

Abstract

This paper assesses how the impact that teaching and learning strategies used by Year 7 teachers impacts on their learning and enjoyment of lessons. It is well documented that students' transition to secondary school is often a difficult time. It is the less able and most vulnerable students who find this transition most difficult. This paper assesses the impact of teachers using a 'primary approach' to learning for students with Special Educational Needs.

Analysis of the data collected from the studies shows that significant improvements to teaching and learning of students with Special Educational Needs can be made possible through the use of the primary approach to learning. The nature of the data collected was decided by me, my line manager and Dr Mike O'Neill and the data collection methods included questionnaires, lesson ratings by both students and teachers and observations of students and teachers in lessons. The observations and questionnaires are included in the appendices, along with other materials that were collected during the project research.

This paper proves that the use of a more 'primary approach' to learning in a secondary school, when teaching year 7 special needs students, promotes pace and creativity, engagement in the lesson and use of more varied activities. It also caters for the different kinds of learners in every lesson. Through use of the 'primary approach' secondary school teachers ensure a continued enthusiasm for learning and promote students confidence in their ability to learn and improve and allow them to recognise their achievements.

In an average primary lesson the teacher plans between 6 and 10 activities, the maximum number of activities the secondary teacher plans is 5. Students like a quick pace to a lesson, students and teachers both rate the lessons higher when more activities are planned.

Students like to take part in group work or work in pairs. They like to discuss things. This is a planned activity in most primary lessons but a rare event in secondary lessons. In most lessons the teacher leads the main part of the lesson at Manchester Academy and then instructs students to work independently on tasks. Students like to answer questions, sometimes these could be more open-ended and lead to discussion in pairs or groups. Students also like to take part in interactive activities.

The research shows that primary school teachers tend to plan into their lessons activities for the different learners, the visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Although teachers at Manchester Academy may consider these as they plan schemes of work, it is important to ensure they plan them into more lessons. Students want to make and draw things with their peers, though most of the time they are instructed to work independently on a written task.

Although teachers at Manchester Academy give students rewards, in the vocal form and in the form of house points, there is no visual evidence in the classrooms. Students at primary school are given points for their charts at the end of every lesson. They physically go up and add themselves. Students at High School love to get rewards too, they should be able to see how well they have done so there is an

immediate visual impact. It encourages their peers to work hard, improves self-esteem and helps them to remain enthusiastic also. Students at primary schools are often given responsibilities. Displays of students names and their roles are often visible in the classroom. Secondary students also like to have responsibilities, this provides an opportunity for the students to receive praise and again raise their self-esteem.