

Introduction

Dictation, simply stated, is the process of writing down what someone else has said. It has been used in educational settings throughout history. There is much research as to the positive impacts of dictation in improving language skills, memory and retention skills, understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure. Key researchers include Zeigarnick (1927), Morris (1983) and Montalvan (1990).

At Swinemoor Primary School, pupils struggle to retain and recall facts. Many have limited vocabulary as well as poor secretarial skills. The use of regular dictation will build upon the vocabulary work already implemented and will complement the oracy focus already in place. (See appendix – Rationale behind the use of dictation.)

Post lockdowns, there was some experimentation with (lengthy) dictation as one of the methods of ‘catch-up’. This was sporadic and not necessarily very effective, beyond teaching some facts. It was also seen by staff to be outdated and cumbersome.

Consequently, the daily dictation sentences will be short, clear, progressive, relevant, focused and have pace, with an element of competition.

In Practice

All pupils across the school will take part in daily dictation at the beginning of each English lesson. The same sentence will be used throughout the week, with immediate daily feedback. Each sentence will be developed from subject-specific vocabulary, highlighted in the relevant III documents, which will also become the Word of the Week. The sentences will be carefully constructed by year group staff, then subjected to peer-on-peer review to ensure accuracy and progression. (In EYFS, pupils will repeat the sentence orally, rather than writing it down.)

Research Focus

Does daily dictation improve English skills (particularly those involved in listening, transcribing and reiterating) as well as vocabulary knowledge and understanding?

Hypothesis: it is expected that regular (daily) dictation will improve the speed and accuracy of sentence writing, as well as increase retention, recall and reiteration of key subject vocabulary.

Design and Methodology

Although all pupils are involved in the intervention itself, a sample will be used for the purpose of research. This will comprise of 5 children from each mixed year group. *These will be the same children who were tested on their understanding of Word of the Week the previous academic year. Consequently, the results from these pupils last year will act as a comparative ‘control’ group.* (There will be no testing of EYFS pupils this year due to their ‘dictation’ work being verbal.)

The children are a cross-section of boys and girls; PPG and non-PPG; SEND; EAL; HAPs, MAPs and LAPs.

The difference between the control group and the test group is the delivery of the dictation, rather than the children themselves. This difference in delivery includes improved clarity, regularity, focus, progression and understanding of the purpose. (See above.)

Data will be compared between the control group and the test group to show the effectiveness of appropriate dictation. Data will also be compared within the test group to show progress and retention throughout the year, as well as between children with different attributes.

Delivery

The test group will have a baseline assessment at the beginning of both autumn half-terms; they will take part in daily dictation in their classes; then, at the end of both half-terms, they will be given the same

assessments. At the end of the academic year, a further assessment will take place which will be comprised of a mix of both previous assessments. (See Appendix.)

The assessment tests – Swinemoor Dictation and Vocabulary Acquisition - will be developed from the Word of the Week and the dictation sentences for the corresponding half-term. These will be created and delivered by the English co-ordinator, under timed test conditions.

Measurements

The assessment tests will measure: understanding of vocabulary; accurate recording of sentences (correct words, punctuation and spelling); and the amount of words written in a given time (speed). These will all be calculated as percentages. (See Results tables.)

Results

The following tables show comparative results between the control group and the test group, as well as within the test group – over time and between different children.

Results - CONTROL GROUP AND TEST GROUP

1a) Correct definition of vocabulary (Word of the Week)

GROUP	AUTUMN (AVE)	SUMMER (AVE)	DIFFERENCE
CONTROL F	6%	50%	+44%
TEST Y1	9%	59%	+50%
CONTROL Y1	15%	50%	+35%
TEST Y2	22%	100%	+78%
CONTROL Y2	25%	67%	+42%
TEST Y3	33%	83%	+50%
CONTROL Y3	10%	33%	+23%
TEST Y4	29%	63%	+34%
CONTROL Y4	20%	50%	+30%
TEST Y5	17%	83%	+66%
CONTROL Y5	33%	67%	+34%
TEST Y6	34%	100%	+66%

(NB This table enables comparison between control and test groups as year groups and also the same children.

Control group F became test group Y1; control group Y1 became test group Y2; and so on.)

Further Tables of Results – individual children and specified groups – comparisons (**TEST GROUP**)

1b) Correct **definition of vocabulary** (Word of the Week)

CHILD	ATTRIBUTES	SEPT	OCT	Difference	NOV	DEC	Difference	JULY	Diff from Sept
GJ	Y1/2 B LAP PPG	0%	0%	0%	0%	83%	+83%	50%	+50%
WS	Y1/2 B MAP NPPG	17%	0%	-17%	50%	100%	+50%	67%	+50%
MN	Y1/2 G MAP PPG	0%	17%	+17%	67%	100%	+33%	100%	+100%
TC	Y1/2 B HAP NPPG	17%	50%	+33%	67%	100%	+33%	100%	+83%
HT	Y1/2 G HAP NPPG	50%	0%	-50%	50%	100%	+50%	100%	+50%
	AVE Y1/2	17%	13%	-4%	47%	97%	+50%	83%	+66%
HB	Y3/4 B MAP NPPG	33%	83%	+50%	17%	67%	+50%	83%	+50%
BB	Y3/4 G LAP PPG	17%	50%	+33%	0%	50%	+50%	50%	+33%
JH	Y3/4 G MAP PPG	33%	50%	+17%	17%	67%	+50%	50%	+17%
RH	Y3/4 B HAP NPPG	33%	50%	+17%	33%	33%	0%	67%	+33%
EH	Y3/4 G HAP NPPG	33%	83%	+50%	33%	50%	+17%	83%	+50%
	AVE Y3/4	30%	63%	+33%	20%	53%	+33%	67%	+37%
MA	Y5/6 B LAP PPG EAL SEND	17%	50%	+33%	0%	50%	+50%	67%	+50%
LV	Y5/6 B MAP NPPG EAL SEND	0%	83%	+83%	0%	83%	+83%	83%	+83%
LS	Y5/6 G MAP PPG	17%	50%	+33%	0%	100%	+100%	100%	+83%
LH	Y5/6 G HAP NPPG SEND	17%	50%	+33%	33%	83%	+50%	100%	+83%
MG	Y5/6 B HAP PPG	50%	83%	+33%	17%	67%	+50%	100%	+50%
	AVE Y5/6	20%	63%	+43%	10%	77%	+67%	90%	+70%
	OVERALL AVERAGE	22%	46%	+24%	26%	76%	+50%	80%	+58%
	AVE BOYS	21%	50%	+29%	23%	73%	+50%	77%	+56%
	AVE GIRLS	24%	43%	+19%	29%	79%	+50%	83%	+59%
	AVE PPG	19%	43%	+24%	14%	74%	+60%	74%	+55%
	AVE NPPG	25%	50%	+25%	35%	77%	+42%	85%	+60%
	AVE SEND	11%	61%	+50%	11%	72%	+61%	83%	+72%
	AVE EAL	9%	67%	+58%	0%	67%	+67%	75%	+66%
	AVE HAP	33%	53%	+20%	39%	72%	+33%	92%	+59%
	AVE MAP	17%	47%	+30%	25%	86%	+61%	81%	+64%
	AVE LAP	11%	33%	+22%	0%	61%	+61%	56%	+45%

2) Words written down

CHILD	ATTRIBUTES	SEPT	OCT	Difference	NOV	DEC	Difference	JULY	Diff from Sept
GJ	Y1/2 B LAP PPG	28%	58%	+30%	46%	63%	+17%	88%	+50%
WS	Y1/2 B MAP NPPG	65%	95%	+30%	63%	63%	0%	100%	+35%
MN	Y1/2 G MAP PPG	88%	95 %	+7%	100%	100%	0%	100%	+22%
TC	Y1/2 B HAP NPPG	75%	100%	+25%	100%	96%	-4%	100%	+25%
HT	Y1/2 G HAP NPPG	100%	98%	-2%	93%	93%	0%	100%	0%
	AVE Y1/2	71%	89%	+18%	80%	83%	+3%	98%	+27%
HB	Y3/4 B MAP NPPG	62%	100%	+38%	98%	96%	-2%	100%	+38%
BB	Y3/4 G LAP PPG	80%	100%	+20%	79%	96%	+17%	100%	+20%
JH	Y3/4 G MAP PPG	98%	100%	+2%	93%	100%	+7%	100%	+2%
RH	Y3/4 B HAP NPPG	80%	98%	+18%	96%	100%	+4%	100%	+20%
EH	Y3/4 G HAP NPPG	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%
	AVE Y3/4	84%	100%	+16%	93%	98%	+6%	100%	+16%
MA	Y5/6 B LAP PPG EAL SEND	61%	100%	+39%	65%	98%	+33%	100%	+39%
LV	Y5/6 B MAP NPPG EAL SEND	72%	97%	+25%	77%	100%	+23%	100%	+28%
LS	Y5/6 G MAP PPG	100%	100%	0%	95%	100%	+5%	100%	0%
LH	Y5/6 G HAP NPPG SEND	100%	99%	-1%	99%	100%	+1%	100%	0%
MG	Y5/6 B HAP PPG	100%	100%	0%	98%	100%	+2%	100%	0%
	AVE Y5/6	87%	99%	+12%	87%	100%	+13%	100%	+13%
	OVERALL AVERAGE	81%	96%	+15%	87%	94%	+7%	99%	+18%
	AVE BOYS	68%	94%	+26%	80%	90%	+10%	99%	+31%
	AVE GIRLS	95%	99%	+4%	94%	98%	+4%	100%	+5%
	AVE PPG	79%	93%	+14%	82%	94%	+12%	98%	+19%
	AVE NPPG	82%	98%	+16%	91%	94%	+3%	100%	+18%
	AVE SEND	78%	99%	+21%	80%	99%	+19%	100%	+22%
	AVE EAL	67%	99%	+32%	71%	99%	+28%	100%	+33%
	AVE HAP	93%	99%	+6%	98%	98%	0%	100%	+7%
	AVE MAP	81%	98%	+17%	88%	93%	+5%	100%	+19%
	AVE LAP	56%	86%	+30%	63%	86%	+23%	96%	+40%

3) Correct words written

CHILD	ATTRIBUTES	SEPT	OCT	Difference	NOV	DEC	Difference	JULY	Diff from Sept
GJ	Y1/2 B LAP PPG	15%	55%	+40%	33%	59%	+26%	83%	+68%
WS	Y1/2 B MAP NPPG	60%	88%	+28%	67%	63%	-4%	100%	+40%
MN	Y1/2 G MAP PPG	85%	88%	+3%	89%	96%	+7%	100%	+15%
TC	Y1/2 B HAP NPPG	75%	100%	+25%	96%	96%	0%	98%	+25%
HT	Y1/2 G HAP NPPG	95%	98%	+3%	93%	93%	0%	100%	+5%
	AVE Y1/2	66%	86%	+20%	76%	81%	+5%	96%	+30%
HB	Y3/4 B MAP NPPG	54%	100%	+46%	93%	96%	+3%	100%	+46%
BB	Y3/4 G LAP PPG	80%	98%	+18%	75%	96%	+21%	100%	+20%
JH	Y3/4 G MAP PPG	98%	100%	+2%	91%	98%	+7%	100%	+2%
RH	Y3/4 B HAP NPPG	72%	96%	+24%	93%	100%	+7%	100%	+28%
EH	Y3/4 G HAP NPPG	96%	100%	+4%	96%	100%	+4%	100%	+4%
	AVE Y3/4	80%	99%	+19%	90%	98%	+8%	100%	+20%
MA	Y5/6 B LAP PPG EAL SEND	57%	93%	+36%	63%	98%	+35%	100%	+43%
LV	Y5/6 B MAP NPPG EAL SEND	70%	96%	+26%	76%	100%	+24%	100%	+30%
LS	Y5/6 G MAP PPG	98%	100%	+2%	95%	100%	+5%	100%	+2%
LH	Y5/6 G HAP NPPG SEND	98%	97%	-1%	95%	100%	+5%	100%	+2%
MG	Y5/6 B HAP PPG	98%	100%	+2%	98%	100%	+5%	100%	+2%
	AVE Y5/6	84%	97%	+13%	85%	100%	+15%	100%	+16%
	OVERALL AVERAGE	77%	94%	+17%	84%	93%	+9%	99%	+22%
	AVE BOYS	63%	91%	+28%	77%	89%	+12%	98%	+35%
	AVE GIRLS	93%	97%	+4%	91%	98%	+7%	100%	+7%
	AVE PPG	76%	91%	+15%	78%	92%	+14%	98%	+22%
	AVE NPPG	78%	97%	+19%	89%	94%	+5%	100%	+22%
	AVE SEND	75%	95%	+20%	78%	99%	+21%	100%	+25%
	AVE EAL	64%	95%	+31%	70%	99%	+29%	100%	+36%
	AVE HAP	89%	99%	+10%	95%	98%	+3%	100%	+11%
	AVE MAP	78%	95%	+17%	85%	92%	+7%	100%	+22%
	AVE LAP	51%	82%	+31%	57%	84%	+27%	94%	+43%

4) Correct punctuation

CHILD	ATTRIBUTES	SEPT	OCT	Difference	NOV	DEC	Difference	JULY	Diff from Sept
GJ	Y1/2 B LAP PPG	0%	50%	+50%	0%	72%	+72%	75%	+75%
WS	Y1/2 B MAP NPPG	0%	50%	+50%	0%	89%	+89%	75%	+75%
MN	Y1/2 G MAP PPG	17%	67%	+50%	94%	100%	+6%	100%	+83%
TC	Y1/2 B HAP NPPG	50%	92%	+42%	56%	61%	+5%	75%	+25%
HT	Y1/2 G HAP NPPG	50%	75%	+25%	67%	89%	+22%	100%	+50%
	AVE Y1/2	23%	67%	+44%	43%	82%	+39%	85%	+62%
HB	Y3/4 B MAP NPPG	50%	75%	+25%	18%	82%	+64%	94%	+44%
BB	Y3/4 G LAP PPG	67%	92%	+25%	65%	94%	+29%	94%	+27%
JH	Y3/4 G MAP PPG	50%	100%	+50%	18%	88%	+70%	94%	+44%
RH	Y3/4 B HAP NPPG	67%	100%	+33%	65%	94%	+29%	94%	+27%
EH	Y3/4 G HAP NPPG	92%	100%	+8%	76%	100%	+24%	94%	+2%
	AVE Y3/4	65%	93%	+28%	48%	92%	+44%	94%	+29%
MA	Y5/6 B LAP PPG EAL SEND	33%	56%	+23%	29%	89%	+60%	100%	+67%
LV	Y5/6 B MAP NPPG EAL SEND	33%	100%	+67%	43%	94%	+49%	100%	+67%
LS	Y5/6 G MAP PPG	67%	94%	+27%	57%	94%	+37%	100%	+33%
LH	Y5/6 G HAP NPPG SEND	44%	89%	+45%	34%	63%	+29%	100%	+56%
MG	Y5/6 B HAP PPG	78%	94%	+16%	37%	83%	+46%	100%	+22%
	AVE Y5/6	51%	87%	+36%	40%	85%	+45%	100%	+49%
	OVERALL AVERAGE	46%	82%	+36%	44%	86%	+42%	93%	+47%
	AVE BOYS	39%	77%	+38%	31%	83%	+52%	89%	+50%
	AVE GIRLS	55%	88%	+33%	59%	90%	+31%	97%	+42%
	AVE PPG	45%	79%	+34%	43%	89%	+46%	95%	+50%
	AVE NPPG	48%	85%	+37%	45%	84%	+39%	92%	+44%
	AVE SEND	37%	82%	+45%	35%	82%	+47%	100%	+63%
	AVE EAL	33%	78%	+45%	36%	92%	+56%	100%	+67%
	AVE HAP	64%	92%	+28%	56%	82%	+26%	94%	+30%
	AVE MAP	36%	81%	+45%	38%	91%	+53%	94%	+58%
	AVE LAP	33%	66%	+33%	31%	85%	+54%	90%	+57%

5) Correct spelling

CHILD	ATTRIBUTES	SEPT	OCT	Difference	NOV	DEC	Difference	JULY	Diff from Sept
GJ	Y1/2 B LAP PPG	5%	10%	+5%	30%	43%	+13%	63%	+58%
WS	Y1/2 B MAP NPPG	35%	58%	+23%	32%	59%	+27%	78%	+43%
MN	Y1/2 G MAP PPG	63%	63%	0%	80%	91%	+11%	95%	+32%
TC	Y1/2 B HAP NPPG	50%	68%	+18%	65%	72%	+7%	93%	+50%
HT	Y1/2 G HAP NPPG	65%	75%	+10%	74%	91%	+17%	90%	+35%
	AVE Y1/2	44%	55%	+11%	56%	71%	+15%	84%	+40%
HB	Y3/4 B MAP NPPG	36%	92%	+56%	68%	84%	+16%	100%	+64%
BB	Y3/4 G LAP PPG	62%	94%	+32%	64%	86%	+22%	96%	+34%
JH	Y3/4 G MAP PPG	68%	76%	+8%	59%	71%	+12%	93%	+25%
RH	Y3/4 B HAP NPPG	54%	94%	+40%	86%	95%	+11%	98%	+44%
EH	Y3/4 G HAP NPPG	86%	98%	+12%	96%	98%	+2%	98%	+12%
	AVE Y3/4	61%	91%	+30%	75%	87%	+12%	97%	+36%
MA	Y5/6 B LAP PPG EAL SEND	33%	70%	+37%	40%	86%	+46%	96%	+63%
LV	Y5/6 B MAP NPPG EAL SEND	55%	94%	+39%	61%	95%	+34%	97%	+42%
LS	Y5/6 G MAP PPG	76%	96%	+20%	86%	99%	+13%	99%	+23%
LH	Y5/6 G HAP NPPG SEND	67%	72%	+5%	54%	78%	+24%	92%	+25%
MG	Y5/6 B HAP PPG	85%	96%	+11%	87%	94%	+7%	99%	+14%
	AVE Y5/6	63%	86%	+23%	66%	90%	+24%	97%	+34%
	OVERALL AVERAGE	56%	77%	+21%	66%	83%	+17%	93%	+37%
	AVE BOYS	44%	73%	+29%	59%	79%	+20%	91%	+47%
	AVE GIRLS	70%	82%	+12%	73%	88%	+15%	95%	+25%
	AVE PPG	56%	72%	+16%	64%	81%	+17%	92%	+36%
	AVE NPPG	56%	81%	+25%	67%	84%	+17%	93%	+37%
	AVE SEND	52%	79%	+27%	52%	86%	+34%	95%	+43%
	AVE EAL	44%	82%	+38%	51%	91%	+40%	97%	+53%
	AVE HAP	68%	84%	+16%	77%	88%	+11%	95%	+27%
	AVE MAP	56%	80%	+24%	64%	83%	+19%	94%	+38%
	AVE LAP	33%	58%	+25%	45%	72%	+27%	85%	+52%

Analysis

Table 1a) Each test group shows improvement in knowledge and understanding of vocabulary when compared to the control group. The % increase ranges from 9% (EYFS to Y1) to 50% (Y1 to Y2), with the average being 29%

Table 1b) All year groups show improvement in knowledge and understanding of vocabulary between September and July. The average % change is +58%. The highest % change is +70% in Y5/6.

Similarly, all groups show improvement, with SEND, EAL and MAPs being above average.

Table 2) All year groups show improvement in the number of words written down (ie speed) between September and July, with the average % change being +18%. The younger the pupils, the greater the improvement.

Similarly, all groups show improvement in the number of words written down (ie speed), with boys, PPG, SEND, EAL, MAPs and LAPs being above average (particularly high for EAL and LAPs).

Table 3) All year groups show improvement in the number of correct word written down between September and July, with the average % change being +22%. Again, the younger the pupils, the greater the improvement.

Similarly, all groups show improvement in the number of correct words written down, with boys, SEND, EAL and LAPs being well above average.

Table 4) All year groups show improvement in punctuation between September and July, with the average % change being +47%. The highest % change is +62% in Y1/2.

Similarly, all groups show improvement in punctuation, with boys, PPG, SEND, EAL, MAPs and LAPs being above average (particularly high for SEND, EAL, MAPs and LAPs).

Table 5) All year groups show improvement in spelling between September and July, with the average % change being +37%. The younger the pupils, the greater the improvement.

Similarly, all groups show improvement in spelling, boys, SEND, EAL and LAPs being well above average.

Conclusions

Hypothesis: it is expected that regular (daily) dictation will improve the speed and accuracy of sentence writing, as well as increase retention, recall and reiteration of key subject vocabulary.

Throughout the year, all pupils have made significant improvements in their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and their English skills. Moreover, there are significant differences between the control group and the test group for almost all year groups.

This can be attributed, *at least in part*, to the implementation and execution of daily dictation throughout the year. Obviously, children are going to make progress in these skills through other teaching methods; however, the use of the control group shows increased acquisition and progress, beyond what would normally occur in an academic year.

Although the test sample of children was quite small (5%), teachers themselves testify to rapid improvement made by all pupils. They now speak about dictation as being relevant and very helpful in enabling pupils to understand high-level vocabulary.

Furthermore, in Y5/6 in particular, the use of daily dictation served as a vehicle for the teaching of complex punctuation in a meaningful and relevant way. Pupils were able to understand the use of punctuation marks and (correctly) apply them to their work far more quickly than usual.

Consequently, daily dictation will continue to be used as a valuable tool in improving the speed and accuracy of sentence writing as well as increasing retention, recall and reiteration of key subject vocabulary.

Bibliography

Appendix

