2018 cohort

# Amy Calladine – History Teacher

**How do study clubs impact on the attainment and resilience of Year 10 students?**

**Context**

In a new school populated from the bottom up, the first cohort to embark upon their GCSEs did so without an established and visible cycle of formal examination modelled by older students. Teaching staff have voiced concerns about a lack of practical study skills and independent learning from students. From January 2021, the school started implementing interventions to address this specific issue including form-time revision strategies, working with external partners (Elevate Education), and running subject-specific study clubs (first sessions were planned for February 2020). The initial project looked to assess the effectiveness of these clubs by observing sessions in action, analysing assessment data and running focus groups with students and staff.

In recent years, there has been a rise in specific programmes designed to improve student metacognition, however, there has also been a marked lack of take up for these initiatives. This is most likely due to the fact that metacognition 'has not been a formal part of either the National Curriculum in England, nor a part of the recognised metrics used for accountability purposes' (Perry, Lundie and Golder, 2019, p. 491).

The Educational Endowment Fund (EEF) confirms that metacognitive interventions such as study sessions have consistently high levels of impact, with pupils making an average of seven months' additional progress. A range of systematic reviews and meta-analyses have found 'strategies related to metacognition and self-regulation' to have substantive positive results. Although most of these studies have focused on English or Mathematics, evidence suggests that findings are 'widely applicable' across a range of subjects (EEF, 2018).

The research suggests that effective metacognition in a school context must be specific. It must help students 'to monitor, plan, evaluate and regulate their performance whilst completing a particular task'. These methods forward 'taught strategies' designed to equip students with an increased understanding of 'how to learn' as opposed to simply 'increasing knowledge'. Successful application of metacognitive strategies rests on the ability of students to confidently use them in a 'controlled, conscious way to solve novel problems' (Perry, Lundie and Golder, 2019, p. 485).

The wider goal of the project was to empower students to gain independent expertise through a range of effective cognitive strategies. Students who develop a wider range of skills to support their learning are much more likely to achieve success (Rogers and Hallam, 2009). As Zimmerman emphasises, effective learners are those that use multiple methods to help them learn. These include setting specific short-term goals, monitoring performance for signs of progress, managing time-use effectively and self-evaluating one's methods (Zimmerman, 2002). The study clubs at Greatfields were specifically designed to help achieve these goals.

**The Research**

Research questions for the project:

1. What factors influence attendance at study clubs?
2. How do targeted revision interventions impact on student attainment?
3. How do targeted revision interventions impact on student confidence and resilience?

**Adaptations**

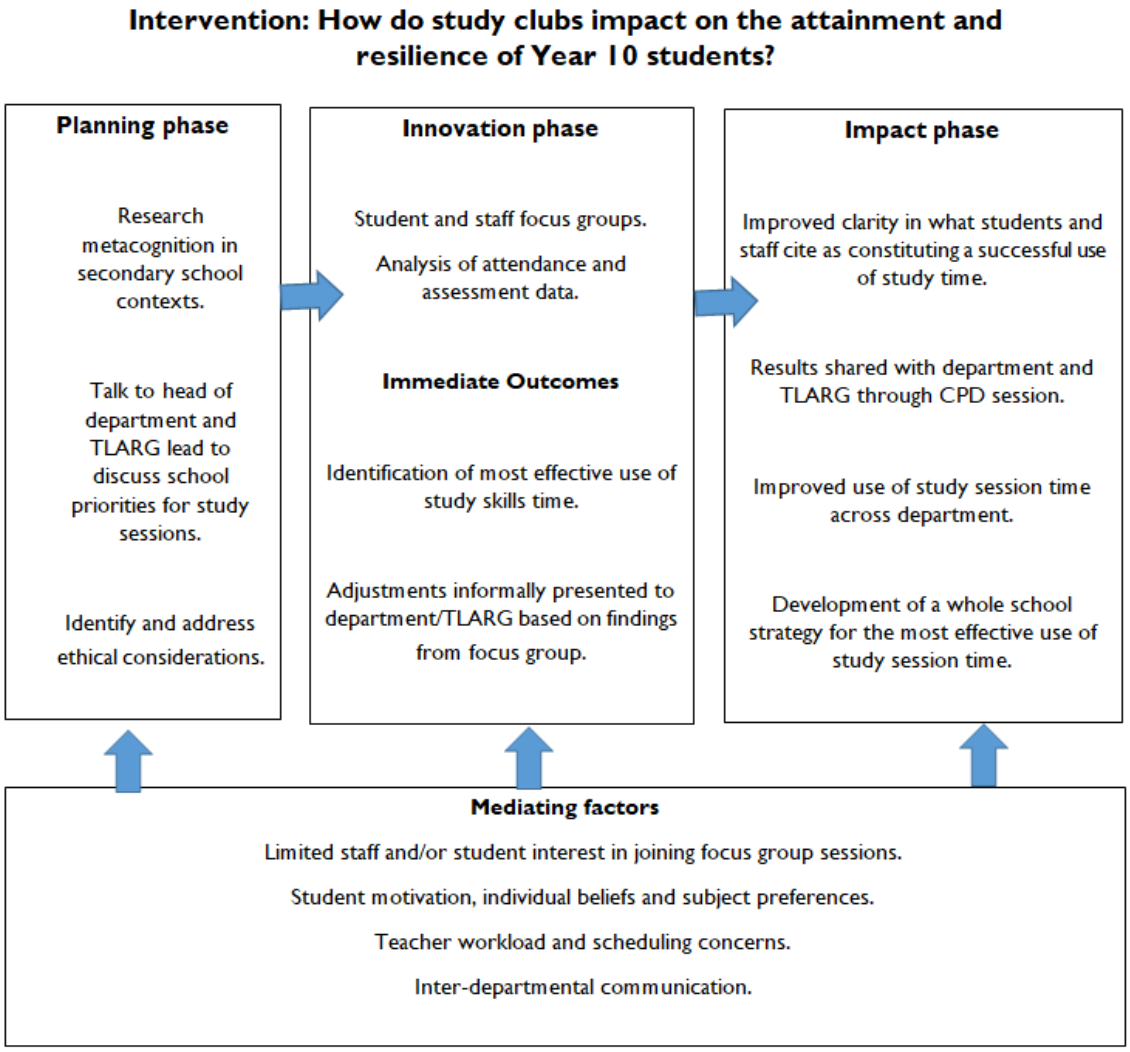
After the reopening of schools in September 2020, Greatfields decided to change the format of its intervention. Rather than operating on a voluntary basis, the students in question (now in Year 11) were given a bespoke timetable which required attendance at three afterschool sessions per week which prioritised core subjects. The GCSE history sessions were scheduled with class teachers to run three times over the course of a half term (three hours in total).

In light of these adaptations and successive school closures, the project shifted focus and became a more theoretical reading around the issue of applying metacognitive interventions in the secondary school context. In addition to planning an effective R&D project which can be rolled out in the future, I developed a logic model in order to explore the likely shape of the intervention, potential outcomes and predict any 'mediating factors' - unpredictable elements which may arise and interfere with results. A copy of the model is provided below:

**Findings and next steps**

The next step in the project cycle would be to execute the R&D project in reality, analysing findings and presenting results to staff in the school. Using the logic model outlined above, it is likely that there will be an improvement in the clarity of Greatfields' approach to managing the study skills sessions across subjects at Key Stage 4. The school will now have access to a bank of data on student and staff beliefs about what constitutes an effective session. This will also likely have flagged any points of confusion on the part of both students and staff which may need to be addressed as the school continues to grow.

As part of the impact phase, it will also be important to provide a more formal method of sharing results with



colleagues. In the first instance, this will be with a specific presentation to the school's Teaching and Learning Action Research Group and the History Department.

Once results have been shared in this way, there is potential for findings to be integrated into future whole-school CPD with the overall aim that Greatfields might utilise the results of the project as a guiding document for developing a whole-school policy for ensuring the most effective use of study session time.

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