best possible answer supporting Didau's underpinning element of slow writing: giving each line and word attention (2012).

The following lesson pupils planned their assessment and wrote it. The slow writing framework was modified to put the features in paragraphs rather than sentences as I did not want one paragraph to be the sole focus to the detriment of the quality of the rest of the assessment. I told pupils that the structure was not a set of rules and that as long as the features were used and used well, the order was not important (Wray and Lewis, 1998). I believe this was important to tell pupils to ensure they did not become frustrated or even possibly opposed to the assessment due to feeling they could not be creative in their own writing or make their own decisions (Fones, 2001). Wray and Lewis (1998) argue that scaffolding should be taken away when pupils can complete a task without it. This supports my decision to keep the slow writing framework on the board during the assessment as pupils had only used it for one lesson (due to time constraints) and even though ideally it would have been better for them not to have it, they may not have remembered any of the features without it. This will have to be taken into consideration when discussing results and effectiveness of the intervention in relation to improving the quality of writing as levels of progress may have been different had the scaffolding not been there. Pupils worked in silence

as like Paton (2011) argues, this creates an environment for pupils to concentrate properly allowing them to focus solely on their assessment.

Results and analysis

Results of the assessment are as follows. This table shows the pre and post-test results of all twenty-five pupils in the class.

Pupil	Pre-test level	Post-test level
1	5	6
2	5	7
3	3	4
4	5	7
5	3	5
6	5	6
7	4	5
8	4	6
9	5	6
10	5	7
11	4	5
12	4	6
13	5	6
14	4	6
15	4	5
16	4	5
17	4	5
18	3	5
19	3	5
20	4	5
21	3	4
22	3	5
23	4	6
24	4	6
25	5	7

The table shows the results of the increase in levels of the twenty-five pupils in the class.

Amount of pupils that assessment levels increased by one level	Amount of pupils that assessment levels increased by two levels
12	13

It can be seen that that all twenty five pupils in the class advanced into a higher level.

Upon review of the assessments in conjunction with the level increase, the pupils that increased by two levels, did not do so simply because of the slow writing framework. This was the case for all pupils that increased by two levels but was clearly the most evident and extreme with four pupils within the class that after the pre-test had a level three and after the post-test had a level 5. Therefore, pupils starting at levels higher than a level three do conform to what is discussed but in a less extreme way.

All four pupils that were awarded level threes were done so due to the lack of imaginative and clear writing, the lack of features for the genre of a recount, and the lack of adaptation for the reader (Welsh Assembly Government LNF, 2010). All were clear examples of what Didau (2014) argues pupils do when they write: write in the simplest and most straight forward way. The recounts were told exactly how it happened with little regard for the reader, how the piece was written, and the fact that features of a recount should be present (possibly due to not being aware of the features for the genre). Not much risk was taken with the writing and recounts were very vague. Upon review of the post-test, the increase in levels whilst taking into account the features of slow writing, were more heavily influenced by the increase in description and development of the actual storyline, how imaginative and clear the writing became, and the use of the features for the recount genre rather than the features of the slow writing framework (Welsh Assembly Government LNF, 2010). This shows that the majority of the increase happened due to other factors such as content from lessons including explanation to pupils of the features of a recount, how detailed ideas needed to be, and interesting ways to engage the reader, more than simply just the use of the slow writing framework features.

Despite the slow writing framework not being the sole reason for the two level increase, all pupils' work that increased by two levels also improved in overall written quality. Like Didau (2012) and Wray and Lewis (1998) argued, pupils did become more experimental and confident with their writing as in the pieces written for the pre-test, pupils at most used two or three features from the writing frame (the compound sentence and an exclamation mark which could be argued to be what pupils ordinarily use when writing) with some using none at all, yet in the post-test piece, the number of features used in each piece clearly increased. In every single piece written by pupils that increased by two levels, at least six out of the eleven features of the writing frame were used suggesting that pupils had the confidence to try new ways of writing (Didau, 2012 and Wray and Lewis, 1998). This suggests that the focus was not on the final finished product, but care was taken throughout the recount and

there was an interest into how something was being written, which like Didau (2012) argues, slow writing allows for pupils to concentrate on. This shows that the slow writing frame improved the quality of all pupils' writing which supports the idea that writing frames do help pupils with different abilities. This is because pupils that increased by two levels started at levels three, four, and five, and as the quality of all of their written work increased, it can be argued that writing frames are an inclusive way to support and can increase the quality of written work for all pupils (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Fones 2001). Wray and Lewis (1998) also argue that not all pupils in a class will need a writing frame, but despite this, I would argue that all pupils should be given the chance to use one, as even those in the class achieving the level 5 for the pre-test, did use aspects of the slow writing frame and the quality of their written work in turn did improve to a degree. That being said, whilst the quality of all pieces did increase, the range of improvement varied. This depended not only on how many features of the slow writing framework were used but also the quality of the features used. Each particular piece of work had a different level of improvement unique to that piece. Therefore, whilst it can be argued that slow writing can improve the quality of written work, it cannot be argued to the exact degree work can, or will be improved by. As it has been found, each pupil may improve in a way that is unique to them.

Upon review of the assessments in conjunction with the level increase, the pupils that increased by one level, again did not do so simply because of the slow writing framework, but did more so because of the framework than other factors, which is unlike those pupils that increased by two levels. This does not mean that those that increased by one level had a higher level of imagination and clear ideas, used more features of a recount, or tried to engage the reader more than those that increased by two levels, but the improvements by one level in contrast were more heavily influenced by the features of the writing frame. It must also be noted that for some pupils that increased by one level, their pre-test results only just missed out on the level above.

Like those pupils that increased by two levels, those that increased by one level in their pre-test used few features from the slow writing framework, with the highest amount being used in one piece being two features (as aforementioned, the compound sentence and the exclamation mark). The difference is that the minimum amount of features used by all pupils that increased by one level in the post-test was nine features, unlike the minimum of six used by those that increased by two levels. This again supports the work of Didau (2012) to an even higher degree as pupils' writing was more experimental as a lot more of the features from the slow writing framework were used in comparison to the lack of features used in the pre-test pieces. It suggests that pupils had the confidence to try new things as the majority of the features of the framework were included in their written work (Didau, 2012). Again, it must be noted that whilst slow writing can improve the quality of written work, it cannot be argued to the exact degree work can or will be improved by as each case has proven to be different based on the individual.

This is furthered by the way in which the slow writing framework was used. As aforementioned, I ensured that I told pupils multiple times that the slow writing framework

sequence was not a set of rules and did not have to be followed exactly. This was to ensure that a curbing of creativity, originality and a creation of frustration did not occur (Fones, 2001). I believe this reassurance to be useful as pupils' work that increased by one level, but whose quality of writing drastically improved and I would argue improved the most, used the framework as they wished. Pupils whose writing improved by one level and whose quality of writing improved the most modified the framework where they saw fit, thus showing that the slow writing framework is the most effective when used as a guide (Wray and Lewis, 1998). It also supports the idea that writing frames are inclusive as all pupils from levels that started at level three to level five modified the framework to their own needs and this further shows that despite the argument put forth by Wray and Lewis (1998) that not all pupils may need a writing frame, all pupils should be given the chance to use one. This could be argued because the use of the writing frame and the modification of it has been seen to create an increase in the quality of written work (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Fones 2001). This was seen by the use of multiple features being used multiple times, through the rearrangement of the features being used to fit the need of the sentence/paragraph, and the clear increase in the quality of written work. It was clear that the focus was not solely on the end product but instead, like Didau (2012) argues happens, a focus became about how things were written seen by each unique modification of the framework.

Upon review of the features used, it must be pointed out that some features were used more often than others. The most popular features used were the compound sentence and exclamation mark (used twenty five times) and were followed by the simple sentence, a variant of said, and a rhetorical question (used twenty-one times). The two features that were used the least were onomatopoeia (used seven times) and a metaphor (used three times). The lack of use of onomatopoeia and metaphors may be due to being visited only once during the sequence of lessons. Campbell and Parke (2018) used a writing frame over a twelve-week period and found that all pupils in the class' results increased. This suggests that using the framework for longer may lead to pupils becoming more familiar and confident in using the techniques and they may in turn benefit even more from the frequent revisiting of the features.

Overall, the research shows that it can be argued that a slow writing framework can improve the quality of written work but it must be noted that the framework was on the board for pupils to use whilst writing their assessment. Wray and Lewis (1998) argue that the scaffolding should be taken down, but as it was not, it cannot be argued that the same results would happen had the slow writing framework not been on the board.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be argued that slow writing framework, like Didau (2012 and 2014) argues, does improve the quality of written work, but it cannot be said to be the sole influencer of the pupils' level gains. Other factors that were included in the content lessons such as explanations to pupils about the features of a recount, how detailed ideas needed to be, and interesting ways to engage the reader must also be accounted for. Further research could explore whether a slow writing framework or one of the other factors aforementioned improves the quality of written work the most. This could then influence the path that the classroom teacher would take to improve the quality of written work of the class.

That being said, like Didau (2012) argues, the slow writing framework did improve the overall quality of written work. Whilst the level of improvement cannot be pinpointed to a certain degree as results differed from pupil to pupil (something which can be expected due to the uniqueness of each individual pupil), all pupils' quality of written work did improve. This also supports the argument put forth by Wray and Lewis (1998) that writing frames are inclusive. All pupils in this study did benefit to some degree from using the writing frame and I would therefore recommend writing frames be used with both set or mixed ability classes as they can benefit all pupils. Also, the slow writing framework got pupils to think about how things were written, clearly seen by the increase in features used by all pupils in the post-test in comparison to the pre-test (Didau, 2012). More attention was paid to how ideas were conveyed and not on the end product which was not always the case in the pre-test assessments (Didau, 2012). Therefore if pupils are seen to write in a basic way with not much attention paid to quality, an introduction of a slow writing frame with features that can be used to make writing more interesting could be used to get pupils to think more in depth about the way they write.

Wray and Lewis (1998), argue that slow writing frameworks can be modified and this study supports and suggests that frameworks work best when pupils modify them to suit their own needs and outcomes for particular sentences/paragraphs. This is seen by the frequent modification of the structure through the rearrangement of features and the amount of times the features were used and the quality increase of all pupils and especially those increasing by one level. This further shows that the framework gave pupils the confidence to experiment with their writing as modifications were made to the framework independently (Didau, 2012). Further research could explore the exact extent of increase in quality of work by pupils that follow the structure rigidly and those that modify it to suit their own needs, to see if the slow writing framework given by a teacher should only be used as guidance and a starting point.

As aforementioned, certain features such as onomatopoeia and metaphors were not used often in comparison to other features such as compound sentences and rhetorical questions. A recommendation would be for teachers that use the slow writing framework to identify features that are not used as often, investigate why, and revisit the features later on to ensure that pupils have the confidence to use them at a later time. This way, more features will be

used confidently and it gives the pupils the best chance at being creative and producing quality writing.

Limitations and Future Developments

One limitation of this study is that only one participant group was used. The results were from a top set class and whilst it is useful to see results for that particular group, generalisations cannot be made about the whole year group due to the differing abilities of multiple other classes (Swanson and Holton 2005). A future development of this research could use pupils from a range of abilities of all the classes in a year group to see whether the slow writing framework positively impacts all pupils or if it works better for a certain group. This would then aid my judgement about what classes would benefit the most from the slow writing framework and what classes the slow writing framework could be implemented with.

Due to the time constraints, slow writing was only done once and it was completed as a class and in pairs. Whilst this is useful as it worked as a working model for pupils to see the process, hear other answers, and become confident with using the framework, pupils did not actually get the chance to use the slow writing framework on their own properly before it was expected that they do so in the assessment. In the future, I would ensure that sufficient time was given to ensure that individual practise with the slow writing framework was carried out so that pupils felt confident in using the framework on their own. This is vital as pupils in assessments and exams will have to come up with their own ideas therefore it is important that they become familiar with doing so.

Due to time constraints and the lack of practise of using the slow writing framework, the writing frame was left on the board as pupils did not have enough practise with it to remember all of the features. Because of this, certain features may not have been used if it was not left on the board. Therefore in the future, it would be ensured that the slow writing framework is used enough times before the assessment or examinations so that pupils are as familiar with the framework as they can be and have confidence in using it before it is taken away, like scaffolding must be (Wray and Lewis, 1998 and Hammond, 2001). Also, in future assessments and examinations such as GCSE's, the framework will not be present therefore this will aid in the remembrance of certain features that pupils should be including in their work. The remembrance of the features without the framework will also aid my understanding of what features are remembered and used well and those that are not remembered or used as well. This would then further my planning to ensure that those features not remembered or used well are revisited in future lessons to help pupils have the best chance of using all of the features to the best of their ability. Furthermore, it could also aid in the introduction of new features. I would be able to monitor those using the majority of the features (and using them well) and introduce additional features at an appropriate time to further their chance at producing the highest quality of written work that they could.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Slow writing framework

Paragraph 1 = Use a simple sentence

Paragraph 2 = Use an ambitious verb
Use onomatopoeia

Paragraph 3 = Use a time connective
Use an ambitious adverb (end in -ly)

Paragraph 4 = Use dialogue with an '!'
Use another word instead of said

Paragraph 5 = Use a simile/metaphor
Use a four word sentence

Paragraph 6 = Use a compound sentence
Use a rhetorical question

