



School: Scoil Íosagáin CBS,
Sexton Street, Limerick

Team: Our team consisted of five co-learners. They were Karen Ward and Emma Keane, 6th class teachers, John Murphy, an SEN teacher, along with Éibhear O'Dea and Ann Treacy from PDST.



Our School Context

Scoil Íosagáin is a Christian Brothers School located in the city of Limerick. It is a senior boys school catering for boys from 7 - 14 years of age. We are a Catholic School, however pupils of all faiths are welcome in our school. Our student population is about 280 with 10 class teachers, 6 SEN teachers and also a Home-School Coordinator. A large proportion of our pupils are EAL learners.

Our Goal

"To develop pupils' maths language and skills enabling them to become confident problem solvers in their everyday lives."

Research Question

"How can we design a lesson so that pupils are supported in applying their understanding of decimals and percentages to real life contexts?"

Planning Process

On Day 1 we decided on our goal and research question. We spent a lot of time discussing our pupils' current experiences of maths in their classroom and in their everyday lives. All teachers agreed that pupils did not see much connection between maths in school and maths in their daily lives. We used the GROW model to help us decide what curricular area we wanted to focus on. Teachers strongly believed that in their school context, maths language was a huge area of concern. Teachers decided to focus on the area of decimals and percentages. On day 2, we planned the lesson. Teachers during the week between planning days had been looking for useful activities. Teachers wanted to make the activities as realistic as possible for the children. Soccer statistics and shopping were some of the ideas we discussed before deciding to focus on a receipt for a problem solving activity. On day 2 we also gave careful consideration to the observation template to ensure effective reflection upon the taught lesson. Day 3 had to be postponed due to illness but the lesson was taught by Éibhear on the 26th January with 17 6th class pupils present.

Teachers' Reflection on the project

Key learning

- lesson study is a very thorough and collaborative process which provided opportunities for us to be reflective of our maths teaching.
- we learned the value of a productive struggle and how it contributes to learning for the pupils. By investigating the mistakes made by peers, our pupils learned from each other.
- our pupils engaged excellently with the lesson as it was motivated by a real life context. As a result, the pupils enjoyed working together, they liked the idea that there was more than one correct way to solve the problems and they had fun.

Opportunities

- we were pleasantly surprised by the high levels of collaboration among pupils during the lesson and this represents a huge opportunity for us to develop this methodology in the future.
- lesson study has taught us the benefits of pupils working in small groups when engaging in problem solving. We can see further opportunities to develop this structured approach to problem solving across all classes in our school.
- the approach to problem solving used in this research lesson provided huge opportunities for language development as part of the lesson. This is a methodology we need to explore further.

Challenges

- mixed abilities. We need to ensure that all pupils are challenged. There is a wide gap between the high achievers and those struggling with maths in our classes. This poses a challenge for us to get our groupings right when engaging with problem solving
- maths language presented a challenge for the pupils. The terms subtotal and total caused confusion for the pupils.

Possible solutions

- we also need to find tasks and problems for pupils where the language will not be a barrier to engaging with the problems. We could include more discrete teaching of maths terms.
- we need to vary the groupings in our classes periodically to avoid the same pupils dominating discussions during lessons.