

High Quality Teaching

A synopsis of 70 classroom observations
in teaching in Zone 1 Primary Schools

A Collaborative Intervention Research Project
Ministry of Education, Antigua and Barbuda
and

The Centre for Commonwealth Education,
Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, UK



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Education

The Research Process

- Each Principal selected 4 (?) teachers across different grades
- An interactive (LA) lesson – 3 per teacher per school
- Observation and support by a **school leader**
- Impact on students
- Feedback and development between both participants – the 'after-talks'
- Record diary (reflections) kept by both participants
- Staff discussion after 2 observations: supportive, acknowledging successes and failures without threat
- Across school meeting of teachers, beginning steps for the creation of a Community of Practice (CoP)

Overview of what was done

| Schools | No. Teachers | No. Lessons Observed |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Old Road | 3 | 6 |
| Urlings | 2 | 6 |
| Bolans | 4 | 11 |
| Jennings | 3 | 8 |
| Golden Grove | 4 | 12 |
| Greenbay | 4 | 10 |
| Five Islands | 5 | 15 |
| TOTALS | 25 | 68 |

| Theme / topic of lesson | Lesson Topic | No. in class: Boys 9 Girls 10 | Grade: | Time lesson begins: | Time lesson ends: | Date: |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Time | Teacher activity | Children's' activity / engagement in lesson | | | | |
| 9:30 – 9:40 | There are lots of posters etc. on the classroom's walls. There is also a behaviour wheel with each students' name on a peg on the colour Green. Teacher has the students doing their morning drills. Writes these on the board. Lets students sound out the 'N' for November. Lets students do counting. Corrects students on their pronunciation of 'three', stressing the 'th' sound, also saying that 'tree' is the thing that grows outside. | Children as a whole class do their routines – Today is..., the date, month and year. Students count in 2's, 5's. Students join in this last about 'tree' which suggests it is something they have heard before. | | | | |
| 9:40 | Tells students to take out their exercise books. Reviews Child-Friendly classroom rules with students. Reminds class that they all start out on Green, and that when someone goes on Yellow, she will just call the child's name and say Yellow, and they have to go and put their peg on Yellow. She won't say what they have done, they will have to reflect on what it is they think they did. They can get back to Green if they behave themselves; however if they go to Blue, they cannot get back to Green, and Blue means they will get a punishment. If they go on Red that means they will be sent to the Principal. The Teacher tells the girl to go and call her father. There is some discussion between the Teacher and the girl's father (seemingly to do with the girl's repeated lateness to class and the time school begins). | Students do so, and most begin to head up their books. A few go to sharpen pencils, etc. The students do seem to know these rules as they joined in saying them at various points when the Teacher was talking, or responded to specific questions asked related to them by the Teacher. A girl arrives late at the class during this time. The girl returns with her father and goes to her seat. | | | | |
| 9:45 | The Teacher sits at her desk writing during this period. | | | | | |

Seating Plan

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| B | B | B | G |
| G | B | G | B |
| | G | G | |
| | G | G | |
| | B | G | G |
| B | B | G | B |

A Selection of Best Practices

Classroom Environment

Lesson Structure

Teachers' questioning

Allowing space for time and reflection

Interactive teaching

Individual and collaborative approaches

A Selection of Best Practices Cont'd

- ⚡ Pace and ethos of lessons
- ⚡ Cross-referencing to learning in other contexts
- ⚡ The use of 'games' within group-work contexts
- ⚡ Alternative seating plans for different parts of lesson
- ⚡ Role plays

A Selection of Best Practices Cont'd

- ⚡ Praise / reprimand balance
- ⚡ Public praise v private praise
- ⚡ Lesson topics which stimulate interest
- ⚡ Graphic/Visual support
- ⚡ Opportunities for oracy / talking self into understanding
- ⚡ Informality and humour

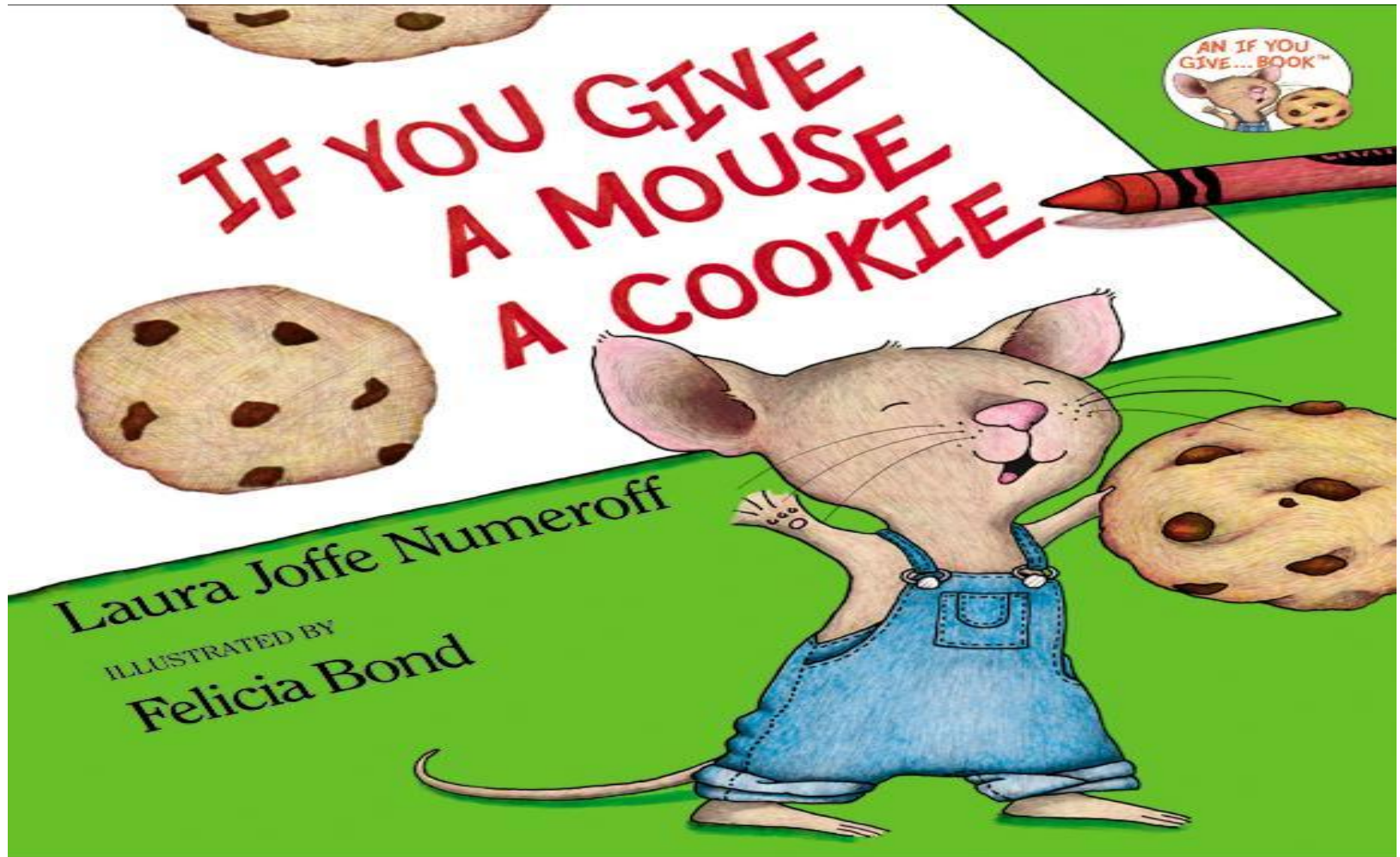
Exemplar Lesson 1

Theme (detectives seeking clues) immediately engages children



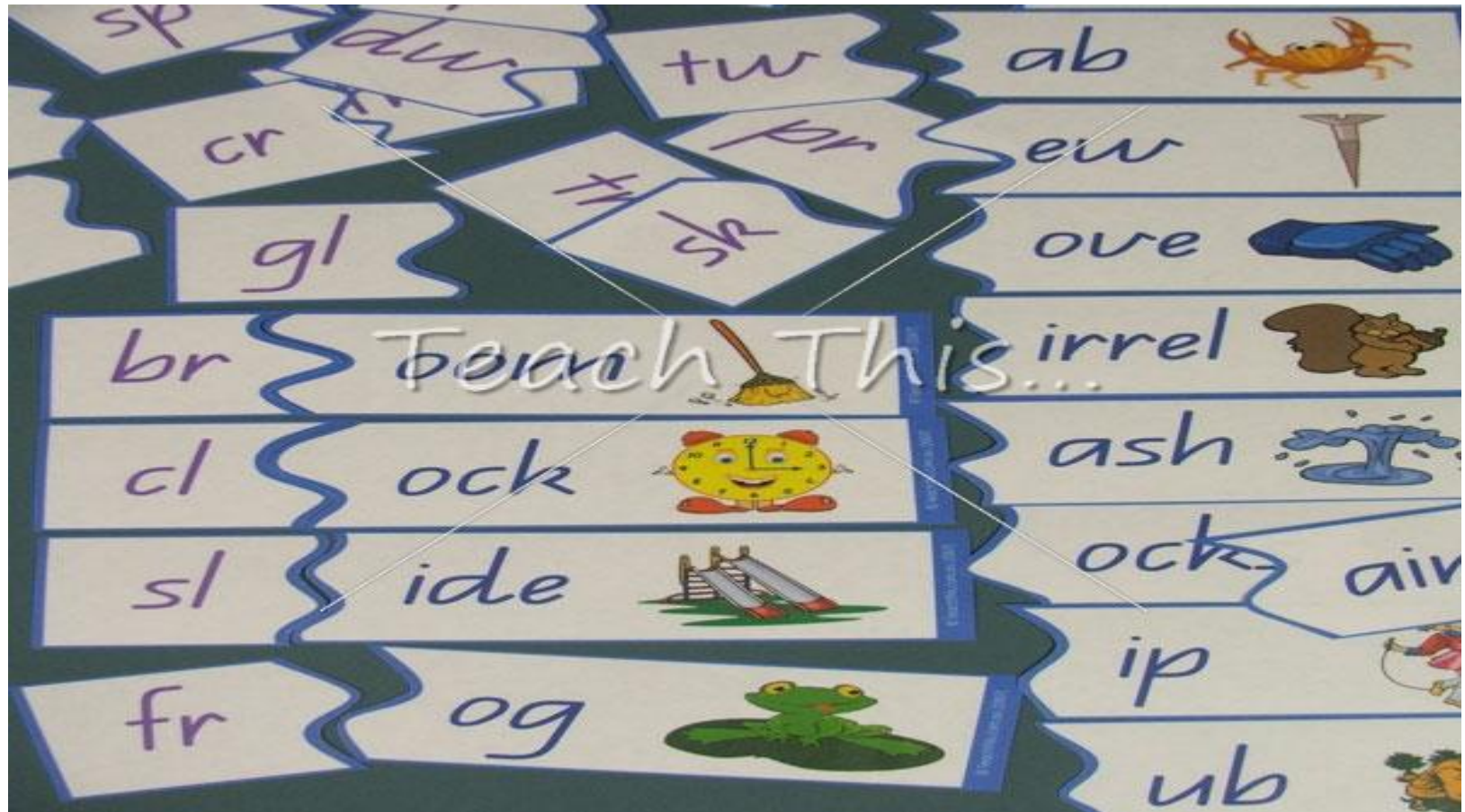
Exemplar Lesson 2

Big Book story read to class: 'If you give a mouse a cookie' ...



Responding to Students Questions

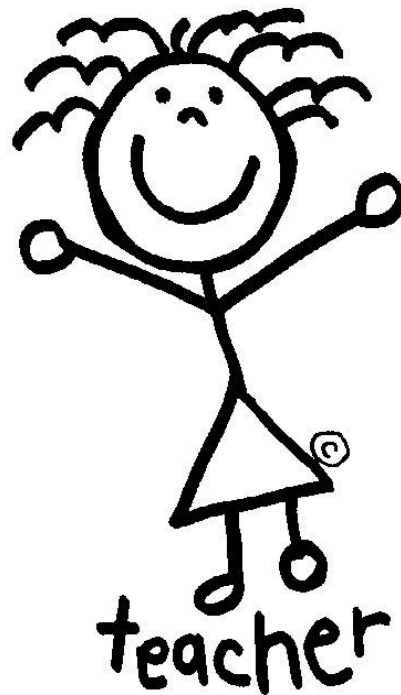
Grade 2 lesson: Phonics – s-t-r blends...



Growth and Development: the Researcher's Perspective



Growth and Development: Teachers' Perspectives



Research evidence on pedagogic issues

- ⚡ A key to learning is to ensure that pupils have much better understanding of themselves as learners: "... **teaching is not about teachers doing things to us, but about us understanding how we learn and how we can get better at it**".
- ⚡ Placing particular emphasis on raising awareness of how learning takes place, allows a greater awareness to develop about the need to balance different approaches to pedagogy, with more variety, activity and interaction, and an appreciation that students need to acquire different study skills for different contexts.

Research evidence on pedagogic issues Cont'd

- Students value most highly teachers who show confidence in them and are committed to their learning, who generate self-belief in the students, and convey a sense of enthusiasm and involvement in the work planned for them.
- Learning is more likely to occur when there is discussion about process (the 'how' of learning as well as the 'what' and 'why' of learning) as well as outcomes, an acknowledgement of variety, and a sense of trust in the teacher.

Research evidence on pedagogic issues Cont'd

⚡ There is always the need to try to generate a supportive classroom environment: which encourages all pupils to be positive about their own achievements and those of others', whilst also considering how improvements might be made.

⚡ A successful teacher regularly and explicitly celebrates pupils' *genuine* successes through praise and display (of pupils' work).

Questions, for your thoughts

⚡ How might the list be different if another subject area was the focus? Is this an avenue worth investigating?

⚡ '...teaching is neither sufficient nor necessary to produce learning' (Jean Lave) If we accept this, how might we re-think **teaching**?

