

Speaking notes for the presentation on English Teaching at Grove Academy

The curriculum is dictated by the three modes of the BGE - Reading, Writing, Talking & Listening (which are combined).

All modes have equal status and learners develop skills for employability through their study of both language and literature, as well as developing the skills to succeed in NQ.

We aim to cover all three literary genres - poetry, prose and drama - in each of S1-3 and introduce the skill of critical essay writing in S1. By S3, we introduce the skills required for Scottish Text Analysis for those planning to progress to National 5 in S4.

Class teachers are free to select appropriate literary texts to suit their interests and provide a range of reading for learners.

The study of language is essential - and we cover a range of unseen texts (fiction/non-fiction) in order to teach high-order thinking skills - analysis and evaluation.

Extended writing is promoted and learners are expected to complete both creative and discursive pieces as they build a portfolio of work. Some personalisation and choice for topics is introduced as learners become more confident.

Personal reading is promoted through the 10 mins reading at the start of each lesson in the BGE - and the expectation is that a further 10 minutes is done at home as well.

Learners are encouraged to see the links between the modes of learning: reading influences writing (the sentence structure/punctuation they analyse they should be able to use in written pieces); responses to texts can be written or spoken; group discussion and individual presentation are essential to developing employability skills and, consequently, all pupils are expected to participate.

This session, S2 learners are involved in IDL (with Art & Design and Computing) to create graphics and a computer game based on "Escape from Kraznir". This is very much skills' based and focused on teamwork, meeting deadlines, working in different groups, communication ...

S3 learners engage in the Masterclass in Scots Language (also part of the BGE) where they work in teams to produce the Scots news and weather. They are also involved in "Scotland in Focus", the mandatory unit from Scottish Studies which allows them to present their research on an aspect of Scotland in a creative way - this is also linked to employability and the comparative skills required for National 4 Added Value, Scottish text poetry/short stories at N5/H and forms the basis of AH English.

Assessment is continuous and unobtrusive: learners are provided with a combination of written and oral feedback and 'learning conversations' can be written/discussion. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their work and consider how to improve.

This pattern continues into the Senior Phase.

In the Senior Phase, learners who have achieved the outcomes of Fourth Level progress to National 5; those who have achieved Third Level progress to National 4.

In S5/6, those who have achieved N4 can progress to N5; those who have passed N5/H (A-C) can progress to H/AH.

NQ course descriptions are available from SQA website. Course for N5 will change for session 2017-18 with the removal of unit assessments - no details as yet. Literary study currently makes up 40% and is assessed through the Scottish textual analysis and critical essay - two different genres must be studied. Department covered three genres with learners to allow for personalisation and choice in the critical essay in the exam.

Learners are encouraged to complete a range of writing pieces before selecting the two to include in their Folio -> those who continue to read widely and keep up to date with news/current affairs and have a general interest in the world around them are most likely to succeed, as are those who constantly work at editing and reviewing their work and taking on board feedback.

Talking and listening pervades these courses and learners are encouraged to prepare and present tutorials in order to build up their notes. This becomes the main approach for AH in S6.

Unit assessment evidence is gathered from a range of classwork (completed independently) rather than a formal 'test'. A series of group discussions/presentations will generally provide the evidence for Talking and folio work will generate writing evidence. Responses for Reading need not be written: oral responses to an unseen text can also generate evidence, although generally written answers are used. Our aim is to focus on learning and teaching with the caveat that 'assessment is for learning' and feedback is an important tool in this process.

As with the BGE, class teachers select appropriate texts/topics for study: it is essential that the teacher is confident and comfortable in the delivery of the material.

A range of teaching and learning approaches pervade all levels: there are times when learners must work as individuals; other times, pairs and co-operative groups are used and the aspiration is that every class member has the opportunity to work with all their class mates at some point in the year.

Home Learning is set as appropriate: a given in the BGE is 10mins personal reading and in the Senior Phase, regular revision of texts/work on Folio writing. In addition, learners may be asked to research, plan, revise, prepare a presentation, edit and redraft a writing piece, finish work started in class, produce a creative response ...

The responsibility of the individual is stressed: work hard and try your best; remember your role as part of the class/group team. All of this is supported by the school's values.