Mnemonics embeds learning, providing a deeper grasp of language that can then be applied to independent writing.

Lisa Cassidy - lisa@equatetsa.co.uk

**Introduction / Purpose**
- National Curriculum 2015 requires children to know, understand and use a list of grammatical terms.
- Inconsistent approach Nationally to the teaching of grammar.
- Children would benefit from a connection being made between the teaching of grammar, reading and writing.

**Research Questions**
- Can mnemonics be used to support all children in learning and retaining grammatical terminology?
- Does keyword mnemonics with association impact on progress in writing?
- Can Active English be used to accelerate the learning of vulnerable groups?

**Existing Research**
- Keyword mnemonics is one of the most successful mnemonic strategies to be used in education.
- There can be profound differences in vocabulary knowledge among learners from different socio economic groups: children from high income families experience, on average, 30 million more words than children from low income families.
- The quantity, quality and responsiveness of teacher talk can effectively mediate socio economic status.
- When teachers made children aware of the meaning of words, then engaging them in using those words in a meaningful context, children achieved greater gains than from explicit instruction alone.
- Spaced Learning has been seen to improve performance. Words are learned faster by children the more often they are heard.

**Method**
- Experimental group
- Impact Evaluation Study
- Semi Structured Interviews
- Coding and thematic analysis
- Qualitative – Interpretative and Critical

**References**
- D Myhill “We need a more informed debate about grammar in the classroom” (2017)
- A Palumbo L Vida Kramer “An Academic Curriculum will Close the Achievement Gap” (2012)
- C Dornach, B Roche, B Sullivan and M Glenn “Enhancing Practice through classroom research.” (2012)
- R Cox, S Wile, C Neville and A Cole “The DIY evaluation guide” (January 2013)
- R Moustakas “Phenomenography: A research method for describing human experience” (September 2013)
- S Rosenblum “Principles of Instruction: Research Based Strategies that all teachers should know” American Educator (Spring, 2012)
- Creswell “Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry” (2006)
- Gex Gallagher “Closing the vocabulary gap” (2018)
- Hans Ray “Working class children get less of everything in education” including respect! (The Telegraph 21.11.17)
- Helen Tredgett “Working Memory & the Implications for Pupils from Low Income Families – What is the research telling us?” (23 January 2018)

**Results/Findings/Limitations**

**Results Assessment task**
- Define the grammatical term then use the term correctly in a sentence.

**Results from children’s interviews**
- 93% spoke of use of images to support recall of grammatical terms and explanation of terms or referred to the images to support their knowledge and understanding.
- 86% increase in correct explanations of grammatical terms after 1 term of AE.
- 86% referred to AE as benefitting their reading and writing – improved sentence structure / benefit reader as writing more interesting / awareness of or greater use of vocabulary.
- 36% of the children were less negative about the writing process after using AE, 14% more negative about writing – references to awareness that they need to know more / how much there is to learn.
- SEND children refer to “getting better”, “helped, ” did it by myself” – support of images

**Finding not anticipated**
- Pupil Premium and Forces children referred to the impact the programme has had on the increased number of words they understand and use in their writing as a result of AE is identifying a need for more modelled reading, a focus on text and discussion around vocabulary?

**Assessing the transference of skills to independent writing**
- Assessing the transference of skills to independent writing using a randomly chosen piece from the child’s portfolio.

**References**

**RQ1**
- Active English can be used to support the acquisition and retention of grammatical terminology.

**RQ2**
- Children reported on associated impact on progress in writing – range of vocabulary, more complex, detailed sentences used; neater handwriting

**RQ3**
- Active English can impact on the learning of vulnerable groups, to see whether this learning is accelerated needs to be researched further in controlled conditions.

**Implications/Next steps/Further research:**
- Impact of modelled reading (drawing attention to new vocabulary) on vulnerable groups using a control group.
- Set up a control group to look at the impact of Active English on all children / vulnerable groups of children.
- Compare progress of all children in 2018 KS2 SATs / internal assessments with similar data from 2017.
- Use of same title / genre for assessment of transference of skills to independent writing.
- Support schools with researching the value of research where a control group is used.