Working around the words

Tutor strategies and the tutor voice

Emma McLaughlin
How do you learn the carpentry words?
(Me, 2014)

We learn as we go
(Carpentry learner, 2014)
Focus of this session

Purpose of the research
What we found
What we did
Feedback
Purpose – starting point

• Working with vocational tutors:

Air-over-hydraulic brakes: Brakes utilizing a hydraulic system assisted by an air pressure system.

1000 word list Academic Off – list

Question: How do people learn the language of the trade?
Language in the Trades Research Project

What:
- 3 year research project funded by Ako Aotearoa
- Collaboration between Victoria University and Wellington institute of Technology

Purpose:
Describe the language, texts and visual features of:
- Carpentry
- Automotive
- Fabrication
- Plumbing

Turn research into practice
The research - What did we do?

Interviewed tutors
Interviewed learners
Observed teaching sessions
Analysed written and spoken texts
Analysed visual images
Ran focus groups with tutors
What did we find?

Trade vocabulary just as challenging as academic
Embedding language is through tutor-talk and tutor learner interaction
Reading texts are complex
Need to write and it is a specific genre
Pictures and diagrams are key
Carpentry

• Build a house over 36 weeks
• Building the house underpins the curriculum
• Analysed 15 hours of tutor talk - interviews
• How are the words taught and learnt:
  – L: Dumbling studs
  – T: Doubling, doubling studs
  – L: Doubling, gibbing
What did the carpentry tutors say about teaching the words?

a. *We just use it, always use it, demonstrate, show...most important what it is used for*

b. *Use different synonyms... use more commonly then use more technical ... use it from the get go*

c. *Deliberately use them and put them in so they listen out for them*

d. ‘Don’t answer learners until they use the correct word’ and ‘Elicit the correct term’...challenge and argue

**BUT**

a. ‘Word matches and silly little games’...’Vocab games don’t work with the class’
What did the carpentry learners say about learning the words?

1. Using them practically while we are working
2. Once we started working on the … soffit we became more familiar with what it is when we are working with it and referring to it all of the time…working with it and doing the job around the word
3. It wasn’t until I did the task that I learnt the word
4. We ask Ben he will give us the meaning and then we underline it and write the meaning next to it
5. Write it in my diary – develop own glossaries
6. Glossary: I love the glossaries …. Too many words

**BUT**

‘We didn’t come here to play kindergarten games – we came here to build houses’
How does this link to the research?

- “Language is part of practice and it is in practice that people learn” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.85).
- Vocabulary is central to understanding and using language in any context (Hirsh and Coxhead, 2009).
- Language helps to create a kind of identity kit (Gee, 2000).

“When you can walk like a builder and talk like a builder, then we can have a conversation” (Carpentry Tutor, 2015).

- Literacy practices of vocational assessments - more demanding than originally thought - often invisible to learners and tutors - central to success in terms of attainment (Edwards, Minty and Miller, 2013).
- Embedding language and literacy into vocational training is a complexity vocational tutors often have to grapple with (Bak and O’Maley, 2015).
Turning research into practice

• What are tutors already doing?
  – Modelling
  – Elliciting
  – Prompting
  – Creating opportunities for use
  – Giving feedback
  – Emphasising words
  – Explaining
Using a strengths-based approach – Why?

- Building on what tutors are already doing – working around what works for the tutor, the context and the learners – ‘Embedding by stealth’
The resources

- Theory / models
- Resources
- Workshops

12 tasks
Section A: The model

- Tutor unaware of language element of teaching their trade or not engaged with PD initiatives related to language.
- Tutor interested in strategies for embedding language and will work with advisors or independently to learn some new strategies.
- Tutor begun to identify ways they are embedding language in programme and is actively seeking new ideas to include in practice.
- Tutor deliberately pre-empt and plans language embedding as part of usual lesson planning process.
- Tutor reflects on own practice and shares ideas with colleagues.

*What we have observed - a continuum for embedding.*
Section B: The resources

Teaching strategies
Videos – what the tutors say
Glossaries for the words
Planning for words in tutor talk
Reading around the words
Writing around the words
Show case tutor strategies – ‘Grab and go’ approach
The videos

Set up an authentic language environment


What strategies did they share?
How could you use videos like these?

Tutors sharing their practice
The glossaries – why?

Making glossaries…

Using glossaries…

Building on what tutors are already doing

**Building glossaries:**

When you write your glossary, the following questions will help you work out which words to choose and what information you need to include:

- **Bacteria**
  - A member of a large group of unicellular microorganisms which have cell walls but lack organelles and an organized nucleus, including some which can cause disease.

- **Bar**
  - A unit of pressure defined as 100 kilopascals. It is about equal to the atmospheric pressure at sea level.

- **Base**
  - In plumbing and drainlaying it is used to describe the following, Examples:
    - 1. The section at the bottom of a stack or vertical discharge pipe where the direction changes from a vertical pipe to a horizontal.

- **Bolt**
  - Bolts are headed fasteners with external threads suitable for non-tapered nut. They require a nut (or some other female thread) as a counter - to lock the joint.

- **Boundary**
  - The outer perimeter of a property, section or area.

- **Boundary joist**
  - A joist that runs 90° off the end of floor or ceiling joist on the outer most part of the structure.

- **Branch**
  - A lateral pipe coming off or joining to a main run of piping. Also known as a lateral branch. Could be of any angle and smaller than the main run.
Supporting reading and writing

**Before:**
- Tell learners why they are reading
- Ask them what they already know about the topic

**During:**
- Write up important trade specific language on the board
- Guide learners to important ideas in the text (have them highlight or underline).

**After:**
- Discuss the meanings of important language
- Ask learners questions about what they have read
- Give learners something to discuss in pairs

**Before:**
- Find out what learners already know - brainstorm

**During:**
- Examples, templates, pair and group work

**After:**
- Independent writing
- Editing and reviewing

Extending strategies
Section C: The workshops

Workshop 1 – What do my learners need to know?
Workshop 2 – What are you already doing?
Workshop 3 – Sharing strategies
Workshop 4 – Focusing on the words
Building writing skills in trades training – a guide for tutors

Embedding writing: where do I start?

1. What do my learners need to develop?
2. What do they already know?
3. What do they want to do?
4. What kind of texts will they need to write?
5. What writing skills will they need to use?
6. What are some useful frameworks I can use?
7. What can I use as good examples?
8. How much time and resourcing do we have?

Building Writing Skills In Trades Training: The Case of Carpentry

A Guide For Tutors

Emma McLaughlin

Key ideas for time-poor tutors

Which skills matter?

- Purpose and audience
  - All writers need to know why they are writing something (explain, describe, inform, etc.) and who it is for (a friend, someone at work, a tutor, etc.). This will help them decide what details to include and how formal or informal the writing needs to be.

- Spelling
  - Words need to be spelled correctly to make sure people understand what has been written. Your learners may need to know how to spell more specialized words and longer words: specifications, insulation, export, project, pronunciation.

- Vocabulary
  - As well as spelling more specialized words correctly, your learners may need to know how to use these words in the right place in a sentence and which words have multiple meanings. For example, “Pebble” is a type of insulation (thing).

- Sentence structure
  - Good writers need to make sure their writing is clear. One way to do this is by using clear sentence structures, linking sentences that need to be joined together and using full stops and capital letters to show where sentences begin and end.

- Planning
  - An important part of writing is the planning. Learners need to be able to brainstorm any ideas they have and then plan and organize what they write. This could be in the form of an outline, presentation, instructions or essay.

- Editing and checking
  - Checking writing for errors is usually at the end of the writing process. It is useful for learners to read out loud what they write aloud as it helps to identify any mistakes. It is also important to focus on one thing at a time when editing: e.g., spelling, then punctuation, then meaning and then organization.

How can I support my learners to use the resources?
1 x day workshop

What are you already doing?

What do tutors and learners say?

Sharing ideas

Continuum – where is your organisation?

Building practice
Feedback: What did people think?

• Most beneficial?
  – A compendium of good ideas / real-life examples / practical strategies

• Change in practice?
  – Reshaping perspectives on ‘embedding’/unpacking LLN and with this shift in thinking comes a shift in strategies and tactics around LLN integration into instructional practice

• Take away?
  – Writing guide, videos, posters to recontextualise / before, during, after framework

• Recommend attendees?
  – Anyone interested in literacy or working/needling to get some ideas

• Amend workshop?
  – Nothing – research, more activities
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