

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experience of the student teachers who participated in the 'Challenge and Support, Punctuating Grammar' programme, a school-based grammar intervention, which was written and delivered by the researcher. Year 4 BAQTS Primary Education student teachers at Liverpool Hope University in academic year 2017-2018 opted to attend training to prepare them to teach a grammar intervention on their Professional Placement Learning (PPL). Student teachers' lack of confidence, but also the influence of their prior beliefs on the teaching grammar is a well-documented topic in research (Watson, 2015; Harper and Rennie, 2008) – perceptions of student teachers in my own setting reflected this research. The desire to improve subject knowledge was one of the main motivations for student teachers choosing this grammar training programme. The aim of the programme was to enhance Year 4 BAQTS trainee teachers' subject knowledge, by teaching the grammatical terminology, but also exploring a range of pedagogical approaches, in order to improve pedagogical content knowledge. Approaches included 'slow writing' (Didau, 2015), 'rainbow writing' (Harrison, 2009), sentence-combining and other multi-

sensory activities, using picture books as a medium for teaching the grammatical features in context.

In terms of programme design, the training for the grammar intervention spanned two days, comprising one full day's training, half a day supported planning and half a day for the student teachers to teach a grammar activity to year 2 and year 6 pupils in a local primary school. Student teachers engaged in 'pedagogies of enactment' (Lampert et al, 2013), teaching grammar in school as a rehearsal for their interventions. Once on placement, the student teachers taught approximately six grammar intervention sessions to small groups of children, completing daily reflections about their perceptions and experiences of using particular pedagogical principles to teach grammar.

In order to build a richer picture, a qualitative approach was chosen, combining pre and post-attitudinal surveys, interview question responses, trainee reflections and a critical evaluation. Of particular interest was how the trainees perceived their subject knowledge and pedagogy had developed as a result of the training, and how they contextualised grammar through the use of children's literature (Myhill, 2012), thereby developing their knowledge of picture books and encouraging reading for pleasure, as well as becoming 'teachers as readers' (Cremin, 2009). Links to both grammar for writing and grammar for reading were explored.