This publication fantastically reflects the learning progress of both the students and teachers at Elthorne Park High School. The Teacher Development Trust is proud to have supported Elthorne Park High School develop powerful and effective teacher professional development and learning through Lesson Study.

Lesson Study is an innovative and valuable way of supporting teachers to become reflective practitioners, who evaluate their practice with an explicit pupil focus. It is helping teachers to embed and contextualise new research and best practice into their schools and classrooms, and ultimately benefitting their pupils. It is brilliant to see this embodied through the work of staff at Elthorne, through this collection of their Lesson Study enquiries.

This collection should inspire, motivate and remind people of why they became teachers – a focus on evidence-informed and evaluative pupil learning and teacher practice runs throughout! We are delighted to continue working with and supporting Elthorne Park High School’s leadership and staff develop world-class professional development through Lesson Study.

David Weston
Chief Executive
Teacher Development Trust
Welcome note

Welcome to Elthorne Park High School’s Research Journal. Over the last three years, we have been actively using research to inform our teaching and pedagogical practices. We firmly believe in the power of Lesson Study and agree that the most effective research happens when we actively engage with it and create it ourselves.

Since its introduction three years ago, we have seen a major shift in our staff learning culture. Staff are keen to engage with, and in, research to help improve the educational outcomes for all of our students. Staff are confident enough to regularly refer to the EEF Teaching and Learning toolkit, John Hattie, Robert Marzano and other academic research to help determine the types of intervention that will help maximise students’ attainment and progress.

Lesson Study has allowed us to make great strides in improving students’ learning; in particular, our focus on students with Speech, Language and Communication needs and those who are entitled to Pupil Premium funding. Our affiliation with the Teacher Development Trust and Teaching Leaders, as well as our keen interest in pedagogy, has exposed us to cutting edge research that has allowed us to develop a powerful knowledge base.

Disseminating this knowledge would not have been possible without our committed team of Lead Learners, all of whom are experts in their fields. Their excellent facilitation of sessions where they have been supporting and encouraging staff to engage with high quality research has been invaluable.

As a school, we are immensely proud of how staff have engaged with, and in, research and we are delighted to celebrate and share their fantastic work in this journal.

Julie Jerham
Research & Development Lead
Elthorne Park High School
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How can I use learning mats to support independent, thoughtful and resilient work?

Daniella McManamon

Focus of study and why I have chosen it:
In this lesson study I have chosen to focus on using learning mats to promote more independent and resilient learning. My focus for the study was on students in my Year 10 class who were approaching a new, very challenging English GCSE curriculum.

The aim of these learning mats was to provide students with a step by step approach to analysing the poetry in the new anthology. This focus widened after the first lesson observations; as we moved onto revising Great Expectations and Macbeth, we subsequently developed learning mats to support students to analyse these texts too.

Each of the mats featured colour-coded questions to support students to approach the text in a thoughtful and structured way. The aim was for the mats to be used frequently within lessons as an aid to developing the skills of independent analysis that would be expected of these students at GCSE.

Barriers to learning for targeted students:
Student 1: Experienced a severe lack of confidence in English as she transitioned between Year 9 and Year 10 and she faced the challenges of the new curriculum. She has since developed more confidence, her homework is consistently completed to a high standard and she seems to take pride in producing good work. Her levels have been good throughout the GCSE checking points and she is on target to achieve her predicted grade.

However, this student can quickly become disengaged during activities and she continues to struggle to take responsibility for her own learning, to demonstrate independence or resilience when faced with difficult tasks. She freely admits to copying work from her peers. Student 1 seems to avoid challenge and she needs a lot of encouragement to attempt tasks that she considers too challenging.

Student 2: Can thoughtfully and confidently analyse a text, but has struggled with the structure of his extended pieces of writing. Sometimes he is too reliant on scaffolds – such as the reading ladder paragraph structure – which results in a writing style which does not reflect the level of student 2’s sophisticated analysis.

Précis of research:
Scaffolding: AN ONGOING PROCESS TO SUPPORT ADOLESCENT WRITING DEVELOPMENT by Susanna L. Benko

This article looks at the way “scaffolding” is used in the classroom.
What is ‘scaffolding’?
It is, as the metaphor suggests, meant to be a temporary assistance available to students as they complete the task, which is taken away when students gain confidence and aptitude.

However, one issue is that the scaffold itself can sometimes become the goal upon which students are evaluated on.

This article suggests that scaffolds should not be ‘closed’ structures which can be mastered, but instead, they should foster challenge and enable the broadening of a student’s understanding.

Scaffolding as part of effective writing instruction
Applebee and Langer (1987) suggest that scaffolding is an essential part of effective writing instruction. Carefully structured support or scaffolding is crucial as students undertake new and more difficult tasks. Thus, the ultimate goal of scaffolding is to support the students in completing a challenging task.

Langer and Applebee (1986) suggest that ownership is an important component in instructional scaffolding and argued that “effective instructional tasks must allow room for students to have something of their own to say in their writing.”

Effective scaffolding in the classroom:
- **Reduce degrees of freedom**: Teachers break the task down, simplifying the demands of the task, enabling students to concentrate on the most important parts.
- **Marked critical features**: Teachers help students to better understand the difficult aspects so that they can help students move forward and complete the task.
  
  **Example from one classroom**: using a “resource map” to guide student note-taking about texts during whole class discussions. The resource map was a large sheet of paper with sections for setting, characters, context, themes, symbols, or other topics from their reading. The resource map was quite open; it was organized by headings, but students were given freedom about what to write within these headings.
- **Direction maintenance through feedback**: Preventing distraction from the task is an important part of scaffolding. Useful feedback provides students with specific guidance for how to revise their work. The timing of the feedback (on early drafts), is important in direction maintenance.
- **Demonstration**: Teachers model possible ways that children might assemble the block structure. Using models: professional writers – adapting and copying style, peer writers, teachers as writers, etc.