Strategies to Close the Achievement Gap

Pupil Premium

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General Strategies

Get to know your PP students:
- Find out how they prefer to learn and plan accordingly.
- Find out about their hobbies and interests and ask them about them.
- Find out information about their context and background. Have they got siblings in school? What is their family background? What was their attainment on entry? What is their reading age?
- Discuss PP students regularly at Department meetings and share good practice.

Think about your seating plan and data sheets:
- Highlight PP students on your seating plan.
- Think carefully about where they are sitting and who they are sitting next to.
- Highlight students on your data sheets.
- Take an extra time to think about their data and what support they need to make progress.

Plan your behaviour management strategies:
- Meet and greet students at the door. Welcome students in to the classroom.
- Develop mutually respectful relationships with PP students.
- Use praise and rewards for positive contributions, good work, exceeding expectations.
- Work out what behaviour management strategy works best for each PP student.

Target PP students for support:
- Approach PP students first to see if they understand the task set or need support to complete it.
- Target PP students for questioning; ask them to respond in full sentences. Use Blooms Taxonomy to extend and stretch their answers.
- Ensure PP students know exactly what level they will be working at or are aiming for in the lesson.
- Continually check the progress of PP students throughout the lesson.
- Make sure they know their current grade/level, their target grade/level and what they need to do to improve
- Ensure PP students with attendance issues are provided with work to catch up with their peers.

Remove barriers to learning:
- Provide equipment and resources where necessary.
- Provide access to free revision and home learning materials.
- Ask about funding contributions to enable them to attend school trips.

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Effective and Timely Feedback

Feedback is information given to the learner and/or the teacher about the learner's performance relative to learning goals. It should aim to (and be capable of) producing improvement in students' learning. Feedback redirects or refocuses either the teacher's or the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. This feedback can be verbal, written, or can be given through tests or by means of ICT. Providing effective feedback is challenging.

Accelerate Student Progress by:
- Providing feedback at the right time, with a specific purpose and desired outcome.
- Ensuring it is specific, accurate and clear e.g. "It was good because you…".
- Comparing what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong/misunderstood before (e.g. "I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time's Y").
- Providing specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students where they have gone wrong.
- Modelling correct work/ processes where possible and appropriate.
- Avoiding comparison to other students.
- Encouraging peer and self-assessment.
- Providing opportunities for students to make improvements following feedback.

Example: Marking for Improvement

Original work

Feedback from teacher

Improvements made by student

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Metacognition

What is it?

Meta-cognitive and independent learning strategies (sometimes known as 'learning to learn' strategies) are teaching approaches which make learners think about learning more explicitly and take ownership of their learning. This is done by teaching students specific strategies to set goals, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Overall these strategies involve being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner, such as by developing self-assessment skills, and being able to set and monitor goals.

These strategies are usually more effective in small groups so learners can support each other and make their thinking explicit through discussion; they also tend to be particularly effective with lower ability students. These strategies are more effectively learned when they are taught, modelled and applied in a range of contexts and across the curriculum inside and outside of the classroom.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- Teaching approaches which encourage learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning have very high potential and impact.
- Teaching students explicit strategies to plan, monitor and to evaluate their learning, and give them opportunities to use them with support and then independently.
- When using approaches for planning, ask students to identify the different ways that they could plan (general strategies) and about the best approach for a particular task (specific technique).
- Encouraging and supporting students to monitor their progress by identifying the key steps they need to be aware of as they go through a task to keep it on track. (Where might this go wrong? What will be the difficult parts? How can you support them to tackle it?)
- Supporting students to evaluate their own progress. Evaluating can be part of the process of checking so that it feeds into the current task as it nears completion (Can you make it better? Are you sure this is right?). It can also feed forward into future tasks (What have you learned that will change what you do next time?).
- Model and explain the strategies being taught so that students understand what they are learning.

Example: Mind mapping – the purpose of this metacognitive technique is to visually map out the connection between an individual's way of connecting concepts.
Directions: Provide students with a list of concepts and ask them to arrange them in a way that reflects their own individual thinking and associations between the terms.

Peer Support and Feedback

What is it?

A range of approaches in which learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support and feedback. In cross-age tutoring an older learner takes the tutoring role and is paired with a younger tutee or tutees. In Reciprocal Peer Tutoring, learners alternate between the role of tutor and tutee. The common characteristic is that learners take on responsibility for aspects of teaching and for evaluating their success. Peer assessment involves the peer tutor providing feedback to children relating to their performance and can have different forms such as reinforcing or correcting aspects of learning. Relatively short but intensive periods of tutoring over 4-10 weeks are likely to be more effective than using it over longer periods of time.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- Ensuring that activities are sufficiently challenging for the tutee that they can benefit from the tutor's support but not too difficult that they cannot succeed with a teacher's support.
- Planning the organisation of peer tutoring well to address the logistical challenges.
- Making the role of the tutors explicit, ensuring best practice for tutoring is modeled and scaffolded.
- Setting up ground rules for peer tutoring activities in advance to ensure students stay on task and are focused on the activity at hand.
- Using several different approaches to peer-tutoring which make different demands on the tutees; working in pairs, small groups, providing reciprocal feedback.
- Pairing older students with younger students or more able with less able peers to support and mentor
- Reviewing challenges and successes of the tutoring with teaching groups to ensure tutoring impacts positively upon students' progress.

Example:

Effective Differentiation

What is it?

Differentiation is an approach to teaching that attempts to ensure that <u>all</u> students learn well, despite their many differences. There are three categories of differentiation. Ideally, you should be using all three types of differentiation to accommodate the different learning styles in the classroom:

- *Differentiation by task*, which involves setting different tasks for students of different abilities.
- *Differentiation by support*, which means giving more help to certain students within the group.
- *Differentiation by outcome*, which involves setting open-ended tasks and allowing student response at different levels.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

When planning ask yourself two questions:

1. What are the *most* advanced skills, concepts and facts that the **most able** student in the class will just manage to get?
2. What are the skills, concepts and facts that the **least able** student in the class will just manage to get with appropriate support?

A middle ground can be added (what will stretch the average student in the class?). This allows **three sets of learning outcomes** to be created and described as three levels.

Differentiation examples:

1. **Above and Below -** All students are asked to carry out a common core task. Some students finish it quickly as the task is relatively easy for them and they move on to a *planned* extension activity. Meanwhile, other students who may be struggling with the core task are supported by additional materials, or by being given a lower level task, or by receiving extra help from the teacher, or by receiving support from the learning assistant. Please note how important it is that the support for the 'less able' is *planned* by providing: additional explanatory material, re-phrasing the task, reducing the reading age of the task, using symbols and pictures, using online resources.

2. **Ability Groups -** The class is subdivided into small groups according to students' 'ability' in regard to the topic in hand. This is important as students should not be grouped according to their general ability alone. Each group is given materials and tasks appropriate to their prior knowledge / reading abilities / aptitudes / motivation.

3. **Peer Coaching -** This approach asks the more able to move ahead, do some advanced learning and then come back and teach or coach the rest of the class. This can happen in a variety of ways, for example: those who are able to prove that they have achieved the main are asked by the teacher to go around the class coaching other students on an informal one-to-one basis or those who have achieved the main learning are asked to get together to research, plan, prepare, and actually teach, the next lesson

4. **Mixed-ability Manipulation -** The teacher organises small mixed-ability groups, say groups of three. Each group therefore has a 'high ability', an 'average ability' and 'low ability' student. Each student is then given a letter: A, B or C, All the 'average ability' students are given the letter A, all the 'low ability' students are given the letter B and all the 'high ability' students are given the letter C. The teacher divides the topic to be studied into three parts and prepares a task for each. The groups then break up. All the Cs go to one area of the classroom where they can support each other in completing the task relatively independently. Likewise, all the As go to another area of the classroom where they support each other in getting the task done. The tasks given to As and Cs need to be capable of being done with minimum help from the teacher. The teacher gives her or his time to the least able – the Bs. At the appointed time, the original groups of three reconvene. In each group, the students teach each other. The least able, the Bs, are able to make a full contribution because they will have learned their topic properly, thanks to the support and guidance of the teacher.

- 5. **Menu -** In 'Menu', students are asked to make choices about the *level of challenge* that they take on. It's a simple idea: design three (or more) tasks, each to a different level of challenge, and ask the students, individually, to choose which task is right for them. Please note that this is the same activity (e.g. writing an essay), but expressed in three different levels of difficulty.

Appropriate and Timely Intervention

What is it?

Intervention is defined as 'the strategies and methods used to narrow the gap between identified target group and individuals to ensure all students attain well and make the expected levels of progress'. This should be both within and beyond the classroom and should be timely and appropriate to the specific skills gaps and needs of individual students. There are three distinct waves of intervention which staff should follow.

- Wave 1 - The effective inclusion of all children in high quality teaching & learning.
- Wave 2 - Additional time-limited provision in the form of small-group intervention outside the normal classroom.
- Wave 3 - Specific targeted interventions for identified students outside the classroom.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

Wave 1
To include:
- A nurturing environment with relevant, tailored and differentiated opportunities for learning.
- Opportunities for small group experiences in a safe and secure space.
- Extra time for responses to questions or contributions to group discussion.
- Extra time for activities where needed.
- Scaffolding of activities and modelling of exemplar work and responses.
- Using practical activities and experiential learning.
- Opportunities for students to transfer/generalise their learning in different contexts and between different subjects.
- A clear focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Opportunities for revision and over learning.
- Access to groups where students are working with peers of similar levels.
- Access to grouping that enables students to work with peers who will provide good role models for language and communication skills and for co-operative and independent application to task.
- Teaching and learning which is multi-sensory and well structured.
- Changing direction and re-shaping tasks to enhance student progress and understanding.

Wave 2
When considering students for Wave 2 additional support, teachers should first consider whether the elements of Wave 1 provision are in place. It may well be the considered judgement that despite some of these elements not being in place, a student is sufficiently behind their peers to merit additional support. Nevertheless, the thorough implementation of quality first teaching should be a priority. Wave 2 interventions should be used for students who can be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention.

Examples:
- Small-group intervention for example after school booster classes; holiday revision camps, withdrawal classes during the school day.

Wave 3
- Additional time-limited intervention and provision to enhance the progress of identified children where Waves 1 and 2 are not, on their own, having the desired effect.
- This will involve intensely focused teaching activities which tackle fundamental gaps in skills, knowledge and understanding which is preventing progress
- These would usually be conducted on a 1 to 1 basis where the teacher does not expect students to make the

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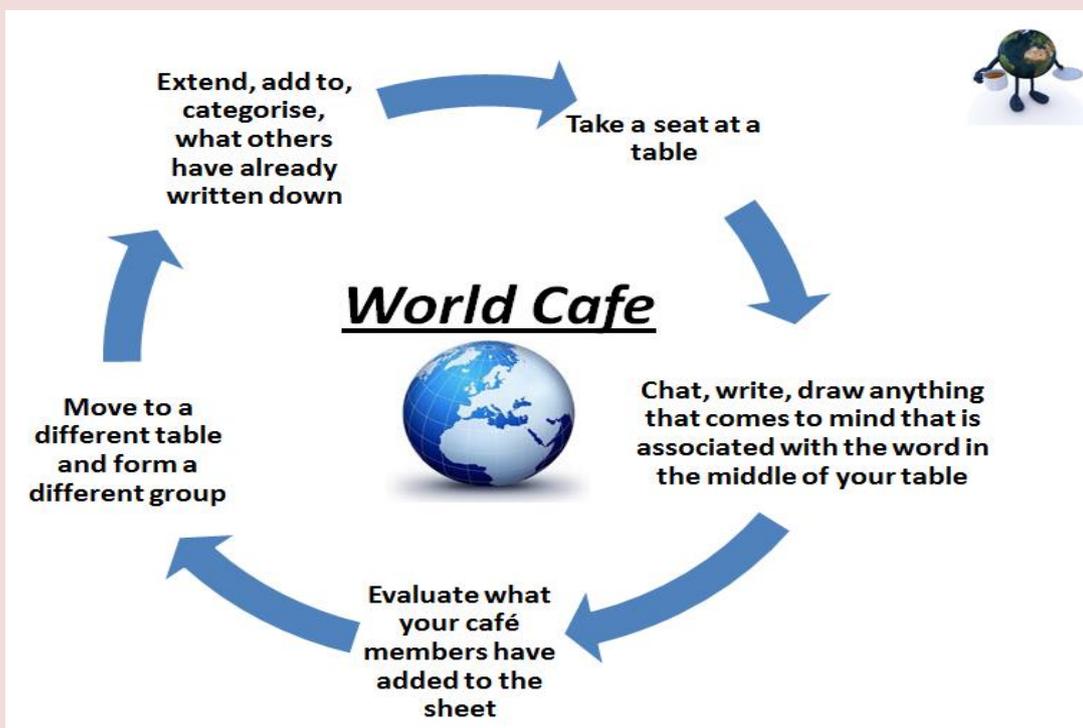
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Collaborative Learning

What is it?

- Collaborative or cooperative learning can be defined as learning tasks or activities where students work together in a group small enough for everyone to participate on a collective task that has been clearly assigned. This can either be a joint task where group members do different aspects of the task but contribute to a common overall outcome, or a shared task where group members work together throughout the activity. Some collaborative learning approaches also get mixed ability teams or groups to work in competition with each other.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- Ensuring support is in place for students to practice working together. Do not assume this will happen automatically. It will take time.
- Setting out and agreeing ground rules for group work and collaborative task.
- Appointing a chair of 'leader' for tasks to ensure students are on task and focused.
- Designing tasks carefully so that working together is effective and efficient, otherwise some students will try to work on their own and some will be left out.
- Using competition between groups to support and engage to work more effectively and efficiently together group. However, be careful as over-use of competition can focus learners on the competition rather than succeeding in their learning.
- Encouraging lower achieving students to talk and articulate their thinking in collaborative tasks as they may contribute less.
- Sharing good practice between colleagues; especially those from practical subjects where group work and practical learning may be done more frequently.

Example:

World Cafe

Extend, add to, categorise, what others have already written down

Take a seat at a table

Chat, write, draw anything that comes to mind that is associated with the word in the middle of your table

Evaluate what your café members have added to the sheet

Move to a different table and form a different group

One to One Tutoring

What is it?

One to one tuition is where an individual student is removed from their class and given intensive tuition. It may also be undertaken outside of normal lessons, for example as part of after school programmes or summer schools. Short, regular sessions (about 30 minutes, 3-5 times a week) over a set period of time (6-12 weeks) appear to result in optimum impact. Evidence also suggests tutoring should be additional or supplemental to normal instruction, rather than as a replacement and that teachers should monitor progress to ensure the tutoring is beneficial. One to one tuition is very effective in helping learners catch up. Short periods (5-10 weeks) of intensive sessions (up to an hour three or four times a week) tend to have greater impact.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- **Ensuring that the tutee has been effectively selected.** Use a variety of evidence to choose the most appropriate students. Ensure that the tutee's needs are effectively assessed and tuition is planned to take place at the optimum time in their school career.

- **Making sure it is additional to high quality whole class teaching.** One to one sessions are additional to normal whole class lessons. Ensure that there is a strong and explicit link between the learning in class and the content of the tuition sessions so that learning is transferred from one context to another.

- **Applying learning.** One to one tuition sessions allow time for the tutee to apply the learning directly. Therefore, part of the session will allow for independent work albeit for a short period.

- **Planning appropriate outcomes that are communicated and evaluated.** Tutors and class teachers have clear expectations about the purpose and outcomes of the period of tuition. These have been shared with the parents and carers as well as with the tutee. Evaluation of progress towards the specific goals is made during and at the end of the programme to review progress and support next steps planning.

- **Involving the tutee in self-assessment.** When the tutee understands what they need to learn next; why it is important and is able to evaluate how successful they are in achieving the goals, they are more engaged in the tuition and more likely to transfer the learning to a wider range of contexts.

- **Developing a positive relationship between the tutor and tutee.** Where the tutee feels happy and confident they ask questions and clarify any misunderstandings. There is an appropriate balance of tutor/tutee talk and an effective, learning dialogue takes place.

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ICT to Support Learning

What is it?

Approaches in this area are very varied, but a simple split can be made between:

1) Programs for students, where learners use technology in problem-solving or more open ended learning and
2) Technology for teachers such as interactive whiteboards or learning platforms.

Different technology has the potential to enable changes in teaching and learning interactions, such as by providing more effective feedback for example, or enabling more helpful representations to be used or simply by motivating students to practice more.

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- Clearly identifying how the introduction of technology will improve learning rather than assuming that new technology will automatically lead to increased attainment; technology without pedagogy is very unlikely to be effective.
- Using technology to support students to work harder, for longer or more efficiently to improve their learning.
- Ensuring the use of technology supports the specific learning aims and outcomes for the lesson.
- Motivating and engaging students through the effective and appropriate use of technologies in lessons.

Example: Active expression handsets to assess student learning
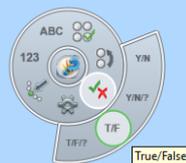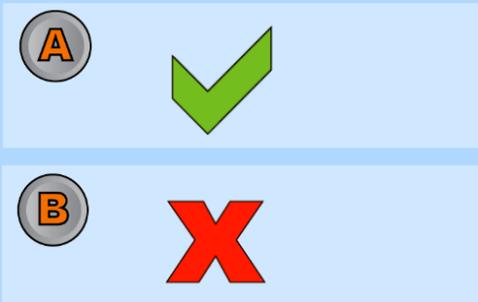
Home Learning

What is it?

On average, the impact of homework on learning is consistently positive (leading to on average five months additional progress). There is some evidence that homework is most effective when used as a short and focused intervention (e.g. in the form of a project or specific target connected with a particular element of learning) with some exceptional studies showing up to eight months positive impact on attainment. In the most effective examples homework was an integral a part of learning, rather than an add-on. To maximise impact, it is also appears to be important that students are provided with high quality feedback on their work (see *Feedback*).

Accelerate Student Progress by:

- Making the purpose of homework explicit to learners, e.g. to increase a specific area of knowledge, or fluency in a particular area.
- Not setting homework as a punishment or penalty for poor performance or behaviour.
- Setting homework that includes a variety of tasks with different levels of challenge is likely to be beneficial.
- Ensuring that the focus is upon the quality of homework and not necessarily the quantity.
- Providing feedback on homework that is specific and timely.

Homework is effective when:

- **It is well planned.** Staff and students regard homework as an integral part of the curriculum rather than an after-thought or add on. It is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning. Tasks set are integrated into the whole class lessons.
- **It takes 1 to 2 hours per school day.** The optimum level is between 1 to 2 hours, or slightly longer for older students but the effectiveness is reduced as the length of time increases.
- **Students receive feedback.** When homework is completed well it is acknowledged and praised. Homework is marked in line with the school's feedback policy and treated with as much respect and attention as school-based learning.
- **It supports attainment of all students.** Homework tasks are differentiated and are appropriate to the needs of individuals. A variety of tasks are set, for example joint family learning tasks, independent learning, the use of ICT. Ensure students write the homework down or provide a written copy for all students; especially those with a Special Educational Need.