

# Project recommendations to date education essay

[Education](#)



## **Introduction**

This essay will discuss how we can effectively include these students into the education system. It will review literature regarding schools collaborating with students and parent, enabling them to fully participation in the school ethos. It will also discuss how professionals interact within the structured framework of education. How staff share information and become part of the decision making process, allowing them to full collaborate and participate in the school ethos also. I will focus on practical aspects of including students who have literacy difficulties. The project I have embarked upon will highlight there need for more focused reading plans. This is to promote the use of literacy skills. It also allows for those who need further assistance to be given the support that they require by means of staged intervention. Under the Curriculum of Excellence, Literacy can no longer be viewed as the sole responsibility of English Departments. All teachers now have a responsibility for the development of their pupil's literacy (Ward, 2002). With Inclusion and Equality one of the National Priorities in Scotland's Education system, it is recognised there is a need for greater awareness of hidden disabilities, such as Dyslexia. With the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) there has been an opportunity to raise more awareness. The introduction of policies and frameworks released by the Scottish Office and Her Majesty Inspectorate in Education (HMIE, 2005) identify that more must be done to include every child. Although as a nation we strive to create an environment of social inclusion and equality, were all people are treated fairly. It is recongnised people with disabilities face barriers and discrimination ( SEED, 2008- 2011).

## Participation and Learning

The aim of a school is to achieve, while supporting a diverse culture and improve the attainment and achievement of all their students (Black-Hawkins et al, 2007). In line with legislation the school must encourage good inclusive practice requiring a school ethos of respect. Some learning environments use collaboration to find new and inventive ways to create a more positive learning environment. This can be achieved when the role of a specialist teacher is used to collaborate with the general class teacher. The specialist teacher will assist in the planning, implementing and evaluating lessons planned. By creating this environment it will ensure the delivery of materials and resources are adapted to each individual student needs. On the evaluation the materials can be further adapted accordingly (King-Sears, 2001). Ainscow (1994) saw these school as a moving schools who were responding to the changes the curriculum required. He claims that this type of cooperation ensures collaborative planning and engagement in the task of learning. This professional interworking will provide a source of stimulation for teachers and enrich the teaching and learning experience (Ainscow &Vygotsky (cited in Pollard 2002) ). This flexibility in approach was in response to meeting the needs of children in their community. Ainscow saw these schools as establishments that were responding to and sustaining a curriculum which is built on and emphasises co-operation, planning and engagement in the co-operative task of learning. Teachers and schools working towards the same goals are effective schools. They must have positive communication and collaboration amongst staff, other agents, parents and pupils (Head, 2003). Head (2003)also places value of collaboration schools at a personal level. He claims that collaboration

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enhances moral support and confidence, on a professional level. This new approach leads the teacher to adapt a new professionalism. One in which they commit to a collegiate approach to learning, sharing responsibility at all levels. Easing the burden and helping them to develop and share higher goals (Lieberman and Miller, 2004). It provides improved self-reflection of learning, through sharing good practice with others. This sharing of good practice produces an effective ethos of collaboration to develop a common goal for staff, students and parent (Hargreaves, 2003). Schools that develop these type of learning communities perform at the highest level. Not only academically, but have the ability to at a higher level, in terms of staff and student motivation (Forde et al. 2006). Educators are under constant pressure to absorb new legislation and adapt it into their day to day teaching practices( Hallanhan, 1999). To ensure the continued professional development (CPD) teachers have a professional commitment to develop their skills and knowledge (SEED, 2003a). It plays a major role in influencing the identity of teachers and encouraging their own personal interests. CPD expects that teachers collaborate with each other and external agencies to ensure that they participate in professional solutions (Kane et al, 2004). Collaboration among teachers is about influencing existing practices at a functional level (Head, 2003). However without this effective communication and the sharing of good ideas, teachers in schools can be unaware of the knowledge that exists between themselves. This could leave teachers isolated and restricting their ability of being solution focused (SEED, 2010a). The advantage of a solution focused approach allows the educator to take responsibility for personalizing the curriculum for each student. It is a clear aim of the Scottish Executive that teacher does not have the sole

responsibility for curriculum content. There is an expectation that teachers will collegiately work together to develop an appropriate curriculum, with the input of students. " All children and young people should experience personalisation and choice..." (SEED, 2008). This collaboration between students and their teacher is essential for the pedagogical quality (Wolfe & Hall, 2003). Not only should teacher and student work in collaboration, peer collaboration is necessary in the learning process (Damon and Phelps, 1989). Promoting the growth of self esteem and an eagerness bring a togetherness in sharing common interests. The sharing of common interests means that peer participation leads to encourage motivation to learn new skills and enhance the development of problem solving skills. This collective working together can be linked to many learning theories (Sachs, 2003). This coming together is said to give power of focus , that would not be possible otherwise. It is this type of peer participation that enables dialogue to change how we think as an individual. Not only should student collaborate but parents should be encouraged to participate in their child's school life. Researchers claim that parent involvement in their child's education increases their understanding of educational practices (Thousand, 2002). It also improves child's motivation towards their school life. It encourages good relations between teacher and students leading to less behavior issues. It shows a level of commitment from the parent that can lead to a huge impact in their child's learning (Hughes & McNaughton, 2000). This collaboration of teaching staff, students and parents has a very positive effect on the student's view of the school (Tett et al., 2001). The importance of Parental Involvement has been established by the Scottish Government with the Parental Involvement Act 2006. This Act encourages parent participation and collaboration in the <https://assignbuster.com/project-recommendations-to-date-education-essay/>

contribution of their child education. It allows parents explore avenues in establishing the way in which to break down the barriers to involvement in school life (SEED, 2006). It encourages the development of these partnerships with parents and the wider community, which is also encourage under the Curriculum of Excellence (SEED, 2010). Under the Scottish Parental Involvement Act all parents are automatically members of the Pupil Forum. If they have any concerns, they can approach the Parent Council with these concerns or issues. They will be further raised at the Parent Council meetings (SEED, 2006). This sharing of information leads to a better understanding of the education system for parents. This type of collaboration allows for social equality and can have a positive impact creating a sense of ownership (Loreman et al., 2005). This collaboration between school and parent has a common goal to increase the success of the students. When a school and parent share the same goal, the whole education process benefits (Harris, 2007). The parents feel empowered in the decision making process working collaboratively to solve issues within their child's school. There are researches who claim that parental involvement has no importance in raising attainment in a school. Harris & Goodall (2007) claim that it is positive parental engagement in school rather than involvement, that promotes learning (Harris & Goodall, 2007). They claim that word involvement covers a wide range of activities which may not be connected to the learning of the students. In fact they state that these types of involvements have little or no impact on their child's learning. Russell (2001) claims that some parents are not satisfied with the level of involvement that they are getting. The parents what change to the legislation to enable active participation in their child's learning. An example would be for strong partnerships to be formed between

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parent and individual teachers to develop a working relationship in the interest of their child. This would ensure consistency in methods used in both the home and in school, ensuring the child's needs are being met fully (Russell cited in Frederickson and Cline, 2003 ). The relationships that we build require much work in education. There is strict guidelines that teacher must follow to ensure that their students and parents feel that their views are being acknowledged. The HMIE, ' An Inclusive Establishment' sets out the guidelines from which effective working relationships can be established. This along with the CFE encourages not only collaboration and participation of teacher but also of the learners, parents and other agencies (SEED, 2010). The introduction of more collaboration and participation can lead to many obstacles being created by the bureaucracy of multi-agency working. Lacy (2003) claims that these obstacles should be studied and broken down to ensure effective participation for all involved (Lacy, 2003). Creating a more flexible way in which school operate and ensuring that all barriers are addressed the needs of all students are met (Dyson & Millard, 2000). The CFE aim is to maximize learning and promote all students be; effective contributors, confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens (SEED, 2010). It encourages teacher to use their professional judgment and reflect on their practice. This is done by teachers critically reflecting on their practice and working together with students. Individual teachers must be committed to developing their own skills and teaching practice and keeping up to date with new approaches to teaching and learning. (Stainback , 1990). Teachers are being challenged by the CFE to allow more participation in course structure by students and parents. They are being challenged to develop their professional knowledge and

understanding, skills, abilities, values and commitment to aid in their professional development (GTCS, 2006). The CFE has restored the autonomy of the classroom when teacher develops and implements approaches which are modified to the needs of every individual child (Reid, 2008). To achieve full participation and inclusion all students must be reached both pastoral and academically. The General Teaching Councils Standard for Full Registration gives clear guidelines to teachers on how to encourage students input into their education (GTCS, 2006). As many schools focus changes to ensure that participation and collaboration are at the centre of their policies. It requires a significant refocus on a schools operations to ensure that each member of staff and students are given an equal voice in the decision making process. This equal partnership allows the sharing of information about the academic and behavior needs of students. This will ensure that staff share of successful strategies and interventions when implementing the curriculum (Thousand et al. , 2002). To enable this effective communication, schools must encourage and develop the correct environment to ensure that collaborative interactions occur. Friend and Cook (2007) state that there are a number of prerequisites to enable collaboration to occur (Appendix 1). They claim this can support diversity in the classroom as well as solve specific problems with bespoke solutions (Friend & Cook, 2007). Working together in this way can lead to a more care centered model for every child. The idea of a personal learning style has grown during the past decade to dominate teacher discourse (Rayner, 2007). It is the foundation of the Scottish Government Publication, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). The components of the GIRFEC model have been designed to ensure that information about young people is collaborated in a constant way between

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agencies. The tools which support it can be used by schools and other agencies in a single or multi-agency context. The main components for most Local Authorities are: the Well-Being Indicators, the Five Questions, my World Triangle, the Resilience Matrix and the Child's Plan (Appendix 2). The GIRFEC discusses all the factors that influence our children's ability to participate in mainstream learning. It fully expects schools and local authorities to take a holistic viewpoint on every child, whether they need support or not (SEED, 2008). It attempts to break down the barriers to education for all children. The emphasis shifted and the focus is more on the child's achievement and personalised education rather than the school setting that they taught in. It introduced a staged process of intervention to ensure that all young people are given equal opportunity (SEED, 2008). The Education Act 2002 requires that all local authorities provide strategies to enable young people with disabilities to have access to the curriculum. It also states that they must be consulted when the strategies are being discussed. With reference to dyslexia this applies to young people whose lives are affected in a negative way and severely impacts their day to day functioning. It is vital that all local authorities and teaching staff understand that all children with dyslexia or any hidden disabilities have any input into how their curriculum is adapted. (SEED, 2005). The Scottish Government advocates that schools should encourage partnerships in a school setting. This equal responsibility of this partnership may be off putting for some parents. They may feel that they lack confidence or knowledge to fulfill the role. Teachers may feel under treat due to their professional status and would have to release some of their power to parents (Runswick-Cole, Goodley, 2011). It is suggest by Armstrong (1995) that suggests partnership

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should mean mutual respect, complimentary expertise and a willingness to learn from each other ( Armstrong, 1995). The approaches used to overcome participation vary from Local Authority to Local Authority and there does not seem to be a consistent approach in education. The HMIE in Scotland stated that an importance should be placed on high quality service. This should be provided by our schools and other institutions (HMIE, 2002). When determining which intervention is used, we should consider that all children are individuals and unique. The strategies should meet the learning needs of the individual (Kane et al., 2004). It should meet the requirement and provide the individual with a sense of happiness and security. This should also provide them with a challenge to further develop their personal and academic progress. To ensure full participation and collaboration it is important that schools identify the barriers that may prevent this. As, there can be many barriers to this ideology, schools should be sensitive to cultural and personal barriers that there may be in the community they support. To ensure that the school is inclusive and is committed to developing the whole child, including all of their talents and abilities as well as their personality and their social attitudes (Hughes & MacNaughton 1999). This requires knowledge of the pupil's life outside the school, at home and in the community. Schools therefore need to be committed to actively engaging with pupils and their parents to identify their needs and aspirations and to access their views about the school's success in meeting them (Sachs, 2003).

## **Dyslexia Definition**

As Literacy and Numeracy has been, and continues to be, fundamental to political aspirations and to contemporary human culture. It is therefore fundamental to education that there is a clear definition of Dyslexia for our guidance (Hannon, 2000). The Scottish Government, in cooperation with Dyslexia Scotland and The Cross Party Group on Dyslexia in the Scottish Parliament have given a clear definition for schools and Local Authorities. See Appendix 3 for the working party definition. There are many views on Dyslexia making it difficult to define. Although there have been several definitions introduced since its inception, experts have relied on identifying exclusionary and inclusionary characteristics to define who has dyslexia (Rice and Brooks 2004). The definition of Dyslexia has been made by Dyslexia Scotland as a specific learning difficulty which mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills. The problems in seen as a deficiency of phonological processing and speed of expression. (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2008). Studies of students with dyslexia, have found that it is found that the underlying deficit in reading difficulties in children is in their process where they attach letters to sounds & analyse sound segments. In a more recent study, it was also found that children show a reduction in their speed of articulation (Fawcatt, 2002). It is also suggested that these literacy processing deficits continue into adulthood. Even though adults have often, by then become skilled at compensating for these difficulties. . It has been found that people with dyslexia, even those who were literate showed impaired awareness of improvement as they get older (Griffiths & Firth, 2002). Dyslexics find difficulties in working memory, phonological processing, processing speed (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2008). Dyslexia has <https://assignbuster.com/project-recommendations-to-date-education-essay/>

been defined as a combination of abilities which affects the learning process for reading, writing and sometimes language/numeracy. It is also claimed by some that Dyslexics have weakness in areas of; memory, processing speed, short-term memory, visual perception, auditory perception, spoken language, and motor skills. The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills state that dyslexia is the result of poor phonological processing and poor short-term memory. Hence, dyslexics often struggle with following instructions, copying notes from the board, and difficulty in reading (Johnston, 2004). Although there have been several definitions of Dyslexia, Fletcher and Lyon (2008) offered three primary reasons why dyslexia is hard to define. First, it has varying degrees which individuals experience difficulties. Secondly, it is difficult to measure how the individual suffers and therefore it cannot be reported objectively. Thirdly, there is debate amongst experts on what characteristics to include and exclude when diagnosing ( Fletcher & and Lyon, 2008). Defining Dyslexia as an umbrella of difficulties has been criticised by many researchers. Studies have shown that reading disability is the most common. . Dyslexia is now defined as a specific learning disability (Riddick, 2006). Some research has claimed that there are differences between dyslexics and poor literacy skills. Rice and Brooks (2004) listed several studies that suggested slight differences in the performance of dyslexic and poor readers on a few reading related tests. Moreover, studies (Fawcett et al., 2001, Rice and Brooks 2004) have also found that children with poor literacy skills had lower scores than dyslexics in the areas of rhyme task and memory tasks. An experiment was also conducted to support that the treatment of dyslexia as a separate entity. It would claim that dyslexics and poor readers differ significantly in

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cognitive skills which are reading-related. The poor readers were observed to perform well in other test (Stanovich, 1991). Frith (1997) claims that the definition and explanation of dyslexia have long been problematic. She developed a framework for thinking about Dyslexia (Firth, 1997). Frith's framework claims that there three main contending perspectives on any particular developmental condition: a biological, behavioural, and cognitive one. She also believes that there are environmental factors that also play a have a part in this viewpoint. The framework helps us to understand the complexity of dyslexia. Frith explain that the biological refers to the genetics and neurology of the individual. The behavioural are the characteristics such as reading and spelling. The cognitive are used in the way that the information is processed in the brain. Environmental factors used to refer to only social or non-biological influences. This also refers to the biological, cognitive and behavioural situation that people might be exposed to.

( Fawcett, 2002)Frith's framework highlights the theoretical explanations of dyslexia. Biological and cognitive factors, at a behavioural level can result in difficulties such as: learning to read, naming, speech development, phonological tasks, memory, spelling, motion detection, phonic skills, balance and time estimation. Both biological and cognitive perspectives provide theoretical explanations that involve untried validation, whereas the behavioural level of any developmental condition tend to be less discussed since behaviours, as they can be observed (Solity et al., 2000). Frith also suggests that dyslexia has a cognitive basis and suggests that there is something different in the way dyslexic students process information Many dyslexic people have difficulties with short term memory, meta-cognition and working memory(Fawcett, 2002).

## **Dyslexia Myth**

Dyslexia is a difficulty associated with literacy. It is not that a sufferer is any less intelligent than a non-sufferer it is more associated with language and literacy. There are many problems that a child who is dyslexic may experience these include difficulty with reading, writing, understanding the language they hear and spell. At the moment, millions of pounds alone are spent on the process of merely identifying children with dyslexia. There's no uniform test, and different psychologists have different ideas about which things to look for. Different local authorities have different testing methods( Snowling, 2008). Some researchers say that this amount of funding in diagnosing dyslexia could be put to better use, claiming that Dyslexia is a myth (Elliott, 2005). They claim that the term has been overused to label any child with literacy difficulties. Professor Julian Elliott of Durham University claims that he could find any difference between a child labeled " dyslexic" and a child labeled " a poor reader". He further claims that too many children have been labeled dyslexic and the sheer amount of child with dyslexia make the term meaningless. In the United Kingdom, one out of 10 people are considered dyslexic(Doyle, 2002). He asks whether there any need for this label to provide support ( Elliott and Gibbs 2008). Elliott suggests that many link the ability to read and write with IQ, which he claims is not the case. It is also the case that parents seek out the dyslexia label, which brings extra support in the classroom. Research from York University that shows - contrary to what you might have expected - that children with a low IQ can be helped just as much with reading problems as children with a high IQ, providing it's the right reading program and it is taught in the appropriate way( Elliott and Gibbs 2008). Further studies by <https://assignbuster.com/project-recommendations-to-date-education-essay/>

Cumbria Council have shown that early intervention is the key to raising the literacy attainment level. They claim that too much of their budget was being spent on diagnosing Dyslexia and not treating it with appropriate interventions. They have begun targeting all poor readers as early as possible with very successful results. The need for early as possible intervention for the development of speech processing skills is needed. Snowling (2008) calls for the redefining of Dyslexia as a neurodevelopment disorder with a genetic origin and that early intervention should be in the first year of schooling ( Snowling, 2008). The National Statement for Improving Attainment in Schools (2002) highlights the importance of knowledge, capability and self-confidence for young people when it comes to good quality literacy and numerical skills. When compared to international standards, the poor attainment of British children has raised concerns in both Literacy and Numeracy. In Scotland, there is a National Priority which, is to raise the standards of education attainment, particularly in the core skills of Literacy and Numeracy, and to achieve better results in national measures of achievement including examination results (HMIE, 2005). There is around 12% of Scots 15 year-olds are judged to be at or below the most basic level of literacy, level one. In England, 30-40 per cent of pupils fail to achieve the reading standards for their age group (Lewis & Wray, 2002). HMIE have specifically identified that many pupils have weak skills in using non-fiction( HMIE, 2005). The implications for these traditional views that Dyslexia has also been viewed as a deficit model whereby a pupil is lacking in literacy skills. If we are to provide any kind of meaningful solution for these pupils we need to do a great deal more observation and analysis to uncover the specific difficulties. If we are ignoring strengths and

concentrating on the weaknesses of these learners we are doing pupils an injustice and adding to the issues of self esteem and confidence. Therefore, there is a challenge for all teachers to actually understand dyslexia and meet the dyslexic learners need. Being dyslexic simply means a different way of learning and therefore as educators we may need to find a different way of teaching ( Booth and Ainscow, 1998). Without appropriate support a dyslexic learners is at risk from a number of negative outcomes from being dyslexic. The effect of inadequate support for people with dyslexia can lead to emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Self esteem can be affected for those who face barriers to their learning or those with underdeveloped social skills (HIME, 2002). The child's own perceptions and lack of support can leave a detrimental to the health and well being for the rest of their lives (Rose, 2009). This lack of awareness by the individual and their peers can lead to the child being bullied and socially excluded. According to Crombie (2002) continuance of such issues can impact self esteem and motivation into adulthood ( cited in GTCS, 2009-2010). The launch of the Dyslexia toolkit by Dyslexia Scotland may suggest that there was a lack of awareness and understanding in the classroom. Further awareness needed to be raised for all concerned ( GTCS, 2009-2010).

## **Project Outline**

This project has been carried out within the SERA guidelines for educational research (SERA, 2005) . Whilst speaking to the Principal Teacher about a specific students and their difficulties. I was surprised when she claimed that most of the students would never complete a project. She felt that this was because pupils lack reading for gathering information. Following further



investigation, in the wider school context, this view seemed to be shared by many staff. As I am working in the Business and Computing Department the S1 pupils are allocated one period a week for an S1 Information Skills course pupils attend the library for one period per week where they are taught, in conjunction with the librarian various information retrieval skills Toward the end of S1 the pupils are required to complete a small research topic and create an 8 - 10 page report using the skills they have learnt in the library. Pupils choose projects from a list moderated by the librarian or suggest a suitable project of their own. This is to encourage the pupils to choose something that they are interested in. The current situation is that pupils are taught the information skills outlined in appendix four, shown previous years projects, given a suggested structure and headings and then given a target of six to ten weeks to complete the project. The librarian and class teacher are on hand to deal with problems. However, faculty staff had become concerned that current teaching practice does not fully prepare pupils for their project and that many of the pupils with literacy difficulties go unnoticed. I approached the Principal Teacher to ask if she would consider a change in the S1 Information System course. I asked if I could introduce a reading model allowing to investigation the impact on their learning. It would also highlight areas of concern for some pupils. This would allow the school to allocate support to pupils who need more specialized help (SEED, 2005). Allowing for information to be gathered and future courses to be developed and adapted to suit individual needs (see Appendix 5). As the project is to identify and address students with reading and comprehension difficulties. Care must be taken as children with literacy difficulties may compensate for their difficulties. The staff involved must be on the strengths and weaknesses

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of the learner and learning styles appropriate through the school, which is suited to the needs of each individual (Reid , 2008). In order to critically models of the reading process need to be reviewed. Many models of how children read and what do they read. (Hatcher et al..., 2006). Kenneth Goodman (1970)( as cited in Hatcher, 2006) explained that reading was a selective process and the objective of reading is not word or letter recognition but to make sense of it - the construction of meaning. Following consultation from the literacy officer for Argyll and Bute it was agreed that I would use the PLUS model. Research from Rippon Grammar school found that the PLUS model prevented students from rushing into projects, allowed time for better thinking and analytical skills and helped pupil improve their literacy skills ( Herring, 2007). The PLUS model provides pupils with an easy to understand ' scaffold' which will help them interact with non-fiction texts. Scaffolding is important as it slows down the reading process for greater comprehension, helping students question, wonder, analyse, summarise and synthesize (Reading to learn) (Stephens, 1996). There were three main aims for the project: To investigate the impact of selected PLUS model activities in fostering reading for information skills. To explore how teacher modeling of the PLUS activities influences pupils' ability to extrapolate relevant information. To highlight any areas of concern regarding literacy issues within the S1 group. Allowing for necessary support or further investigation. As I was working in the Computing Department the project is based around gathering information and presenting the information by means of written presentation, image presentation or animation . The term ' information skills' has been used to refer to " the process of locating and dealing with the information given in texts in a range of media" (Lewis and Wray, 2000). Put <https://assignbuster.com/project-recommendations-to-date-education-essay/>

simply, this is the interpretation of text. However, Lewis & Wray point out that this is at odds with recent authors who suggest that the reading process is a transaction, people actively construct meaning while interacting with a text. Indeed, the key idea of Piaget's theory of cognitive development is that the literacy learner is trying to make sense of his or her encounters with written language rather than just being the passive recipient of external influences (Woolfolk, 2004). Hannon has taken this idea further by suggesting that reading is about the ability to deriving meaning ( Hannon, 2000 ). It is clear that the project was about identifying and meeting the needs of children with Literacy difficulties. My aim was, in a classroom setting, to work with support of the school librarian individually with students for period of time. During my contact time I would complete appropriate paperwork (Appendix 6) and respond to the individual needs of the child. Although I am aware that further intervention will be require for some students as recent research indicates that the method of one-on-one for reading recovery is more effective in teaching in regular classes that lead to achieving the individual needs for each student. From previous experiences, a common difficulty among pupils is that projects are not well thought out or planned in advance. This leads to a lack of focus on what they are researching. The PLUS model provides them with a clear series of steps that if guided through, pupils should be clearer at the outset about their purpose and plan their projects better ( Farrer, 2001). The idea of a list of questions is also used in the EXIT model, Lewis & Wray( 2000) highlight the importance of specifying as precisely as possible what it is they are trying to find out (Lewis & Wray, 2000). PLUS is an acronym for Purpose, Location, Use & Self-evaluation. This model has been chosen as it was designed to be used with <https://assignbuster.com/project-recommendations-to-date-education-essay/>

an information skills course. Also, it does not have as many steps as other models and therefore, will be easier to remember. The model was developed by James Herring (2007). Herring suggests core skills and activities that could be covered under each of the above headings: PurposeIdentifying an information needLearning to frame realistic research questionsPlanning a piece of research using diagrams or headingsIdentifying key words.(Herring, 2007)The indication from members of staff was that pupils are happy to search the web and trawl through endless websites, frequently wasting a whole period, not coming up with any concrete information to use in their projects. Although taught how to search efficiently using keywords, strings & Boolean operands, pupils' typically still try to query the web using natural language searches which frequently only throws up millions of unrelated web sites. Emphasis will be placed on the CD ROMs, books, magazines such as national geographic etc that the library subscribe to as these frequently prove fertile ground for relevant information. Evidence gathered from staff relating to from previous years would indicate that pupils' spend a great deal of time reading irrelevant information. Examples of how to skim and scan text will be practiced by the whole class, in pairs where pupils use skimming and scanning techniques to read a passage from a modern studies text book and then explain to their partner the main points of the passage. This would involving a buddy system pairing those who have appositve outlook on literacy with their counterparts (Johnston, 2004 ). Pupils will be encouraged to self -evaluate. Reflecting on what has been learnt and are able to come to a conclusion based on information found. They will be able to carry out a personal information skills audit and identify successful information skills strategies. In previous years, the projects ran up until the change of

timetable when the pupils' went into S2. The aim for this project was to devote the last period to reflecting on their progress in the project. This would allow them to record which strategies each pupil found most helpful. It was also decided to be completed ten minutes prior to the end of each lesson. The pupils should summarise by reflecting on what they have learned that period, what is called comprehension monitoring. (Lewis & Wray, 2000).

## **Project Method**

The course plan indicates that information skills are taught to pupils until the change of timetable in May. This would allow for a ten week module to complete the projects and one week for the pupil evaluation. Following advice from Support for Learning staff, Principal Teacher Business and the Librarian who felt that this was sufficient time to complete the project lessons. Therefore, the pupils started the project element of the course when timetabled for Information Systems or Business. This would allow eleven weeks for the projects to be completed until the change of timetable . A control group and an experimental group were used. Schools have been able to successfully demonstrate improvement in an experimental group using the PLUS model with various assessment strategies (Stephens, 2006). Two groups of pupils were used from different classes. One class would be explicitly taught stages of the PLUS model and the other would not. This may seem to disadvantage one class. However, after negotiation with the English Department, it was agreed that other class would be taught the stages of the PLUS model immediately after the change of timetable when they move into S2. Classes were matched in terms of ability as closely as possible. The criteria for selection were; Attainment on CAT scores Attainment across the

curriculum as evidenced by S1 reports Attainment in English For the experimental group, an aspect of the PLUS model will be shared explicitly with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Progress through the projects will be more structured than from previous years. Pupils will be required to think about how they are gathering and presenting evidence. While all pupils learn at different paces, the general breakdown in time and major topics each week are given in Appendix 6. For the control group, the projects will be completed using the same process as previous years. They will spend one week choosing a project topic, one period framing questions and part of a period looking at previous year's exemplars before completing the projects over a five week period. In terms of measuring any effect, qualitative measures will be used. Pupils in the control and experimental groups were observed by both myself and the school librarian. An observational checklist will be used each library period for the control group and the experimental group. This will enable that the data will be collected in real time and not open to bias being introduced. Also, two checklists will be completed. One by the class teacher and one by the librarian and the results were cross checked at the end of the project. The pupils were to be observed in terms of understanding what to do, engagement with the project, perceived ownership of the project, confidence, motivation, time spend gathering information, movement around the library, whether projects were completed, quality of work produced. It also asked for comments on any pupils who had difficulties in understanding any stage of the process. In addition, a post project interview was to be conducted with all of the pupils from each group to gauge differences in pupil confidence, perception of

support & level of understanding in relation to the PLUS model and sharing of learning intentions. However, at the time of writing this is still ongoing.

### **Project Conclusion to date**

All three projects were completed by the experimental group. The information contained in the projects completed by the experimental group was more relevant given their choice of topic. The members of the experimental group had a clearer idea how to access information as evidenced by their asking fewer questions during project completion and interviews with the pupils toward the end of the project. A more structured approach and explicit demonstration of reading for information seems from this small research to increase boys' interaction with projects and the quality of the information located.

### **Project Recommendations to date**

The project should be repeated with a larger number of pupils to validate findings. The use of a model of reading for information should be introduced to all information skills classes. Further research should be carried out with other models to check the validity of the PLUS model. AiFL techniques should be included in information skills classes. The findings from this research should be shared with colleagues within the faculty and whole school.

Enhanced information gathering and the ability to help SFL in identification and the support of literacy tasks. More teachers training in the awareness of literacy difficulties across the whole school, with the view to the Staged Intervention Process.

## Conclusion

For many years the teaching profession has been encouraged to be more accountable in maintaining standards in our school. I feel that this external accountability leads to improving collaboration and involvement in school life. Head teachers and school management are now expected to be committed to building relationship to enhance the well being of their students. At the same time they will be judge on their academic performance. Partnership is at the heart of the most Scottish Governments legislation, although the depths of partnerships vary from local authority to authority. This could have a negative effect in promoting participation. It is vitally important that each school develops a positive relationship with parents, external agencies and students. Information that should be collective gathered should also include the definition of the word partnership. It has been shown that collaboration and involvement work best when there is a common goal. To ensure this, there must strong commitment and support from local authorities and management, as well as teachers, parents and pupils. Successful relationships are more likely if the views of each person are respected. I have worked in some school where the local authority has banned correspondence between teacher and parents. This leads to a feeling of resentment and distrust for both staff and parents. I feel that informal gatherings could solve these problems and develop the trust that has been lost in these schools. In order for this to take place, teachers must be more open and approachable and available to make themselves visible to the parents. The work of Dr Julian Elliot brings the question of the Dyslexia being a myth. This is of interest to me as I have worked in schools where the testing of Dyslexia is the most important part of the Support

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Departments remit. This area has made me question my own interpretations of Dyslexia and the interventions that we implement. From my understanding of Elliott's work , first you divide children who find reading and writing difficult into two groups - those identified as dyslexic and those not identified as dyslexic. You give both sets the intervention recommended for dyslexics (a phonic approach) and both sets benefit in the same way to the same degree. Therefore, the argument goes the term dyslexia has no functional use, other than to label. As we discussed the positive and negative aspect of labeling in the previous essay, we are aware of the impact that they can have. The dyslexia myth refers to the difference between normal and poor readers but to the existence of a significant difference among poor readers. Evidence suggests that there remains no conclusive evidence that dyslexics and poor readers are different in terms of reading related limitations. Following the research I have completed for this course, I think of dyslexia as a spectrum, as with autism with various depths and degrees of dyslexia. As a general population most people's brain function process information and communicate differently. For someone to be dyslexic there is a significant difference compared to the social norm of brain function. Quite often there is a spectrum of areas of high brain function and areas of poor brain function. Although dyslexia is an umbrella of different attributes, positive and negative, those range far wider than literacy. There are issues such as short term memory, a different relationship with tracking the flow of time, arithmetic and listening comprehension. Elliott accepts that these wide ranges of issues exist for many who are diagnosed as dyslexic, however for the purpose of the people who want to say that dyslexia is a myth, all these other attributes must be ignored (Elliott, 2005). Debates surrounding

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dyslexia are still ongoing but there is a general acceptance that it is a reading impairment which is neurobiological in origin. How resources are allocated in schools when dealing with students who have literacy difficulties vary between local authorities. Some authorities I have experienced, the system fits those who are strongly dyslexic. It does not seem to match well with those who are seen to have literacy difficulties. This makes the schools push for more testing and once the student is diagnosed they access to specialised support. Those with marginal difficulties that are not flagged by staged intervention processes receive little or no support. For those with literacy difficulties there are proven techniques for supporting them, it has been shown they respond best to these. Support has to be rationed out and shown to be the most cost effective option, hence there needs to be evidence before schools will use their limited resources. As the students projects have to be complete the evaluation is still ongoing. Although I have had verbal feedback from many members of staff on it effects. The plan was to arrange an online course feedback for the students to get an idea of how the course can be improved. I have found that students with literacy difficulties had other strengths. Most of them had some learned strategy to overcome their difficulties. However, they have weaknesses in academic skills sometimes presented in reading/writing which are to be thoroughly developed via make use of various types of individualised intervention. If these strategies are applied we could predict an improvement in these students academic ability. From what I have read I believe that it is not the individual interventions which have led to success. Different schools and departments used different strategies when adopting interventions.

Undoubtedly the staged intervention techniques are effective but I feel that

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it is the clearer focus on teaching and learning that has been the major contributing factor. What this project has done for me is that it has forced me to question much of my teaching style and reconsider many aspect of my classroom practice. I must examine how I interoperated the curriculum and allow for more input from students on designing courses. There are many positive findings in this report, improved motivation, confidence, self-esteem, attainment, independence, involvement, behaviour, autonomy, listening skills and willingness to learn. The teachers report many positive aspects on their personal and professional development. However, there are difficulties. I can identify with is a content heavy curriculum for classroom teachers. The report mentions parts of the curriculum not being covered. The level of commitment within the school is another reported downside. Again, I can identify with this having received in-service training on staged intervention strategies and then expected to get on with it, no follow up, no support, no extra time. I do not feel the difficulties mentioned in the report are insurmountable. But they are big problems, interventions are viewed as 'another initiative' that a bit of in-service training will deal with. There has to be a commitment to embrace it whole heartedly by the entire school, authority and the Education Department within the Local Authorities. It has to be properly resourced more teaching and specialized staff that are willing to try something new. Peter Hannon has said (Hannon, 2000) that providing a model of literacy must involve a demonstration of how reading and writing are linked to a wide range of adult purposes in the home, community and workplace. The information skills project completed in S1 fulfils this requirement as it is linked to the pupils own interests and is also presented as being indicative of projects completed at further education and the

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workplace. This paper was seeking to address this difficulty by in Literacy can no longer be viewed as the sole responsibility of English Departments. The interventions must be school wide, with teacher taking responsibility for the own CPD and being aware of current legislation. All teachers have a responsibility for the development of literacy in their pupils (Ward, 2002).

Word Count 7767

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