

Abstract

The overall aim of the project is to assess the appropriateness of using test results and questions from nationally produced KS2 Science SATs papers as the basis for intervention. This research was carried out to boost Primary schools KS2 Science SATs results by the combination of two strategies: using detailed question level analysis of KS2 SATS tests to establish target areas and target groups and an intervention programme based on detailed analysis of the pupils test papers, highlighting specific areas where pupil lost marks and addressing weaknesses by utilising nationally produced SATs questions as the basis for intervention.

This project has led to an improved understanding and valuing of the question level analysis process for raising achievement through targeted intervention. This process has reframed how National Tests could be utilised; as a resource of professionally produced sets of questions; which have been levelled, checked and piloted by experts in their field; which each come with a mark scheme and question level analysis tool and which support all aspects of the National Curriculum.

The symbiosis of using detailed question level analysis and the nationally produced SATs questions as a resource has not only led to an improvement in achievement but has also boosted students' confidence and resulted in science lessons which were rewarding to teach and fun to learn. The project was successful in that data analysis showed L4 achievement in science improved by 50% plus over the period of the project. Both strategies independently may have had an impact but it was the combination that made the project as successful as it was.

In education, as in all things, change happens. After completing the research activities and 4 days before the Science SATs, the Expert Group on Assessment which published its report on 7 May 2009, (QCDA 2009, p11) has declared that:

“whole cohort testing of science at the end of key stage 2 should be discontinued, and that science should be assessed only through teacher assessment”. (QCDA 2009, p11).

The objective of this research was to find a way for schools to raise their SATs results. By moving the goal post I wondered whether this report was already out of date. However, I believe that the process is sound and the skills used transferrable to other areas of assessment for learning. There is also the need to consider that:

A representative sample of Key Stage 2 schools (approximately 775, covering around 5 per cent of Year 6 pupils) will be required to administer a statutory science sample test to all Year 6 pupils who are considered to be working at or above level 3 in science”. (QCDA 2009, p11)

This was not in the expert group published report but was added by Ed Balls as a way on assessing national standards. So science SAT testing is not completely over and it could be you.