

Mount Tamar School

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Mount Tamar School specialises in educating young people from 4 to 16 years who find it difficult to be successful within mainstream education. We specialise in supporting students with a variety of complex needs including; trauma, communication difficulties, mental health difficulties, social and emotional difficulties, attachment, ADHD, MLD, Asperger and Autism. We strive to provide the very best educational experience so that all our students can reach their full potential as they become responsible and proactive members of the community. We are a friendly and caring community that firmly believes in treating every young person as an individual and offer personalised all round support.

We were looking for a way of moving forward with our teaching and learning through an organized and collaborative approach. I had heard of TEEP in the past and had good recommendations from a headteacher colleague therefore decided to find out more.

In November 2014 senior staff attended an introduction day to find out more. Our concern was that the case studies were very much mainstream education based but we were assured that the training would be tailored to meet our needs. Many of the teachers at Mount Tamar have been here for a while and were already very experienced with teaching SEND pupils, so a training course based on modern mainstream expectations would raise standards across the school.

In April 2015 we undertook our first two days of the TEEP. Having all the teachers together in the same room with the trainers for two days had an immediate effect of getting us all talking about learning and what it meant to us – the atmosphere was great.

We wanted an immediate impact and consistency throughout all classrooms and across the whole school, therefore decided to start with the Bloom's Taxonomy Spiders and also the De Bono's Thinking Hats. The immediate impact of this was that the teachers were all talking with each other and trying out new ideas to engage the pupils. There was a new approach that meant how the pupils learnt was just as important as what they learnt. 'Stickability' was the new Mount Tamar catch phrase!

I attended the TEEP conference in London in the summer and heard how other schools had embedded the approach across their schools. Keeping this alive was important if it was going to work. Following the final day training we decided as a staff group to commit to ways of

sharing that included: teacher research area, TEEP market place, subject learning mats, peer TEEPing and speed TEEPing! Making our staff training sessions as exciting as teachers are making their lessons is important to us.

Through TEEP all teachers both experienced and newly qualified can now all talk the same language when we discuss teaching and learning, this was not the case before. The staff are now able to move forward together and have been reinvigorated with learning themselves.

Keeping the communication going and opportunities for staff to work together have been put in place for example; teachers have created their own resource banks to share ideas and resources. Triads have been formed, grouping staff of varying skill sets, pathways for newly qualified, main scale and experienced staff to encourage the continuation of academic communication and to facilitate ground level support for all staff. Teep market places occur regularly to keep it at the forefront of people's thinking. We have done a lot of work on making TEEP an essential part of our planning, and an integral part of our management protocols. It now appears on our work scrutiny feedback forms, learning walk focus sheets and lesson observation documents. The last round of formal lesson observations showed approximately 80% of lessons having a TEEP element.

Looking forward we believe that learning is a vital half of the equation in education. As a result we have recently turned our attention to learning behaviours. Our students have little concept of themselves as learners or the idea of transferable skills. We have found that the spiders and thinking hats are a little inaccessible. We started with whole school sessions around what good learners do and we made a decision to focus on students being able to understand, identify, articulate and transfer skills. This is a long term plan! Then a smaller working party began by combining the principles of TEEP with some of the key features of concepts like "Building Learning Power" and have replaced spiders with learning robots. As we are a cross-phase school we have designed language that can be common across both primary and secondary to provide consistency for the students as they progress as learners and make their way up the school. The robots and accompanying language have been designed to highlight the skill a student is using for a particular task and what success looks like. We are also in the process of designing and trialling a common power point slide to start all lessons which includes the skill or skills being used, the TEEP scale, key words etc. We are close to launching this as a whole school. We have had to think very carefully

about how to introduce this to the students. We are currently planning a Crystal Maze day which will be a series of skills based challenges to introduce the concepts.

We have had several "wow" moments, non-more so than the amount of practical and kinaesthetic activities introduced into subjects that were seen as highly academic like Maths. We have seen angles taught through stealth by chalking out scooter tracks on the playground and speed calculations done through human races and snails versus woodlice. A catapult used as a starter to revise nouns and verbs! Exit activities used to produce higher order questions from previously uncommunicative young people and singing used as brain gym. Writing on tables is now as common place as the worksheet used to be.

If I had to describe TEEP I would say- this is what teaching and learning should be like.