

Quick Information Guides for Educators

Ambitions, expectations, aspirations: how to challenge at point of transition **SNAPshot No 5**



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Ambitions, expectations, aspirations: how to challenge at point of transition Claire Callaghan, Coltness High School working with Glasgow University Building academic resilience is an important aspect of raising ambitions, expectations and aspirations. This session will examine how one secondary school is working with first years to foster a climate of high achievement through inclusive enrichment opportunities. The protocol, activities and initial evaluations of the programme will be shared.

Enrichment programme for Highly Able pupils

What are enrichment opportunities for Highly Able pupils?

Enrichment opportunities are vast and varied but this leaflet provides a structure for a very user friendly and inclusive programme that has the flexibility to suit your learners and establishment.

Experts internationally in this field recognise the needs for appropriate challenge, skills for learning and the development of creativity. This programme has been developed to incorporate the effective communication of which pupils are highly able, metacognition and creativity in an inclusive manner. Both PSHE and an extraction group make up the structure that supports these aspects while supporting high attainment.

Where do I start?

Find your pupils!

Professional judgement is a variable in any collective professional consideration. Therefore it is important to gather as much information as possible regarding pupils who are highly able. A usual starting point is using an appropriate definition of high ability to share with colleagues cross sector. The following definition from SNAP is ideal,

the term highly able pupils refers to pupils who are working or have the potential to work ahead of their age peers. We will also assume that the term includes pupils who are highly able across the curriculum as well as those who are highly able in one or more particular areas.

Guidance for addressing the needs of highly able pupils, Scottish Network for Able Pupils, p 10

(<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/additionalsupportneeds/highlyablechildren/index.asp>)

The information sharing period of primary/secondary transition is an ideal opportunity to begin your information gathering. This is a good time to offer a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) with P7 teachers and any secondary pupils who are interested. SNAP provide suitable resources for discussing high ability and sharing the above understanding

of identifying high ability. Many primary schools are willing to volunteer the names of pupils and their particular curricular areas of high ability, some schools volunteer the information of pupils identifying strengths in more than one curricular area.

Allow pupils to settle into secondary school and after a period of 6-8 weeks begin to gather information from secondary teachers. Again the same definition is useful as it important that all staff are working with a shared understanding of high ability. Once all names and curricular areas are tabulated it becomes clear which pupils are highly able.

Numbers will vary from year to year and a revolving door policy is advisable. Staff in secondary are asked to identify pupils from all year groups so in essence the names that are put forward in S1 may be slightly different from the names volunteered for the same cohort while they are in S2. This allows for late developers to be identified and also for potential underachievers to be supported by alerting Pupil Support.

Parental involvement is important so consent to taking part in the extraction group is advisable. This also opens the communication between Support for Learning and home which can provide useful information regarding extracurricular and out of school achievements.

Naming the programme is important. We have found that the title *Skills for Learning Group* is inclusive and promotes what it states. Some other options are *Reach for the Stars*, *Aiming Higher* or *Step Up*.

Now we have our pupils, it is time to enrich.

What do they learn?

Using research of actiotope models of high ability education the categories supported in this programme are metacognition and creativity which support lifelong learners in the 21st century. This supports attainment while developing skills for lifelong learning. These lessons can be delivered inclusively during Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) for the benefit of all pupils while an extraction group can work on the more tailored needs of the group depending on the pupils involved. Some groups require emphasis on social skill while others groups may work primarily on the promotion (raising the profile/aspirations) of high ability and success both in class and from extra-curricular / out of school clubs.

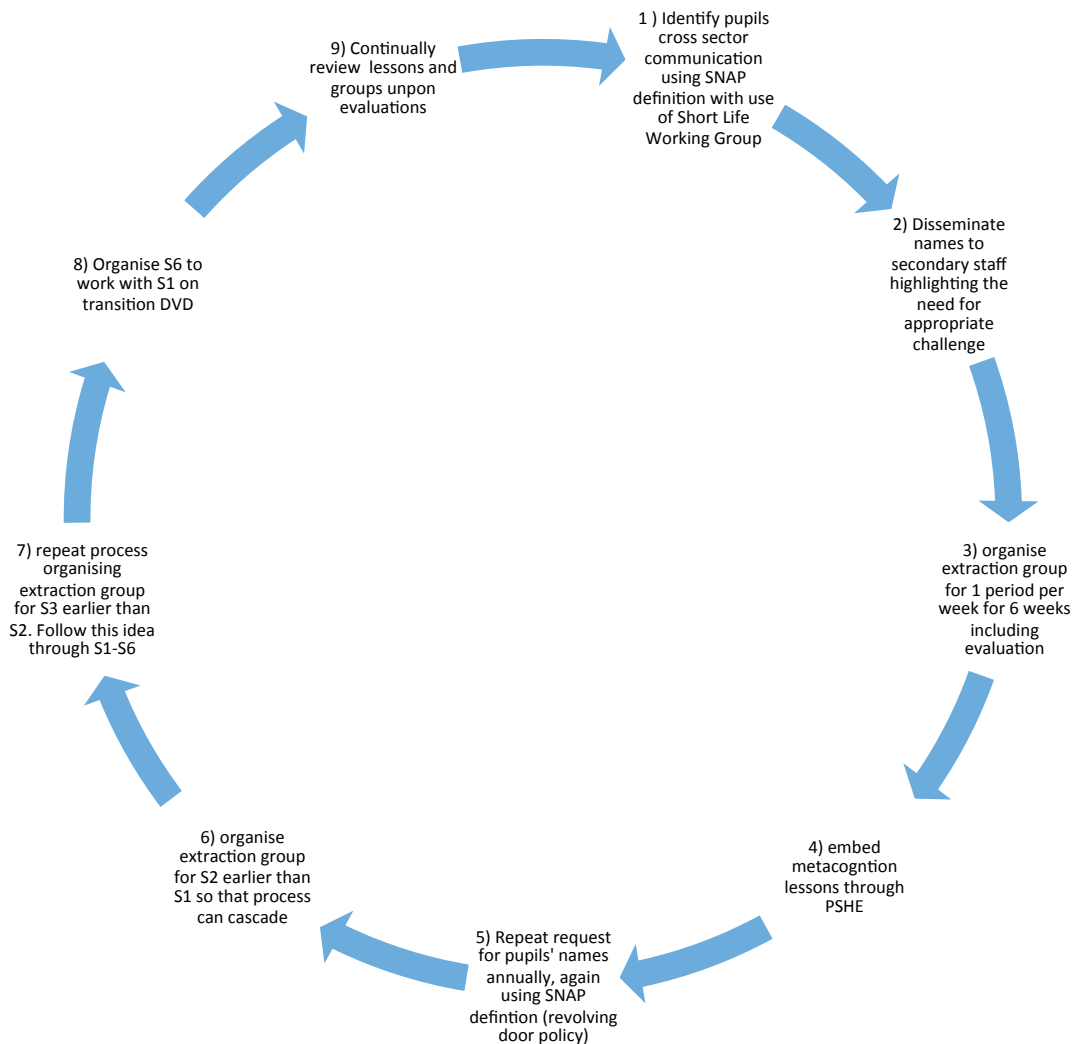
How do the activities develop through S1-S6?

All activities have been chosen to coincide with what is appropriate for that stage eg. S1 promoting a transition DVD to enhance links and aspirations while S4 have a focus on exam preparation and stress release. Creativity is promoted through both the extraction group and PSHE lessons.

	<u>Extraction group activities</u>	<u>PSHE lesson outlines</u>
<u>S1</u>	Focus on transition DVD showcasing school, competitions and high ability in general (interview DUX pupils, competition winners ect.)	<p>How Am I clever?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is meant by intelligence? • What are the different kinds of intelligence? • Is it possible to become more intelligent? • In what ways am I clever? <p>Learning Styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do people learn? • Why do people learn in different ways? • What are learning styles? • What kind of learner am I?
<u>S2</u>	Powerpoint focussing on IDL opportunities to be delivered by pupils to S1 assemblies	<p>Emotions and Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do emotions affect learning? • What is meant by emotional intelligence? • How can I become more self-smart? • Why is positive thinking important? <p>The Learning Brain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does my brain work? • What happens in my brain when I'm learning? • What stops my brain from learning? • What can I do to develop a learning brain?
<u>S3</u>	Powerpoint focussing on high tariff careers Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Design, Football ect	<p>Memory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does memory work? • What are the different types of memory? • What stops me from remembering things? • What can I do to improve my memory? <p>Setting Personal Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are goals important in learning? • What are personal goals? • How do I prepare a personal learning plan? • How do I deal with setbacks?

<p><u>S4</u></p>	<p>spotlight groups HWB and exam preparation</p>	<p><u>Study Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are study skills? • How do I study best? • What are the top tips for studying? • How do I create a study plan? <p>Preparing for Tests and Exams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the best way to prepare for tests and exams? • Which revision techniques work well for me? • How do I prepare a revision timetable? • How do I overcome exam stress?
<p><u>S5</u></p>	<p>study time presenting to timetabled study classes about Time Management, study techniques, exam techniques</p>	<p><u>Exam Technique</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is exam technique? • What are the best tips for exam success? • How do I deal with the unexpected? • How do I prepare an exam plan?
<p><u>S6</u></p>	<p>The Joy of Learning group. Creativity group researching the importance of creativity</p>	<p><u>Employability</u></p>

In summary



Dealing with difficulties

From our experience the main difficulty can be staff perceptions of high ability and getting across the inclusivity of the programme. We often hear in staffrooms about the attainment gap and the supports required to close this gap often resulting from deprivation. While this is vitally important when considering issues of social justice it is important to highlight during the SLWG and discussions with colleagues that high ability has no regard for social status and many highly able pupils are indeed from circumstances of deprivation. That is why naming this programme is very important and we have found that the name *Skills for Learning* can avoid any notions of elitism.

Timetabling can also be an issue. From our experience a rotating time slot approach avoids one subject feeling the impact of having pupils removed week on week. For example Week 1 Monday period 2, Week 2 Monday period 3, Week 3 Monday period 4 ect. Often staff question how a non-specialist in their subject can justify working with their able pupils during their time. An appropriate answer to that would be that this programme does not deliver their subject content but indeed covers skills for learning and creativity.

Providing an extraction group can be regarded by some as elitist. Like any extraction group who find their justification in the Additional Support Needs Act (2009) this one is no different and is supported by law. Again, a useful way to avoid misunderstanding is to carefully choose a name for your group.

