

Implementation of Knowledge Organisers in Year 8 English lessons

Claremont High School Academy

Problem: What challenges do your school(s) have that need to be addressed?

As the examinations in English have moved to a linear set up, pupils need to rely significantly on memory. They need thorough and in depth knowledge of the texts they study, including contextual information and subject terminology, as well as the knowledge of the skills they need in order to succeed. English has long been considered a skills-based subject, but skills can only be developed when knowledge is secure. The embedding and quizzing of this knowledge needs to be actioned from Key Stage 3 and pupils need the resources to assist them.

Innovation: How will the innovation help improve the problem you have identified and benefit teachers and learners?

We will give pupils Knowledge Organisers at the beginning of a new unit of work with all the knowledge they are expected to know for this unit. Having knowledge of key terms and ideas is intended to support pupils to improve the skillfulness of their essay writing.

Teachers will encourage Knowledge Organisers to be used in lessons to complement and assist with pupils' work. The first five minutes to every lesson will involve a five-question knowledge recap. All five questions will cover knowledge learnt in lessons from the previous day, week or unit. (Three from previous lesson, one from a lesson the previous week and one from another lesson in the unit (over a week ago if possible.)) As all answers can be derived using the knowledge organisers, all pupils have opportunities for achieving 5/5. Teachers will circulate and question / ask orally for scores to gain an indication into pupil knowledge, and identify any pupils that need further support to help more so during the lesson.

Using Knowledge Organisers will have the added advantage of reducing teacher workload and increase pupils' accountability for their own success. Homework activities will include a mixture of filling in blank organisers and revising from them.

Another advantage of Knowledge Organisers, I believe, comes to teacher workload. No

homework needs to be marked, only to check it has been completed. The quizzes are peer marked in class and results are entered onto a spreadsheet during class time. Homework is always set on the same day and quizzes occur on the same day. This reduces the time teachers have to think up a homework, mark it, and chase up any pupils who have not completed it, or help pupils who have not understood.

Existing evidence: What evidence is there that this innovation will improve outcomes?

While there is opinion to support the success of Knowledge Organisers, and studies into the importance of memory and a knowledge-based curriculum, the use of Knowledge Organisers as an effective teaching tool is unproven.

At the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), research has proven that homework can increase a pupil's progress by five months, and meta-cognition and self-regulation can increase progress by eight months. However, the methodologies for how to achieve this are slightly vague: *'The potential impact of these approaches (meta-cognition and self-regulation) is very high, but can be difficult to achieve as they require pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning and develop their understanding of what is required to succeed.'* (EEF)

Knowledge Organisers are therefore a way to aid pupils' progress in these areas because:

1. They require pupils to take responsibility for their learning. When pupils fill in homework grids based off their Knowledge Organiser, this is simply retrieving and transferring information. Nothing is abstract or inferential – it is all based on fact. Therefore there is minimal, if any, reason for a pupil to claim not to have 'understood' a homework.
2. They provide a clear framework for pupils to improve their understanding.
3. They provide a reference point throughout lessons for the meta-language used throughout English lessons that pupils need to know in order to succeed.

Cognitive science literature puts emphasis on quizzing/ testing and makes the use of Knowledge Organisers pertinent as they are designed to be used in testing. Evidence from the field of cognitive psychology identifies promising approaches to learning through quizzing/testing: Highlighted in Coe et al.'s 'What makes great teaching' (2014) report for the Sutton Trust, inclusion of desirable difficulties (Bjork and Bjork, 2011) and incorporating opportunities for testing, interleaving and spacing, can support pupils' memory of the topics they are studying (Dunlosky et al. 2013).

In my opinion, a structured, formalised and tracked approach to teaching would benefit those from less advantaged backgrounds. This is because having homework pre-set, with a competitive element to quizzing, is not dependent on parent help/assistance or attendance (as catch-up quizzes would run for pupils who miss a quiz,) and encourages the child to take more autonomy for their success.

Research question or hypothesis: What effect will the intervention, implemented for how long, with which pupils, have on what outcomes?

What impact does the use of a combination of Knowledge Organisers and regular quizzing in English, used over 12 weeks, have on the attainment and progress of Year 8 pupils?

Prediction 1: Pupils who are taught Knowledge Organisers will progress more than those who do not use them.

Prediction 2: Pupils who use a Knowledge Organiser will feel more secure and confident in their subject knowledge from using Knowledge Organisers and will both be motivated by and engage more with English lessons.

Method: Include sample, design, measures, intervention, process evaluation, and analysis

Sample

Six out of nine Year 8 English classes will partake in the sample. This comprises 179 pupils. Two classes are excluded because they are taught by the lead teacher; a further is excluded so numbers are kept even.

Information about Claremont School:

- Located in Brent (urban location).
- Mixed comprehensive Years 7-13.
- 1600 pupils on roll.
- Received Outstanding Judgments in Ofsted in 2009 and 2014.
- In September 2017 became a Multi-Academy Trust.
- Large mixture of ethnic backgrounds and one in three pupils speak English as a second language or are bilingual.

Parents of participating pupils will be made aware of the strategy via letter and required to return

a form consenting to the evaluation.

Assignment to condition

Six classes (mixed ability) totalling 179 pupils will take part. (One class has 29 pupils; the others have 30).

Three of the classes will be control groups, the other three will be innovation groups. This was generated randomly, by flipping a coin.

Form Class	Control or Innovation
8.1	Innovation
8.4	Control
8.5	Innovation
8.6	Control
8.8	Innovation
8.9	Control

All pupils will complete a pre-test before starting the unit of the work that uses the Knowledge Organiser. If there are large gaps in attainment between classes it may be necessary to re-randomise. The pre-test will be marked out of 30, by the Lead teacher to ensure standardised work.

Summary of intervention

In the innovation classes, the procedure will work as follows:

- All pupils will be given a Knowledge Organiser at the beginning of a unit of work. This will be glued in their book for reference. If a pupil starts a new exercise book, they will be given a new Knowledge Organiser.
- Pupils will also be given a second Knowledge Organiser to be glued into their planner. This ensures they will always have one in case they do not have their exercise book with them (ie. if it's taken in for marking).
- The Knowledge Organiser will be created by the Lead Teacher, along with all quizzes and homework resources. It will comprise skills needed for the completion of that unit, but include skills that are transferable to other English Units. (Please see further attachment for what typical Knowledge Organisers might look like.)

- Teachers will instruct children on how to use their Knowledge Organiser and how to revise from it for homework. Teachers will implement a ten-question quiz once a week on knowledge revised from their Organiser that links directly to their day-to-day school work. This is a summative quiz.
- Three five-question starter activity quizzes are to be implemented at the beginning of each lesson; the answers of which can be found in the Knowledge Organiser. The Lead teacher will provide examples of these, however, individual teachers are likely to want to adapt them to suit the needs/knowledge of their class.
- Quizzes will be designed by the lead teacher and made available to all innovation classes.

Teachers will be trained/directed as to how to:

- use Knowledge Organisers in class
- administer summative (20 question) quizzes.
- upload results and calculate averages
- react to test scores (e.g. helping pupils more specifically in lessons/phoning home if there is a perceived lack of effort/changing seating plan so that certain pupils can be helped by others or the teacher more readily.)
- administer pre-tests and post-tests and upload scores in to an excel database.

Detail

Teachers will encourage Knowledge Organisers to be used in lessons to complement and assist with pupils' work. The first five minutes to every lesson will involve a five-question knowledge recap. All five questions will cover knowledge learnt in lessons from the previous day, week or unit. (Three from previous lesson, one from a lesson the previous week and one from another lesson in the unit (over a week ago if possible). As all answers can be derived using the Knowledge Organisers, all pupils have opportunities for achieving 5/5. Teachers will circulate and question / ask orally for scores to gain an indication into pupil knowledge, and identify any pupils that need further support to help more so during the lesson. Subject teachers should devise these questions by themselves in order to suit their pupils. However, examples will be circulated by the lead teacher a week in advance that teachers may wish to use if suitable.

Homework will centre around Knowledge Organisers and will be two-fold:

Task 1: These tasks (20-30 minutes per week) will require pupils to use their Knowledge Organisers directly to complete activities. Such activities might include a copy of part of the Knowledge Organiser, with sections missing to be filled in. Alternatively, pupils might complete a

mini quiz or a timeline if important dates are key to a literature unit.

Task 2: (2 x 15 minutes per week.) Pupils will be taught how to revise using Knowledge Organisers (covering up the definitions of key terms for example, and memorising the answer). Collaborative revision with peers will be encouraged.

Pupils will have a 20-question quiz once a week on particular sections of the organiser. All quizzes will be provided by the lead researcher and teachers will upload quiz marks centrally onto a shared excel spreadsheet. A competitive element will therefore be added in that classes partaking in the experiment will have their test scores averaged by the class teacher so that they can compete with other classes in the same cohort.

Pupils who are absent on the day of the quiz will be re-quizzed during a quiz catch up session on Tuesday (running for 10 minutes after school). Pupils who do not turn up will be issued with a detention. Pupils will have detentions also for not completing Knowledge Organiser homework activities.

In total, two teachers will need training and the head of English will be trained so that they are aware of the research taking place.

Pupils who score poorly in quizzes will be focused on by teachers and TAs in lessons in order to assist them further. Improvements in test scores will be rewarded with School R(rewards) points. If a pupil scores 4/10 or less, a teacher may put them in for a re-test as part of their detention if they also failed to fill out Task 1 homework activities.

This intervention takes place over one unit of work (six weeks.)

Control classes

- Pupils will be taught as normal. quizzes may be administered but they will not be linked to a Knowledge Organiser as none will be used.
- To avoid cross contamination, teachers of control groups will need to be aware that pupils should not be copying Knowledge Organisers from a pupil in another class, and that they are being taught using a different method.

Outcome measures

- All pupils will conduct a pre-test and a post-test for each unit. These tests will be administered in class time. Pre-tests will be written on lined paper and be marked and moderated. Both tests will be scored out of 30. The marking grid is a Key Stage 3 version of the AQA GCSE assessment grid and uses the same objectives. The marking therefore takes into account ability to: Read, understand and respond to the text (AO1), Analyse

Language, form and structure (A02) and to explore the relationship between texts and context. (A03).

- The unit of work is *Roald Dahl Short Stories*. Both pre-test and post-test will be the same question, however will concern different extracts. The pre-test extract will be 'The Man from the South' and the Post-Test Extract will be 'Lamb to the Slaughter'. Although pupils will read the entirety of 'The Man from the South', there will be minimal discussion prior to the pre-test, in order that a pupil's raw ability be more accurately measured. The question will be:
 - **How does Roald Dahl use language and structural features to engage the reader and create suspense? Your response should comprise 3-4 PEA paragraphs (Point-Evidence-Analysis) and you should focus on: The methods (techniques) Dahl uses to create humour, suspense and intrigue.**
- Pre-tests cannot be revised for (except for the reading of the text beforehand), however, the post-test can, and innovation groups will use the Knowledge Organiser in order to help them do this. All pupils will know the assessment title and have three lessons (one-hour each) of preparation for it in class time, assisted by the teacher.
- Individual class teachers will mark all post-tests. However, all test papers will be handed in and assigned randomly, using a number system. This includes mixing up innovation group and control group tests. All test grades will be uploaded onto a spreadsheet and will be analysed after by the lead researcher.
- All pupils will be identified by a number also to ensure that no bias is given.
- Moderation will take place pre-marking of the post tests, with all teachers being given three papers (top, middle and bottom), and explaining the reasoning behind the grading. These moderated pieces will be marked by the lead teacher. Further moderation may take place of up to a further five pieces to ensure continuity in marking.

Process evaluation

Perception Data will also be used by pupils and teachers who partake in order to gauge how effective they believed using knowledge organisers is and whether it has impacted their workload/ confidence.

In order to assess the Perception Data, I will implement surveys using Survey Monkey. Surveys will be carried out pre- and post-innovation for all teachers. Only pupils taking part in the innovation will carry out surveys. Questions asked in this survey will include:

- pupil confidence in subject knowledge
- pupil motivation
- pupil engagement

- teacher subject knowledge
- teacher workload
- timeliness of teacher response to the needs of learners.

To ensure all teachers are using Knowledge Organisers appropriately, the lead teacher will observe lessons to look for:

- summative quizzing taking place once a week
- formative quizzing taking place at the start of lesson
- All Knowledge Organisers stuck into books
- knowledge from the Knowledge Organiser referred to in lessons

Issues/ feedback will be documented and followed up where necessary. Control classes will also be checked to confirm that no Knowledge Organisers are being used.

Analysis

Pre-test essay and post-test essay marks will be compared and analysed to see what improvement (if any) has been made and whether the improvement is greater for pupils using Knowledge Organisers.

This data will be used to estimate an effect size using the EEF's DIY evaluation guide. Data will also be measured against the pupils FFT 20% Target Grade (marks will be converted into A-E grades, following the school's grading policy).

The results will also look at outcomes for Pupil Premium (PP) pupils, boys and lower prior-attainers (from the pre-test), to ascertain any effects to these groups.

Perception data will also be taken into account as a survey will be filled out by all pupils and teachers involved with the innovation to see how they respond to the style of Knowledge Organiser lessons, quizzes and homework. This will be conducted at the end of the 12-week period. Perception data will be interpreted from the survey information to ascertain any benefits and limitations to the study.

With our analysis, we will:

- quantify the size of the effect of the intervention
- identify if the intervention is more successful for PP pupils more so than others.

Conclusion: What will happen if your innovation improves outcomes, or not?

What are the limitations of your evaluation?

If successful, the research will be used to invest in expanding the use of Knowledge Organisers across different year groups, different curriculum areas, and possibly across other schools.

If unsuccessful, priority will be given to different methods of closing the attainment gap between PP and non-PP pupils.

Potential limitations

- This is a reasonably sample of pupils from one school.
- Success or lack of success within a topic could be attributed to other factors unrelated to the innovation.
- Attendance may affect pupil outcomes; this needs to be monitored closely to see if it impacts overall progress.
- The lead teacher will not have results of their classes included in the study to reduce bias.
- Cross contamination will need to be monitored: teachers and pupils may find the Knowledge Organisers useful but should not be allowed to use one if they are in the control group.

References

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