

“How a school develops one aspect of its SDP: a report that critically reflects on the actions, impact and evidence base”

“Further Developing Monitoring, Tracking & Reporting Systems at KS3 & KS4 to Support The Progress of Individual Learners & Groups of Learners”

Word Count: 2673

Feedback from Previous Assignment and Meeting set Targets

	Targed / Target	What I have done in this assignment
Targed / Target 1	Improve the quality of your reference	Keep all sources from academic or government publications
Targed / Target 2	Paraphrasing Key Concepts	Dont use direct quotations and instead form into my own words
Targed / Target 3	Use a variety of sources that provide information not only on the topic, but aspects that may branch from it	Broaden my depth and breadth of understanding how SDPs work and my chosen aspect e.g. how to improve tracking for learners with difficulties rather than a general overview for all students which may not suit all learners

Introduction

The information discussed comes from my placement school within South Wales which hosts under 1000 pupils, under 15% free school meal pupils and roughly 30% of pupils having special educational needs (taken from the school estyn report - available on request).

It is important to focus on how current school development strategies work and which already exist linking to my focus point. The focus point I will be discussing is the potential differences that each learner may require in their tracking and how each learner's requirements may differ.

Therefore, this essay contains a literature section to explore existing information to better improve my understanding of SDPs and developing pupil progress monitoring.

I will be investigating how schools can develop their plans (SDPs) along with my chosen school action point to '*Further developing monitoring, tracking and reporting systems to support learners and groups of learners*'.

A2. Further develop monitoring, tracking and reporting systems at KS3 and KS4 to support the progress of individual learners and groups of learners.	Department meeting time (1 hour) to adapt comment banks for reports.		July 2019 – April 2020	- Tracking system at KS4 adapted to include new courses and new KPIs. - Attitude to learning/effort grades reported on in all year groups through interim reports and full reports. - Expected grade added to SIMS <u>marksheets</u>, for KS4 pupils, to allow value added scores to be measured. - Subject Review and Cohort Review documentation simplified. - Comment banks in year 7 modified to include Progression Steps in line with Curriculum for Wales 2022 (<u>CfW</u>).
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[Image 1 - Chosen SDP Action Point - Taken from Schools Development Document]

I will also provide my own thoughts and potential solutions to developing pupil progress monitoring along with discussing the understanding behind how development plans are created / how the school action points are identified. A discussion on which parties have a say in the development plan and how the impact of the points are measured is also included.

Literature Review

Several studies exist towards how a schools' development plan is created and worked upon to allow the action points to become successful. The Department of Education created a document in 2010 that provides guidance on school development plans (SDPs). The document outlines how every school has its own individual challenges and therefore have control of their own action points to develop. SDPs should create a strategic pathway for improvement and actually be of an achievable manner in a given timeframe, these create realistic goals to demonstrate progression for the school and their community. SDPs require discussion between headship and the board of Governors to confirm a clear sight is set and if or any guidance is needed to help towards achieving the goal(s).

Barbara MacGilchrist (2006) produced an article on the impact of SDPs within Primary Schools. Barbara investigates mainly the financial and human resource which is required to have an effective monitoring and management behind achieving the goals. The research information comes from a 36 month project over 9 primary schools where the methods behind developing school plans are explored and their effectiveness measured. The methodological issues that arose in the study show a problem between gathering quantitative and qualitative data and how they can best be analysed towards helping a pupil's progression. The best development plans were described as one which shared their goals with surrounding educational facilities, encouraged teacher collaboration towards meeting targets and teacher improvement / learning was a key characteristic. Michael Rutter (1983) although a potential 'out-dated' opinion, concurs with Barbara through the discussion of how equalizing the quality of schools and teachers' understanding towards assessment would work towards a relative goal of improving learners' achievements. Michael concludes with how the school policies can be used to display the schools mission points and allow them to set expectations towards pupils and meeting their goals during intake.

An interesting aspect I thought of was how do parents tie into the school development planning as they are the ones receiving this information on what their children are doing towards improving the school in certain ways along with how it is being achieved. In 1943, again even though an extremely out-dated relevancy source I found contained some interesting factors that also relate to current educational standards. W. L. van Loan (1943) mentions on how we can best report progress to parents to let them know what the school is doing to best benefit their child and how basic tickbox report cards are not allowing individual learners progressions to be uniquely identified as argued by authors below on how assessment should be done on an individual basis due to each learner progressing differently.

With our technological advancements, we now have so many more methods available towards contacting parents such as texting, calling and emailing so I would argue that this target is now up to the school on how frequent they choose parental communication to be and how it can affect their planning.

I then began looking at how previous studies have worked towards 'assessing pupil progress', and discovered that numerous authors have recognized this specific aspect to be a structured process where teachers use everyday in order to form judgements on their pupils which leads to evidence collection for building pupil profiles and achievements. These profiles could then be used to inform future teachings and opportunities for learners (J. Freeman, 2009). Jerome extends their discussion on pupil assessment into how judgement is inevitably formed of a teachers interpretation of the criteria being marked against and how by collecting pupils work, we can create standards as to what is deemed to be 'pass-worthy'.

Mary Lou Veal (2012) highlights a problem of how professional practitioners require a theoretical understanding of pupil assessment in order to properly connect with it and create the best situations for their learners else we only offer a 'negative view' towards assessment. Mary additionally discusses how the understanding of pupil assessment may also link into the problem of insufficient record keeping and a need for theoretically backed support personnel for documenting progress appropriately.

I then further looked into how two researchers discuss assessment towards learners with difficulties as pupil progress tracking may require different strategies for targeting different learners and how they can be properly supported. The discussion introduced by Rosie Hogg (2017) shows the idea that as some learners do not follow the traditional educational pattern, why should a pupil assessment process designed for mainstream educational work for these individuals. Instead, for these learners, identifying progress is very difficult and therefore a system which is able to identify small progress stones and record quantitatively may be more appropriate. However, the question of how to create such a system remains somewhat unclear as current requirements for schools to record and display this pupil data collection are set. Rosie continues to mention how quantitative data enables the comparison of individuals or groups of learners to be made and can set achievement goals so ensure progress is being made.

Secondly, Peter Imray (2013) has produced a publication of the indicators that pupils with PMLD (profound and multiple learning difficulties) may display. Imray mentions how skill-based learning opportunities are hindered by those with PMLD which prevents these progress tracking systems from ever seeing any data - so is that to say the learners progress is zero? Or should their progress be measured using alternative methods, concurring with Rosie Hoggs discussion.

I could not however find sources from current years with regards to 'pupil progress evaluation' so I gathered information from what may be deemed as 'out-dated' however display that the thought of pupil progress has been surrounding educational professionals for many years. Harry Smallenberg (1945) created an article which emphasises evaluation in education as the process of analysing education programmes to meet the requirements of the learners and community. Additionally Joseph R. Jenkins (1979) mentions how the need to measure special education programmes has greatly increased and skill monitoring within the classroom can lead to altering the teaching towards targeting the class as a whole for inclusiveness and understanding.

Developing the Action Points

The school I am basing this essay around uses the SIMS pupil recording system that allows the creation of individual pupil profiles along with key information that surrounds the learner such as likes, dislikes and preferences. This therefore lets teachers design their lessons effectively for all learners and allows avoidance of potential issues however It would also be relevant to the topic to look at what existing systems already exist towards monitoring pupil progress in order to form practical suggestions towards developing tracking methods.

Developing the schools measurement of assessment and how their stakeholders form decisions, first I found an article by Margaret O'Connor (2018) that reviews a system which allows small-step progressions for learners with difficulties to be recorded and helps towards setting achievable goals for the individual based on the inputted information. The system records data along the lines of an individual's reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculations, comprehension and using / applying known skills. By recording this data, an individual's progressions can be observed as certain groups of learners receive extra teaching towards literacy and numeracy and their overall progression is increased.

The challenges within the system are discussed as in order for a learner's next goal to be realised, they need to be as far as 80% up to achieving their current goal and doing this allows the severity levels of the next goal to be set appropriately. A secondary issue is that existing assessment systems can disengage some learners as the tasks set were not on the appropriate level.

Concluding my understanding towards how a school may develop their pupil tracking and reporting systems, a clear common goal is shown within literature that it is not only an importance of having pupil assessment recorded appropriately, but to do so effectively as discussed by both Barbara (2006) and Michael (1983) it requires teachers to have their own sound understandings on different assessment forms / pupil requirements. Then Mary (2012) said how the thought of a teacher improving their capability to assess appropriately should be one that is welcomed as adaptation and strategies can always be improved and globally shared. The issues discussed by Margaret O'Connor (2018) may be resolved by improving upon the teachers' understanding of assessment as reaching the '80%' pupil goal and setting appropriate assessment levels seem to be dependent on who is assessing the individual.

As our literature section showed, the action points put in development plans are formed and approved by stakeholder inputs (e.g. board of governors and headship) so I further investigated how these stakeholder decisions are made. In 2006, L. Robin Keller hypothesised a framework which allowed for multiple stakeholders to feed into decisions and form a priority order. The model is said to help form connections between theory and practise and the reasoning behind requiring such a model stems from literature lacking a conceptualization of decision making that is relevant for individual communities, as shown by the Department of Education (2010) above how each school faces its own challenges, such a designed system to help the school should be adaptive towards helping these issues.

One of the main things that makes these progress tracking and reporting systems so effective would be the data that is being fed into it. One of the main data items I thought of that would have an effect on a learners progress would be their school sets and how well they engage within the classroom which may link to their achievement. Lani Florian (2004) and Paul Withey (2013) have both written of how we can use national data sets to spot potentially non-inclusive experiences as a lower score trend will be shown in the analysis and how different schools have different percentages towards learners who may have difficulties so the strategies will differ between how schools are teaching the concepts as the 'C' is a common performance indicator. This data is then what can be used to make judgements in the success of the schools action points and whether or not they need any refining.

From the discussed points of data analysis, involving stakeholders and the need to constantly progress a teachers understanding towards assessment and how this can lead to the development of recording systems and the schools development plan effectiveness schools need to appropriately measure the impact that their development plan is having on the school either positively or negatively, through the voices of stakeholders as a central focus point to the school which provides several different insights into creating the most achievable action plan points with a clear pathway being set.

Finally, developing a successful development plan clearly requires the voice of many to allow a positive progression that sees all learners needs are met within the education system and it is in my own judgement that the school is showing a clear understanding and need towards developing their assessment techniques as the beneficial aspects for individual learners are highlighted throughout numerous references.

Reflection & Evaluation

Looking at the schools current pupil tracking system and having knowledge surrounding these systems / school development plan design I will propose some ideas towards developing a new monitoring, tracking and reporting system.

I would say that after considering each literature aspect and how the school deals with creating their plans, the ultimate point is coming down to what data is put in the system as this is used to record an individual's progress and create plans for them to continue learning positively. Therefore from the investigations from the likes of Jerome Freeman (2009) and Rosie Hogg (2017) it is possible to form a conclusion on the fact that it does indeed appear to be a commonly known thought that extra methods are required to accurately record the potentially minuscule progression that learners with difficulties may show however progress is still progress and if we can identify a learner progress, we are affecting them positively.

The school builds profiles on individuals along with their learning requirements which allows staff to get further understanding on each of their classes and allows teachers to develop strategies towards helping learners develop which may then in turn be put into their profile to inform future teachings. I feel that the schools development plan presents clear achievable goals (example available in image 1) and also shows how it will be achieved either through meetings to adapt the point and set their own bullet point list to reach success. A secondary factor I like is that they set themselves a timeframe to meet the point, else the development is becoming too slow and the point should be rethought.

Towards developing their progress monitoring, they are creating a dynamic system which allows courses to be added for individuals and are working closer with their KS4 pupils to change attitudes for assessment and individuals scores which are to be measured with reaching success in the course.

To really ensure that progress monitoring is improving positively, I am proposing a new system that provides; unique pupil profiling and dynamic assessment methods to be entered which could be used to form decisions on a learners next progress goal and create pathways to achievement. The system potentially may work towards targeting Margaret O'Connors' (2018) issues of moving a learner forward in their education and having assessments that are appropriately designed for the learner. Dynamic testing is frequently increasing in these coming years mainly within literacy and numeracy as they allow the question severity to be altered to an individual's understanding and could therefore provide better data to be fed into recording systems. The system should also allow stakeholder input to see the schools development plans and henceforth allow multiple inputs towards meeting each individual's progression requirements with that specific action point.

Conclusion

Summarizing the essays discussions, the school development plan process is appearing as a cyclic operation where small-steps are used to create achievable goals for the school within a few years time frame and through creating these goals, we can create further development ideas for the school itself as they will possess their own unique importances for development.

The pupil monitoring, tracking and recording process is also showing to be that which is becoming heavily more important within a schools structure and through constant research, idea improvement and communication with surrounding educational facilities, can become a more unique individual process further allow an individual to show their progressions rather than having to meet an overall requirement.

I feel that my future practise has been altered by having a clearer mindset on how I can personally improve upon my own understanding towards pupil tracking and how I should design my lessons around providing progression goals for individual learners rather than a general goal to be met within the lesson itself. This can then be recorded and used to inform the schools' future developments in their overall vision.

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