TRAWL (Teaching Reading and Writing Links)

TRAWL is an approach to writing that recognises that children are imbued with a huge potential for creativity. The primary aim is to allow a child to develop this creativity through an extended piece of writing while recognising that children need support to help them realise their potential.

Main Features of TRAWL:

- Writing development begins by reading and relishing texts,
- Children explore the craft of writing during literacy sessions,
- Children develop personal writing toolkits by examining and critically discussing books,
- The explicit teaching of literacy devices is combined with the freedom to experiment with language and be creative in writing workshops,
- That the progression of writing skills is rapid, and sustained reinforcement will lead to these skills being embedded ready for further development within the curriculum.

An outline of the TRAWL Program

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Introduce Focus Medium: Book, Film, Poem, Song Lyrics Develop understanding enjoyment of medium. Emersion and enrichment to further understanding.	Develop and understanding of the structure the story follows. Secure understanding of plot features, development and associated links with emotions that this creates.	Development of own creative elements. Structured development of children's own ideas based around framework of example story.	Writing development. Creating text while identifying progressive use of literary devices.	Edit and present. Consolidate and develop writing skills and ensure high expectations for outcomes. Develop approach for creative presentation.

Phase 1

The primary aim is to engage children with a suitable medium for which they can base their project upon. The medium needs to be made accessible for all learners but this does not require the content to be limited at age related expectations. The phase will allow the learners to immerse themselves with the focus and its themes, and consequently become enthused with the subject matter. This is similar to 'wow' events at the beginning of curriculum projects in that the range of activities need to cater for all types of learner and ensure those that may be unfamiliar to the stimulus (which may be everyone) has developed a sound understanding of what it is about as well as begun to enjoy and be motivated to find out more.

Phase 2

The outcome of phase 2 is to ensure that the learner is clear on the structure and path that their story will follow. Activities are structured to help them identify, explore and sequence events that will build the framework of the text that they write. The level of autonomy for this phase is crucial to the differentiation and expectations that is placed upon the learner. For example, a class or group of learners working at year one age related expectations would be supported to develop a sequence dictated exactly by the teacher's expectations and then supported at changing specific details, where suitable. In contrast, a year group of learners working at year 6 age related expectations may agree upon a series of common milestones to ensure the story fits the genre of the focus text, although the development of the plot is devised independently. The teacher must use their understanding of the children's prior attainment to plan suitable challenge and support the children in creating a manageable plot stricture which will ensure that while the story is sustained, it does not become too difficult for the project to be completed.

Phase 3

Once the framework of the text is agreed upon the learner will need to be given opportunity to develop their own ideas and grasp their own identity for the project. Sessions focus are therefore based upon encouraging free thought and allow development of initial ideas for experimentation and exploration in different ways. Once learners have developed a more secure idea then discrete writing skills can be taught to help structure the explanation of these ideas. The primary outcome is that the learner has developed a clear view of the main features of the story: characters, settings and particular actions/ events, and has created resources to support the expansion of these elements while writing the story.

Phase 4

Is the longest phase as it focusses upon writing the story. The session structures should involve the following elements although the teacher will advise and plan how to structure and manage these effectively for each different ability groups.

Modelled teacher writing activity

Teacher models writing examples of literary devices that the children will be required to use or have found difficult to apply within their work up until that point. Teacher will model writing while commentating upon their choices and actions, as well as possibly boxing up a prewritten piece. Shared writing could happen to help reinforce concepts.

Shared writing- Group- 1-2-1

This activity is generally to support a group or a learner in grasping a new concept or a previously learnt concept that they have found difficult to master when writing independently. The teacher may provide their own example or use a number of the children's previous attempts to highlight misconceptions and support children with developing solutions or examples to achieve the particular literary skill focussed upon. The outcome should be that the learners feel able to independently apply this skill or re-edit their own work to ensure it is of the correct standard.

Teacher Pupil writing conference.

This session is a 1-2-1 session which generally focuses upon assessment and identifying actions for work that has been produced independently. The teacher and pupil read through written work together with the teacher highlighting both positive use of writing skills, as well as identifying areas for improvement or next steps to challenge the learner further.

Peer Assessment

Using assessment data, and an understanding of the range of abilities and attributes each learner has for the skill of writing, the teacher will identify partners which can be used for both support and crucially challenging the learner. In pairs learners will read and check each other's work using both their own understanding of writing skills as well as prompts and resources to help structure their assessment of each other's work. It is essential that there is some directed modelling of how to work as an assessment partner to ensure children are taught on what to look for and how to enter into a conversation which involves constructive criticism. More able children

may well require a writing partner from a more able setting to ensure they also have the opportunity to be challenged by their peers as well as supporting others within their own class.

Independent Writing

Independent writing is a fundamental requirement for children to embed writing skills. For writing to be effective they must be clear on the targets and skills they are required to use at every stage of their writing. The writing must be assessed regularly to ensure the learner is on track and they are and successfully achieving their agreed targets. Once these targets have been completed, monitoring of work should ensure that these are maintained and selected/ used appropriately as they develop new skills.

Phase 5

One of the TRAWL projects key aims is to give the learner ownership of their ideas and consequently this then determines a key theme to the choices they make in how the work is presented. Just as when identifying the framework of the story in phase 2, the teacher must decide on the level of autonomy they give to the learner depending on their ability or age related expectations. Regardless of the level of choice given, the main theme for every learner is the importance in taking pride and valuing their work. This therefore should be modelled in the teacher expectations as well as when assessing the learner's efforts. If directed sessions are required to reinforce levels of expectation in this area, then the approach of using a range of strategies to remind the children at every possible opportunity would be the most manageable solution.

Outcomes

TRAWL projects have the ability to rapidly evidence quality teaching and learning through several ways. The evidence produced in written form shows a body of work that challenges children to make clear specific progress in their ability to write, as well as gives clear indication of the teaching that has been facilitating this progression. The feedback through both teacher and peer marking shows teachers making timely interventions to ensure rapid progress. Through the use of peer mentoring to moderate writing against a clear criteria then it allows learners to engage in articulate conversations, which are focus driven, and use associated technical vocabulary which supports their ability to converse within group and whole class discussion. Furthermore, by applying an intense focus on writing, children's attainment will progress accordingly, supporting whole school targets for achievement.

By giving children the time and support to produce a lengthy project also develops learning skills relating to effort and perseverance, as well as developing pride and achievement for their own individual efforts. Having the opportunity to celebrate similar efforts as a whole school is beneficial, as it helps to solidify a school's ethos and vision for developing the child as a whole.