

Primary planning with Projects on a Page

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Introduction

In 2017 I became Art and D&T lead and I knew that I wanted to focus on implementing a well-structured and supportive Design and Technology long term plan. That year, Moorlands was chosen to host D&T CPD for the Trafford Teaching Schools Alliance and work with ITT design and technology tutor Ben Sedman (Manchester Metropolitan University) to offer expertise in teaching the subject at the primary school level. I hosted the termly CPD meetings and they were a great opportunity to network, share good practice, ask questions and learn new practical skills. Ben encouraged us to become members of the D&T Association and to access their resources, including Projects on a Page (PoP). In an early meeting I was able to meet my Infant School counterpart and discuss our approaches to design and technology and it transpired that they had recently introduced Projects on a Page and were positive about its impact for children and

their learning. This supported my decision to move Moorlands towards adopting the scheme and provide continuity between our two settings. We follow an Art and D&T long term plan that details three Art units and three D&T units across the year, each lasting approximately one half term. We work in one combined sketchbook and make the start of a new Art or D&T unit clear with a cover page or vocabulary mat.

Introducing PoP

When I first looked at the resources the level of detail really struck me: there was a huge amount of information on one A3 page. I admit I was a little daunted as to how to introduce it to staff and use it plan from, however, through following the numbered sections it became clearer, and I could imagine a way to use it to create a comprehensive medium-term plan to teach from. I designed CPD for the staff to guide

them through the resources and to create clear medium-term plans.

Selecting units

Projects on a Page has planners for each aspect of D&T: textiles, food, structures, mechanisms, electrical systems and programming and control. To split the units into three for each year group was our first decision, and we decided that every year group would teach the 'food' unit, and the others would be spread equally. We chose to align 'electrical systems' units to year groups who already had an electricity focus in their science teaching and learning.

Giving the D&T unit a focus

Using sections 2 and 3 gives the teacher and children a very clear focus for the unit: Which aspect of D&T are we working in? It is crucial that children are clear about the focus of their work, so make this explicit on the medium-term plan.



Establishing a clear project title

Using sections 4 to 9 allows any teacher to create a clear project title, using appropriate vocabulary: product, user and purpose. Again, it is crucial that children understand the project title and begin to use D&T vocabulary.

Example – Year 3, Autumn term

Aspect of D&T: Textiles

Focus: 2D shape to 3D product

Project title: Design, make and evaluate a purse/wallet or pencil case (product) for a family member (user) for celebration / carrying things (purpose).

Identifying the three stages for a medium-term plan

Using sections 10, 12 and 14, PoaP recommends three stages: 1) investigative and evaluative activities, 2) focused tasks, and 3) design, make and evaluate assignment. Each offers suggestions and ideas that teachers can use to structure parts of a medium-term plan. For my staff, I recommended using a 1:3:2 ratio for the stages.

Another useful feature of the PoaP resources is the 'instant CPD' page with each unit containing practical ideas, tips for teachers, examples and a glossary. Section 19 contains useful information about Health and Safety with more information available on the Association's website.

Evaluating the project

Use section 14 to ensure that evaluation is a key part of any children's D&T learning. To aid evaluation I designed some key questions that can be applied to any project title: What worked well? Challenges I faced. How I dealt with any challenges? What I would change next time? Skills that I learnt / skills that I developed. The best part about this project was... Evaluation is a really powerful tool in D&T and although it comes at the end of a unit, it should not be missed.

Using vocabulary mats

Section 17 has specific vocabulary for each unit. It is always important to model good D&T vocabulary for children and to support this, I created vocabulary mats for all the PoaP units and made them available to staff to use in their planning and for children to have in their D&T lessons (they stick them in their sketchbooks).

I designed my CPD and a medium-term planning format to show the aspect of D&T, the focus of the unit, the project title, and clearly defined sections to guide through the required stages. Guiding the staff and discussing the resource and appropriate sections of the planning format has brought a consistent approach to D&T planning, teaching and learning outcomes for children, all of which is very positive. As with any new resource, we are still in an implementation and review phase: evaluating how well specific project titles worked, the stages of the medium-term plan, and children's own evaluations of their work.

