

# LET'S THINK *in English*

## Leading Let's Think in English Course 2019- 20 Report

The “Leading Let’s Think in English” course was designed for experienced LTE teachers leading the programme in their setting and wishing to develop their teaching, leadership and understanding of LTE. The objectives were to provide colleagues with:

- An opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of LTE
- An opportunity to apply this knowledge and understanding in their setting.
- An opportunity to collaborate with LTE colleagues.

See **Appendix C** for the course outline.

### Recruitment and attendance

Interest in the course was very high with 34 teachers signing up to the course so the decision was taken to run two cohorts. Of the 34 teachers 28 completed the course. 4 participants left the course in the autumn term following the first session. Two colleagues left the course as they couldn’t reconcile the demands of the course with their positions as members of SLT. Two other colleagues departed as they faced unforeseen circumstances and had to leave their schools. Two participants left the teaching profession in the summer term and therefore were unable to attend the final online sessions in the autumn term.

Attendance for the sessions was excellent with full attendance for nearly every session.

### Course adaptations due to COVID

We were able to conclude our third session in March before COVID led to significant disruption in schools. COVID had two main impacts on the course:

1. We had to postpone the summer face to face meetings and reschedule with online sessions in autumn 2020.
2. Teachers had identified and started to implement their action research (see examples in Appendix B) but due to school closures and disruption they had to postpone this aspect of the course. Many teachers are hoping to continue their action research once schools return to normality and they can work with classes. LTE tutors will continue to support them, and we hope they will present at our termly LTE Network meetings.

### Evaluations

We received 15 completed evaluations. **See Appendix A.** Reminders were sent but it seemed unreasonable to chase outstanding evaluations given the pressures teachers were

facing in the autumn term of 2020. The evaluations were very positive with 100% of respondents indicating they would recommend the course to another.

The evaluations indicated teachers felt they were better able to assess pupils, apply the Let's Think principles beyond the LTE lessons and developed their understanding of the reasoning patterns. The most common responses were the course provided them with a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of Let's Think and they became more responsive practitioners. In essence, they started to own the pedagogy.

Colleagues were able to identify a number of next steps. Embedding and sustaining Let's Think featured highly with regular meetings being scheduled and working parties established within their schools. Participants felt they could use many of the processes they undertook in the training with their colleagues such as reflecting on lesson transcript and collaborative planning.

Throughout the course interim data was collected providing feedback to the tutors and ensuring the course met the needs of the participants. Examples of the interim data can be found in **Appendix B**.

### **Next steps**

All of the participating colleagues are part of the LTE Network and will continue to attend and contribute to the programme.

We have established an LTE Steering Group so teachers can provide a critical lens and support the development of the programme. We invited expressions of interest from the Leading course participants and are delighted 5 secondary and 3 primary colleagues have agreed to join the Steering Group. Our first meeting is scheduled for March 2021. We hope in time, these colleagues will become LTE tutors and perhaps some of them will join the Let's Think Forum in due course.

Other LTE teachers have expressed an interest in the course should it run again. We will consider running it again in 2021/22 or 2022/23 academic year.

## Appendix A:

### Course Evaluation

#### What has been the impact of the course on your teaching of LTE?

- Knowledge of research methods
- - The course has reiterated the importance of the teacher during class feedback/discussion. The teacher needs to play an active role in shaping, developing and prompting ideas from pupils. The session on 'dialogic teaching' was particularly interesting in reinforcing this. - A developed understanding of the reasoning patterns for LTE lessons and how to apply these to specific texts. - The course has provided me with the opportunity to reflect, particularly through the use of transcripts. They provide a valuable insight into both student and teacher 'moves' during a discussion.
- I think there have been some very practical strategies that have been shared, that have raised the importance of assessing pupil engagement and participation. In the past, I've been happy for students to not contribute ideas to a lesson provided they are listening. However, in recent months, I have recognised that lack of contribution can lead to lack of engagement with the discussion. The slide Leah shared about expectations of talk/thinking, why talk is important in terms of thinking has been really useful in re-setting expectations in an LTE lesson, enough so that I've shared this with my colleagues with a view to reset our expectations of LTE within our context. Prior to this, the introduction of Piagetian lenses, then followed up by the introduction of ACTS and encouraging us to transcribe portions of our lessons has been incredibly useful in ascertaining how well students are thinking in the lesson. One of the main weaknesses I have found with LTE is that teachers often are unable to assess in lesson, as well as over a longer period of time. We all know the research suggests that LTE lessons, taught properly, will help raise attainment. However, it is important for teacher and student to see this progress, to help raise interest and engagement for all. This is what my research is about right now and will continue to be about moving forward.
- Huge. I'm now far more aware of the real reasons behind why the lessons are constructed the way they are and how I might prompt students to develop their thinking together. Before the course I tried too hard to ensure that students came up with the ideas suggested in the lesson plan, whereas now I'm more focused on what my own students are suggesting, so that I can help them shape their responses: I don't feel I'm failing if we step back into social construction if it's clear that this will help them. My lessons feel more fluently organic as we collaborate to deepen and challenge our thinking, but I'm also building in more opportunities for bridging, which I now see as integral, not just as an add-on if there's time remaining or as a quick bit of homework. It has given me the confidence to create my own Let's Think

in English lesson on Porphyria's Lover, whereas previously I was content to use some LTE type questions in parts of a lesson, or to follow the pattern of an already-created lesson but with a different text that seemed to fit. More recently, I've become more conscious of the modal verbs we use - not just in LTE but in ALL lessons - and can stop myself saying 'What does this suggest?' to 'What could/might'. The course has given me the confidence to stick to the fundamental principles that have always driven my teaching (even though I hadn't previously grasped the pedagogical theories behind them) and justify my department's refusal to jump on the Knowledge-only band wagon. Because the course has strengthened my convictions, I feel it has made me a far more contented and 'better' educator.

- Greater understanding and unpicking of the theory. This has helped in the application of pedagogies to other lessons as well as in the development of writing LTE lessons. The opportunity for professional dialogue across the school phases and with teachers from different settings has been really valuable and something I have taken back to the classroom. My understanding of action research and the processes attached to this has been deepened too and I have really valued the inputs given by you all.
- I have thought more deeply about the pedagogy and made further links to my other lessons as a result
- Understanding of the theories behind it has enabled me to coach students more effectively through the different levels of responses. I feel more confident teaching LTE too and with questioning in general in my own teaching.
- Careful reflection has definitely refined my Let's Think technique and made me more critical of my questioning (in a positive way). I am better able to cut through waffle and push the reasoning patterns and observe these in my team.
- I have reflected more on the role I play as facilitator - and advocate - of these important lessons. I am paying more attention to delivery of lessons, as well as how I am able to code/look carefully at patterns in student responses to gauge progress
- Greater confidence and understanding of how to push student progress
- I feel that I have a better understanding of the pedagogy and this informs my questioning. I feel more confident planning lessons. I have used my understanding to begin to introduce LTE to my school. Speaking to other teachers has also given me ideas on how to improve the lessons in my classrooms.
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the LTE principles and how I can use these across other subjects.

**What has been the impact of the course on pupils?**

- None as yet as I had planned to assess pupils before and after on unseen poetry and their approach to it, but lockdown prevented this. I was unable to start with the same class as we had moved to a new revised curriculum however, I have been able to change the focus group and am planning a new series of lessons for the Year 9 curriculum which I will trial this year before implementing fully next school year. The focus will remain on the impact of bridging. I will therefore be able to employ the research methods taught during the course and hopefully - Covid permitting - complete the research with evidence.
- - Some pupils now starting to mirror modal language when giving feedback. - Students value discussion as a way of learning - improved ability to listen and respond.
- Pupils have been particularly interested in reading the transcript (without pupil names) and guess who said certain things in the lesson. This is a fun activity, but also allows them to start thinking of which types of students think/speak in certain ways. Beyond this, this reflection activity has allowed my students and I to consider our own practices in the lesson, to ensure that we get the most from it. Most recently, the resetting of expectations in LTE has had a really positive impact on the quality of LTE lessons.
- Judging by my own classroom experience, pupils have become increasingly confident about sharing their thoughts openly, without feeling that they mustn't say something that may be deemed 'wrong'. They even challenge some of my ideas, which I celebrate. There's a better sense of them working things out together - students feeding back always start with 'we', but they realise that they don't necessarily have to agree as a group and will reflect back those differences. Older or more able students are beginning to disagree with other students who are feeding back. Students seem unafraid to encounter new, even difficult texts, because a) the lessons give them a clear way through to understanding and b) they seem more comfortable with the idea that our understanding of a text evolves through discussion and further thought. My Year 11s have all written confidently and perceptively when evaluating two previously unseen texts as part of their recent mocks, which I attribute to the LTE-type lessons we've enjoyed together as a result of this stimulating course.
- Initially, I was able to apply my research question to pupils by finding ways for them to apply LTE strategies that drew out rich dialogue and responses to their written responses. This was really interesting, and I would like to continue this to consider the impact. It's something I am keen to try in my new school. I've also learnt additional strategies in facilitating LTE sessions from discussions with others and reflecting on the transcripts. This has been invaluable.
- Difficult to measure across the department but I have got CPD planned. For myself, I take more time embedding the theory of LTE in my lessons

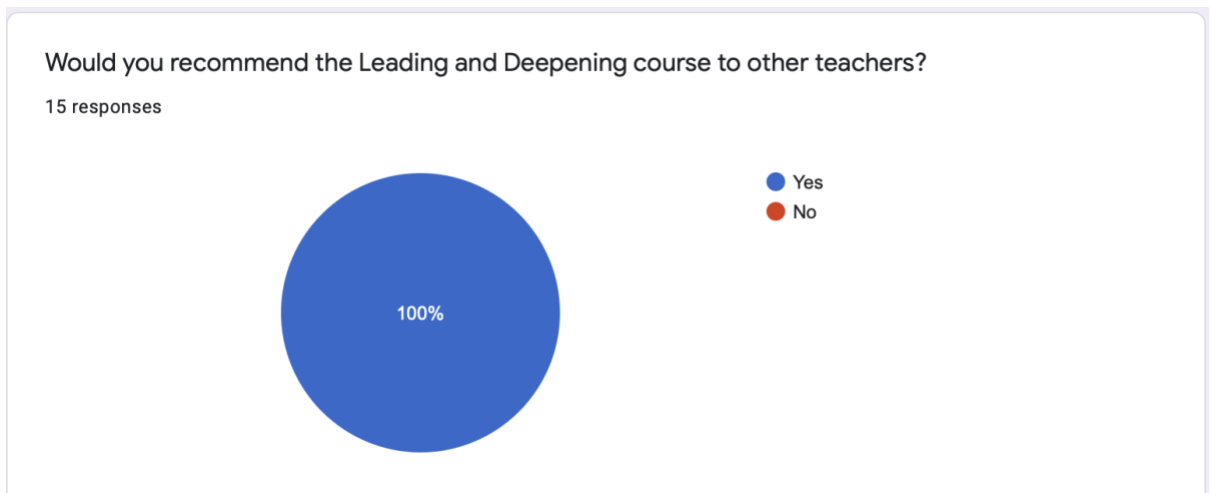
- I feel that I can coach students to develop better, higher level responses and I have noticed a big reduction in one-word answers or concrete operational responses.
- They have benefitted from the refinement in practice and more precise observations of staff delivering the programme.
- I actually was able to gather data from a survey with some important questions - leading to further questions. The majority have said there is benefit to the class in many wonderful ways (will share survey results with you)
- Unfortunately, mixed due to COVID disruption so my case study for AR was never fulfilled. However, before this HPA students were engaging more in lessons and showing signs of good progress.
- I feel that as my confidence and understanding of the pedagogy has improved the quality of my lessons, this has led to better outcomes for the pupils. The ideas that have inspired me from other teachers has also improved my pupil's discussions and feedback.
- Children's attitude towards metacognitive strategies has improved

#### **What do you plan to do next to support LTE development beyond your class?**

- The department needs to be updated as there are few staff left from the original presentation and implementation. I have mapped LTE lessons against our new curriculum and have also chosen lessons which provide equal coverage of the different reasoning patterns across Years 7 and 8. There has been very positive feedback from staff as to the choice of lessons and variety. Because the lessons are specifically mapped, this has meant increased conversations and discussion between staff about the LTE lessons and programme.
- - Departmental use of transcripts as a way of reflection for staff. - Collaborative planning. I found this part of the final session really insightful. Rarely do colleagues plan together due to time-constraints/different approaches to planning. Using LTE lesson plan is a really useful way of developing practice as a group.
- I have already set up a working party with two other members of my team. They are now part of the LTE Network meetings and are really keen to develop their skills in this area. We are all trialling new things in LTE, share our experiences and then develop the skills of practitioners within our department (many of whom are new to LTE). With a department in a state of flux, right now, the main goal is to make staff feel more confident teaching LTE lessons. My hope is that the working party help raise this confidence, despite the challenges of a socially distant classroom.
- I wish to run a termly Department meeting on LTE: we need to evaluate where we are using the taxonomy, but it seems clear from my observations that the

department would do well to focus on encouraging active listening from students so that they can build on and challenge each other's ideas more: at the moment there's still a tendency for students to see the teacher as the audience and for ideas not really to be explored and connected. Using transcripts of some lessons would be helpful here. I would also like us to create our own LTE lessons together as part of our new schemes of work in Year 7 and 8: my department would benefit from observing each other teach these lessons (covid plans permitting), but trialling and modifying them for future use will also help everyone move forward.

- Continue embedding LTE across the school and developing confidence in teachers to teach LTE lessons and helping them recognise the value of lessons. I'm also keen to continue having a go at writing and trialling lessons in the classroom with the English lead in my school.
- CPD for my department, using many of the resources from the course and network meetings
- Continue to develop my own LTE skills and deliver CPD to achieve consistency across the curriculum.
- My main concern is including clear and tangible links between let's think lessons and curriculum time that students can name and identify.
- I would like to complete my data analysis looking at certain standards of analysis and use of evidence in other courses to demonstrate that LTE has a positive effect on these, and continue to spread the word, especially in the Language Arts Dept.
- Keep up with the next stages of my AR: staff training, introduction of Faculty taxonomy, use of AT to measure progress.
- I will be using my knowledge to introduce LTE to my school. This will be ongoing and once the whole school is teaching lessons, I will continue to monitor and provide CPD to improve the quality of teaching.
- Run PDMs for whole school and implement LTE into our school policy more.



**Add the reason for your answer above if you wish**

- I would highly recommend the course for the following reasons: - Chance for reflection and sharing of expertise with like-minded colleagues from different settings (outside of your school). - The course provided an insight into primary LTE which was interesting as I've only had previous experience of LTE in secondary. - The course has had a huge impact on my practice. It's led me to consider that LTE is not just the lessons produced by King's, but a 'way of teaching'.
- The course gave us an opportunity to hear about experiences from other schools that helped contextualise our own. It also highlighted particular aspects of LTE that we often know, but do not fully appreciate. On reflection, I think it would have been really interesting if we could have taken this further to collaborate with other leaders of LTE, thus helping each other with our projects but also forging links between schools. Perhaps this is something that could be considered in Network meeting or through the Steering group.
- It will energise them and refresh their teaching.
- The course provides the opportunity to further develop and apply your understanding of LTE. It enables you to dig more deeply into an area relevant to your setting and apply LTE to this. The chance to engage in dialogue, reflections and analysis of lessons and transcripts with others has really enhanced my thinking. It has only increased my passion and belief that all schools should be engaging in the LTE programme because of the clear benefits in developing children's higher-level thinking, independence and confidence. The Leading and Deepening course has increased my understanding of the theory and pedagogical approaches central to LTE and enabled me to better apply these



both within and outside of the LTE lessons, thus building a talk-based curriculum in my school.

- It is high quality professional development
- Engaging and interesting with a wide range of valuable activities and sessions to build confidence and ability teaching LTE.
- It allows you to dig deeper into the reasons lessons are structured the way they are and allows much needed space for reflection about best practice.
- Helped me to gain a greater understanding of the ethos and pedagogy behind LTE, reignited my passion and inspiration which then came back to the Faculty and helped develop usable resources for the department such as our taxonomy.
- It has improved my knowledge and confidence. I have really enjoyed it.

**If there is anything further you wish to add to the evaluation of the project, please add this below**

- Obviously, lockdown meant the delivery of the course was different. Having the sessions recorded would have been very useful as I was always having to juggle school meetings running concurrently and this would have made it easier. I think also having a booklet of the materials made with space for note making - almost like a journal - would have been helpful for me. That way I could record the evidence gathering/research alongside the exemplars given by Leah.
- Just want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the three of you. Before starting the course, I felt quite confident with my knowledge of LTE. However, over the last 18 months or so, each of you has developed my thinking about LTE in ways that I have not considered before. It has made me realise that LTE mastery (if that isn't a term, then I've just coined it) is still very far away for me. This is not a bad thing - if anything, it has made me more aware of the complexities of LTE and has renewed my determination to consider these within my own practice and make myself a better practitioner.
- Thank you for running it so well - and for adapting the course to meet our changing needs. Even when we could only meet via Zoom, it was so refreshing to work with

such enthusiastic, committed and reflective teachers. Even in the darkest depths of a covid-winter there was a real sense of optimism and deep enjoyment.

- Thank you so much for the opportunity to be part of this group. I have thoroughly enjoyed the mental challenge each part of the course has brought and have learnt so much from yourselves leading it and from discussions and collaborative work with colleagues also.
- I really enjoyed the collegiate spirit of the course, and also the network meetings
- Thank you for such a brilliant and valuable course!!
- I feel more time should have been allocated to the classroom action research (I know the lockdown delayed things by a lot) but allowing for more time gives teachers the space to think about, execute and then analyse their ideas.
- Thank you for guiding us during this unprecedented year! I always gain so much from working with you all and look forward to meeting again. Thank you.

## Appendix B: Examples of Interim Course Data

After 2 days of the course: January 2020

Group A:

The most beneficial element of the course so far has been...

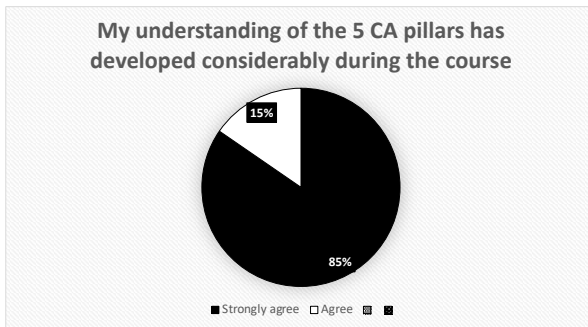
Themes	Weighted Score
Reflections on own practice – planning forwards with other 'believers'	27
Having time and space to focus has reinvigorated and remotivated us, colleagues and children	16
Deeper understanding of Piaget and Pillars: intellectual challenge	13
Tracking development of children's thinking in transcripts: more objective analysis than with own class	10
Enjoyment and love of literature	5
Cross-phase fertilisation	1
Having a chance to refine Action Research focus and process	0

Group B:

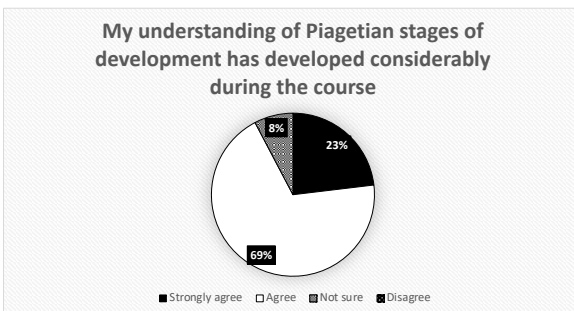
The most beneficial element of the course so far has been...

Themes	Weighted Score
Self-evaluation of IT practice – supported by lesson simulation	31
Collaboration with colleagues	21
Reflections through transcriptions	14
How Action Research looks in practice	14
Theory and knowledge of Piaget and Pillars	9
How to lead in your school – supported by AR structure	7

**September 2020 online questionnaire (50% return):**  
Development of theoretical understanding



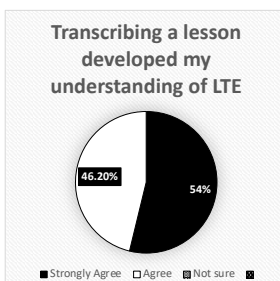
Qualitative responses referred to improved understanding of Bridging and Metacognition and how this had led to adaptations in practice



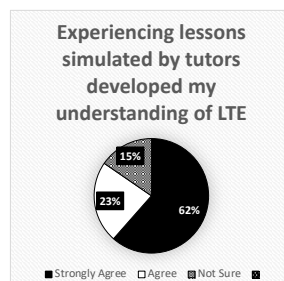
Qualitative responses admitted this was a more challenging thread, though influence on practice related to:

- improved understanding of why some students were struggling,
- when to scaffold, when to increase challenge and
- seeing the pillars as more fluid, not fixed stages

**September 2020 online questionnaire:**  
Evaluating professional development approaches



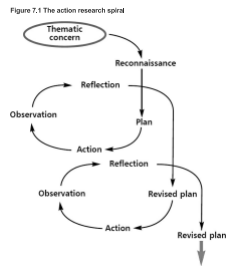
- Evaluating impact of teacher moves on pupil responses
- Support development of questioning
- Window into pupil's thinking and indicators of Piagetian stages



- Experience as a learner: the challenge and benefits
- Understand flexible routes through the lesson
- Cross-phase lesson experience

## Examples of your Action Research projects:

- Improving unseen poetry responses and other aspects of GCSE
- Using a pupil blog to bridge oral responses to written
- Increasing use of teacher moves that linked pupil-pupil responses
- Exploring barriers in LTE lessons for vulnerable pupils and how they could be overcome
- Focus on supporting pupils through conflict
- Supporting teachers to increase the pace of the first lesson stages without reducing pupil access
- Building confidence and capacity of TAs to support LTE
- Using lessons from lower year groups with older children to build confidence



Atkins and Wallace, 2012  
Action Research in *Qualitative Research in Education*

## Appendix C: Course Outline

The course consisted of four whole day sessions across an academic year however the final session was postponed due to COVID and rescheduled as two online meetings in the autumn term of 2020. The face-to-face sessions were supported with inter-sessional tasks exploring research areas and will include reading, lesson observations, transcripts and preparation of presentations. The programme structure was:

<b>Pre-course task</b>	<b>Self-Audit Tool</b>
<b>Session 1</b>	<p><b>LTE exploring the pillars</b></p> <p>The role of concrete preparation            Developing a toolkit for social construction            Supporting pupils in cognitive conflict            Considering metacognition            Levels of Bridging</p> <p>Developing your action research area</p>
<b>Inter-sessional tasks</b>	Exploring an action research area (possibly exploring a pillar in greater detail)
<b>Session 2</b>	<p><b>LTE Reasoning Patterns</b></p> <p>Feedback on action research.            LTE reasoning patterns.            Development across Key Stages            Considering LTE reasoning patterns' taxonomy.</p> <p>Developing your action research area.</p>
<b>Inter-sessional tasks</b>	Exploring an action research area. (Looking at the development of a RP with a class)
<b>Session 3</b>	<p><b>Leading LTE</b></p> <p>LTE lesson observation.            What makes effective PD?            Research on effective teaching and learning.            LTE in the curriculum.</p>

	<p>Supporting colleagues with LTE.</p> <p>Developing an action research area.</p>
<b>Inter-sessional task</b>	<p>Exploring an action research area. (Coaching a colleague)</p>
<b>Session 4</b>	<p><b>Let's Think and Cognitive Acceleration</b></p> <p>History of Cognitive Acceleration: A presentation by Michael Shayer. LTE lesson planning.</p>