

## **Vignette 6**

### **Directly involving parents in children's learning**

**Abstract:** The teacher supported all learners in the class to write a story that was submitted to News Desk, so that one or more stories might be selected and shown to a much wider audience of learners, teachers and parents across schools in Northern Ireland. The story chosen for the front page of the website was the story written by a boy with extremely low self-confidence, who gathered evidence about his father's work in order to create the headline and content.

### **Full vignette**

In this primary school, learners were being encouraged to write for an audience; one in particular lacked self-confidence to the extent of not wanting to attend school. The teacher faced the challenge of supporting the learning needs of all the learners, and of this one learner in particular.

The teacher set up a writing activity, using the school's digital area, which had a managed personal computer (PC) and a suite of 12 PCs that children could use. The teacher told the children they would be involved in creating stories that would be submitted to News Desk, an online news service for schools.

The teacher supported all the learners in the class. They had to collaborate in groups to research facts for an article to be submitted to News Desk, so that one or more stories might be selected and shown to a much wider audience of learners, teachers and parents across schools in Northern Ireland. This fact-finding was largely done with parental support as ICT homework. One boy did this by using details relating to his father's work. The story that was chosen for the front page of the website was the story made possible by this boy, who had low confidence in schoolwork generally and literacy lessons in particular, but who shone during this activity, as he was the expert possessing detailed knowledge relating to his father's work.

Overall, the teacher found that all the learners were engaged positively in this activity; it actually changed the dynamics in the classroom. For once, this boy was the teacher in the room and everyone else (adult and peer alike) were the learners. All learners have a wide audience for their work, but the boy whose story was on the front page was very strongly affected by the experience; it was transformational to the extent that he now enjoys attending and working in school.

### **Outcomes and benefits:**

- Raising parental awareness about teaching and learning and enhancing their interaction, emotional engagement and 'presence' as an audience for their child's creations
- Increasing parental engagement in homework activities