Exploring Teachers’ Experience of Implementing a Whole Class Vocabulary Intervention in Disadvantaged Secondary Schools

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Glossary of Terms:

SaLT Speech and Language Therapist
VEP Vocabulary Enrichment Programme
SLT Speech and Language Therapy
SLCN Speech, Language and Communication Needs
R1 Respondent 1
R2 Respondent 2
R3 Respondent 3
R4 Respondent 4
R5 Respondent 5
R6 Respondent 6
R7 Respondent 7
R8 Respondent 8
Abstract

**Background:** Collaborative practice between teachers and speech and language therapists (SaLTs) can augment secondary school students’ vocabulary learning through whole class interventions. Research that explores teachers’ experiences of implementing collaborative language interventions is relatively rare. The current study sought to explore teachers’ perceptions of the process and outcomes of a whole class Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP) with first year students attending disadvantaged secondary schools.

**Aims:** To describe teachers’ views on the process and outcomes of implementing a whole class VEP, including their experiences of collaborating with a speech and language therapist (SaLT), the positive and challenging activities within the VEP and possible barriers and facilitators to effectively teaching the VEP.

**Methodology:** Eight teachers from two secondary schools participated in semi-structured interviews within two months of completing the intervention. Eight questions relating to the research aims were used to guide the semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was performed on the resulting transcribed data.

**Results:** Teachers’ perceived that liaison with the VEP SaLT was an important element of the intervention. Teachers’ highlighted the necessity of vocabulary learning for students and indicated that the multidimensional nature of the learning objectives in the VEP broke down barriers to language learning for students, which helped to increase their confidence. The timescale of the VEP was two classes per week over twelve weeks. This was challenging as teachers had to adapt it, in order to accommodate the learning needs of their students. Classroom management was facilitated by teachers sharing instructional responsibility for the class (team-teaching). Opportunities for expanding the VEP for use with students learning English as an additional language and learning resource groups were also explored.

**Conclusions:** This analysis evaluated the VEP by describing the experience of intervention from the teachers’ perspective implementing the programme. The findings will inform future planning for collaborations between SaLTs and teachers’ in secondary school settings.

**Keywords:** Collaboration, Whole Class Intervention, Vocabulary, Disadvantaged Schools.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Current Study

The transition from primary school to secondary school poses multiple challenges for adolescents with language impairments. To succeed academically, students’ linguistic and cognitive skills must be successfully integrated (Joffe 2006). Between the ages of twelve and seventeen, adolescents are exposed to approximately 10,000 new words in school textbooks alone (Clark 2003). Vocabulary learning is a significant challenge for adolescents with language impairments (Bishop 2014), but very little time is spent on direct vocabulary instruction in secondary school (Dockrell and Messer 2004). Adolescents living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage have lower vocabulary knowledge compared to adolescents from areas of relative advantage (Spencer et al 2012).

Teachers’ report that they are not supported to accommodate children with additional language needs in mainstream classrooms. Moreover, teachers report feeling that they lack the necessary training, skills and supports to meet the needs of these children (Dockrell and Lindsay 2001). As the area remains relatively under-researched, the current study will focus on teachers’ experience of implementing a whole class vocabulary intervention in disadvantaged secondary schools.

1.2 Language Development

During adolescence, language development occurs gradually and many subtle but significant changes take place (Nippold 2007). Vocabulary knowledge expands as adolescents learn approximately seven to ten new words per day. Reasoning skills develop as adolescents use language to solve more complex problems. Syntactic structures grow and narration skills enhance, equipping them with the skills to explain more complex ideas and use sophisticated language during social interactions (Nippold 2007; Nippold et al 2005).

Data sourced from international studies indicates that prevalence rates between 5% and 13% exist for language impairment among children and adolescents (Tomblin et al 1997; Law et al 2000; McLeod and McKinnon 2007). These figures rise dramatically for children living in
areas of socio-economic disadvantage (Locke et al 2002). In Australia, a large scale study involving teachers and SaLTs found that 13% of secondary school students present with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) (McLeod and McKinnon 2007). Longitudinal studies indicate that language disorders can persist into adolescence (Conti Ramsden et al 2012; Durkin et al 2009).

1.4 Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

In areas of poor economic growth and social disadvantage, children have a higher risk of developing SLCN (Meschi et al 2010). Lindsay et al (2010) report that up to 50% of children entering school in areas of socio-economic disadvantage have more language needs than age-matched peers in areas of relative advantage. As children enter primary school, an incongruity can exist between the language development expectations of the school and those of the home (Wasik et al 2006). A myriad of reasons account for this disparity. Many children from disadvantaged families can have less language input, poor language modelling and a lack of language stimulation. Furthermore, low parental value is often placed on literacy (Wasik et al 2006; Clegg et al 2009).

1.5 Consequences of Language Impairment

Research indicates that SLCN in early childhood negatively impacts on educational attainment in the long term (Leitão and Fletcher 2004). Students with impaired language have problems accessing the curriculum as their verbal language, reading and spelling skills are often not sufficient for the academic demands of secondary school. Language impaired students may also present with behavioural and psycho-social adjustment difficulties (Law et al 2000; Joffe and Black 2012). In 2008 the Bercow Review was published; it entailed a review of services across England for children and young people (0-19 years) with SLCN. While the Review states that early identification and intervention is essential for children with SLCN, it also recommends that adolescents require continued support. The SLCN of adolescents, however, may only become apparent at secondary school as the curriculum becomes more demanding (Bercow 2008).

Research evidence indicates that, at a minimum, on-going school-age language and literacy support is necessary to eradicate the negative effects of children’s socio-economic backgrounds. Greig’s (2012) systematic review of literacy interventions in the preschool
years concludes that long term literacy outcomes for children in areas of socio-economic disadvantage are not significantly influenced by early intervention.

1.6 Vocabulary Demands of the Curriculum

The transition to secondary school requires a high level of vocabulary knowledge in order to communicate efficiently in the academic context (Wilson et al 2010). Vocabulary knowledge develops at a slower rate for children from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to children from more advantaged areas (Spencer et al 2012). Once these differences in vocabulary acquisition are established, they tend to remain (Beck and McKeown 2007). As language difficulties persist and curriculum challenges increase, teachers in secondary schools are faced with the momentous task of making the curriculum accessible for all students (Lindsay et al 2010).

1.7 Speech and Language Therapy Service Delivery

In an Irish context, McGough et al (2006) and Quigley (2006) investigated the attendance rates of children from disadvantaged backgrounds accessing clinic based speech and language therapy (SLT) services. The perception was that this cohort did not regularly access clinic-based SLT services, thus an alternative service delivery model is necessary to ensure that this cohort access such services.

Providing SLT services to secondary school students is a multifaceted task; the students must be taught specific curricular structures, timetabling constraints impact on the location of service delivery and students who need language services often receive limited or no support (Bercow 2008; Nippold 2010; McCartney 1999). Students who receive support often miss class time and also have unwanted attention drawn to their needs when they are taken out of the classroom. A lack of opportunity for collaboration between teachers and SaLTs can result in reduced continuity from therapy objectives to the academic work within the classroom (Wilson et al 2010). To this end, a traditional model of SLT denotes significant limitations within the secondary school environment.

Teachers report that they are not supported to accommodate children with additional language needs in mainstream classrooms (Dockrell and Lindsay 2001). In addition, Berne and Blachowicz (2009) suggest that many teachers are not confident with regard to best
practice for vocabulary instruction. Interestingly, Korth et al (2010) conclude that teachers involved in a literacy intervention recognise the benefits of literacy programmes and value specialised training to implement them.

1.8 Collaborative Practice in the Educational Setting

Collaboration in the educational system encourages interdependent and co-equal interactions (Hartas 2004). Collaborative practice between teachers and SaLTs is an important aspect of developing a holistic service, where students benefit from the integration of therapy with education. Through collaborative practice, SaLTs’ curriculum knowledge increases, students’ new language skills are more easily generalised to the classroom and teachers are equipped with strategies to support children with language needs. Classroom interventions can therefore provide services to a cohort of children at risk of SLCN (Throneburg et al 2000).

Throneburg et al (2000) compared the effects of vocabulary instruction provided through three service delivery models; collaborative, classroom-based and traditional individual therapy. Results indicate that a collaborative model (teacher/SaLT) is most effective for teaching vocabulary to students. Similarly, Kelley et al (2010) conducted a large scale vocabulary programme with eleven and twelve year old students. Teachers’ weekly logs and brief end of term interviews provide limited insight into the teachers’ experience of conducting this vocabulary programme. Although the vocabulary interventions were successful in these studies, neither provides a comprehensive overview of the teachers’ personal experiences of implementing the interventions. While research suggests that the collaborative relationship between teachers and SaLTs plays a role in the outcomes of mainstream school-based interventions (Baxindale et al 2013); studies such as that of Kelley and colleagues fail to shed light on such factors.

The integration of SLT services within the educational system can meet the needs of secondary school students in a way that traditional one-to-one clinic based services cannot. Whole class language interventions deliver immediate intervention over a longer timescale than is possible in clinic based services. Bercow (2008) recommends that an appropriate model of service provision necessitates integrated, collaborative and systematic delivery of SLT services. Although ideal, challenges for collaborative practice can arise. Law et al (2001) allude to collaboration in the education and health disciplines as an idiosyncratic
process, whereby the initiative for collaborative practice is firmly placed with the professionals themselves. The finding of which points to a major barrier to the integrated service delivery model that Bercow (2008) recommends.

1.9 The Current Research Study

The long term nature of language impairment, coupled with the rigorous demands of the curriculum especially for adolescents in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, provide ample justification for a whole class Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP) (Joffe 2006). As students with SLCN have both language and educational needs, collaborative practice between teachers and SaLTs is warranted (Lindsay et al 2010). To conduct an in-depth exploration of teachers’ experience of implementing the VEP, a qualitative research approach is rendered the most appropriate methodology. The principal aims of this study are:

1) To gain an understanding of mainstream secondary school teachers’ experiences around the process and outcomes of implementing a whole class VEP with first year students during English class.

2) To gauge teachers’ perceptions of their experience of factors that facilitate or hinder collaborative practice with SaLTs within the educational setting.

3) To investigate the positive and challenging features of the activities within the VEP itself.

4) To examine the perceived barriers and facilitators of implementing the programme from the teachers’ perspective and potential benefits teachers gain from successfully implementing the VEP.

As noted previously, teachers’ experiences of implementing whole class language interventions remains relatively under-researched. It is hoped that the insights gained from teachers in this study will positively contribute to the development, planning and implementation of future school-based language interventions.
2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The current research is an exploratory study. It aims to explore teachers’ experience of implementing a VEP with first year students attending two secondary schools in areas of socio-economic disadvantage within the same geographical area. The empirical element of this study will be based on qualitative research methods to gather and analyse the data, as it is deemed appropriate for exploration of the key issues from the teachers’ perspective. Creswell (2009) reports that qualitative research is largely inductive and a means for exploring the meaning individuals ascribe to social phenomenon.

The researcher elected to use the semi-structured interview technique over a focus group system. The former was considered an appropriate method of exploring teachers’ experiences in this context, as their individual experiences would not be constrained by the presence of other participants (Charmaz 2006). In addition, semi-structured interviews allow for the exploration of predetermined topics, based on previous research, with sufficient scope for new themes to emerge (Fielding and Thomas 2008). The data generated during interviews was subsequently analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis empowers the researcher to identify, analyse and report patterns within data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

2.2 Sampling and Recruitment

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. This type of focused sampling was utilised in order to gain detailed, rich data to answer the research question (Patton 1990; Silverman 2013). The SaLT overseeing the VEP asked all eleven teachers who implemented the VEP to partake in an interview. Teachers were asked on a face-to-face basis and following a description of the task, nine consented to participate. Each participant read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form (see Appendix A).

In total, eight teachers were interviewed as one teacher was not available on the day of interviewing. Seven of these teachers taught the VEP alongside a co-teacher, both sharing instructional responsibility for the class (team-teaching). One teacher taught the VEP
individually, without any co-teacher. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants. Three teachers were from school A and five teachers were from school B. Both secondary schools were single gender schools. Fossey et al (2002) note that although qualitative samples are often small, the researcher is not attempting to generalise the findings.

### Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants (n=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Role</th>
<th>Individual/Team-teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1 (R1)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2 (R2)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3 (R3)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Behaviour Support Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4 (R4)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Individual Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5 (R5)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6 (R6)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 7 (R7)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Resource Support Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 8 (R8)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Resource Support Teacher</td>
<td>Team-teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 Instruments

Each participant partook in a semi-structured interview, using open-ended questions with planned and unplanned prompts. A script was followed at the beginning of every interview to reiterate the confidentially parameters. The interviewers asked the questions in a flexible manner, giving participants’ opportunity to explore issues which they felt were important (Clifford et al 2010). The eight interview questions were developed to reflect possible issues pertaining to the central research question under investigation (Wengraf 2001). Patton (1990) suggests that an interview guide ensures that information pertaining to the same topics is obtained from a number of different participants. See Appendix B for the interview questions.
2.4 Data Collection

Upon obtaining consent, arrangements were made for the interviews to be conducted in the schools where the participating teachers taught. The participants were encouraged to give both positive and negative feedback on the VEP in order to develop the programme.

Six final year students in SLT conducted the interviews in pairs of two. One researcher interviewed the participant, while the other recorded the interview. Each pair of researchers conducted up to three interviews. All interviews were conducted in person, on the premises of either of the two secondary schools. Three interviews took place in school A and five interviews in school B. Interviewing participants in their normal workplace can “...enhance contextual richness...” of the data (Foster 2004 p. 230). Interviews were video recorded to ensure accuracy of reporting and reduce the threat to validity of description (Robson 2011). The interview guide reduced the potential for bias and increased transparency as the participants were asked about similar topics (Creswell 2009). Interviews lasted between eight minutes and twenty eight minutes. The average interview lasted fifteen minutes.

2.5 Data Coding and Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that enables researchers to understand and interpret observations about people, events and situations in a systematic way. Themes or patterns within data are identified, analysed and reported. It is a process for encoding qualitative information, and according to Boyatzis (1998); it is a way of seeing. Data analysis was guided by procedures outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Miles and Huberman (1994), Braun and Clark (2006) and Boyatzis (1998). Although it is presented as a linear procedure, the analysis was iterative and reflexive in nature which according to Tobin and Begley (2004), assures the quality of study.

2.6 Stages of Data Coding

Stage 1: The interviews were transcribed verbatim, using Standard English orthography from the video recordings into Microsoft Word. Microsoft Word was used to aid retrieval of keywords when comparing data. The transcription conventions of Bunning (2004) were adhered to (see Appendix C). Recordings were listened to twice at a minimum to ensure
accuracy of the transcriptions prior to data coding (see Appendix D). All analysis was completed manually as qualitative data analysis software has built in assumptions and limitations that may be undetected by a novice researcher (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

Stage 2: Transcripts were systematically broken down line by line into distinct units of meaning to form initial codes. This allows for a wide array of themes to emerge and reduces the researcher’s bias (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). Initial coding of each interview began with a manual annotation of scripts. Codes were outlined with reference to Boyatzis (1998) and included the code label and a definition of what issue was represented. Codes were documented in an Excel file, each referenced to the source (Denscombe 2007). Initial codes were succinct phrases describing what the participant had said in the interview.

Stage 3: Line by line coding was followed by focused coding, in which codes describing similar or related phenomena were combined to create concept clusters representing different categories (Silverman 2013). At this stage in analysis, visual representation of the data is effective (Miles and Huberman 1994). Diagrams were created, illustrating the relationships between codes and categories. In order to reduce the threat to objectivity, to demonstrate rigor, and to enhance dependability; successive diagrams were archived during analysis (see Appendix E).

Stage 4: Connecting codes is the process of discovering themes and patterns within the data (Crabtree and Miller 1999). Boyatzis (1998) defined a theme as “...a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon...” (p. 161). Codes were clustered under headings related to the research question. Similarities and differences in data emerged indicating areas of consensus and conflict. Main themes and sub themes within the data were clustered, refined and named.

Stage 5: Corroboration was initiated in an attempt to confirm the findings (Crabtree and Miller 1999). Previous stages were considered to ensure that the final themes were representative of initial data analysis and assigned codes. Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) method of peer debriefing was used to confirm interpretations and coding decisions with a fellow SLT student researcher. The interaction between the text, codes and themes was scrutinised.
before the analysis proceeded to the interpretive phase. The key themes that were identified were thought to capture the experiences of teachers implementing the VEP.

2.7 Ethics and Trustworthiness of the Research

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the University of Limerick. Data was rendered anonymous during the transcription process by eliminating any identifying information. Consent was obtained from the participants after reading the participant information sheet. This ensured autonomy as participants knew they could withdraw at any stage (Beauchamp and Childress 2001). Validity of the data was optimised by the guarantee of anonymity for participants. Transcription reliability was established by comparing three interview transcripts with the transcriptions of a fellow SLT student.

Trustworthiness of research is a necessary component used to evaluate the quality of interpretive research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four criteria to analyse trustworthiness of research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The interviewers in the study were familiar with the VEP and research pertaining to language development and impairment in adolescence, thus allowing for Lincoln and Gubas’ depth of data criterion for research credibility. The use of multiple interviewers, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) adds to the probability that findings are credible as any one team member is kept ‘honest’ by other team members. Member checking is identified as an important method to increase credibility of findings. Member checking took place in two ways. Firstly, the interviewer fed back ideas to participants to refine, rephrase and interpret and secondly, all participants were given an opportunity to review their transcript. Member checking gives participants an opportunity to verify (Marshall and Goldbart 2008), and confirm the accuracy of what was said (Denscombe 2007).

Transferability refers to the extent to which a study’s hypothesis can be applied to another setting. The researcher has provided descriptions that are rich enough to allow other researchers to judge the extent to which findings are transferable to different settings. Dependability and confirmability were addressed through research notes and detailed records of data generation (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Zhang and Wildemuth 2009).
3.0 Findings and Discussion

Key findings which emerged from the analyses of the interview data will be presented in a heading format, depicting significant themes and sub themes. The content of these themes will be fully described and discussed in the text. Three main themes will be outlined. Firstly, ‘The Positive Features of the VEP’; secondly, ‘The Challenging Features of the VEP’; and thirdly, ‘The Significance of Support during the VEP’. Sub themes categorised within these main themes will be discussed. The themes will be presented and described with supportive quotations from respondents, see Figure 1 for a visual representation of themes.

Figure 1: Themes Represented in the Data
3.1 Reflecting on the Positive Features of the VEP

![Diagram showing Positive Features of the VEP]

**Figure 2: Outline of Theme: Reflecting on the Positive Features of the VEP**

### 3.1.1 Teachers Recognise the Need for a Vocabulary Intervention

Respondents communicated numerous positive commentaries regarding the contribution that the vocabulary programme made to their classes. As previously discussed in the literature, students’ levels of vocabulary knowledge are associated with their academic success (Beck and McKeown 2007; Wilson et al 2010). Many respondents highlighted that they, along with other teachers, saw a need for this type of language intervention in school:

‘For years I have been giving out about first years coming in not knowing...the basic rudiments of the language. I felt that this was an opportunity...that I could address a lot of those issues...the foundations should be laid so then I could move on from there’. (R2).

‘They don’t understand basic words like describe, imagine words like that, which is very hard for them to access an exam...they don’t perform to their ability ‘cause of their lack of vocab...So that would be of huge benefit for us going forward’. (R4).
There was consensus among respondents, echoing this sentiment, whereby a gap exists in the curriculum pertaining to vocabulary learning skills. Teachers felt that students lacked skills ‘in actually dealing with the words’ (R1.)

Respondents’ views are in line with Dockrell and Messer (2004) who state that little direct time is spent on vocabulary instruction in school; instead vocabulary exposure tends to occur incidentally for students. Research shows that mainstream teachers receive little or no information on language impairment during initial training (Sadler 2005). Student vocabulary knowledge needs to be a priority if schools are to meet the goal of inclusive education for all (Apthorp et al 2011).

The long-term nature of language difficulties, coupled with demands of the secondary school curriculum, mean that teachers face a significant challenge to make the curriculum accessible for all students (Lindsay et al 2008). Two respondents outlined the benefits of equipping students with strategies to deal with new words. This aspect was particularly highlighted for students with lower academic abilities. One teacher noted that the programme ‘allowed the weaker students to develop strategies and techniques’ (R2). Respondent 1 expressed similar praise of the programme for students:

‘Another thing too that I noticed was their ability to deal with new words, they were actually, in a few cases, not the majority but in few cases...they saw the practical benefit...if they came across a new word, guess or have a go at it, whereas before it would have been Sir what’s this mean?’ (R1).

Respondents also expressed their concerns that students do not have the skills to access vocabulary in exam situations. Wilson et al (2010) suggest that a high level of vocabulary knowledge is needed to succeed within the academic context. Indeed, the level of evidence supporting explicit vocabulary instruction is strong. Archer and Hughes (2011) conclude that “...explicit instruction should be a consistent mainstay of working with students both with and without learning difficulties...” (p. 17).

One teacher explained that these vocabulary identification strategies give students an opportunity ‘to boost up their achievement in Junior Cert’ (R2). Similarly, the programme has ‘given them a platform...to be exam ready’ (R4), while another teacher emphasised the
application of the strategies by ‘relating it back to exam situations’ (R7). As vocabulary is central to cognitive development and literacy, any strategies that help students to understand and learn vocabulary will benefit them in academic and social endeavours. This confirms research by Hartas (2004) which infers that students benefit from the integration of SLT within educational settings.

3.1.2 Breaking down the Barriers to Language Learning

Respondents discussed how the VEP broke down barriers to language; one respondent remarked that it instilled confidence within the students. As noted previously, Law et al (2001) suggest that adolescents with impaired language can have significant difficulties in educational attainment, thus any intervention that can reduce these barriers is beneficial. The consensus was that teachers encouraged all students to ‘have a go’ (R1) with new words. Linking in with this idea, one teacher mentioned that she would have liked more time to allow a sense of confidence to be instilled in the students:

‘I think that some of them were only just beginning to get it...and to get confidence in themselves and then it was like okay well done and we are done’. (R2).

In relation to students with lower academic abilities, Respondent 2 also believed that the programme ‘raised their confidence a lot’. Another teacher described how some ‘weaker students’ were ‘motivated to continue on with the programme’ (R8) when they were successful in completing some aspects of it. Ryan and Patrick (2001) note that students’ peer groups play a role in socialising achievement beliefs. In the context of the VEP, positive affirmation was achieved as students were motivated to continue.

Another teacher suggested that the programme ‘broke a lot of barriers for kids accessing language’ (R4). Barriers to learning for students academically underperforming was a reoccurring issue highlighted by teachers in this study. The VEP was attributed to identifying students ‘that might have slipped under the radar’ (R2). In secondary school, an adolescent’s language impairment may become less obvious to others but their risk of social, behavioural and emotional difficulties increases (Snow et al 2013). The VEP also focused attention on academically struggling students:
‘On a very simple level, it highlighted four or five students in my group that were having difficulties accessing vocabulary, which means now we can look at that and work with them a bit more independently’. (R4).

3.1.3 Multi-Dimensionality of the Programme

Many respondents made reference to the multi-dimensional nature of the VEP and how the students enjoyed many aspects of it. This is in line with research by Apthorp et al (2011) who recommended that vocabulary instruction should provide multiple contexts to engage students’ processing of meaning to achieve vocabulary knowledge. One teacher summed up the consensus on the students’ enjoyment value of the programme:

‘They loved the individual sessions, the visuals, the structure of it, getting their handouts. I suppose the whole organisation of it, that it was part individual, part group work, I suppose they felt they were engaged with it the whole time’. (R3).

This viewpoint was reiterated by a number of the respondents whereby the vocabulary programme was seen as a ‘break’ from the regular English class. Various activities within the programme were mentioned as particularly enjoyable for the students, especially material for learning idioms and on figurative language. Group work was seen as a positive model of learning, whereby one teacher noted that ‘they loved working in groups’ (R6). In support of this, Ryan and Patrick (2001) denote that group work is a positive method of learning as it exposes students to alternative solution methods and encourages students to reflect on their own strategies. It was also reported that concrete activities were well received by the students, helping them engage with difficult material:

‘The girls engaged with it, they enjoyed it which I always feel is kind of the first hurdle to get over with something when I’m teaching’. (R1).

Teachers working with lower academically performing students emphasised the need to have more concrete activities within the programme along with visual representations and more content relevant to the curriculum and their educational goals.
3.1.4 Opportunities for Expanding the Vocabulary Programme

The resource teacher made insightful recommendations regarding the use of the VEP with groups of students outside of the first year classes. One resource teacher working with a senior learning support group found that their essay writing structure benefitted from principals of the programme. She remarked that the senior group had a ‘higher level thinking because they were that little bit older’ (R7). This teacher also suggested that aspects of the programme should be reintroduced every year to ensure the maintenance of skills occurs. Within a mainstream class group, one teacher found that the students learning English as an additional language (EAL) ‘absolutely loved the programme’ (R5). Another resource teacher used aspects of the programme when working with EAL students:

‘There is scope for adding in your own extra lessons to it if you wish...you could work at a slower pace for students that don’t have English as their native language’. (R8).

3.2 Reflecting on the Challenging Features of the VEP

![Figure 3: Outline of Theme: Reflecting on the Challenging Features of the VEP](image)

3.2.1 Programme Timescale

The VEP was implemented over a 12 week period with two classes per week dedicated solely to its delivery. All respondents had concerns about the timescale of the programme; however
there was no consensus on the ideal length of the programme. The majority of respondents did agree that certain units within the programme were rushed. One teacher summarised his experience of the programme timeframe:

‘At times it definitely did feel very rushed...just trying to tick all the boxes there, which you know usually is something I don’t like to do, but for the sake of this I was trying to make sure everything was done’. (R1).

Similarly, another teacher felt she ‘was just always clock watching’, she went on to advise that she ‘would love to do this programme throughout all of first year’ (R2), as she felt the 12 week timeline was too condensed. Another teacher noted that the students in his class forgot materials for either the VEP or regular English class as the timeline was confusing for them. He proposed implementing the programme over four weeks. The issue of confusion for students was highlighted again by another teacher who noted ‘it’s difficult to pull the kids back and the kids got confused’ (R5), when the English curriculum and VEP were run in parallel.

One teacher remarked that students needed an individualised timeframe to complete the assigned work, suggesting that this approach would be useful to ensure students’ abilities reflected the time allocated to each section:

‘The group of students I was working with were quite challenging and I just felt that time wise it was quite difficult to deliver the programme effectively’. (R8).

Furthermore, a longer programme timescale was needed for some students ‘to be able to absorb it’ (R3). This view was shared by many other respondents. On the other hand, one teacher found that the content in the final units was too repetitive for ‘the highflyers’ (R2) in her mixed ability class.

### 3.2.2 Teaching Methods

One respondent taught the vocabulary programme on his own, while all others shared responsibility for instructing the class with a co-teacher where both teachers implemented the VEP with the class at the same time. The team-teaching method was favourably viewed as
co-teachers provided support within the classroom environment. The teacher who implemented the programme individually felt he had classroom management difficulties:

‘I had to handle the group on my own, which I did find difficult’. (R4).

In particular, he felt that the explanations for some units were too abstract and were not engaging for his class. He believed that these difficulties impacted on their learning:

‘If I was explaining it I was losing them basically....classroom management issues which kind of interfered with the delivery of the programme’. (R4).

Joffe and Black (2012) state that secondary school students with low academic and language performance were more at risk of lower social, emotional and behavioural functioning than typically developing peers. Respondent 4 highlighted that students tended to engage with the programme when it became routine for them, when they realised the overall purpose of it and when they were completing concrete work related activities:

‘There was an improvement in their attitude towards it, they saw it as a challenge, and they started to access it a bit more after that’. (R4).

Another teacher who team-taught the programme discussed the benefits in terms of classroom management:

‘I think that in terms of support...like making sure that the course went smoothly and classroom management was obviously a lot better as a result of having two teachers then one’. (R8).

Furthermore, the students enjoyed the team-teaching element, ‘they liked the dynamic’ (R3). One teacher noted that the other ‘teacher had a completely different style...we would try and work it together’ (R6). This honest reflection is in line with Law and colleagues’ (2001) conclusion that the initiative for collaborative practice is firmly placed with the individuals themselves.

Continuity in teaching was an issue raised by teachers affected. A number of teachers taught one vocabulary class a week, while the second class was taught by a different teacher. One
teacher used the term ‘disjoint’ (R1) to describe his experience of not teaching continually. He felt as if he was ‘going in blind on some occasions’, as he did not know which students were having difficulty with specific content. Another teacher felt as if she never ‘got a momentum with the class’ (R2). The consensus was that this practice made the implementation disjointed and was unfulfilling for teachers as they could not complete whole sections.

3.2.3 Workload in Adapting the Programme

A number of teachers raised the issue that there was extra work involved in delivering the VEP, along with the curriculum. In particular, teachers working with lower academically performing students completed extra work to adapt the programme to their students’ academic abilities. One teacher noted:

‘I found it very top heavy, I found that there was an awful lot of work to do.’ (R5).

This teacher went on to say that having to teach seven or eight other classes in the day made the programme delivery strenuous. Voicing a similar sentiment, another teacher acknowledged that she was:

‘Going in on a need to know basis...because I was so busy preparing classes’. (R6).

The general feeling was that the VEP content was ‘pitched’ too high for the academic abilities of some classes. For some respondents in the current study, making the VEP accessible for their students was an arduous task. Furthermore, many participants remarked that a condensed resource given to them by the VEP SaLT was of huge benefit as it lessened the amount of time they had to spend preparing materials. Baxendale et al (2013) state that teachers positively view SaLTs provision of clear structures for a classroom intervention.
3.3 Significance of Support during the VEP

Figure 4: Outline of Theme: Significance of Support during the VEP

3.3.1 Training

Teachers received 5 hours of training before implementing the programme with their first year English classes. After receiving the training from the SaLT overseeing the programme, one teacher remarked that the programme ‘just completely made sense to me’ (R1). In a similar vein, another teacher emphasised the importance of the training, noting:

‘The introduction programme at the start laid it out perfectly for us; we knew exactly where we stood’. (R4).

The education of staff members outside of the core group implementing the programme was also beneficial:

‘It was great that all staff knew about it because (the VEP SaLT) came in and did a presentation to staff about speech, language and communication needs’. (R3).
Previous research by Baxendale et al (2013) suggests that teachers’ knowledge about the nature of children’s language difficulties increases after a collaborative teacher/SaLT school-based intervention. The current findings imply that training for all teachers is important. Successful training is integral for any language programme. This concurs with findings from Dockrell and Lindsay (2001) who discuss how teachers’ understanding of language impairment is limited. Support and information thus need to be provided by SaLTs to lay a foundation for effective collaborative intervention.

3.3.2 Availability

The availability of the VEP SaLT was a positive feature of the programme. This reflects research conducted by Baxendale et al (2013) whereby frequent meetings with the SaLT were successful in transferring information relating to language strategies in the classroom. The multi-modal nature of support was highlighted whereby the VEP SaLT was contactable by email or phone during the week, as well as spending time in the school one day per week:

‘If there was anything at all we needed to get in contact with her we were well supported’. (R1).

The relationship between SaLT availability and support was again emphasised:

‘(The VEP SaLT) was there on a weekly basis...we could always touch base and I knew the issues would be grand’. (R4).

This flexibility in collaborative practice is highlighted by Gascoigne (2006) who describes that the variance involved in the role of the SaLT within the school environment, depends on the needs of the situation. In McIntosh and colleagues’ (2007) study, effective teacher and SaLT collaboration, achieved through weekly meetings, was an integral part of the language programme’s overall success.

Previous research suggests that inefficient support can hinder effective collaboration. Dockrell and Lindsay (2001) conclude that 49% of teachers feel they are not sufficiently supported to meet children’s language needs. In the current study, dynamic, co-equal,
interdependent interactions between the teachers and the SaLT contributed to an effective school-based collaboration (Hartas 2004).

3.3.3 Initial Feelings of Doubt

A number of respondents made explicit references to their own personal uncertainties in running the VEP, however, support acted as a buffer to this uncertainty. One teacher noted:

‘Even though we are trained to teach, we aren’t sure we are doing it right’. (R4).

He viewed the support from the VEP SaLT as an aid which ensured he was not ‘veering from the path’ (R4). Wright and Kersner (2001) suggest that joint working can reduce stress on individual professionals as they share concerns and gain professional support from each other. Another teacher reported that the collaboration gave her momentum and motivation to implement the programme. She remarked that she:

‘Kind of felt that you were being monitored, so there was no opportunity for slacking’. (R2).

She believed this was a positive addition to the programme. Mirroring this, another teacher dispelled any hierarchical roles in the collaboration by saying:

‘It wasn’t like you felt you were being tested or you didn’t deliver the lesson well, it was more the feedback...as to me personally feeling I did not deliver this programme which was obviously very helpful because it gives you more motivation for the following week.’ (R8).

Baxter et al (2009) advise that this method of indirect intervention to achieve common goals is not without its challenges. Law et al (2002) make reference to the concept of ‘consultant’ encapsulating concerns of power relationships between professionals and the question of ‘expert’ professionals. To overcome this, the term ‘collaboration’ is ratified as it conceptualises each profession as an equal partner, combining skills to achieve optimal results (Baxter et al 2009). The latter proved true in the current study.
Berne and Blachowicz (2009) suggest that many teachers are not confident about best practice in vocabulary instruction. Research by Sadler (2005) concludes that teachers receive little or no information about language impairment during their training, thus confidence in their ability to meet the needs of students with additional educational needs is low. Evidence of this was voiced by a number of respondents. The importance of peer support was recognised as an important factor by respondents. Within their departments, teachers adapted resources that were ‘shared among each other’ (R1).

Peer support among the teachers implementing the programme within their schools meant that they talked about the VEP. One teacher highlighted that ‘the teachers involved in it were very focused in it and I suppose we did discuss it’ (R7). This teacher referred to the group as a ‘team’. The team-teaching method of implementing the programme was a source of support for some respondents. A resource teacher noted:

‘I’m not specifically an English teacher...I was a little bit concerned that I might not be able to deliver the programme myself effectively’. (R8).

This concern was remediated by having the support of a co-teacher whereby she didn’t feel alone in delivering the VEP and they decided which aspects they were most comfortable teaching. Positive outcomes for the teachers can be linked to the joint problem solving that took place in the weekly meetings between the teachers and the SaLT (Lacey and Lomas 1993).
4.0 Conclusion

Interviews with secondary school teachers who implemented the VEP illuminate the personal experiences of implementing a whole class vocabulary programme. From a research perspective, this study adds to the growing literature on successful implementation of collaborative service delivery models (see Hadley et al 2000; Law et al 2002), despite potential functional and structural barriers to collaboration within the school system (McCarthy 1999).

4.1 Clinical Implications

The teachers who took part in this study appeared to respect and value the relationship between them and the VEP SaLT. Lacey and Lomas (1993) suggest that effective collaboration requires both willingness to collaborate and an acceptance of the role of learner as well as specialist. As the teachers recognised the need for a vocabulary intervention, training and support provided by the SaLT was taken on board by the teachers implementing the VEP.

The SaLT also demonstrated acceptance of the role of a learner by adapting and reviewing the programme based on the teachers’ feedback on how students were engaging with the VEP. To emphasise the benefits of collaborative practice for future intervention schools, Baxendale et al (2013) note that the teachers’ increase in vocabulary teaching knowledge could be communicated to teachers in other schools, thus encouraging them to participate in language interventions. In accordance with Starling et al’s (2012) conclusions, the current study validates a professionally collaborative approach to support vocabulary learning of secondary school students in their prime learning environment, the mainstream classroom.

Teachers highlighted the importance of support throughout the programme. The initial training and weekly meetings provided teachers with ample support to implement the VEP. As noted previously, teachers feel under supported to address the needs of children with additional language needs and are not confident about best practice in vocabulary instruction (Dockrell and Lindsay 2001; Berne and Blachowicz 2009). As students with SLCN are enrolled in the mainstream classroom, the value of the current study demonstrates how SaLTs can support teachers to address the language learning needs of students in secondary school.
The content of the VEP consisted of both positive and challenging aspects which were highlighted by the teachers’ insightful commentaries. As Apthorp et al (2011) note, the vocabulary learning environment needs to be multi-dimensional and this was a positive feature of the VEP. Teachers’ indicated that some students struggled to cope with the academic demands of the programme itself. As noted by Spencer et al (2012) vocabulary knowledge develops at a slower rate for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, once differences are established, they tend to remain (Beck and McKeown 2007). With this in mind, there is ample justification for future implementation to adjust the VEP to match the academic abilities of lower achieving students.

Dockrell and Messer (2004) outline a number of factors that play a role in new vocabulary acquisition, including the size of the students’ existing lexicon. Based on this, it is expected that students will exhibit differing levels of engagement with the programme, which means the programme must be adapted accordingly. Some students may benefit from an individualised adaption of the VEP. In line with previous interventions (see Brown 2004), there is potential for teachers to adopt teaching approaches, and SaLTs to adopt materials to ensure they are appropriate for the academic profiles of their students. Shannon (2003) outlines that when students interact, discuss and engage with educational materials they are more likely to reach their educational objectives. Teachers also highlighted the necessity to embed the VEP activities with the students’ current English curriculum demands. This is in line with conclusions drawn in Starling et al’s (2012) research.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

As is the case with any research project, this study is not without limitations. Researcher objectivity is a cause for concern in all qualitative research. Interviewer probing may have influenced the direction in which the interviews developed. In addition, the data generated in the semi-structured interviews was primarily led by the topics explored in the eight questions which guided the interviews. This may have limited the themes which were generated and subsequently emerged from the interviews. Although Kirsch (1995) notes that structured more so than semi-structured interviews focus on specific topics, data generated in the current study primarily resulted from the eight guiding questions.
Furthermore, in the current study the training was fully SaLT led. The SaLT did not engage in reciprocal training, thus the approach was primarily an ‘expert model’ which is not considered conducive to collaboration (McCarthy 1999). However, as noted previously, the SaLT accepted the role of the learner by adapting the programme in response to teachers’ weekly feedback about the VEP (Lacey and Lomas 1993). The teachers were not frequently observed implementing the VEP; therefore it is not known how effective specific teaching methods were to sufficiently engage the students.

4.3 Future Research

Further research could explore the possibility of implementing the VEP with students learning English as additional language (EAL) and with learning resource groups. Long term effects of the VEP on teachers’ vocabulary teaching methods could have been established if baselines measures were obtained in this study, but this would be a worthwhile component of future studies. Pre-test and post-test measures of teachers’ perceptions of their own knowledge and skills pertaining to vocabulary instruction would be beneficial to demonstrate if teachers gain skills as a result of implementing the VEP.

4.4 Conclusion

The reflections from the current study shed light on mainstream secondary school teachers’ experiences around the process and outcomes of implementing a whole class VEP with first year students. Their perceptions of collaborative practice with the VET SaLT can inform planning for future collaborative language interventions within the secondary school environment. This study shows that investment in liaising time and cooperative planning with teachers are essential parts of the intervention itself and possibly contribute to students’ engagement levels with the VEP. Positive and challenging features of the activities within the VEP itself were explored, allowing for necessary adjustments to be made to the programme.

SaLTs have a wealth of information to share with teachers in secondary schools. As demonstrated by this whole class intervention, informational and material support has the potential to enhance the communication abilities of all students in the classroom. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2005) states “...collaboration between
professionals, in particular between teachers and therapists...” (p.10) is an expected role of the SaLT. The current study shows how teachers and SaLTs can work together to identify ways in which vocabulary can be infused across the curriculum. This is especially crucial for students attending school in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
5.0 References


Appendices

Appendix A:
Participant Information and Informed Consent Form

Information for Teachers

Research Project: Measuring the efficacy of a whole class intervention to improve vocabulary learning skills in post-primary school students

What is it about?
You are being invited to participate in a research project that evaluates the Oral Vocabulary Skills Programme (adapted from the Vocabulary Enrichment Programme - Joffe, 2011) which you will be completing in the 2013/2014 academic year. This programme aims to improve students’ abilities in the following:

• Understanding all the characteristics of a word (Basic or Extended Word Map Templates, Antonyms/Synonyms, Word Categorisation, Multisensory Definitions).

• Understanding the context of the word. (Breaking words into smaller elements - prefixes, suffixes, roots)

• Understanding the grammatical function of the word (All parts of speech – Nouns, verbs, adjectives etc.)

• Understanding the multiple meanings of words. (Idioms, homonyms, homophones)

• Being able to use the word in multiple contexts (Expressive language development, discussion, sentence creation).

• Being able to use a variety of strategies to understand the meaning of a word. (Word detective, dictionary work).

What do you have to do?
As part of the research you will be asked to participate in an interview with one of the Speech and Language Therapy master’s students after you have completed the 12 week programme. The interviews will be video recorded and conducted in your school building. The interview will last approximately 15-20 minutes and include questions on:

• Your experience of the programme.

• Your views on the support you were given for the programme.

• Your views on student progress and enjoyment.
What if I do not want to take part?
Participation in this study is voluntary and you can choose not to consent or to withdraw consent and stop participating in this study at any time.

Who else is taking part?
English teachers in three other secondary schools are being asked to take part.

What happens to the information?
The information retrieved will be dealt with and handled in complete confidence whereby results of the participants as well as their confidentiality are the first priority of the researchers carrying out the study. The interviews will be video recorded with all recordings kept strictly confidential and will be used exclusively by the researchers of the study. After the completion of the study, information will be kept electronically on the principal investigator’s password-protected computer.

What are the benefits of the study for you?
You will be given an opportunity to give your views, opinions, ideas and experience of the programme and identify the strengths and/or difficulties of the programme. This will help to improve the programme.

What are the risks of the study for you?
You may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions in the interview. If this occurs you have the right to discontinue the interview or refuse to answer the question.

What if something goes wrong?
In the unlikely event that something goes wrong during the interview session, the interview will immediately stop until the researcher and you are ready to start again or the interview would be stopped completely.

What happens at the end of the study?
At the end of the study the information will be used to present results but the information here will be completely anonymised. All video, subject detail/information and data will be held by the Principal investigator for up to 7 years in a password-protected computer at UL. The results of the project will be available to participants on written request to the Principal Investigator.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?
You can contact either of the investigators at any time during the study.

What happens if I change my mind during the study?
Should the you feel at any stage that you want to discontinue being a participant then you are free to stop and take no further part.

Research Ethics Approval Number: 13-04-35 EHS
TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Measuring the efficacy of a whole class intervention to improve vocabulary learning skills in post-primary school students

I give consent for myself to be involved in the above research
- I have read and understood the participant information sheet.
- I understand what the study is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I consent for the data to be used anonymously in report format and published output.
- I am fully aware of all of the procedures involved and of any risks and benefits associated with the study.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation in the study at any stage without giving any reason.

I consent to my involvement in this research project after agreeing to all the above statements.

Name: (please print): __________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Investigator’s Signature _________________________ Date: __________
### Appendix B:

**Eight Interview Questions**

**Interview Questions for Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How did you find the programme overall?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What did you first think of the programme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How did you feel the programme progressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you feel the students benefitted from the programme? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you think the students enjoyed the programme? If so, in what ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How did you find the support you got in running the programme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What would you change about the programme and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you have any other information to give about the programme and your experience working on the programme?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C:

#### Transcription Conventions

- **Transcription Conventions**
  - Adapted from Bunning (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Speech in bold text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee (Respondent 1/2/3...)</td>
<td>Speech in non-bold text with the respondent number beside it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Indicates a micro-pause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyed</td>
<td>Indicates emphatic stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((laughs))</td>
<td>Indicates the transcribers’ descriptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Interviewer: [vocabulary]  
Respondent: [vocabulary] is important | [Indicates the start of an overlap, and] indicates where the overlap ends. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Used to indicate continuity (no pause or gap between utterances). This is used in two ways:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. From one speaker to the next:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: I am not sure=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: =not sure at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. To indicate a continuous major turn by one speaker, where there is a back channel response by the other speaker (which does not overlap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: I am not sure=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: mhm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: =at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D:

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1:

We want to find out your experience of implementing the programme so both positive and negative, it’s for us to find out the good and bad point so we can improve the programme, or you know (VEP SaLTs) can improve it for the future.

Respondent 1: Okay.

Am so the first question we have, this is a just a list of just a few questions just to structure it, am so how did you find the programme overall?

Respondent 1: Ah really beneficial, the girls engaged with it, they enjoyed it, which I always feel is kind of the first hurdle to get over with something when I’m teaching the girls or any kids=

Yeah

Respondent 1: =is if they enjoy it, they tend to take something away from it. Am it was different which was nice, it’s always nice having a bit of a challenge in class and kind of, do something new. Am, over all it was kind of (.) it was, I don’t feel it was, once I actually got into, it kind of taxing or any additional kind of a work load on top of it, bar a little bit of photocopying and that kind of stuff.

Okay.

Respondent 1: But eh, so it was easy in that sense, it was just coming to grips with actually delivering it and after that I found it was, kind of, it was very doable.

Okay great and you said once you got into it?

Respondent 1: Once I got the first or second week out of the way=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =because we were team teaching as well so eh...

Oh so were you on a team?

Respondent 1: Yeah myself and the, eh the (Behavioural Support Teacher) were team teaching together.

Okay. great.

Respondent 1: So that was the first time I had ever done anything like that as well=

Oh ok.

Respondent 1: =so once I had the jitters out of the way it was grand. So it was a combination of team teaching plus delivering the course for the first time as well so.

Okay, so it was all new?

Respondent 1: Yeah it was all new for me, yeah personally.

Okay and you found it a challenge as well? Was it the new part of it was challenging or which part?

Respondent 1: It was (.) ’cause I missed out on the course that (VEP SaLT) gave at the start of the year=

Oh the training.

Respondent 1: =yeah, I was in Brussels you see with a school group so when I came back I had to kind of catch up really quickly=

Yeah of course.
Respondent 1: =so for me I missed out on the first little introduction, but and ah when I came back then (VEP SaLT) actually sat down with me and explained the rationale behind it and everything like that, I was grand.

**Okay, so did you get the same amount of training then as the others?**
Respondent 1: Yes I got exactly the same amount of training yeah yeah=

**Brilliant.**
Respondent 1: =yeah so I just got it a little bit later. So everybody else was talking about it and planning and what not and I hadn’t a clue what was going on for about a week.

**Okay got you.**
Respondent 1: But am, once I had that with (VEP SaLT) and once I actually went in and started doing it, then it was grand, so yeah.

**Okay great.**
Respondent 1: It was probably just more so my nerves than anything else to be honest.

**Of course, I know, definitely. What did you first think about the programme, am when you were given it?**
Respondent 1: I thought fantastic because it’s something we are always complaining about=

**Really?**
Respondent 1: =the kids’ vocabulary is terrible.

**Really?**
Respondent 1: And I’ve taught all over the country, I’ve taught in different school systems, I’ve taught in schools that I know would not be DEIS schools where the kids, there would be a higher expectation of what they would be able to do but vocabulary in general, it’s terrible all over the country because they’re not reading, they’re not practicing their writing that much so to actually be able to am to do something to improve that and their skills in actually dealing with the words and stuff like that, I just thought straight away it was a fantastic idea.

**Okay.**
Respondent 1: Because I had noticed as the English teacher that vocabulary was very poor (.) yeah.

**Okay, and do you think that like most teachers would have noticed that or was it just you particularly?**
Respondent 1: Every English department that I’ve ever taught in, it’s something we have lamented was the fact that their vocabulary was generally poor. Now you do have some students that would be great readers, so they are good communicators and their vocabulary would be you know, it would be impressive, but for the vast majority of students; I would have considered it to be poor.

**Okay and then you said when you got into it swing it we’ll say, but how did you feel the programme progressed?**
Respondent 1: A (.) I kind of noticed a slight little bit of a disjoint in it, but that was more so too eh because of how we were doing it. I would take one session a week with the (Behavioural Support Teacher) and the (Behavioural Support Teacher) would take another one of the student teachers, so they were doing things and then I had to kind of liaise with them and follow on, so there was a little bit of a disjoint there that you know.

**Okay so you did one session.**
Respondent 1: And somebody else did the other, and I was communicating between the (Behavioural Support Teacher) so there was, for me, I just felt at times I was kind of, going in blind on some occasions, but that I don’t think was a fault of the course it was more so in how we handled it, am.

**Do you think that was because it was paired?**
Respondent 1: No no, as in like the team teaching or...

Yeah.
Respondent 1: No the team teaching I think worked fantastically.

Okay.

Respondent 1: It was just the way that we were actually split, the two sessions were split. So if I was, if I was, if I had to do it again next year, I would want to, I would love to team teach it again next year. I thought that worked well but I would want to do all of the sessions myself with them.

Okay just to get a good handle on it?

Respondent 1: Or you know, continuity, just to get the continuity for myself being able to walk in and know exactly where they are, because, I kind of, when I walked in I didn’t know which individual kids were getting something or whatever.

Okay.

Respondent 1: So just to be able to walk in okay and say, okay she needs a little bit of extra work on it or a bit extra attention or whatever, that’s where I felt I was kind of, going in a little bit blind sometimes.

Yeah that makes sense, and do you feel that students benefitted from the programme?

Respondent 1: I said this to (co-teachers name) and a few other people over the year that they were actually in regular English class.

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =they were throwing stuff back at me that they had learnt during the programme. When we were doing reading comprehensions or poetry and if they didn’t know a word, some of them were actually thinking you know, if it was a prefix or a suffix, oh we actually did this before and they were actually trying to work out or sound them out. Now, not a lot in terms of you know, the strategies, because you know we didn’t have a lot of time for them to you know mind maps or word maps or stuff like that in class, when you know you’re into another section but they were using other strategies, like when we were doing syllables in poetry and the rhythm, and rhyme and all that kind of stuff=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =they were doing the jaw drop and the clap and all that kind of stuff to actually count syllables and=

Oh okay.

Respondent 1: =they were then able to use to in poetry and stuff.

Really, so there was a generalisation, was it of what they were learning across classes or through English class?

Respondent 1: Am, through English anyway they were able to, in different areas of study they were able to apply it practically so yeah, that (. ) it impressed me actually when I was doing stuff in poetry like alliteration and rhyme and that kind of stuff, that they were able to say it before I had started, which usually isn’t the case so yeah it benefitted them definitely.

Okay would that be the main kind if benefit of the programme overall?

Respondent 1: (. ) Ah one of, but ah another thing too that I noticed was their ability to deal with new words was, they were actually am in a few cases, not the majority but in few cases they would, they saw the practical benefit, the practical applications of what they had learnt, the strategies or whatever and they were able to, if they came across a new word, guess or have a go at it whereas before it would have been Sir what’s this mean? There is less of that now, which is, because when I said earlier about the vocabulary before that you are usually dealing with a lot of, what’s this mean and they are treating you like a dictionary more so than anything else ((laughs)), so for them to be able to do it themselves was great.

Okay brilliant and you just mentioned time there. Would you have liked more time to implement some parts of what way would you have wanted it?

Respondent 1: It felt rushed=
Respondent 1: =at times it definitely did feel very rushed at times eh, even when we were discussing this as a department, ah we were just saying spread it out over the course of a whole year or something like that, or am timetable it once a week or something like that but spread it out over the year, rather than am, twice a week for a couple of months=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =because we were trying to get stuff done especially towards the end where those I think the sections 10, 11 and 12 were fairly heavy and fairly jam packed, and just trying to tick all the boxes there, which you know usually is something I don’t like to do, but for the sake of this I was trying to make sure everything was done=

Of course.

Respondent 1: =and I don’t think some things were getting as much attention as they deserved or needed, especially towards the end.

Some things?

Respondent 1: Am, especially section 12, sections 11 and 12=

Okay.

Respondent 1: =that am, we were kind of focused on eh, ye (Student SLT Researchers) coming in to do the individual assessments with the girls=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =and we were trying to get things kind if squared away.

Okay.

Respondent 1: So there was a little bit of a rush, but even over the course of the whole year, am you knew that you had two sessions to get a section done and it was a little bit of a race at times.

Yeah it is very compressed. So how did you find the support you got in running the programme?

Respondent 1: The training at the start of the year that I got from (VEP SaLT) was brilliant, am I mean am, going in from a position where I hadn’t a clue what was going on, I think that within five or ten minutes of that am of the initial training session=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =I came in on the second training session so then I had a good idea after about a couple of minutes, but then when I went back in the second day and got the first half of the course, it just completely made sense to me and then (VEP SaLT) was available, I think was it every Tuesday she was in here am (co-teacher) was communicating with her by email, so if there was anything at all we needed to get in contact with her we were well supported, and then we were supporting each other within the department as well.

Okay.

Respondent 1: Am, there was one teacher in particular who was making amendments to PowerPoint’s and stuff that were provided, you know if there was an area that she felt we didn’t have enough, she was adding stuff to it and we were doing the same, if there was something I felt I needed to add and we shared among each other.

And ye felt empowered to do that, to made amendments and everything like that?

Respondent 1: Ah, yeah yeah yeah, eh no we didn’t feel there was an issue there at all. It was more so kind of am, making sure everything was kind of represented in the PowerPoint’s and that you know, there was an activity for everything basically.

And were everything outlined for you in the programme, the activities and all that kind of thing?

Respondent 1: Oh the orange folder was brilliant in terms of, (..) it was a little bit tricky to follow=

Yeah.

Respondent 1: =and a bit, you’ve seen the size of it like.
I actually haven’t! ((laughs))
Respondent 1: It’s a bit massive like, there’s lots of pages in it, and there was a lot of stuff that we wouldn’t have used in it, but the resources that were in there, once we found them were great, so it was just a little bit tricky.

So once ye found them?
Respondent 1: Yeah so the book itself, the orange folder itself was a bit maybe a little tricky to navigate but once we got in there it was grand.

Okay, great, perfect and do you think the students enjoyed the programme?
Respondent 1: Definitely yeah, ah the way we treated it was a little bit different to a regular English class, in that it was kind of; it was mostly discussion, with bits of pair work and written work in between. It was more so the students sharing their understanding of what was going on and demonstrating that they were able to apply the strategies and use what they learnt. So it was a noisy class=

Okay.
Respondent 1: =but it was a good class, but they definitely enjoyed it, but that’s English in general I think=

Yeah.
Respondent 1: =English is a noisy class but in this case I think it was nosier then usual but that was good.

Nosier than usual?
Respondent 1: As in we would have to get a certain amount of written work done in a regular English class, but we focused more so on their understanding and oracy in the sessions than we did in regular English class.

Okay and was there anything in particular that the students might have enjoyed or not?
Respondent 1: The one thing that really stands out was at the end I revised all the strategies that they could use, if they didn’t, if they came across a new word that maybe they weren’t familiar with and they didn’t understand, or they wanted to find out what it was, and I think I went through, maybe in one class I went through six or seven different strategies that they could use and everybody at one stage or another had to come up to the top of the room and demonstrate one of the strategies, either, I think there was like charades or using the board to do a mind map or word map, am acting it out, describing it without actually using the word, that kind of stuff and they actually, they loved that. They all loved getting up and being able to show, and it was voluntary but at the end everybody got up to do it.

Great.
Respondent 1: So, god they love performing! They love showing how great they are so yeah.

And was that part of the programme, that final session?
Respondent 1: Am, it was kind of revising the techniques. I don’t think it stipulated that they should demonstrate it, but I think it was beneficial for them to show it in practice=

That’s great.
Respondent 1: =and they enjoyed it, again.

Yeah brilliant okay, so what would you change about the programme and why?
Respondent 1: Am, as I’ve already said the amount of time, am I think ideally I would like to see it done over the course of a year.

Okay yeah.
Respondent 1: So once a week for a year, with the continuity of having the same teacher. I think the team teaching element that we used was great, it was really good because if we in written work, one teacher could go around and look at the written work, while the other could kind of gauge orally what was going on. Am, and it was just we had different ideas on how to do things as well, so I think everybody was kind of able to engage with either one or the other of us, am.
Two heads is always better than one isn’t it you know for things!
Respondent 1: Well you know look I wouldn’t argue and say that I know everything, so it was actually great to have somebody in there who had a different understanding and a different way.

Who had been trained as well?
Respondent 1: Yeah so we were able to hit every student basically I feel.

Yeah.
Respondent 1: Yeah so there was the time, I’d like to see the team teaching continue am, and just the continuity of having the same teacher all the time or the same two teachers all the time. Am, I think the orange folder as well, like I said was a bit too detailed, so maybe a kind of condensed or compressed version of it that would be more useful, it was kind of, it was a lot to get through to be honest.

Yeah of course definitely, that is great. So do you have any other information to give about the programme and your experience working on it?
Respondent 1: Am (.) other than what I’ve said already, just am what I felt was useful was just to add in some things that I would have done myself. I used traffic lights am, just to gauge were they following ah what was going on, were they able to apply it, did they understand it.

Traffic lights?
Respondent 1: You know am, you have three cards on a bit of a string so, red, I’m trying to remember what colour traffic lights are ((laughs)) red, yellow and green. Green, I completely understand this and I can use it, orange, I am unsure, and red, I don’t know how to use this and nobody looks at each other, they are looking at me, they hold up their cards and I am able to see who maybe needs a little bit of an intervention or something like that.

Is that something you use in class?
Respondent 1: That’s something I use in class as well, so I just think just not to be am, just be a little bit open to using your own techniques in there as well.

Yeah sure.
Respondent 1: Am (.) especially if you know the group really well.

Yeah.
P1: And you know what works for them or, cause they don’t really, if they don’t get something, they are not really willing to say I don’t get this, but if its anonymous, so you’ve got the traffic lights, you could have the ticket in or the ticket out system or something like that as well, just an anonymous way almost for them to communicate how’re they getting on, especially in a class like that where it wasn’t very written so I didn’t have lots of stuff to pick up and correct.

Yeah.
Respondent 1: So, it was good for them to actually admit and for me to be able to work on it then.

Okay, so that’s great and then do you have anything else then to add to anything you’ve said previously.
Respondent 1: Am (.)

We’ve got some great information there already.
Respondent 1: Well if you’re happy then I’m happy ((laughs)), I can’t think of anything else I want to add there now.

Okay so I think that’s it now so, thanks a million.
Respondent 1: Are you sure?

Yeah that’s great, thank you!
Interview 2:

Thanks for coming here today, we really appreciate it.
Respondent 2: No problem.
We want to find out more about your experience of carrying out the vocabulary programme, so everything is confidential and anonymous as I said, and please feel free to tell us both the good points and the bad points ’cause we need to know both sides of it so we can develop the programme.
Respondent 2: Sure.
We will get started now, so am first off, how do you find the programme overall?
Respondent 2: I really enjoyed it =
Yeah.
Respondent 2: =I have to say because for years I have been giving out about first years coming in not knowing nouns, not knowing verbs, just the basic rudiments of the language, am and I felt that this was an opportunity (.) the classes are never homogenous, they are coming from different primary schools, so at least this was an opportunity for me to have a programme that was really well laid out, that I could address all of those issues that some knew and some didn’t, and at least I felt at the end of it well they’ve all been exposed to this now, so the foundations should be laid, so that I could move on from there.
Okay.
Respondent 2: Instead of just giving out about the fact that they didn’t all know about it.=
Yeah?
Respondent 2: =at least now I felt I was doing something about it.
Yeah, so you mentioned it was really well laid out?
Respondent 2: Yeah
So what was your first impression?
Respondent 2: Now my first impression was that I was very scared of it, because it was new and it was change and as a whole, teachers aren’t good with change, so am (.) I felt a little uncertain of my own ability.
Okay.
Respondent 2: Because even though I can analyse Shakespeare to death, sometimes I do myself have to think, preposition, what’s that again? You know?
Yeah.
Respondent 2: So yeah I was a bit uncertain about it, but no I have to say the actual way the programme was laid out was so user friendly and so compact, in that one led onto the other, led on to the other, it was nicely laid out, am (.) the blue folder was brilliant ’cause the objectives were there, I knew exactly what I needed to do and when I needed to have it done by, so guidance was great, loved it
Guidance, so yeah the training that you did with (VEP SaLT) how did you find that?
Respondent 2: Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant, I would have liked a little bit more but shur we always want more don’t we! ((smiling)).
Okay yeah.
Respondent 2: But timetabling and whatnot isn’t suitable to that, but it really was very straightforward, (VEP SaLT) was great, am her support throughout was brilliant, she came in once a week, checked in with us, which was nice because you kind of felt, (.) not in a bad way but you kind of felt that you were being monitored=
Okay.
Respondent 2: =so there was no opportunity for slacking.
Okay.
Respondent 2: I could go off on a tangent sometimes, but I knew in the back of my mind I have to report to (VEP SaLT) next week, so there was a kind of momentum to the whole thing.

**So you saw that as a kind of a positive?**

Respondent 2: Definitely, yes definitely.

**So how did you feel from when it started, how did you feel the programme progressed?**

Respondent 2: Now this is where it all goes a little pear shaped! ((laughs))

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: Programme I loved, monitoring I loved, the timescale I didn’t, I would have rathered a full year.

**Okay, yeah.**

Respondent 2: I would love to do this programme throughout all of first year, I just felt there was too much pressure on us to have it done, within the 12 weeks, within the 12 week modules, am I found that I was rushing it too much, because there was so much to get done, not so much to get done but I would have rathered to expand it over the year. I would have rathered have a little bit of opportunity for them to come back to me and a little bit longer group work. I was just always clock watching and I never felt, that’s not my way of teaching anyway, so it wasn’t something I was very used to or very familiar with.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: Am I felt as well it was a little bit repetitive, now I could understand why, because it’s a mixed ability class, I understand that you need an element of repetition for the weaker students, they need that reinforcement and that repetition but because it’s a mixed ability class, you have the high fliers who are sitting there going we did this last week, we are doing this again and as soon as you hear that whiny tone coming into some of the students you know you’ve lost them=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: =so I don’t know, I can see how it would be brilliant for a small JCSP class or am (.) you know a speech and language class, I don’t know did it work brilliantly, no it worked very well don’t get me wrong, but I don’t know was it perfect for a mixed ability first year class.

**Okay and was there certain aspects of the programme you would have wished to expand on more than others or?**

Respondent 2: Am I would have liked to expand on the whole classification element of language, I thought that was really interesting, am (.) word detective yes, spider diagrams too repetitive.

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: If there see another spider diagram coming at them they are going to turn into spiders themselves ((laughs)) really, am because I think as well that could be the schools issue too, we had a study week where we taught them how to use spider diagrams for study and then it just happened to be that the next week of the VEP was spider diagrams=

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: =so it was like two weeks of constant spider diagrams and then I think later on in unit 11 and 12, we came back to spider diagrams again, I was like I’m going to crawl up the wall myself cause I’m turning into a spider!

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: Am, but the classification I really liked am, oh god it’s so long ago now, I’m trying to think of what else was, the little kind of techniques you know, the last couple of units I thought were really good where you kind of give them a piece of writing and you give them all the different ways of figuring out the different meaning of the word=

**Yeah.**
Respondent 2: =where they were using what they had learnt in actual reading.

**Applying it?**

Respondent 2: Applying it. I would have liked a couple of more classes of that, because I think that some of them were only just beginning to get it=

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: =and to get confidence in themselves and then it was like okay well done and we are done.

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: I know, you are thinking shur they are going to be using this in their reading anyway, but I’m just not going to see it.

**No this is perfect like, we need exactly how it’s going cause it’s different on the ground when you are actually carrying it out.**

Respondent 2: Yeah I know what you mean. I really do value the programme, I really do, but I just felt it was a bit too repetitive for a mixed ability first year class.

**Yeah, so do you think the student benefitted from it over all or?**

Respondent 2: I do, I do, definitely I do because it allowed the weaker students to develop strategies and techniques, I think it also raised their confidence a lot=

**Okay.**

Respondent 2: =because, the real drive, I think all of us really drove the try it, attempt it, don’t be afraid of it and they were really becoming much more comfortable with reading and not being afraid to be wrong.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: Am, as well as that, like the classifications, the sub-ordinate, super-ordinate and all of those, was I think something new to the highflyers, and it gave the high fliers an opportunity to show off if that’s, I don’t know if that’s educationally sound ((laughs))=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: =but it did give them an opportunity to show what they knew and again, be comfortable with reading, which was lovely for first years coming into secondary school, they are so frightened and so afraid that at least it gave them something that they knew=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: =that they were comfortable with, and they were happy with that=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 2: =so there was happiness all around, not that we were all cheerful, but it gave a little bit of something to everybody which was nice.

**That actually leads onto to our next question, do you think the student enjoyed it?**

Respondent 2: At the beginning yes, am I think the last maybe, definitely the last unit, maybe the last two units was too repetitive for them. They had had enough at that point=

I: **Yeah.**

Respondent 2: =plus I think they know it was coming to an end.

I: **Okay yeah.**

Respondent 2: So they were like whatever.

**It was coming to the end of school.**

Respondent 2: Exactly, we have had enough of this now, we are moving on.

**Okay, so do you think that would have carried on if you had extended it or?**

Respondent 2: I think if they had known it was going to go on they would have kept the momentum going=

**Oh okay, yeah.**

Respondent 2: =it’s just they knew there was a deadline and they knew they were finishing and they tapered off, their interest level and their enthusiasm tapered.

**Was there anything specifically that their interest weaned in?**

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Respondent 2: Am (.)

Or was it just a general?

Respondent 2: I think it was just a general thing, I think so=

Yeah?

Respondent 2: =that’s just the vibe I got from them.

You mentioned before just the timing and things like that, is there anything you would change about the programme and why?

Respondent 2: This could be more our school issue rather than yere programme issue I would have rathered have the two classes myself.

Okay.

Respondent 2: I felt the division between the two teachers, even though the other teacher is my best friend so it didn’t matter ((laughs)), but I just felt neither of us got a momentum with the class because (.) you never finished a unit, I started, (co-teacher) finished and she never saw the beginning and I never saw the end, if you know what I mean.

Yeah.

Respondent 2: I know that’s a school timetabling thing, but I think for both classes, I think it should be the same teacher.

Okay, yeah.

Respondent 2: The one teacher, and I think it’s easier for them too, because they kind of come into me going (.) are we meant to be with (co-teacher) or oh that’s tomorrow, and you had that 30 seconds of confusion of what are we doing today, whereas if it was the one teacher they just know, they follow through.

Yeah that’s true, is there anything else?

Respondent 2: No I thought it was great, I really did think it was great, and I think it might have identified girls that might have slipped under the radar.

Yeah that’s important.

Respondent 2: Which that alone, even if it identifies one student that might have slipped, cause we are great for picking up the very very very weak.

Yeah.

Respondent 2: Because that’s easy.

Yeah.

Respondent 2: But maybe the girls that verbally, could be fantastic or bold, have a tendency to disguise their weaknesses through their verbal interactions in class=

Yeah.

Respondent 2: =that you might miss their weaknesses in understanding comprehension and literacy and stuff and I think that was great that it did kind of flag people that you might have missed.

Yeah so you think it really benefitted them?

Respondent 2: Definitely, yeah yeah I’m a huge fan of it, huge fan of it.

And you saw, could you see the effects of it?

Respondent 2: I think so yeah. It would be nice to see later on, like really I would love if ye could all come back and ye could test them again at the end of the year=

Yeah.

Respondent 2: =to see if they have continued to use the strategies and is their reading the same as it’s scoring now, has it gone up or gone down.

Yeah.

Respondent 2: That’s, I know ye probably can’t do that but you know as part of it, if, I’d love if it was given a three month break and then retest.

Okay.

Respondent 2: And then see has the momentum been kept on.
Yeah, does it continue to keep helping them?
Respondent 2: Yeah, yeah.

Yeah that makes sense. And do you have any other information you want to give us about the programme and your experience of working on the programme?
Respondent 2: I don’t think so, I’ll probably think of something now tomorrow ((laughs)) am I don’t think so it’s just the timing, the timing was the one thing that just, got me.

Yeah, timing and the continuity?
Respondent 2: And the continuity yes exactly, they would be my two big issues other than that I really did think it was valuable.

Oh that’s good.
Respondent 2: Can I see it going past first year, no, I don’t know, maybe that’s just me, with the mixed ability general classroom situation no, but maybe for a JCSP definitely that you could do the whole three years.

So JCSP?
Respondent 2: Sorry that’s Junior Cert School Programme.

Okay.
Respondent 2: They would be the kind of weaker students who get the extra resource I suppose.

Okay.
Respondent 2: They have extra strategies and a programme to do, to boost up their achievement in Junior Cert.

Yeah.
Respondent 2: Am I think it would be great throughout the three years for them, I just think even the pictures and the PowerPoint’s and stuff.

Yeah.
Respondent 2: Come second year for the high fliers as I call them, they just think that’s not cool anymore.

But you think for first years it’s still beneficial?
Respondent 2: Yes definitely.

Okay.
Respondent 2: Yes definitely.

That sounds good, now I think that’s everything, you have given us great information there now, no it’s great to see.
Respondent 2: My strange perceptions on things! ((laughs))

No we really have to learn from how it actually works with the group of kids.
Respondent 2: Sure yeah, I would be much more comfortable doing it next year=

Yeah.
Respondent 2: =because as I say I really did doubt my own ability and understanding to do it and I felt the big orange folder, god I have to do all of this and it kind of came to about unit four where I realised no, I don’t have to do all of this you know, just take what works and try what doesn’t work you know.

Yeah.
Respondent 2: You know am, it wasn’t as intimidating but yeah I certainly would be more comfortable with it next year.

Okay, that’s brilliant yeah great.
Respondent 2: Okay.

Thanks a million, that’s brilliant.
Respondent 2: Thank you very much.
We just want to find out the positive and negative experiences of implementing the programme, just so you know we can make the programme better for future schools.

Respondent 3: Sure.

Everything is anonymous, as in we are going to use the recording just to transcribe the data, so that is everything that is said and there will be no names or schools on anything written down.

Respondent 3: Grand.

Okay so, is that alright?

Respondent 3: That’s perfect.

The first question, this is just a list of questions just to structure the interview.

Respondent 3: Yeah.

So how did you find the programme overall?

Respondent 3: Am, I found it a very, incredibly well thought-out programme, am I found that we had, I suppose because we have such now, such a good relationship with (primary VEP SaLT) and obviously now with (another VEP SaLT) that am the cooperation is very good and it’s so professional and because of the very good relationship that we have with them there was a lot of very positive energy around am, rolling out the programme. Am, it was great that all staff knew about it because (VEP SaLT) came in and did a presentation to staff about speech, language and communication needs.

Yeah.

Respondent 3: Am, so they were very on board as well as a group, so if we had to take them out of classes, oh no for that we didn’t sorry, am so that if it interfered with any class and we had to take extra time they were totally on board.

Okay.

Respondent 3: Am, the positivity then I would say rolled over and it was infectious.

Okay.

Respondent 3: And the students were really really, to use a colloquialism up for it.

Yeah.

Respondent 3: Am, if I met them on the corridor, have we VEP today, when are we having it, you know they were really, really enthusiastic about it.

Wow!

Respondent 3: They loved the individual sessions, they loved the visuals, the structure of it, am they loved getting their hand outs, I suppose the whole organisation of it, that it was part individual, part group work am and I suppose they felt they were engaged with it the whole time, and the fact that it was new of course there was an element of, I suppose uniqueness to it.

Okay that’s great, you focused there a bit on the relationship, so that was obviously a big part of it was it, of the programme?

Respondent 3: Absolutely.

Was it collaboration between the teacher and the?

Respondent 3: Cooperation and collaboration between staff members themselves and between the staff members and ye obviously (SLT student researchers) and (VEP SaLT) as the spear head for all of that.

Okay great, and what did you first think of the programme?

Respondent 3: I thought grammar, I thought wow that is fabulous, how are we going to sell this?

Yeah.
Respondent 3: Ah, so that was my initial reaction yeah, because I would be a grammarian, as in my language background would be German.

Okay.

Respondent 3: I teach German so yeah.

So did you have a strong interest in that then?

Respondent 3: Yes definitely, yeah.

Okay so was it a positive initial reaction to the programme?

Respondent 3: Oh absolutely yeah.

So you could see positive?

Respondent 3: I could see how it would fit in how it could benefit, yeah.

Okay great, and then going on from that how did you feel the programme progressed, from your initial kind of thoughts, how did you feel it went you know progressed?

Respondent 3: Ah it would have peaked at one stage, am as in level the interest of the students and the enthusiasm and I suppose that weaned towards the end because I suppose it was just oh yeah that’s (teachers name) giving the class and yeah its VEP so obviously the uniqueness, and the am=

Okay.

Respondent 3: =and a natural peak and then the weaning off am, what did you ask me again?

How did you feel the programme progressed?

Respondent 3: Am, I suppose the individual units of it I find myself, in delivering it, that I thought it was a little over ambitious, am I thought it was very well thought-out and we were given fantastic pointers and structure for it.

Yeah.

Respondent 3: Am, there was never enough time.

Okay.

Respondent 3: I would have loved to have more time to deliver it, am and I suppose for the pick-up of how individual students were getting on, with (.) being able to use what we were teaching them, I wasn’t a part of that, the aftermath we’ll say, I didn’t have them for English class afterwards to be able to, or for any of their subject classes to see whether it was impacting.

Okay, so would you be just interested to see how it was impacting?

Respondent 3: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Okay great, and you said time there?

Respondent 3: Yes, I thought it was quite ambitious as to the amount.

Yeah.

Respondent 3: Am, and we moved very quickly on from one section to another within our sessions I mean.

Okay.

Respondent 3: Now, I don’t know what I’d cut out having said that because it’s all important, I mean I did the validity and the value of everything that was put into the programme.

Okay so do you think there would be any like options to you know?

Respondent 3: I suppose the way when I was thinking about it, am we’ve done it two different ways now, we did it as a pilot programme last year with a group of students, then we rolled it out to all first years this year.

Yeah.

Respondent 3: I think possibly an extension of that would be to, yes have it for all first years but over the whole year=

Over the year okay.

Respondent 3: =would be I suppose one way maybe I think that we could get more value out of it=
Yeah sure.
Respondent 3: And then you wouldn’t have to change the integral parts of the programme.

Yeah okay great, and you said the programme peaked, was there a certain time where it peaked?
Respondent 3: I would say about session 7 (.) yeah and then they were very relaxed in school just from themselves you know and their transition in to secondary school and, am I suppose their social relationships within their class groups and everything they had all pretty much settled down by, I suppose you know November, their mid-terms were over yeah so I would say they peaked at that stage.

**And how would the relationships influence?**
Respondent 3: Well I suppose students who would have been more reticent or reluctant to speak at the beginning then felt they had more class cooperation and they would have spoken up a little bit more as it progressed, just feeling happier in the group.

**Great, and just on the over ambitious part,** so it’s the time management almost where you had to put so much into each session, so just to change that and maybe over a year could have been an option or?
Respondent 3: Yes and we were very conscious that we were taking up one quarter of their English course.

**One quarter?**
Respondent 3: Yeah, they would have had four English classes per week and a quarter of those were then taken up with, actually it was more than that, it was two classes per week so it was half.

**Okay.**
Respondent 3: And also that would have been at a time where am, now it is mixed ability and there was no change into levels and there hasn’t been since, but that could have happened during that time that the Department could have decided to change and to put it into maybe an honours or a faster moving honours or a slower moving honours.

**The first year group?**
Respondent 3: Yeah it could have happened.

**Okay.**
Respondent 3: Now this is only our second year to do mixed ability, am we have changed maths and Irish maybe after the midterm or coming up to Christmas and streamed them, so it could have been a question for the English department but with this I suppose that was nullified.

**Okay, great okay and (.) how do you feel the students benefitted then from the programme, if they did how?**
Respondent 3: The use of terminology to be able to understand the basic grammatical terminology.

**Okay.**
Respondent 3: Am (.) it would have helped their comprehension, ah the breaking down of words, prefix, root and suffix and that, and that would have helped their comprehension as well, use of dictionary work great, they can access a tool as such to help them if they didn’t have help at hand from somebody else, am the idiomatic phrases to show them things didn’t always mean exactly what they were (.), synonyms, antonyms, I suppose to create a bigger file as I call it in their brains to be able to access that, I’m going through every aspect of the programme there ((laughs)).

**So a lot of the aspects they benefitted from, okay. Do you think the students enjoyed the programme?**
Respondent 3: Definitely, Most definitely.

**Okay and in what way, what did they most enjoy or least enjoy?**
Respondent 3: Ah they did find it challenging when we came to, what was it session 10 where we gave them paragraphs and they had to, the word detective. They did find that a big challenge and I would have loved to have had more time to work on that, you know just to give them the confidence and I suppose the routines and to embed the routines as to what to look for and how to use that exercise, I would have loved to work on that.

I: So we back to time there again.
Respondent 3: Yeah, yeah.

And what did they find maybe, what was the most enjoyable aspect for them, that you think? ((laughs))
Respondent 3: Yeah am, I know one group they liked when we did the team-teaching when myself and the other teachers taught, in fact two of the groups I would have team-taught, it’s hard to say ((laughs)) and they liked the dynamic, they really enjoyed that.

The dynamic?
Respondent 3: Between the teachers themselves as adults teaching in a room and then people taking turns, teachers taking turns to teach them, it was just something new I suppose for them.

Was there anything in particular about that dynamic that they might have benefitted from or?
Respondent 3: I think that it created a more relaxed atmosphere for them.

Yeah sure, that’s great. How did you find the support you got in running the programme?
Respondent 3: Fabulous, absolutely fabulous. We always knew that if we had a question that we could ask it and it would be addressed and (VEP SaLT) had time for us every week to sit down so that was, that was really of benefit because we wanted to make sure we were doing it right=

Of course.
Respondent 3: =and that we were doing it to, I suppose to exploit its full potential.

Yeah and do you find you did that, exploit the full potential of the programme?
Respondent 3: Yeah I think so, I hope so ((laughs))

I hope so too ((laughs)) that’s great, and would there be anything you would change about the programme?
Respondent 3: Just the timing, just what I said earlier, maybe roll it out over the whole year so that you could work on the individual aspects at different times, and also embed them into your general English lesson plans as well.

Okay and do you know how would you do that then, embed them into the?
Respondent 3: As in use the routines, I suppose embedding routines with the students would be.

Is it generalising the skills that they are learning in the?
Respondent 3: No, using them in particular, we’ll say remember we did the root suffix and here’s an example of how we did that you know, I suppose to be able to use it more and then give time for them to be able to absorb it maybe.

Time to absorb it so would that be going back to intervening over the whole year?
Respondent 3: I think so, yeah.

And do you think that might have been an issue that they might not have had time to absorb it?
Respondent 3: I think so, yeah.

Okay, because it was so fast paced?
Respondent 3: Mhmm, yeah.

And you said they enjoyed the hand outs, or they got hand outs did they?
Respondent 3: Am, yeah the student exercises that we printed off, and am also all of the PowerPoint presentations, it was lovely for them to have the visual am and some of them as was indicated later did need the visuals=

Oh really?
Respondent 3: =yeah for them to understand it.
So that was another positive part of the programme?
Respondent 3: Definitely, yeah, yeah.
Okay and so you have said what you would change about the programme the time, that would be the main thing?
Respondent 3: I think so yeah.
And then so have you any other information to give about the programme or your particular experience working on it?
Respondent 3: I think apart from what I said, I’m trying to think am.
Or even from your own teaching experience did you find it a benefit?
Respondent 3: Well it was lovely to be handed the folder and it was lovely to have all your lesson plans done for you and to be told the timing and everything, so yes that was an absolute am, () that was a pleasure to be handed something ready-made, and to have the back up from (VEP SaLT) yeah.
And were you happy with what was handed to you ready-made?
Respondent 3: Absolutely yeah, now we did agree on some changes to it with (VEP SaLT) you know we had our feedback chats afterwards and she was always interested to know what went well, what didn’t what you would change and that so we would have made minor adjustments along the way.
Minor adjustments?
Respondent 3: Oh minor yeah just to exercises really.
I think that’s everything we hit on all the different areas, am is there anything else you would like to add or is that everything?
Respondent 3: No, I think that covers it.
Okay well that is great thank you for your time.
Respondent 3: Not at all it was a pleasure.
Interview 4:

Thank you for meeting with us, like I said everything is confidential within the team, we just really want to hear about your experience of the vocabulary programme, so that includes both positive and negative, feel free to you know, any feelings you had about it we want to know everything, so we can improve it for the future. So I guess, how did you find the programme overall?

Respondent 4: Well overall I found it very useful as a tool, am to am you know to deal with the kids, you know who wouldn’t have had much contact with the written word so to speak, so ah you know even basic things like noun, verb, adjective, adverb they didn’t have, so just to start from that point was useful, you know?

Okay.

Respondent 4: Now the other side of it was that the abstract explanation and stuff, am, you’d kind of loose them for that five minutes and it did cause a lot of classroom management issues.

Okay.

Respondent 4: Now the other side of it, and on top of that I was on my own whereas in the other groups there was two teachers working together so I had to handle the group on my own, which I did find difficult, but it was positive in that it broke a lot of barriers for kids accessing language and on the overall it was a positive=

Okay.

Respondent 4: =with the few little negatives thrown in between, but that was it.

Okay and so you found some things negative?

Respondent 4: Well on my own experience, yeah, yeah=

Okay.

Respondent 4: =am I found that there were big areas there where you were trying to explain abstract concepts to the kids and they are just gone ((clicks fingers)), they don’t want to know about it you know, am.

Yeah.

Respondent 4: And it was the concrete, kind of work related activities that they really embraced much, much better. Maybe it was my classroom management as well, but if I was explaining it I was losing them basically, and the class were going, and then there were classroom management issues which kind of interfered with the delivery of the programme then as well.

And what did you first think of the programme?

Respondent 4: I thought it was a very good idea when (VEP SaLT) presented it to us, am like with our kids anything that can help them access vocabulary in any sense at all is great, cause our kids just don’t have the language skills, and even when they go into exam situations, even if its maths they don’t understand basic words like describe, imagine words like that, you know which is very very hard for them to access an exam, which means they don’t perform to their ability cause of their lack of vocab, so I thought it was a huge problem, so that would be of huge benefit for us going forward anyway yeah definitely.

Am, so how did you feel the programme progressed from your initial thoughts on it?

Respondent 4: Am there were initial issues obviously with classroom management and stuff, but I found once they got into the routine of it, and they knew what to expect, and they knew what we were doing that they kind of embraced it a bit better as well. But by the end while they hadn’t got the whole lot of it they had taken on bored a whole lot more than what they had going into it at the start, and I thought that once it became routine for them, they
embraced it a bit more, and they started to see the overall purpose of it and they started to embrace it a bit more as well.

**Okay so at first they didn’t find it?**
Respondent 4: Well, they just thought it was stupid English stuff that they have to learn, and they didn’t really know about it, but then when they saw, when the exercises and the activities putting it into practice, then there was an improvement in their attitude towards it, they saw it as a challenge then, and they started to try and access it a bit more after that.

**I: Do you feel the students benefitted from the programme?**
Respondent 4: Oh yeah, oh definitely yeah, yeah am varying degrees obviously, but even on a very simple level, (. .) it highlighted four or five students in my group that were having difficulties accessing vocabulary, which means now we can look at that and work with them a bit more independently, and help improve their vocabulary skills independently outside of the curriculum, so on that sense alone it definitely improved things yeah.

**And overall do you think it benefitted everyone?**
Respondent 4: Oh yeah, definitely yeah.

**Am, do you think they enjoyed the programme?**
Respondent 4: Am again like I said earlier, there were some teething problems with it ((laughs)) but they got here in the end. I think they did, once it became routine because kids hate change and I find especially our kids they do hate change=

Yeah.

**And do you think they found anything specifically enjoyable more so than other things?**
Respondent 4: Am, the work, the actual activities they enjoyed a bit more as opposed to the learning of the concepts you know, am they definitely enjoyed the activities and the challenges of trying to figure out you know, and I’d say the idiom activities, they really embraced them and found them really, really good and that was one of the better ones where I thought this is actually working and we are starting to break down the barriers so to speak, and that was a kind of a change there that showed.

Yeah, am how did you find the support throughout the programme?
Respondent 4: Well I mean it was good that (VEP SaLT) was there on a weekly basis you know ah we could always touch base and I knew the issues would be grand, so that was perfect it was ideal, (. .) am the introduction programme at the start laid it out perfectly for us, we knew exactly where we stood so yeah, the support was brilliant you know am yeah.

**Anything specifically about it that was helpful?**
Respondent 4: No, no, no, well just the weekly contact, you know, just to see, you know cause sometimes, you know even though we are trained to teach, we aren’t sure are doing it right you know and, I’m doing it this way and is that okay, and yeah that’s perfect, just to know you are doing it in the right way=

Yeah.

**Right okay, and is there anything you would change about the programme?**
Respondent 4: Am ((laughs)) just a little bit maybe like, I don’t know how you would change it cause you still have to deliver these abstract ideas to the kids, but if you could bring in a couple more activities just to show there, maybe even the way I delivered it maybe I could look at that and improve that but, as it stands its very good, but I think it could improve, but maybe having a second teacher as a support, but I mean that’s where maybe I would have had no issues then, you know what I mean?
Yeah so the co-teaching then?
Respondent 4: Yeah the co-teaching would be much, much better you know, now I did have a difficult group as well, I’ll qualify that, but they did come on.

And do you think the timeframe and stuff like that was?
Respondent 4: Yeah the timeframe was a bit difficult for me, because I had a student teacher as well so I had to split my classes with her, so you know I was only doing half, now I would, if I was to do it in a timeframe again, I’d like to go consistent just the whole way through four periods a week doing the vocabulary enrichment and just really concentrate it into shorter, sharper bursts=

Yeah.
Respondent 4: =to be honest with you, cause if you jumping in and jumping out, that inconsistency you find then that the kids aren’t bringing in their folder one day and so they are missing the work sheets, or they are not bringing in their book for the novel, and they bring the folder so it’s confusing for them so, just bring in, have it, we are doing the vocabulary programme for six weeks, now that’s going to be four classes or periods a week and I think that would work much, much better to be honest with you=

Okay.
Respondent 4: =as opposed to, I know there is, I know the logic behind it but I think, just do it in more concentrated bursts it would be much better.

So is there any other information you want to give about the programme overall or your experience personally?
Respondent 4: No, ah I found it hugely beneficial am, for kids from the disadvantaged groups you know because their access to literature is minimal, they don’t even read the paper, they barely read websites you know, so just to get things down for them to show them how important language can be, that was hugely beneficial for them, to show them how language operates was hugely beneficial for them, am and I think it’s given them a platform now hopefully as the next few years progress to be exam ready, and to be ready to perform to their ability in an exam situation so that would be my overall impression so.

Okay, great.
Respondent 4: All right.

Yeah, thank you.
Interview 5:

So basically what we are trying to do today is just to find out how you found the programme overall and your experience implementing it. Everything you say here today will be confidential.

Respondent 5: So it won’t be held in evidence against me ((laughs)).
No it won’t! Yeah ((laughs)) so we do really encourage you to give us both positive and negative feedback=
Respondent 5: Yeah.
=ah we want both good and bad points for the programme so it can be developed in the future.
Respondent 5: Of course.
So we’ll get started, so am I’ll just ask you, how did you find the programme overall?
Respondent 5: Okay, overall I loved it, I loved the programme overall, it suited me as well as a French teacher because there would be a huge emphasis on grammar=
Yeah.
Respondent 5: =so I just found that it, in fact it’s funny because I had met with a couple of the other English teachers prior to being told about this VEP and we had said that we would love to introduce a module of grammar into first year English anyway, and then this programme was developed and all the rest of it and given to us. I thought it was a brilliant programme, very, very good. In fairness I had a very good class as well.
Okay.
Respondent 5: So it was ya know.
Okay, and what did you think am at fi

Respondent 5: Well again you know I suppose I wouldn’t be typical of your type of teacher doing this in that it’s not like history or something is my other subject. Because my other subject is a language, this all fitted in very well with the training I have in language and language acquisition skills and breaking down words and semantics and all the rest of it so I was, well I was happy about it, I was well up for it.
Okay good, and as the programme progressed, like in the middle of it how did you feel about it?
Respondent 5: Towards the middle, well I know that the kids kind of retired right, what I would suggest, if you could, () putting it over 12 weeks is fine but what I found difficult was taking two weeks of our lessons out of our allotted four every week and doing VEP on either a Monday and a Tuesday or a Tuesday and Wednesday whatever, and then clicking back into maybe poetry or whatever else we were doing in the classroom, am that was difficult, because it was difficult to pull the kids back and the kids got confused, is it VEP day, is it ordinary day and also, I wanted my VEP to be done on a Monday when they were awake and bright but the downside of that is that you would have a lot of, if somebody’s going to be sick, a lot of the time with the kids it’s a Monday=
Okay.
Respondent 5: =or a Friday, so really I suppose I should have geared it towards mid-week where you have got more, you know maximum attendance.
Okay yeah that makes sense and do you feel the students benefitted from the programme?
Respondent 5: Absolutely, yeah I mean I didn’t see any of their formal results from the assessment or anything, I hope they have=
Okay.
Respondent 5: =I hope they now understand what an adjective, verb and an adverb is and all the rest of it but I think that they did, again I had a very strong academic, academically strong class.

**Yeah and could you explain to me the ways you think they benefitted, like how did they benefit from it?**

Respondent 5: Okay so you take it that quite a lot of the kids, and I’m talking there might be four or five would be foreign nationals=

**Okay.**

Respondent 5: =am Lithuanian, Polish, it was very important for them because how (.) you know in language learning, you are learning one language then you are acquiring a second, acquiring a third in their case in a lot of times, and they need it broken down, so they absolutely loved the programme. They loved the fact that this is a noun, what does a noun do, oh that’s a collective noun, that’s a proper noun that’s a common noun, now I understand and in fact it’s all integrated into their Christmas tests, so I was testing the VEP myself. Am I found that it was very, very good for that, for the skills for them. For our own boys, you know they are coming from national school and really I could tell from their fifth and sixth class teacher whether there is going to be an emphasis on literacy or what they...it’s just, I think it’s a question of the curriculum of primary school=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 5: =it’s so heavy, and so top heavy on the teacher to kind of figure you know what’s important, what’s not important. I would definitely hope that we are going back to this am, decor in French, I’m trying to say it in English but it’s basically this cutting up of the language=

**Right okay.**

Respondent 5: =because it’s only by doing that, that students get a real grasp of how to use the language and the benefits of it, like as I said them one day we were doing adjectives, and another day we were doing adverbs, and talking of adverbs I said to them, right these are words that generally end in ly, and I said that you know they can add so much to your store of knowledge, and your store of writing, they were like yeah okay, they didn’t get it and I said how did he eat his dinner?

**Yeah.**

Respondent 5: And one of them said with a fork and I said right, he ate it with a fork, how did he eat it? What way did he eat it, hungrily, how did he eat it, longingly, happily, you know? and then they began to see actually that gives me more power over what I am going to write and as I say to them, look paper has never refused ink, you can write what you want but you have to write correctly and this programme will show you how to write correctly, and I think that it has definitely am made a lot of sense to the kids.

**Okay great, and am do you think that they enjoyed doing the programme, the students?**

Respondent 5: Am I think they loved the ‘newness’ of it at the start, it’s like anything with the kids that age, they love something novelty, they love the idea that it’s a programme, they are the ambassadors for the school that are doing it and you know there is only a few schools in Ireland have been chosen to do it, and this plámáising that goes on, and then they settle into it, and then they are happy, and then they get bored. That is (.) whether you brought in a rocket scientist from NASA, they would still get board because that’s what boys and girls of that age do, you give them something, it’s the world of immediate gratification, they will not wait for anything they want it now, they want to understand it now, and if you kind of say we are going over such and such or we are going over the root, prefix, suffix whatever part of it you are doing, awh do we have to do it again, or we are going back over that, awh do we have to do it again? And they get pretty annoyed at that, but again a lot of that would be down to the fact that they are a very strong group, maybe if I had a weaker group I would have
worked at a much slower pace. As it is, I finished the programme and I don’t think that every class group would be able because there is an awful lot in it, it’s very intense the programme.

**Okay and how did you find the support that you got in running the programme?**

Respondent 5: Well I was am paired with am (co-teacher) another teacher in the school, (co-teacher) would come in for one class am, generally on a Tuesday morning or sometimes a Monday, it would just depend on her timetable, my timetable well my timetable doesn’t really change, but depending on how busy she was or whatever. Yeah I found it great, I found her very supportive. I found (VEP SaLT) came in every Wednesday morning at what about twenty to ten and kind of asked me how are you finding it, is there any difficulties, but look again to be honest with am, you it was fairly, as a teacher it was fairly basic to convey to relay all of this so I didn’t find it too difficult in the least, but I think it is important to have a support network there again if I were a maths teacher and an English teacher, I might find this more difficult, (.) but I keep coming back to the fact that being a language teacher already this was, manna from heaven, you know I loved this course.

**Okay that makes sense, am what would you change about the programme and why?**

Respondent 5: Well what I would do if I were you is, I would not run it over 12 weeks, I think it’s too long I would run it full on six weeks.

**Okay.**

Respondent 5: And what I would do in a school like this really there would be three or four first years, first year classes, I might say okay we will do a module from September to the mid-term break, that’s six weeks, then we would do a module from the mid-term break up to Christmas and then the week after as there would have been an awful lot lost if you like. That was another thing about your course when we were drawing to the close of it, the kids were very tired, you know they wanted something different, you know so I would make it six weeks and a very intensive six weeks and I think that ye managed by doing it at the start of the school year or after Christmas, one or the other, am actually I think that the start of the year was a great idea because it’s getting them into a very good habit, it’s getting them thinking, this is now expected of me if I want to write well, if I want to read well, if I want to do well in English, this is what is expected of me. And I think you know that that’s important for the children, that they need to get that, and also to kind of show them that, it’s not, this isn’t poetry this is a fantastic opportunity for you to really get to grips with something and maybe a little idea would be for you to just create a small certificate ‘I completed VEP programme in (school name) for first year of English’.

**Okay.**

Respondent 5: Kids love getting something, they love putting it in a scrapbook or keeping it at home, or giving it to their mothers and getting them €10 credit for it. That’s the way kids operate. They love having something to show, and whether they are 12 or 13 years you have to remember, they are in their own minds ‘big boys’ you know right, they are in big school= Yeah.

Respondent 5: =they are not, their babas until they are about fifth or sixth year so, even I even make the contention that they are babas all the way through (laughs) they don’t change in adulthood, especially with boys, but yeah that’s what I would say.

**Okay and is there anything else you would change about the content of the programme?**

Respondent 5: Am (.) there was one particular part, was it session, no session six was fine, I just want to see was it session eight (.), there was something they didn’t like, (.) I’m trying to think what was, am (.) sorry about this you are going to have to edit this to=

**No its okay.**

Respondent 5: =yeah, that antonyms and synonyms they got, they didn’t particularly like it, oh yeah the one that they didn’t like, I’m trying to think what it was, it was super ordination? I’m trying to think.
I don’t know, we don’t know the ins and outs of the programme too well.
Respondent 5: Right, I think its super, it’s basically the super-ordinate and the sub-ordinate yeah it’s the super-ordinates.

**Okay in the categories, yeah.**
Respondent 5: Yeah in the category so for example you would say okay, a tiger it's what, it’s feline, then the subcategory would be cheetah whatever and am they found that just weird, they couldn’t really get to grips with that=

**Okay.**
Respondent 5: =but once they, that would be the only thing that they found really difficult.

**Oh okay.**
Respondent 5: Ya know, I wouldn’t, as I say to you there isn’t much that I would change to the programme, I think it’s very, very good, maybe use more concrete examples of other subjects, so for example if you have, if you wanted to teach about am super-ordination you might consider science, and then you might consider the sciences be the physics, chemistry, biology, whatever you know?

**Yeah okay.**
Respondent 5: And just the differences, maybe make it more in tune with what they are doing in school.

**Okay and finally do you have any other information to give us about the programme and your experience working on the programme?**
Respondent 5: Am no I enjoyed it, I found it fine, now I found it very top heavy, I found that there was an awful lot of work to do, I found that am, (.) the orange folder that we got, the big thick folder, if (VEP SaLT) hadn’t had the three or four hour introduction at the start before we started school, and started the programme, if (VEP SaLT) hadn’t come into us and gone through each of the sessions, and if we hadn’t taken notes, like I took notes like to say go to this page for that or don’t bother with that or go here for that, that of itself, to hand somebody a folder that thick, right and say this is the programme we are working through, am yeah perfect of that’s all I have to do but I have 7 or 8 other classes in the day you know and it’s, there is an awful lot involved so I think this blue folder that am (VEP SaLT) made up was great and I actually worked from that most of the time. I only went to the other one if I wanted to photocopy stuff.

**Okay.**
Respondent 5: And I think the kids enjoyed it, am they enjoyed it to a point, and then as I say they got tired so turn it in from the six weeks I think you might be doing an awful lot better.

**Okay thank you very much that’s super.**
Interview 6:

Okay so this is to sort of to get an overall idea of what you thought of the programme and am just about your experience of implementing it and the positive and the negative experiences just so that we have an idea of how to improve it.

Respondent 6: Yeah okay.

What’s good, so am I guess overall how did you find the programme?

Respondent 6: Am, a lot of it would be very useful but I’d a very weak group, am and ah twas kind of I just found it too much together for the weaker group that am I was hoping they would be learning lots of words=

Okay.

Respondent 6: =you know and em they didn’t ((laughs)).

Okay.

Respondent 6: Am, the reason I think was that they were really learning more about how sentences are put together and they really aren’t all that bothered about how sentences are put together, they want to tell stories and read stories, and they would have actually found more fun with just words, if I had said that am I’m going to teach them this list of vocabulary some way or another=

Okay.

Respondent 6: =over the next two months, am we would have probably have put them into stories and they would have read them in short stories and they would have picked them out and kind of, you know, explored them a little more, ah the mechanics of the sentences were really not of any interest to them at all you know ((laughs)).

Okay.

Respondent 6: Which would be useful if we’ll say for instance the punctuation is necessary for them to know if something is a proper noun or a common noun, and if it’s a person or a place when they don’t know what it means or the rest of the word around it, and yes they can identify well yes that’s either a place or a person, so I can figure out, it must be about that person or place, ah they may be able to pull the sentences apart a bit better and find out what it meant if they didn’t know all the words and the meaning but am, other than that the mechanics really didn’t matter to them.

Okay.

Respondent 6: Am I’d prefer myself to have put it over a span of maybe two years.

Okay.

Respondent 6: Rather than trying to do it within you know, 12 weeks or 10 weeks, we had to repeat a lot of stuff because some kids were out am we kind of had to start again remind them of what we did yesterday, and it would take up half the class and by the time we did it we found that we couldn’t actually condense it, you know, what was meant to be done in two classes usually took maybe three or four=

Okay.

Respondent 6: =and then they got bored, because it was taking too long to do this and we were trying to get as much of it in, in that time, am but its team-teaching the first session, and then the second session in the following morning would have been kind of recapping on what we had done the day before and adding a bit more, but sometimes there were people who were either in or out in both, and it may go back again the following week again to a little bit more of that.

Okay.
Respondent 6: For a weaker group, I would have not tried to do it in twelve weeks, I would have introduced some of the concepts, some of the knowledge, am over a period of three or four years even, two years anyway, definitely, I wouldn’t have tried to condense it.

In the short time?
Respondent 6: Not in the short time, not for the weaker group, because they didn’t actually learn a lot of vocabulary at the end of the day.

Okay.
Respondent 6: They have some idea that yes, there is a noun, verb and there are eh prepositions and eh, even there’s some sort of a pattern in this, but they didn’t learn new vocabulary=

Okay.
Respondent 6: =every little new vocabulary, you know and I also found that normally I would try to go back and do something the following day in the ordinary, in the other classes, two other classes we had left, eh one class we would have tried maybe reading a little bit of a passage and pick out words from that, just talk about the characters and have fun with the story, they enjoyed that, and wanted to do that every day, and then we would start the other kind of mechanical work, they would say oh you know, they were getting a little bit annoyed with it in the end, twas fine, twas grand at the beginning but as we started am going into more and more of the mechanics; super-ordinate and sub-ordinate, tis okay for twenty minutes and then after that they wanted to leave it, which was grand, but we had to kind of revise it again maybe further down the line, but they really didn’t care, they wanted to read a good story and I think they would have learned more vocabulary that way.

Okay.
Respondent 6: And, stretch it out, and we didn’t have time to do things like the am the suffix and prefix as much you know, if we had had more time to do, okay let’s look at the prefix and learn off what arch means, that means, we actually found that by the time we actually introduced the concept and had maybe four classes on prefixes and suffixes, well they could see the breakdown of the word, am we hadn’t actually time we had to move on=

Okay.
Respondent 6: =cause we had already spent for classes where we were only meant to spend two on looking at actually learning you know, what con means what else is going to be a negative idea or a positive idea you know, ah dis, we only barely got an idea, a glance at that and I think that would be more useful=

Okay.
Respondent 6: =to have done, you know maybe five classes on that and not to have to worry you know about moving on in the project, you know in the programme you know. Things that were interesting, we hadn’t time to stay on them and things they found totally boring, were totally useless to them ((laughs)) you know.

At the beginning, what did you first think of the programme?
Respondent 6: Ah before I tried to apply it to a weaker group, am I thought this could be useful, but I was thinking more about the bit about groups, I didn’t start teaching the children that I had in the class until afterwards, and eh I thought when we had been presented with the whole programme initially, that’s a useful kit, you know toolbox to actually have but am then applying it to a weaker group didn’t work quite so well, I just felt you have to spread out and down at the kind of pace that suited the children, as opposed to condense it into the 12 weeks or 12 sessions or 2 sessions for each part.

Yeah.
Respondent 6: Am, it didn’t suit the weaker groups that I had anyway, ah it didn’t suit me maybe, but I just found that some days there was poor attendance, some days there were
people going home a half day and I had them in the evening and the following morning they were either in or out and=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: =we couldn’t do it in the same way, if you had a very good group maybe they would quite like if you did this in six weeks, the whole thing, they might have improved their ability to actually break down sentences and words much better, faster through the whole thing within six weeks, am.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: But for the weaker group twas sort of am, I just felt, irrelevant part of the time am, we were making games out of some of the things, we were actually making a game out of the least challenging part, you know=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: =and am, they didn’t learn new words, they were only bringing up words they already knew you know=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: =so it didn’t enhance their vocabulary from that perspective, it just helped them to think of things faster like a game you could play charades with you know.

**Okay.**

Respondent 6: I felt that if we were going to teach them new words we should have really a list of words we want them to know by the end of two months, you know and have them in different stories, in different contexts, am some of them you could do little games with alright for homonyms and synonyms that’s fine you know, they don’t mind that I think they like that part of the story, the idioms they found fun to try to work them out , but we never really got to use them in context then, we didn’t see them in a drama we didn’t see anybody saying it to anybody else, we didn’t hear it said=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: =other than what does it mean, we only got as far as what does it mean, if I said to you, what do you think I mean and we were looking at the pictures and I think they enjoyed that trying to figure it out like a puzzle, but they didn’t get to use them, we hadn’t time we had to move on you know.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: As it was, we were just getting used to the notion of what an idiom is, but ah it was trying to do too much for them and then condense it , and then make it into a mechanical thing that actually took the fun out of it, where as if they had seen some idioms in a dialogue, in a drama and ah could say I know what he’s saying and the other kid is from a different place so they don’t use that idiom you know, and that means something totally different and they could laugh about it you know=

**Yeah.**

Respondent 6: =and somebody gets upset about something that somebody else finds is funny you know, and that’s em you know, you could see them in context better through storytelling and drama you know, am I would, just I would stretch it out, the whole thing, the whole tool kit, the whole box, I’d stretch it out over two years with the weak group and I would have lots of words that I would say we are going to do these words in the first month or these words in the next, group them all up, am getting them to describe things am, because they will have to hear a word in context and see it written maybe forty times before they use it spontaneously themselves, whereas we were teaching them mechanics, which sort of, (.) is kind of like, I just want to use the computer I don’t really need to know how it works, do you know what I mean, that was where they were coming from, you know am.

**Okay so it sounds like at the beginning you thought the programme might be useful, but as the programme progressed.**
Respondent 6: I thought applying it to a weaker group, it wasn’t keeping their attention and they were getting a little bit bored and whinging about having to do something, instead of actually going at it with a sense of fun, we were trying to make fun then out of something that was a really small element of the session, do you know what I mean?

Yeah.

Respondent 6: That was fine but, it was really, they weren’t learning new words, that’s the key thing, it’s the vocabulary enrichment programme but it didn’t enhance their vocabulary you know am.

Yeah.

Respondent 6: I would think that they would have probably gotten on better with story-telling, story writing, reading, drama and using phrases that they would have picked up maybe through the thing a bit more, so I would spread it out, it’s a good programme, but I would spread it out for a weaker group over a period of two years, you know?

Okay, so do you feel that the students benefitted from the programme then?

Respondent 6: (.) It depends what you wanted them to benefit from. I guess they know there are such things as nouns and verbs and they know ah, but if I’m to ask them now what two months or three months later what’s a verb? I would not get the right answer.

Yeah.

Respondent 6: Do you know what I mean? At the time some of them got it, but really they only have about four elements of speech that they would say the ah am, they get confused again by now as to which, if I went back now I know they would be confused as to which is which at this stage, so I would not really consider it useful to their ability, that if I want to enhance their vocabulary, they need to read stories, they need to have lots of words that they are going to use in their stories=

Yeah.

Respondent 6: =whereas their writing didn’t improve any bit at all from the beginning of the programme=

Okay yeah.

Respondent 6: =not much I don’t think anyway, in that sense that I think if we applied in a different way, if the methodology was different, if it was done over a period of two years it may work, but I didn’t find it worked with the group that I had in that kind of, in the way it was delivered=

Yeah.

Respondent 6: =it was also there was team-teaching on a Thursday, so one teacher had a completely different style, eh we would try and work it together but, eh then there were things that I would recap then the following morning, and by the time it came to the afternoon class which I thought would work really well, where you had the same teacher who was team-teaching on a Thursday in the last class in the afternoon, they had that teacher for their homework, resource time and I would bring the work that I would want them to do as a result of, and by then they didn’t want to know about it, they would get quite cross if I appeared at the door with their homework.

Okay.

Respondent 6: You know, by then they were kind of going oh go away, go away we want to draw, and they were doing their drawing work, or they wanted to finish off their maths, they did not want to do any more of this, you know you know we could just give a small bit and I knew they weren’t interested in it by then, but if it was a story they might have read it do you know.

Yeah, so you touched on this a little bit, do you feel they enjoyed the programme?

Respondent 6: Parts of it, they enjoyed the games, they enjoyed the competitions so much so they actually getting used to having a little competition of some sort on a Friday, at the end of
it, at the end of a session to see if they could remember things, they then after we finished the programme almost instigated a kind of, little test on a Friday, what’s the competition today? would be the question on a Friday so we had a little impromptu test that I would work straight away, and see okay what are we going to do, we are going to have a test on whatever and put an impromptu test and they were quite diligent about going at it and work in groups generally, they loved working in groups bit=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =and trying to come up with solutions to the answers and whatever, they loved that part of it. They got a little bit self-conscious if they were on their own or put on their own, they didn’t like to be put on the spot, but if they were put with someone they felt that they could work out something together they felt better, and that was grand they enjoyed that and they instigated every Friday we would have a competition and the competition was really a test ((laughs))=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =you know so ah it was actually a test, but eh they conducted it as a competition, and they didn’t mind, there were no prizes, like initially the other teacher tended to give them sweets if they won something or if they gave the right answer, whereas I’m a bit mean about sweets, I don’t like giving them sweets, so they were asking what’s the prize, what’s the prize but I’d answer oh no the prize is that you win, you know ((laughs))

Yeah.
Respondent 6: And you get to be the best ((laughs)) as a group, the best group you know and they were quite happy with that, they were quite chuffed with just being the best, you know or winning which was funny, you know. So it did enhance though, maybe I suppose because they got used to having to ask questions or answer questions in class or talk, but that was quite partly the kind of style I would have used anyway, am I do find that they don’t mind me putting words into sentences for them to help them describe, am whether that’s a result of the actual programme or it’s something I’m inclined to do anyway I don’t know.

How do you mean?
Respondent 6: In the sense that there was one little boy the other day trying to describe am a story of how his father knew a man, am we were looking at tragedy and at accidents and there am was one little boy in the class who wouldn’t have a lot of vocabulary, told me that his father knew a man whose son got killed when he ran out on the road after a ball, you know and he said the road was like that ((hand gesture downward)), a steep slope he meant driveway is what he was trying to say, and I said oh was there a steep slope in the driveway he said, oh yeah a steep slope in the driveway, repeated it after me=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =and I said oh he had no chance at all so, kind of I was trying to draw him out another little bit and I find he doesn’t mind me adding it in=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =putting it in here and there, and he is saying it after me, whereas before he might have been a little bit more self-conscious you know of am maybe being able to say the right word or have the right word at the tip of his tongue and he might have been a little bit more self-conscious if I added in something whereas now twas just normal.

Okay.
Respondent 6: It was just normal and he was repeating me without even thinking about it.

And that was because?
Respondent 6: I don’t know if it was because of the programme, because that would be my kind of style teaching, trying to use more, enhancing the vocabulary, if they are telling me a story I would put in a word to help them describe, where if they said one word I’d add another word and they would have two words then and they would kind of stretch it a bit and
develop it a little bit, am but I do think that in am a very good group it gave them a lot of logical break down of sentences, and it would have given them a lot of know how to break down words if they were unsure of it first. For a very weak group I feel that they are still actually working on learning words=

Right.
Respondent 6: =like a child, first time learning words, as a parent trying to teach them words and adding another word to one if they have one already, you know so I think the weaker group in first year would definitely benefit from having it spread out, but am really to intensify word introduction and looking at words in stories and trying to figure out in context, what a word might mean and jotting them down, and saying that right we are going to write a story tonight and we are going to use five of those words that we have and they can choose, and let them try and develop the words that they have picked out and tried to use earlier in class into a story of their own, you know and I think they might build up the vocabulary a little bit quicker you know am=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =but yeah, the mechanics are good for them to know and in the long term it will benefit them, but I just felt for a weaker group, it was too much together, and now I find if I go back to the book and if there is anything to do with mechanics they go cross, they don’t want it, you know, we are always doing this but anyhow we will get there, it’s just we would need to have a lot more story reading and writing for a weaker group.

In terms of throughout the programme the support that was provided, how did you feel, like how did you find that?
Respondent 6: I found that grand, because if I felt that this isn’t working, when I’d report back that this is what we did because this wasn’t working, I usually found that that’s fine because we actually still adapted something again, and it’s just, there’s no point in, if they are, there’s no point in killing their interest by overdoing an element that really is just not something they were interested in at all, and that was grand I felt that’s okay, I don’t have to go doggedly through the material, and then end up you know having a very disgruntled group in front of me=

Yeah.
Respondent 6: =that it was okay to leave out bits and its okay to move on then and it’s okay to keep going with the bit that they actually liked you know=

Okay.
Respondent 6: =the dictionary work actually took four classes, because I had to go around individually and actually show them and some of them actually didn’t have the alphabet learnt off, some of them had English as a second language, so we had to you know show them the alphabet, write it out, higher case, lower case and then they actually had to figure out from that, they were literally going from that basis.

Yeah.
Respondent 6: Some of them, some of the lads who had English as a second language were better at learning the am, parts of speech=

Okay.
Respondent 6: =and if I’d ask them if it were a verb or a an adverb or an adverb or an adjective, they possibly came up with the right answer more quickly than the lads who had very little vocabulary in the first place even through they learned English as a first language you know am, they were better at the mechanics the boys who were learning English as a second language.

Okay.
Respondent 6: Am, but I felt overall that they could have all done with learning more vocabulary you know?
So in terms of the support then how?
Respondent 6: Sorry, am well then the support was very good, that as ah, you know even if I found that some piece of material wasn’t working so well, sometimes a different piece might have been given to me that was being used by the same, the support person, do I mention the name?
You don’t have to.
Respondent 6: But anyway, because the support person was teaching a third year group who would have had every weak vocabulary levels and poor vocabulary and would have been a very weak group, an ah and she found she had to adapt lots for them as well and then she would often pass them back to me then as well.
Okay.
Respondent 6: And I think she found the same, I think she found there were lots of the course that she knew they were not interested in=
Yeah.
Respondent 6: =and am, who had a to really be very encouraging to even sit with some, to even write down the answers, in order to get anything out of them because they were kind of going oh not interested in this, they took a while to get on board because it wasn’t something that was immediately attractive to them, but then once they saw someone else writing down the answer they didn’t feel worried about their spellings=
Yeah.
Respondent 6: =that they didn’t feel like they had to know the spelling in order to write down something, thats what I kept telling the boys, look it doesn’t matter if you don’t know the spelling , even if you don’t know the answer just write it as you think it sounds.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: And am sometimes it was very funny trying to read back some of their answers, because I’d just say what was that again, what was that again, because and ah I just had to pretend I couldn’t read their writing cause the spelling meant nothing to me, nothing, totally off the wall.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: And I felt am, it was quite fun at the same time ((laughs)), you know they didn’t mind me they didn’t mind me asking them, you know it was grand, at least we were on a good relationship that they didn’t feel exposed if I said I couldn’t read their writing, what’s that mean.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: But at the same time, the spellings were terrible ((laughs)), so if their spellings are that bad I can understand then why sometimes they can’t read everything in front of them.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: The sound meant nothing whatsoever, the phonics meant nothing, yeah in some cases.
Yeah you touched on it a little bit, in terms of what you would change about the programme if it was implemented again in the future.
Respondent 6: Am, I would have groups of words maybe that would be sort of, maybe a set of words that might help us describe an incident, say an accident, say a cluster of words there, a cluster of words they might use for, you know kind of vocabulary for a day out, a fun day, a night at the disco or something whatever it might be that they are interested in=
Yeah.
Respondent 6: =whatever their hobby is, that we would have words around that hobby so that they could put them into the sentences, without having to be worried about the spellings, so that’s was one of the big issues, they might know a word but because they hadn’t a clue how to spell it they wouldn’t try putting it in.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: And then you know they would eventually try and get rid of it altogether, it’s kind of somebody else is capable of saying that word but because they couldn’t write it down, it sort got lost from their vocabulary, you know that sort of thing.
Right.
Respondent 6: So sort of keep it very simple, you know.
Okay.
Respondent 6: But they, but am, I think they would feel more support for their work if they felt they had the words they need for the task, and they could just put them together then after that.
If they had them?
Respondent 6: If they had them, like we’ll say for a vocabulary enrichment programme for kids with weakened vocabulary, I would rather have we’ll say picture cards where there was lots of words around the topic=
Okay.
Respondent 6: =that they could then write their story and pretend, okay this is one of the cards I like and write their story about that where they could decide which card they would like to write about, and they have the words and eventually we can actually build up a vocabulary where they are actually free enough that they can write down the word, am more of that, less of the mechanics, very much less of the mechanics, I would keep the mechanics down to just a noun and a verb and possibly then throw in a few more conjunctions, something like that eventually but I wouldn’t have much more than that, three or four parts of a word is as much as they are going to need.
Okay.
Respondent 6: As regards the nouns, I think it is vital in the presentation, that proper nouns be given a capital letter and common nouns a small letter in all presentations, that wasn’t the case in some of the am PowerPoint’s, common nouns and proper nouns got mixed up as far as the capital letter, and I think it was vital for them to see everything straight away, if it says cats it’s all in small letters, you know if it says pussy you know the title of the cat, they need to know that and it wasn’t on the PowerPoint presentation.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: And it sometimes was mixed up as regards capital and small letters and I felt that didn’t help.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: But I tried, I changed them, sometimes it doesn’t change it would go back to the old thing again and I couldn’t do anything about it.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: But am, I did point it out to them, that if this is a proper noun it should have a capital letter shouldn’t it? And am you know just making it clear in their mind that they will be always able to figure out what the sentence is about that if there is a proper noun we know that it is about that person, place or thing you know or title of somebody, so after that you know you can build it up.
So you would cut down on the mechanics?
Respondent 6: I would cut down hugely on the mechanics overall, it was handy to have the prefixes and the suffixes but only if (.), I would have preferred if am (.), like super-ordinate and sub-ordinate really were not relevant to them, and so were a whole lot of things, even I know there were lots of it that we didn’t do a lot on, if it were idioms, I would try and have idioms in a sentence in sentences in context.
Yeah.
Respondent 6: Because otherwise, we were just doing idioms forever but they didn’t actually use them, you know where could they use them afterwards? And it would be great if we could follow up we will say in the other two classes every week we would do idioms in a drama you know but I found that they were so switched off by then, that if I went back to do anything with them about idioms in the story they were getting annoyed, if I repeated anything we did on Thursday and Friday on the Monday, you know they didn’t want to know about it, by then they were kind of sick of it, so am yet there were other parts of it that they loved.

Yeah.
Respondent 6: They quite liked the homonym, synonym, you know, they were quite happy about that.

Yeah.
Respondent 6: Am because I suppose, some of the words were quite short, they were words they could use.

Okay.
Respondent 6: On a regular basis and to know which one was which was actually quite useful to them.

So overall, is there anything else that you would like to say about the programme anything else that’s positive or negative, or your experience in working on it?

Respondent 6: No, maybe if I was again, if I was to use it a second time and I was much more familiar with what was coming up, where as I was kind of looking at it on the Wednesday to see what was coming up for Thursday and Friday. That maybe if it was something that I knew more about, if I was more rehearsed in it myself, maybe then I would let it flow a bit better as well, and that’s something that was you know, I was advising sometimes when somebody might say something, oh yeah we had that synonym last week, or you know, then you know if I was more familiar with it, well maybe, I would have delivered it a little bit better you know, that would make a big difference, I find that with a new text book if you’re not as familiar with a text book or with what’s coming up and what’s been done already you don’t always make the best use of it. So I do think that if I was more familiar with it second time around it might actually help as well. Am, I was kind of going on a need to know basis for now, you know because I was so busy preparing classes and other classes and I knew this was for Thursday and Friday and okay, let’s see what we are doing and we will prepare on Wednesday for Thursday you know and Friday you know, that kind of a way? I’d probably juggle it, do it in a different order maybe and times, or if you were doing something on a Monday that came up, if I knew that was in the Vocabulary Enrichment Programme, I might actually drag something out of it into Monday’s class you know, that might have happened in ordinary class, that they didn’t feel that they were actually being drilled through a certain programme, but that it would actually came through what we were teaching or whatever we were doing, that if it was a story or if we were reading a play we could actually bring some of what was in the programme into the ordinary class or if they are writing a story, lets write kind of you know, something in it that’s, something from it that could be useful, am maybe a bit more user friendly that way for me, and for the weaker group especially.

Yeah.
Respondent 6: So familiarity with the material.

So is there anything else or is that it?

Respondent 6: No that’s it, thank you.

Thank you so much.
Interview 7:

Okay so thanks for meeting with us today. Okay so what we want to get is an overall experience of, your experience on implementing the programme.
Respondent 7: Right okay.
So everything you say is confidential.
Respondent 7: Perfect.
And we would just really like to get both the positives and negatives of the programme just for future implementation of the programme.
Respondent 7: Right okay...perfect.
So our first question is, how did you find the programme overall?
Respondent 7: Yeah I think it was enjoyable, I think there were a lot of aspects of it that am, I think that are really important for your basic English, so I found in teaching the basics it was a good, it was a good yeah.
And you found it enjoyable overall, was there anything specifically?
Respondent 7: Yeah I think it was enjoyable overall yeah.
Okay and what did you first think of the programme?
Respondent 7: Is this myself or?
When you were introduced to it.
Respondent 7: No, I thought it was fine, I think we were introducing anything for the first time anyway I think it’s, ah you know, your first time doing anything, it’s a little (.) your just trying to get it right, you know.
Yeah.
Respondent 7: I did find I spent a lot of time on it prior to my classes, just so I could have it ah, well fresh and do you know (.) like knew it myself before I went in to teach it, yeah.
Okay, am and how did you feel as the programme progressed?
Respondent 7: Am I thought that, I thought it was introduced quite well, I thought the earlier am sessions were good, I thought there was enough in it, I suppose, I’m teaching, the well the students I was teaching are, would be, very low literacy levels.
Okay.
Respondent 7: So I found aspects of it were maybe, even wording was a little higher than= Okay.
Respondent 7: =than you know, the kids I was teaching them to.
Okay
Respondent 7: So that involved a lot of me having to change, am you know, some of the information that was given to us= Right.
Respondent 7: =just so I could target, you know, speaking to them at a lower level.
Okay and you said you changed it?
Respondent 7: Ah, we were given some am PowerPoint’s, so I felt in some of them that they weren’t maybe enough ah information on them.
Okay.
Respondent 7: And I did feel that I had to make up a good bit.
Yourself?
Respondent 7: On them, yeah myself.
Okay.
Respondent 7: Which was grand, because you have to adapt the programme for the kids that you are teaching.
Right.
Respondent 7: And I did feel that there were a lot of options within the each section within the, the folder itself.
Yeah.
Respondent 7: But I think for the time, they were the first time doing it, that took a lot of time cause you always had to read through, you know ah like you know homework for the vast majority of it to find sessions, I suppose that suited the kids that I was teaching.
Right okay.
Respondent 7: I did find always that the information we were given at the very beginning, was ah what I would have liked to have used within the classes, I mean it was said to us that we would have to adapt it ourselves.
Okay.
Respondent 7: So that was grand, but it was time consuming.
Okay, do you feel the students benefitted from the programme?
Respondent 7: Yeah, I do think so.
Okay.
Respondent 7: I think even quite close to the end, even you know they would have the idea, if they, if they were stuck on something they would just ask.
Okay.
Respondent 7: So I think they understood you know I think it’s like the tenth act, like the tenth thing that you would actually do.
Okay.
Respondent 7: Am so, I kind of felt like you know, in class they kept bringing it up and going no, no you can’t ask you know what else are you going to do? What else is going to help you out? And I kept relating it back to exam situations.
Right.
Respondent 7: Where you can’t ask you know, and in actual fact a few of them were knocked out because you can’t use a dictionary, and there is no internet available.
Yeah.
Respondent 7: So you really have to am, you know, relate the information to the text around it you know.
Right.
Respondent 7: Which I think is good and I think it does make them more independent in their thinking=
Okay.
Respondent 7: =about the process so that would be the best thing I think.
Okay and was there any specific content you felt?
Respondent 7: I found the nine parts of speech were very good.
Okay
Respondent 7: I found, especially because I teach a lot of learning support they were always talking, and even with the seniors we are always talking about the use of adverbs and adjectives, how they are kind of more descriptive in language, and I think once they knew what a verb is, and you know if they write a sentence and they know what a noun is and a verb is, and how to make it a bit more interesting, in you know, giving more information about that and knowing I’m looking for an adverb there or I’m looking for an adjective.
Okay.
Respondent 7: I found that (.) it has actually really helped them.
That’s great.
Respondent 7: It has helped them yeah for certain.
Okay, am how did you find the support you got in running the programme?
Respondent 7: Yeah it was fine you know it was great you know (VEP SaLT) was there every Wednesday, so there was, and I think as we went through the programme, as a team ourselves we were very lucky that we have am you know, the teachers involved in it were very focused in it and I suppose we did discuss it, am if I had a work sheet with what worked out for me, you know, it did somebody else and it worked out you know, it was good, there was a lot of photocopying though sorry you better put that down as=
Yeah.
Respondent 7: =you know something that was time consuming I suppose.
Okay and did you implement it on your own or were you doing it with someone else?
Respondent 7: I did it with am, an (class name) group with their own teacher, but I also took it on with, elements of it with a second year group.
Okay.
Respondent 7: And I also took it on with my fifth year group.
Okay great.
Respondent 7: I have a particularly new fifth year group and I actually thought it went really well with the senior group.
Okay.
Respondent 7: Yeah I know that wasn’t part of you know eh the initial research that she was doing.
Yeah.
Respondent 7: But I just found that it really structured them, I thought it was good, I thought it was good on a senior level as well.
Okay that’s really interesting and for the older group, why do you think they benefitted them.
Respondent 7: See, I think when they, I think (.) I think if they were hit it, if they were given the same information a couple of years ago then we wouldn’t have had to have done it again.
Okay.
Respondent 7: So, but for this group they had never done it.
Right.
Respondent 7: So, I felt that their, their, their higher thinking as well, because they are that little bit older so the information they were getting off it, they were retaining it that little bit better.
Okay.
Respondent 7: Even though they were still a very weak group, but it’s actually, for now we are actually working on essay writing to get compositions for ah Leaving Cert, so they have to write a really good essay, and I keep saying to them it’s not about, it’s about using your words, even if you can’t spell them, they can speak very descriptively so why wouldn’t you write descriptively. I actually found that very good, and I did think that they were, they were higher level thinking because they were that little bit older as well=
Yeah.
Respondent 7: =I think they just got it more=
Okay
Respondent 7: =You know? So if I go to them like I would have corrected some essays today and I will likely go back and say well this area is good, but it could be better, what do you think will make it better, how would you make it more descriptive? They would know to say to me oh I would use more adverbs here or some adjectives here.
Okay.
Respondent 7: You know, so I think that’s a really good thing and also they are getting closer to an exam, you know?
Yeah,
Respondent 7: And the idea of becoming more independent in your learning is something that I think really could be brought in again at this stage of fifth year.

Yeah.

Respondent 7: For the learning support group.

Okay.

Respondent 7: Do you know? I think it would be beneficial.

Okay.

Respondent 7: And sometimes do you know when you are a little bit younger, they sort of forget it, you know?

Yeah.

Respondent 7: If it isn’t implemented continuously.

Okay.

Respondent 7: So I do try that, even with my second year group that I do, I always say it and I always bring it back during the programme we did this and, so somebody can remember, somebody else will remember a conversation we had about it, it does jog their memory and I try to say to them it’s the same as reading a word, say it our loud you know, try to put it into a sentence, you know, it’s like follow the guidelines and in saying it out loud, have you heard it before, can you remember the conversation we heard about that word before and even, what, one point I would say about it is that for a learning support group I really do think it needs to be a lot more visual.

Okay.

Respondent 7: Yeah, certainly, you know maybe it’s the kids that I’m teaching I do think that, and that’s what I tried to do a little bit more was introduce the PowerPoint’s with a lot more visual information, you know am, because we are hitting a lot of dyslexic students as well=

Yeah.

Respondent 7: =and they see it, say it, hear it and I did feel that it maybe lacked a little bit like that but even you know there was the ones, (.) oh god I can’t even think now, am where you had am, knocking your head off a wall, you know those idioms, I put all those idioms onto a PowerPoint.

Right.

Respondent 7: So we had great conversations about trying match them up, and we all had them cut out and we made games of them and there was you know like prizes and=

Okay yeah.

Respondent 7: =I tried to make it as fun as possible.

Right.

Respondent 7: I think they did, I think they did enjoy it that’s probably like the toots toot.

Yeah ((laughs))

Respondent 7: But no, I did like it yeah.

Okay that’s great, am and what would you change about the programme, apart from adding visuals, is there anything else?

Respondent 7: Am (.) I think, going into it now let’s say the next time myself I think I have a lot of work done in how I would have adapted it=

Right.

Respondent 7: =so I think going into it again, I think I would have more time to maybe look at other elements that I would introduce you know, I was quite busy trying to ah am adapt it myself this time.

Right.

Respondent 7: You know the way you always feel like I could have done that a little bit again more extensively, you know?
Right okay.
Respondent 7: Am, I do think some areas of it could be shorter=

Right.
Respondent 7: =some areas could be longer, I think we were stuck for time and I think particularly you know, such time restraint for the sessions and I know they had to be for this round.

Yeah.
Respondent 7: But I’m just thinking of my first year group that I work with (co-teacher) with, am yeah some of it was just really hard for them, I just think that they are just a very weak group, you know.

Okay yeah.
Respondent 7: And I think more time, I know (co-teacher) definitely spent more time on some areas than were allocated.

Okay yeah.
Respondent 7: Yeah.

Okay am, do you have any other information about the programme, how you felt your experience of working with the programme, anything else you can give us?
Respondent 7: Yeah I do think, let me see, well I do think it could be established again at a senior level, but I think that’s more for the English teachers and the learning support teachers to do, but I definitely think, you know, if a student doesn’t know, I think elements of it could be reintroduced on a yearly basis you know, or maybe extended a little bit you know that’s=

Yeah.
Respondent 7: =you know, as I said, I think it is forgotten if you don’t keep going back to it, certainly the parts of speech are really important when it comes to essay writing, and the kids write essays in you know history, geography, English, Irish even you know? And I know some am of the lads in (class name) were saying they found it really good because they do, I think they do French and I think they found that good, you know learning their different nouns and verbs=

Great.
Respondent 7: =just the idea that the language you know, identifying language was kind of the same, so I think that yeah it was a good answer.

Yeah and you felt some parts were time consuming?
Respondent 7: Yes, Yeah.

So could you just maybe give us information how you added to it or?
Respondent 7: Am, well for certain I am a firm believer in visuals.

Yeah.
Respondent 7: And I did spend a lot of time, am you know, I know they were on, it was just putting everything into a PowerPoint or to extend the PowerPoint’s you know or, like sometimes when you opened a PowerPoint they were in different sections, and it was about putting them all into one=

Right.
Respondent 7: =one PowerPoint and kind of bringing it through, but I do feel like I did a lot of extra work on it, I think because I was working with a much weaker group, some maybe wouldn’t have spent as much.

Right.
Respondent 7: Maybe they didn’t need to.

Yeah, you just adapted it to.
Respondent 7: Yeah, I felt I did have to.

Okay that’s great thanks a million, that’s all our questions.
So this is completely anonymous and confidential and like nothing goes outside this room.
Respondent 8: Okay.
So feel free to say the positive or the negative cause we want to improve the programme ultimately.
Respondent 8: Okay.
So I guess the first question is really how did you find the programme overall, like what was?
Respondent 8: Well I found the programme fairly useful overall, am like it is a 12 week programme so especially when you are working with boys I felt, 12 weeks was probably a little bit too long it would have been better if was condensed a little bit. I think maybe 8 weeks or else maybe not just twice a week maybe one a week over 7 or 8 weeks. Just because the group of students I was working with were quite challenging and I just felt that time wise it was quite difficult to deliver the programme effectively, but overall it is quite a useful programme, but it’s just hard with the time constraints when you are trying to get a curriculum finished as well.
Yeah how do you mean, like can you expand a little bit on how you meant delivering the programme?
Respondent 8: Well there is a couple of different lessons where you just have a 40 minute class to get like 2 lessons delivered.
Okay.
Respondent 8: Or two lessons delivered over two 40 minute classes, and some of the lessons I felt just ran on, there was a lot more time needed for one or two of the different lessons.
Okay.
Respondent 8: That’s really what I mean.
Okay great, am what did you first think of the programme when you got it?
Respondent 8: Ah initially, I was kind of, because I’m a resource teacher I’m not specifically an English teacher I was a little bit, I suppose concerned that I might not be able to deliver the programme myself effectively, but basically I was only co-teaching with the main teacher, main English teacher so I initially thought that when you see the folder, and you see the lessons this is going to be heavy work.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: Like it would be a quite challenging workload, but once we actually got, sat down together and looked through the titles of the lessons and the content it was actually quite good.
Okay am, so then as the programme progressed?
Respondent 8: Yeah we got into it as the programme progressed, it’s like everything when some things new and you are not sure of it, you kind of, you nearly need to take the time to pre-plan and prepare what you are going to do, as opposed to going straight in and producing the programme towards the students.
Yeah okay, so am I guess through the programme do you feel like the students benefitted from it?
Respondent 8: I do think they benefitted, I do feel that some students though, maybe some weaker students did find it a little bit challenging, and that’s what I mean about earlier when I was talking about the time constraints, it would have been nice to have extra time, or to maybe have the students targeted towards, have different students targeted like for more time,
you know because the more weaker students will always find it a lot more difficult to get the work done at the same speed or the same pace as a more able student.

**Yeah, so they found it challenging.**

Respondent 8: There were at least four or five students out of the class who found it very challenging.

**Okay.**

Respondent 8: And obviously in turn then, that kind of makes them lose interest in it, lack motivation if they find the work too difficult.

**Yeah, yeah and I guess like with the challenging can you say a bit more in?**

Respondent 8: Well I found that, ah a little bit like, behavioural wise to, not control but to manage some students, then there is absenteeism with the same students that found it challenging which made it a bit more difficult again because you might have moved onto a different lesson, am so if they missed the introductory part of lesson one then they were obviously kind of lost for the second part of that lesson, and then you hadn’t really time to go back and re-teach, obviously you do a recap at the end of each lesson and you did an introduction again, a brief introduction and a recap from what we had done in the previous lesson, but it was difficult then if they had missed maybe one lesson before or they may have missed the second lesson, or they have attended the second lesson but missed the next lesson of week three say, for example.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 8: Or week four so that was a little bit challenging to deal with.

**Okay, and do you feel like, do you think they enjoyed the programme?**

Respondent 8: I think they enjoyed it. I think the main aspects of the programme like the parts of speech and the grammar sections, I did think they found those challenging even though you would initially start teaching a noun and what is a noun, and okay they all seem to know is a person, place or thing. But when you actually got into more detail on it, I think they didn’t really, they only had the very basics so they did find the parts of speech quite challenging, but what they did seem to really enjoy were the PowerPoint images on the idioms.

**Okay.**

Respondent 8: Ah cause it was obviously a lot more interesting, and it was a bit more interactive for them, people who found it a little bit challenging were still able to give a guess as to what they thought was happening in the picture or photo or image, as opposed to name this part of speech, where some of them couldn’t even possibly remember the different types of speech.

**Yeah, they were still able to take.**

Respondent 8: Yeah they were still, but obviously the programme is geared towards everybody but you try to do as much of it as you can as the student, you know, but I do think the idiom part of it they really enjoyed that the best.

**Okay, great and is there anything else that would come to mind without sort of the core?**

Respondent 8: That they enjoyed?

**Yeah.**

Respondent 8: I think they enjoyed the fact that it was a little bit of a break from their regular English class as well, and I suppose it was a 12 week programme so it was an introductory to different parts of English, you know am as opposed to focusing specifically on the novel for 12 weeks, there was a lot of scope in it, there were different activities that they could do, like even in the first activity, we represented how there are different parts of speech using Jenga blocks and they really enjoyed that cause it was kind of hands on and using concrete materials.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: So that was actually fun for them as well. Now I have to say as well because it was my first time doing the programme with the mainstream English teacher, I was a little bit apprehensive about introducing all the different activities, because you kind of think great, it’s fantastic, it’s a great idea but at the same time, as a teacher you are a little bit apprehensive, will the class be too noisy? Will the class actually participate well? Will everybody kind of row in on this, you know?
Yeah.
Respondent 8: That’s kind of what is the challenging part for the teacher to get their head around, but I mean it is fun and it is worth doing the activities.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: But I guess it is just you have to get your head around the classroom going to be a bit noisier, and some students may or may not enjoy the programme, there will always be a few that are a little bit more difficult or challenging.
Yeah, so it sounds like you were a little bit unsure going into it.
Respondent 8: I was a little bit yeah.
Okay but then like, how did you find the support throughout the programme?
Respondent 8: I found the support was very good and I felt even the fact that we had the checklists, and we had am basically (VEP SaLT) was at our disposal at any time if we needed to ring her, or like we had weekly meetings so that did help so she would ask like how did you get on yesterday for example, and if you felt the lesson didn’t go particularly well, it wasn’t like you felt you were being tested oh you didn’t deliver the lesson well, it was more the feedback as to oh, maybe we could improve the programme or maybe we could improve maybe how much time we allocate to delivering that lesson, as to me personally feeling I did not deliver this programme which was obviously very helpful because it gives you more motivation for the following week=
Yeah.
Respondent 8: =and as it is a new programme it’s challenging, because like I know from next year onwards or if we deliver this programme again, I know exactly what I am doing, I will know even in terms of the content that we are using I will be a lot more familiar, and I will be able to kind of see, this worked well last year so I may use that again, or I might adapt my plans for the following week in different lessons.
Okay, so overall you found the support useful?
Respondent 8: I did, I found the support very, very useful.
I guess it sounds like it was a really interesting experience, is there anything you would change about the programme?
Respondent 8: Am I think at the start I was saying initially, because I was working with a group of students a group of boys in particular it’s very difficult to maintain their attention all the time, and especially if you are doing like for example I mentioned earlier, the parts of speech, it’s very difficult to make grammar seem interesting to a group of 12 or 13 year old boys.
Yeah ((laughs)).
Respondent 8: So that’s why maybe if there was more activities around, how could we introduce grammar in a more user friendly and interesting way, that might be more beneficial to the students. Because it is quite daunting, like we had lovely PowerPoint’s and we did have like, were able to bring them to the board and get them to work in pairs and in small groups and guess what words they would put in for the different parts of speech but it is still quite challenging to make that area sound interesting=
Yeah.
Respondent 8: =to boys you know, so mainly that area, maybe if you could focus on more information on or more resources for activities around making some parts of the lessons interesting, and also I think, I spoke with some of my other colleagues as well, and they just felt that the 12 weeks was a little bit long that maybe if it was 8 weeks, twice a week for 8 weeks=
Okay.
Respondent 8: =as opposed to twice a week for 12 weeks, because it was quite challenging coming up to the last few weeks, and plus because it was towards Christmas time, there was a little bit of absenteeism for the last month=
Yeah.
Respondent 8: =and you just wanted kind of to get the programme fully delivered then, and you didn’t have a full class which was kind of unfortunate for the last few lessons.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: But other than that I think it went well, I think it’s a good group to target first years when they come in straight away, cause I think that they are more willing to go with the programme then, as opposed to if you leave it to second or third year.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: But obviously it’s mainly first years, but I do know some like I had actually, I used this programme with some international students=
Okay.
Respondent 8: =that are in second and third year that are exempt from doing Irish, so I would actually use this programme with them cause obviously their English am, isn’t at the same level as a native speaker, so it’s quite useful across the board for other students=
Okay.
Respondent 8: =which I think is very helpful then, cause it’s an extra resource for teachers then who need to give extra English grinds or tuition=
Yeah.
Respondent 8: =to students who aren’t, like non-native speakers.
Okay great and is there anything else about the programme that you would change, if you were to implement it again next year?
Respondent 8: Am I don’t think so, I think mainly as I said with the time allocation, I know it’s just to vary the lesson material for certain parts of speech or certain activities within it. Like I did find it a very useful programme overall and am, like I definitely do think it benefitted the students and even some of the weaker students or less able students did find when they were able to do certain parts of it, of the programme it did give them motivation to continue on with the programme. And I think the mainstream English teacher did find it useful overall cause it kind of, went hand in hand with what she would have been doing on her weekly plan in English anyway, but it just targeted it more specifically and I suppose the activities that went hand in hand were helpful then as well.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: As opposed to just using a text book all the time, because we did have the PowerPoint images, I think am actually what we found very useful was the fact that am., that am the Blue Booklet basically had everything, the targets were already there set for you so you could put them up at the start of the class and say listen this is what we are going to do today, and it kind of focused you as the teacher as well, that you knew this is exactly what we are doing now and once the students were aware of what we were doing it was better for them, they kind of what we were actually going to be learning that day=
Yeah.
Respondent 8: =as opposed to today were are just going to do grammar, which we would have probably said from time to time in our mainstream English class.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: It was very targeted I felt which was quite good. So overall I don’t really think there is anything else I would change with the programme.

**Okay great. I guess, is there anything about the programme that you would like to sort of flag up for us or about your experience working in the programme or?**

Respondent 8: Well I did really enjoy it but as I said at the start, initially I was a little bit apprehensive because I’m not a mainstream English teacher, like I’m qualified in resource and I have a background in languages, in German in particular but I suppose I did find it is a useful programme overall. Am I am just trying to think in terms of is there anything else. I suppose you could, like I did like the time that we allocated between September and Christmas, but I guess if it’s a bigger school, or like with more students in first year group or maybe you wanted to target just a specific group of first year students that find they have more difficulty with English, then it may be useful for that. Or if you wanted to target just some schools have streaming, so a better abled group may also find it beneficial because it would be very challenging for them as well.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 8: Am, overall I just felt it was very useful, am so I don’t really think there is anything else I would change, possibly just like I said, with a different school they may decide to use the programme after Christmas, between Christmas and February or Easter.

**Yeah and anything about the supervision or about working in?**

Respondent 8: Oh I felt it was quite good the fact that I was working with a mainstream teacher as well, you didn’t actually feel on your own, I mean that was essential to delivering the course effectively because it had two teachers, so it was co-teaching essentially or team teaching which is very useful. So, for example I might have felt a bit more confident teaching one part of the course or one lesson, and I might have said to the mainstream teacher, I feel more confident teaching lesson seven am you know or for example lesson three somebody else may have felt more confident teaching so I did find that useful because obviously the mainstream teacher has the background in language and in English.

**Yeah but you could really work together?**

Respondent 8: Yes yeah and I think that in terms of support, not just in terms of delivering the course but also in delivering, like making sure that the course went smoothly like classroom management was obviously a lot better as a result of having two teachers then one, because we did have (.) I think about 22 students and as I said earlier there was a few that were a little bit challenging cause there were obviously students with learning difficulties within that class group=

**Okay.**

Respondent 8: =so they needed a little bit of extra attention, so from that point of view it’s important to have a second teacher to help those students so they don’t fall behind more, while the lesson is being delivered and then losing motivation, and kind of feel upset in themselves that they weren’t able to complete the work completely.

**Yeah.**

Respondent 8: I also thought actually the homework was, like there was a small bit of homework recommended every night, and I felt that was useful too, am because it kind of followed through on what we had actually learnt. Now the homework wasn’t exactly, it wasn’t extremely taxing in any way, it was just following through on what they had actually started and maybe we would have always given them the last few minutes to start the work and go around and see anybody that had difficulty, and make sure we targeted those students and made sure that we helped them with their homework at least they were able to fill in some part of the worksheet.

**Yeah.**
Respondent 8: So I felt overall it was very well put together.
Okay.
Respondent 8: You know, am in terms of having (VEP SaLT) there it helped me, I had the mainstream teacher there if I needed extra assistance and you also had your hand outs with everything produced on your Power Points, everything produced on your usb so you could take that home on an evening yourself and look through it if you wanted to.
Yeah.
Respondent 8: So overall that was it really.
Okay.
Respondent 8: It was very useful.
Was there anything else that you wanted to say or.
Respondent 8: Am, I don’t think so, I think I kind of have covered most of what I was thinking of actually saying all along, just as I said maybe that it is beneficial for other students am (.) that don’t have English as a first language you know because it is quite, am the programme is quite concise but you know at the same time there is scope for adding in your own (.) extra lessons to it if you wish, to make it longer. Like as I said it’s just a targeted programme for 12 weeks but that could be expanded on or you could work at a slower pace for students that don’t have English as a foreign, am English as their native language.
Yeah okay great.
Appendix E:

Theme Mind-mapping Process

Themes and Codes:

Positive Features of the VEP

- Received by teachers as beneficial
- Beneficial for students
- Breaks down barriers
- Support and collaboration
- Group work within the class
- Confidence to ‘try it’
- Reassured of not being tested
- Importance of grammar (expansion)
- Transferring skills to other subjects
- Team teaching benefits
- Structure is important for students
- Motivating for the students
- Some pros of targeting first years
- Accessible

Future Changes to the VEP

- Mixed classes; students struggled
- Time consuming (work load for teachers)
- Time constraints
- Continuity of the same teacher
- Moving beyond first year classes (learning support)
- Foreign nationals EAL
- Absenteeism
- Images NB for weaker groups (teaching strategies)
- Different class set up: noisy etc.

Other Topics of Interest

- Teachers apprehension and uncertainty
- Individual teaching strategies brought into the programme
- Adapting the programme to suit the classes’ needs
- Positive about the future of delivering the programme
Challenges of the VEP

- Time to absorb content: embed strategies
- Interest peaked and waned: mid-way point
- Classroom management: delivery not effective

Content of the VEP

- Abstract explanations: classroom management issues
- Repetitive content: academically strong students bored
- Interest waned: need more ‘fun’ activities
- Pitched too high: some students not able to engage

In The Classroom

- Teaching methods: team versus individual
- Split teaching classes: disjoint
- Teachers interest: need for VEP
- Adapting programme: preparation time
- Doubt: mediated by support

Students

- Facilitate EAL students’ access to language
- Develop strategies: practice in exams
- Instil confidence: independent thinking
- Highlight academically struggling students

Positive Features

- Multidimensional nature: visuals and group work
- Grammar: aid foreign language learning
- Resource classes benefit: future development

In The Classroom
Significance of Support

- VEP SaLT
  - Training days: understanding of programme
  - Resources provided: navigation demanding
  - Positive collaboration: SaLT availability and support
  - Relationship important: teachers not being tested

Co-Teachers
- Sharing resources: accessible
- Team teaching: dynamic and support
- Support network at School

Timing of the VEP
- Felt rushed: Some units needed more time
- Time of year: September to December sets expectations
- Absenteeism: students behind others
- Academically struggling classes: need more time
- Challenge to complete the VEP in parallel with the curriculum