



Working On What Works (WOWW)

<p>Children's comments...</p> <p><i>"It has improved group work and getting ideas out."</i></p> <p><i>"Class doing better, working harder, heads down."</i></p> <p><i>"Our friendships are building up."</i></p>	<p>Teachers comments...</p> <p><i>"Made me more reflective on practice and increased my focus on looking for positives."</i></p> <p><i>"Confirmed what I thought I was doing right and pointed out things I could do more of."</i></p> <p><i>"The children have come together as a community and they are more open to discussing their thoughts and feelings."</i></p>
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What is WOWW?

Working On What Works (WOWW) is a solution-oriented classroom management intervention which involves a coach/coaches observing the whole class - children and teacher - during one lesson per week over 10 weeks. A WOWW coach does not focus on unacceptable behaviours, but instead looks for strengths and positive actions and interactions. Coaches compliment successes in a feedback session (with the children and teacher) at the end of the lesson. Noticing and acknowledging successes, *however small*, is fundamental to the WOWW approach and this serves as a reminder to keep doing things that are positive. WOWW is an inclusive strategy – children are not taken out of the class for any part of the intervention and there are no additional curriculum requirements. Following a pilot WOWW in 2007, WOWW was implemented in other schools in Moray, and has been successfully used in both primary and secondary settings.

WOWW was developed in America but was introduced to the UK primarily by the Inclusion & Support Service Outreach Team with support from the Educational Psychology Service. WOWW has featured in the Times Educational Supplement and the intervention was well received when presented to a national conference in 2010. In addition, an academic article on the use of WOWW in Moray has been accepted for publication in a leading Educational Psychology journal. The use of WOWW is now increasingly widespread across Scotland.

What happens in WOWW?

WOWW takes place over ten sessions, and can be divided into three main stages:

Stage 1	Weeks 1-3	Observation by coach/coaches; feedback (to children and teacher); setting of a class goal.
Stage 2	Weeks 4-6	Observation; working on a class goal; feedback; scaling (children and teacher are asked to rate where they are now, in terms of the class goal, on a scale of 1-10).
Stage 3	Weeks 7-10	Observation; scaling; feedback; redefining goals (if necessary), 'noticing cards' for positive interactions or behaviour; child focus groups (children are asked for feedback on WOWW).

An evaluation of WOWW in Moray

An evaluation of the impact of WOWW in Moray has been carried out on 12 classes that took part in a WOWW project between 2008 and 2010, involving eleven primary classes and one secondary class. Information was gathered from:

- child focus groups (carried out at the end of each WOWW project),
- teacher scaling forms (completed before and after WOWW),
- teacher evaluation forms

Child focus groups

Comments made by children suggested that feedback sessions were an enjoyable experience for most children, with many often openly pleased to receive a personal comment at the end of the session. As all comments were positive, this may have helped to allay any initial worries.

By giving the class teacher feedback in front of the class, this further strengthened the children's view that the teacher was truly a part of the process – they were working collaboratively as a class community. This seems to have had a considerable impact. By listening to the feedback given to the teacher, the children became more aware of the teacher's role and the 'good things' he/she did for them. This new perspective led to a greater appreciation of the teacher and, as the WOWW projects progressed, children began to be involved in the teacher's feedback, commenting on, for example, how the teacher had planned exciting lessons or had helped them with their learning. Indeed, focus group comments suggested an increased empathy for the teacher.

Example questions and responses from children

What did you think when you heard the feedback for your teacher?

A total of 81 comments were made and a substantial number of children freely mentioned the qualities of the teacher and what he/she does (e.g. *"it was good – I didn't think she did that much stuff"* and *"we look out for the things that teachers do now"*). There were also many comments which reflected that they felt happy, pleased or excited when they heard the feedback for their teacher, and some also focused on what they thought the teacher would be feeling at hearing the feedback. Some children reported feeling surprised, shocked or astonished at the feedback, whilst a small number felt embarrassed or unsure, perhaps illustrating the novel experience for the children of hearing feedback for their teacher.

What, if anything, do you think WOWW has helped you and your class with?

Of a total of 110 comments, the largest proportion of comments reflected their view that WOWW had helped them to work harder or had improved their learning. For example, *"It's better – you get on with work"* and *"class doing better, working harder, heads down"*. Others suggested that relationships in the class had improved, children were working together better, listening had improved and that it was quieter or calmer. Some children commented that WOWW had made them aware of what they were good at and it had increased their confidence. An improvement in behaviour was also reported.

Teacher scaling forms

Before WOWW started, the class teachers were asked to scale where they thought the class were at present in a number of areas. An identical form was completed at the end of the WOWW project. The results

demonstrate an improvement in areas including; relationships with each other, collaborative work, attainment, and teacher confidence, illustrating the perceived positive effect of WOWW over the ten week period.

Teacher evaluation forms

At the end of WOWW, the class teachers were asked to complete an evaluation sheet which included questions about the impact of WOWW on the whole class and their views on the feedback sessions. Analysis of teachers' comments suggested that WOWW had an impact on the teachers, with comments reflecting feeling more confident, more reflective, more in control and that WOWW had led to changes in their teaching style. Their comments also reflected a perceived positive impact on the children.

Example questions and responses from teachers

- What impact has WOWW had on you?

"It has made me focus much more on the atmosphere within the class and how that affects teaching and learning".

- What have you noticed that you are doing differently or better?

"I am more positive in the language that I use and often get the children to focus on good examples of teamwork."

- In what ways do you think the project has impacted on the pupils in your class?

"It has helped the majority of them become more focused on solutions when a problem arises."

- How helpful was it to have specific goals?

"The listening goal was a lynch pin – but the effect has been broader, helping to generally increase our self-esteem."

- What would you say to another teacher about to try out WOWW?

"Go for it. It is a very positive thing. It builds you as a teacher as well as the class therefore there was a positive feel for the whole class and community".

Conclusion

For the children and teachers involved, WOWW has been a positive experience and within a 10-week intervention period many and varied positive changes to life in the classroom have taken place.

Further Reading: Insoo Kim Berg & Lee Shilts (2004) Classroom Solutions: WOWW Approach

If you would like more detailed information about WOWW or the evaluation, please contact the Educational Psychology Service or the Outreach Co-ordinator.