

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
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.		

ASSIGNMENT ECSP7001

Due to current initiatives, literacy in school is no longer the sole responsibility of the English department. Subject teachers of all disciplines are now expected to improve pupil literacy. Looking into any classroom, we can see the language of learning in action. That is, the essential tools of a healthy learning environment being used, such as instruction, explanation and discussion. Whether delivered verbally or in writing, language must be understood by the recipients. In order to appreciate, analyse and understand concepts in a learning environment, literacy must be at an adequate level. "Language enables us to share thoughts about new experiences and organize life together in ways in which no other species can". (Mercer, 2000, cited in Roberts, 2003, p.47). Language can be seen as the foundation for human development. Without a solid grasp on language, development is likely to be limited. It is this belief that has formed the basis of much educational discussion for at least 20 years. This is reiterated most recently in The Donaldson Report (2015). Among the recommendations, the structure of curriculum should be seen to promote the development and application of knowledge and skills in literacy. Therefore, in order to deliver a high quality education, there must be a focus on the fundamental skills required in order for students to progress. For this paper, I will discuss the importance of literacy and its implementation across the whole school curriculum with a focus on School B, a local authority maintained secondary school in South Wales. Current policy, relevant literature and school strategy will be looked at alongside analysis and reports. The School Improvement Plan for School B will be evaluated and recommendations will be made based on research, established good practice and my own observations as a teacher.

Approximately 460 pupils attend School B, starting at year 7 and ending in year 11. Pupils at the school represent the full range of ability. Based on the Welsh Government regulations, the School B Geography Departmental Improvement Plan (Appendix A) references the following literacy related areas for improvement: First, to improve standards, nurturing of accurate literacy skills, which is backed up by a whole-school marking policy. This is intended to foster the development of more independent learning skills with regards literacy within geography lessons. Second, in terms of provision for skills, the department aims to provide opportunities for pupils to extend their writing, providing support through reading behaviours, strategies, writing frames and connectives. Successful learners will be able to develop literacy understanding and confidence to use literacy skills to express their ideas, knowledge and understanding within the subject. Third, in terms of resources, GCSE booklets are now needed to cover the course. The aim here is the production of good quality booklets covering all units of the course with an emphasis on extended writing. The DIP ties in with the whole school strategy and the five areas of improvement highlighted in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) (Appendix B). Within the SIP are areas of development, including the need to strengthen the whole school approach to literacy with the explicit aim of improving the quality of pupils' written work across the curriculum. The relevant areas can be summarised as follows: The school aims to improve pupil average grades and achieve greater engagement in English, including morning and afterschool enhancement lessons. There is a focus on pupils using literacy techniques on project based challenges. This is hoped to be achieved through: (i) Daily literacy intervention targeting pupils in years 7-9. (ii) Fully embedding in school practice the new marking policies to focus on consistent literacy within book marking. (iii) Action research approaches to reading in geography and history in year 7 with topic specific vocabulary. (iv) Year 7 thematic / skills learning (set lessons) introduced to the curriculum. (v) Focused projects on literacy skill development. Auditing will be undertaken in order to update the provision of skills and delivery and to identify gaps in skill. In terms of skills development, the overall objectives are to embed pupil literacy skills, to improve staff sharing and to standardize marking criteria. This will be administered through staff meetings, staff resource sharing, development of formative feedback and consistency of marking. Quality of teaching can deliver on engaging students in order to develop skills. School B aims for a consistency of targets for staff alongside stronger collaborative work. Pupil voice will also be regarded more through surveys. Linking everything together is school environment; School B has decided to upgrade and develop displays to encourage and promote pupil and staff learning across the national agenda. Curriculum and skills are key words used throughout the SIP. The issue of literacy improvement seems to run in tandem with pupil outcomes. For School B the review of literacy policy could be seen as not only a response to national developments, but an endorsement of the importance of literacy in pupil attainment.

Prior to the publication of any SIP, data is scrutinized and a strategy is devised. Strategic planning divides educational theorists into many camps. For West-Burnham (1994), strategic planning is critical for managing education competently. At the other end of the spectrum, Bell (1998) suggests that such planning could be seen by some as irrelevant and a distraction from the essential functions of improving teaching and learning. Despite these differences, overall it is certain that, if a plan is designed, it is with the hope of securing a successful future for an institution. How an organisation achieves this goal varies. Some plans may involve every aspect of management. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) summarize planning as a continuous process of goal-setting, policy-making, short and long-term planning, budgeting and evaluation spanning all levels of the institution and providing a framework for the yearly planning, budgeting and appraisal cycle. Other plans emphasize simplicity. For Quong et al (1998) this involves selecting a destination, figuring out the best way of getting there, then explaining how you know you have arrived. Whatever strategy of school planning is adopted, there is a desire to achieve some degree of shared principles. Senge (1990) recognises that staff may react in different ways towards a vision. He categorises attitudes towards a vision as ranging from commitment to apathy. In most cases staff show 'compliance', however, it was noted that, through informal dialogue, staff may move from 'compliance' to 'commitment'. A case reviewed by Stott & Walker (1992) points to a more worrying discovery. They found that school mission statements were often vague, self-righteous and undifferentiated. Staff are often unclear about the content, with statements having little impact on the school's activities. Generally speaking, planning for improvement involves collection and analysis of data. Armstrong (1982) argues that the planning process can help produce and maintain better organisation-environment alignment. Through strategic planning, a school can identify needs and objectives and create strategies and plans to meet them. Therefore, with a framework in place, staff are equipped with guidance and everyone is working toward the same goal. Reeves (2008) analysed strategic plans based on the following criteria; planning, implementation, monitoring, expectations and evaluations. He reported that when the criteria were highly rated, there were higher gains in student achievement. For Tracey (2012) strategic planning is a linear and cyclical process with several interdependent elements. First, by being linear, steps in a process can be followed logically in succession. All of this requires the gathering of information or human input to produce an output. Analysis is needed right up to the final step in the sequence. It is at this point that the process begins again based on these results. Therefore, development is a continuous cycle influenced by previous cycles. Tracey (2012) and Reeves (2008) identify the four stages of strategic planning; The first stage involves examination and discussion to identify goals and objectives, revise previous plans and set new targets. Data is collected at the second stage, and continues to encompass strategy throughout. Third, is the process of implementation where strategies are put into place. Finally, through evaluation and monitoring, a school can begin to understand what aspects have succeeded or failed. At this stage, a school is primed for improving quality and is well placed to promote further change, adapt or persevere in a given area of policy. If we were to combine the various definitions of strategic planning we would find that establishment of values, information analysis, goals and implementation, linked to operational management, budgeting and so on are often key. This prescriptive model, often emerging from government organisations can be seen as rational. However, can this kind of strategic planning be applied to educational institutions? A business can make radical changes, but a school's choices are likely to be small in comparison (Bush & Bell 2002). School change is marginal and related to curriculum. It is dependent on funding and constrained by legislation. With such limited choice, can change be seen as strategic at all? The dominant view of strategic planning may not be relevant to education. For example, the educational environment is changeable, so, plans may become irrelevant after one or two years. The linear relationship between plans and outcomes need not apply to schools. Quong et al (1998) see planning as interactive and ongoing. Mintzberg (1990) suggests strategy arises from a situation as it evolves, and Quinn (1980) argues that monumental plans do not build change, instead, change is based on a step by step process he terms 'logical incrementalism'. (Bush & Bell, 2002, 92). What is beyond doubt is that planning is often intended to satisfy external bodies such as government departments. This may serve political ends but Warnet (1994) makes the point that planning provides the apparatus for the negotiation and realisation of the different expectations of society. So planning is not just a bureaucratic process, it is political in a beneficial way as it accommodates society's aspirations for learners. Several commentators such as Staessens, Vandenberghe and Warnet (1994) argue that the mere process of strategic planning can bring positives and purpose. Lumby (1999) surveyed school principals who found

planning had brought; a greater sense of purpose and independence, better efficiency and communications, and a benchmark on which to measure decisions. Lieberman and Miller (1999) on the other hand, detailed the frustrations of principals who felt they were sacrificing innovation and individual growth in favour of long term thinking that reinforces the status quo. Jennings and Wattam (1998) provide a template for strategic management based on current practice but at the same time revising the methods. For example, current expected practice would categorize strategy as a 'realisation of prior intent'. However, the new framework describes strategy as 'emerging from the chaos of challenge and contradiction' (Bush & Bell 2002, 97). Strategic planning takes into account resources, timescales and targets. Information must be gathered and decisions are made rationally and/or politically. Resolutions are met long term and/or spontaneously. Whatever course is chosen and whatever the destination, the course cannot be abandoned. Strategic planning may have its critics but an attempt to facilitate change is only feasible when a route to the destination has been mapped out in advance.

When the Donaldson Report was released in February 2015, it was clear that the emphasis on skills like literacy were here to stay. Already, for the Welsh Government, the LNF/National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (2013) has been seen as central to effective teaching and learning. Estyn, the inspectorate in Wales, are fully engaged in this and government guidelines are in place with a clear goal; literacy must encompass every topic of study. Donaldson (2015) has reiterated this, arguing that literacy is universally acknowledged, by children and adults, as the essential foundation of education, and should be a cross-curricular responsibility for all teachers. The promotion of literacy is not a new concept. Here is an excerpt from the Bullock Report (1975) "Each school should have an organised policy establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development throughout the years of schooling" (DES, 1975, 514 cited in Roberts, 2003, 47). Going back further brings us to the ideas of the psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1962) who believed that thought comes into existence through knowledge of words, this knowledge can then be expressed with words. For students to develop in any subject, they must be given opportunities to use language through talk and writing. For example, in geography, it is important that students are able to verbalise the world around them. As well as specialist vocabulary, there are concepts and questions that need to be put into words. Roberts (2003) believes the use of language is a vital component of the learning of geography. Look again at the previous sentence and it is reasonable to replace the last word with any school subject. It seems evident that there is no quick fix when it comes to language deficiencies. The focus of syllabus, in varying degrees, has tended toward cross-curricular literacy development, and this has been the case for over 40 years. The following quote, now 20 years old, from David Blunkett, the secretary of state for Education, reads like something taken directly from Donaldson; "All our children deserve to leave school equipped to enter a fulfilling adult life. If children do not master the basic skills of literacy and numeracy they will be seriously disadvantaged later". (DfEE 1998 cited in White 2004, 67). Incredibly, a similar rhetoric appears in the Spens Report of 1928; "It is a common and grave criticism that many pupils pass through grammar school without acquiring the capacity to express themselves in English". (Cox, 1995, 38 cited in White 2004, 66). These direct quotes are an indication that improvement in school literacy, to an 'acceptable' standard may never be attainable. Failure in any subject seems to be rooted in a lack of literacy ability. At a school level, many leaders plan meticulously as they prepare for the next literacy drive. At a national level, it sometimes seems that departments borrow from the visions of the previous years; the government in power may be different, the wording may change, but worryingly, the message and the guidance is the same. In Wales, the LNF (2013) and the Donaldson Report (2015) could be seen as top-down, policy driven approaches, which offer a level of autonomy befitting a national policy of choice and competition. However, Fullan (2009) points out, that, in Australia and New Zealand, there have been good results due to a focus on improving teacher skills and involving parents rather than to assessment and accountability. In Singapore, deemed successful according to PISA figures, there is less emphasis on choice and more emphasis on leadership development, professional learning and improved pedagogical skills. To sustain a literacy initiative, support is needed at all levels. For example, the principal is the 'first change agent' working on shaping the shared vision of the school. The 'second change agents' are just as crucial, they are experienced teachers with responsibility and time during school hours to assist teachers and to foster links internally and across schools. (Fullan 2009, 169). So, no matter how feasible an initiative appears, the support systems must be in place. However, to implement recommendations on the scale of Donaldson, senior staff

may find themselves under extra strain. Croxford & MacGregor (2000) remind us that teachers are overburdened and whole-school initiatives are at risk of dilution as teachers avert risk.

Data available for School B, seems to justify the need to consider school policy for literacy improvement as recent data from the My Local School Website (appendix C) indicates some areas of concern. First, some context is needed. The most recent Estyn report (2013) rated the school as 'good' overall, the following breakdown of figures will give an indication of progress since then. School B is an amber category school needing fairly regular support as opposed to the minimal support needed at green category schools. School B belongs to a family of schools that achieve lower average scores in terms of A-C GCSE results. For this paper, the comparisons focus on the school family. Local authority results are touched upon to show the bigger picture. At School B, pupils achieving the Level 1 threshold of 5 GCSE's at A-G has increased steadily from 2012. This is consistent with increases across the board within the family of schools. In terms of averages, School B has remained over this marker every year to date. For the level 2 threshold of 5 GCSE's at A-C, School B dipped below the average in 2016 and finds itself 10 percentage points below the family of school's average. This is just over 20 percent lower than the local authority average. At level 1, it should be noted that School B achieved over the local authority average. For English, maths and Welsh achievement at level 2, the school results echo more or less exactly those of the school family, that is, approximately 15 percent below the local authority average. Average capped 8 points scores dropped below the school family average in 2017. The capped 9 measure scores available from 2017 look at pupil achievement in terms of the 9 qualifications available in Wales. To date, only 2017 statistics are available for this and School B is placed below average within the school family and local authority.

The raw data shows some below average results which could be seen as a catalyst for discussion, reflection and progression. For School B, improved literacy could benefit learning across the curriculum. This ties in with the Welsh Government education agenda, but, for School B, there needs to be an inherent desire to get things right at a skills level. Literacy improvement could kick-start whole school improvement. School B pupil numbers have almost halved since 2010 (Appendix D) but a willingness to quickly adopt Donaldson recommendations could be seen as a positive and progressive move and be viewed favourably by Estyn and similar bodies. Estyn are extremely important in this context. With accessible material and available inspection reports, the winners and under-achievers are publicized, however, it is the good practice that is elaborated on. For example, innovative practice is shared alongside positive impacts on pupil standards. School B has a chance to use initiative to reverse the trend in pupil decline. Schools have a chance to pave the way in the blueprint for the new curriculum. Literacy skill, and authentic implementation across the curriculum is vital to students, but also, reassuring to parents. Epstein (1995) argues that school improvement can be strengthened by better school-family communication, so parents can be made aware of new policy and progress. However, it might be argued that the majority of parents are unlikely to show much interest in data that shows whether planning targets have been met and what practices are being implemented. Recognition of policy and progress often comes in the form of pupil to parent interaction. This area of interaction, which is often understated, can often be the trigger for increased school intake or vice versa. For example, if a year 8 child has reading difficulties, parents can detect it. The school is seen as the culprit, the knock on effect being that parents who share similar concerns can spot trends, word spreads and the school downturn continues as parents look to schools elsewhere. For parents, homework could be used a gauge of school progress, however, monitoring homework and reading perhaps only reflects a child's effort and does not indicate school policy outcomes. Guthrie & Wigfield (1998) argue that some pupils enjoy reading and have a desire to improve, whereas others do not display this attitude and therefore become disengaged. In addition, children are exposed to differing communication experiences at home. Hart & Risley (1995) found that economically deprived children have limited talk repertoire due to insubstantial home conversation. Therefore, school policy could be seen by some as having limited influence in terms of child literacy progression. Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of school literacy improvement is to enable students to understand and express themselves across the range of subjects. For example, Sheeran & Barnes (1991) observed writing ability in a key stage 3 geography class. They found that, even when students knew the answer to a question, they struggled to write at an acceptable level. This was due to lack of understanding of the 'ground rules' of writing such as; spelling, structure and relevance (cited in Roberts, 2003, 66). The relevance of

literacy can perhaps be summed up with the following quote; “Students who are poor readers also face difficulties acquiring background knowledge” (Murphy & Murphy, 2018, 7). Therefore, the implementation of a strong literacy focus across the curriculum could reduce writing problems and strengthen background knowledge in all subjects.

Mindful of the national agenda linked to standards, and to facilitate auditing, School B has students sit tests to assess their progress in literacy. Subsequently, they are assigned levels of attainment by their respective teachers. The process is clear; standard data input to indicate levels of attainment, followed by monitoring with interventions as required. Evidence is available for inspectors along with proof that the national agenda is truly being followed. Whenever there is an initiative, audits are used as the evidence base. To improve literacy, substantial information gathering is required in order to define problems. For Lewis & Wray (2000) thorough audits are conducted on an extensive scale to include observations, book checks, interview schedules and checklists. This can reveal information and perspectives on literacy and learning. This is painstaking work, but maybe necessary to get to the root of any problems. Audits are all very well, but, to inform school policy there has to be a range and depth of information. For School B, many targets are based on improving grades. This is a fairly common and rational method of targeting by using tangible data. Fidler (2002) believes this data allows a school to look at performance over time and compare with previous years. It is also possible to compare results with other schools by charting prior attainment against outcomes. All of this allows for a regression line to be drawn and the schools’ effectiveness is judged on its position being above or below that line. However, with this average line it means all schools could improve and there would still be the same amount of schools below the line. McPherson (1992) has shown how school performance can be relative when factors such as FSM are taken into account. It is important to view School B results in this context to inform any curriculum changes. Within the curriculum, School B is embedding skills rich activities across subject areas in line with national requirements. In order for learners to leave school with a sound command of literacy; development and application of skills is essential. Therefore, non-literacy specialists are expected to administer literacy knowledge. School B provides guidance (Appendix E) on challenging texts in order to expose pupils to higher level reading. Beck and McKeown (2013) categorized words in terms of frequency of use and simplicity. For them, tier 1 words are used most frequently, these words require no explanation, students understand them immediately, for example; ‘table’ and ‘write’. Tier 3 words are seen as academic. They are seldom used, but they are important for progression in subject areas. For example; ‘contour’, ‘attrition’. Tier 3 words are vital, but to close the language gap, there must be a way to deal with tier 2 words. Tier 2 words are used more often than tier 3, but, they often require explanation. In order to rectify this problem, the use of synonyms is encouraged. Therefore, in a reading passage, for the word ‘benevolent’ the synonym ‘kind’ can be applied. In a passage of text, displaying synonyms is seen as a way to build understanding. Unfortunately, such tasks might be seen as a box ticking exercise. They may take up space in a work book, and can be used as evidence of literacy implementation, but how much does the student benefit? Such tasks that touch on surface knowledge only are likely to be forgotten. Alexander et al (2008) used a science lesson to illustrate. They argue that, literacy in the science classroom, is confined to lexical matters such as scientific terminology. Due to time restraints, it is hard for teachers to engage students in worthwhile activities such as extended writing, or reading for meaning and understanding. Therefore, the idea of cross-curricular literacy exposure as a means to improve literacy skill, could be flawed. Students are unable to internalise language practices because the deeper level thinking leading to cognitive development is not taking place. Students do not engage in ‘critical literacy’, an internationally recognized concept, that encourages learners to question texts and to understand that words can be loaded. A consequence of recent policy such as LNF which relies more on surface exposure to skills means “that there is limited engagement with principles and practice deriving from critical literacy”. (Alexander et al, 2008, 3). This compounded by the fact that many secondary teachers believe they do not have requisite English skills to meet the needs of weaker students (Collins and Dallat, 1998). Therefore, even if School B may commit to ‘skills rich activities’, how rich or valuable that activity can be is debatable. On the other hand, if tasks need only basic preparation they are easily applied in any scenario. For example, a School B geography literacy task is as follows; pupils write down any words that they think would be used in a topic to see how many words they know. Throughout the lesson, they check the list and cross out any misconceptions while adding new

words to the list (Appendix F). Clearly this task could be easily applied in science, religious education and so on. The assessment policy is vital for such curriculum remodelling. At School B, all teachers are now encouraged to become teachers of literacy. Technical errors such as; spelling errors, misuse of capital letters and poor grammar must be routinely identified by staff in pupils' work. These errors should be identified using the marking code (see Appendix G). Marking techniques may well make a difference, but, the new marking policy does not seem to lessen time constraints. Dialogic feedback seems to be an accepted methodology. Success in terms of closing the knowledge gap depends on how a marking scheme is implemented by the teacher. For example, some teachers are inclined to use comments in order to guide students to the solution. In these cases, students' correct literacy errors without necessarily thinking about them. Other teachers provide little feedback, hoping that the child is able to find a solution independently by referring to a 'common errors' sheet and struggling through it. This lack of personalized feedback may never be adequate for some students. If we consider how the 35 teachers at School B implement feedback, we can imagine several interpretations of a marking scheme. Such a lack of consistency is unlikely to bring significant improvement in literacy levels. At School B, referrals between departments are welcomed and the strengths of collaborative work have been highlighted in staff meetings. Resource sharing is promoted and School B is promoting collaboration not only between departments, but also, between schools in order to develop skills and training. As the curriculum adapts, it seems fitting that schools share the journey and benefit from each other's experiences. Desforges (2004) points out that more and more schools are realising the benefits of shared resources and expertise in order to progress on matters relating to student achievement. MacGilchrist et al (1997) have written about what makes an 'intelligent' school. For them, whole school effectiveness and curriculum development is only achievable through teacher collaboration. As well as sharing resources and ideas, schools and staff are prompted to be open minded and reflective. This can have a positive impact on staff. Middlewood (2005) evaluated case studies and found that collaboration could often replenish enthusiasm. When a teacher discussed ideas with colleagues outside of department, passion conquered the staleness. However, collaboration can be hindered by both culture and school environment. Faiter (2006) suggests that, in UK culture, personal agenda is valued far beyond that of the group. This is compounded by timetables and school layout resulting in a teacher using his classroom for administration, dining and resting. He may not venture out of that room until after the school bell, so it is doubtful that real day to day cooperation takes place. Perhaps those training to enter the profession have taken to the ideas of collectivism? It seems this is not the case. Despite tutors advocating lesson plan sharing, the uptake has been poor. A shared drive for my PGCE course has less than half a dozen lesson ideas uploaded. School to school collaboration can also be met with indifference. Doherty et al (2001) found that due to resistance and mistrust, collaborative projects can break down as schools may see negative feedback as destabilizing. At a school resembling School B, it was observed that poor attainment was accepted, and despite poor attainment, the school seemed very satisfied with the job it was doing. In this case, despite the efforts of the critical friend, no impact was made on the 'entrenched complacency.' (Doherty et al cited in Macbeath & Mortimor, 2001, 142). Clearly, teachers get tired, schools get complacent, ideas get forgotten, employees become cynical. Collaboration can be beautiful but in every job and every institution people often feel the need to work unassisted, to get on with things without the pressure to keep up appearances.

The following recommendations are brought to the attention of the school governors with a strong consideration of the Nolan principles of public life alongside the importance of innovation advocated by Estyn. The implementation of these proposals is based on strong initial leadership. I suggest Louis & Miles (1990) idea of leadership-dominated early planning to ensure school strategy is followed with certainty, later evolving into shared control.

Standardization of all classrooms to become positive, literate environments. Although school displays are being developed at School B the SIP does not go into detail and the only developments I saw were in the corridors. The work of Mortimore (1991) is a reminder that an attractive and stimulating school environment is an important factor that is associated with good progress in schools. A print rich display can be utilized in any lesson and help to embed literacy. In addition, displays "can include thought-provoking extracts or quotations from books, newspapers,

brochures and magazines". (Roberts, 2003, 63) School displays can make a big difference, they can set the tone and they can give a lot of scope for increasing students' ability to read for understanding.

Standardization of schemes of work. Instead of a scheme of work being a subjective, personalised creation, the school should invest in the 'experts' of lesson planning and resources. A case in point could be 'National Geographic' books which are based on English language acquisition with topics that cover the range of the humanities curriculum.

Higher level teaching assistants (TA's). TA's are unfortunately overlooked at School B in terms of leading learning. Many TA's have a wealth of experience at School B, but they are underused in terms of *what* they do. Middlewood et al (2005) indicate TA's can be equipped and deployed to provide support in literacy. With the right investment, TA's can build on the indispensable experience they possess.

Involve staff in the substance of planning. This is based on an Estyn good practice example from Pontardulais Comprehensive school where teachers developed pedagogical practices and led on how to embed the skills of literacy across the curriculum. For School B, there is a desire to move towards collaborative practice, this could be better facilitated through staff involvement and a trust in what they do.

Finally, to create a micro culture of collectivism in a self-centred macro culture is a huge challenge. School B should be the precursor for such change. The school layout should change to facilitate the collective. As it stands, we have teachers holed up in departments more akin to hospital wards. Based on personal experience, and, taking a lead from China and much of Asia, a teacher should not get to 'own' a classroom. Teachers should share an office to aid co-operation, and to use as a base for planning and administration, with classrooms changing according to the year group. This would benefit basic skills as the wall displays could be differentiated according to the year group. Therefore, year 10 would be exposed to more complexity of wall material than year 8. This could be called 'differentiation by station'. Currently, 'personalised', 'creative' classrooms only reflect a teacher's ego. Children may thrive in more standardized learning spaces with standard cues on walls, according to learning stages, to aid literacy.

Calling for unity and collaboration in an increasingly self-centred society is an uphill struggle, but as literacy skill is seen as a requirement of all subjects, it is up to school leaders to be bold and do whatever it takes to foster positive, collaborative change.

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