

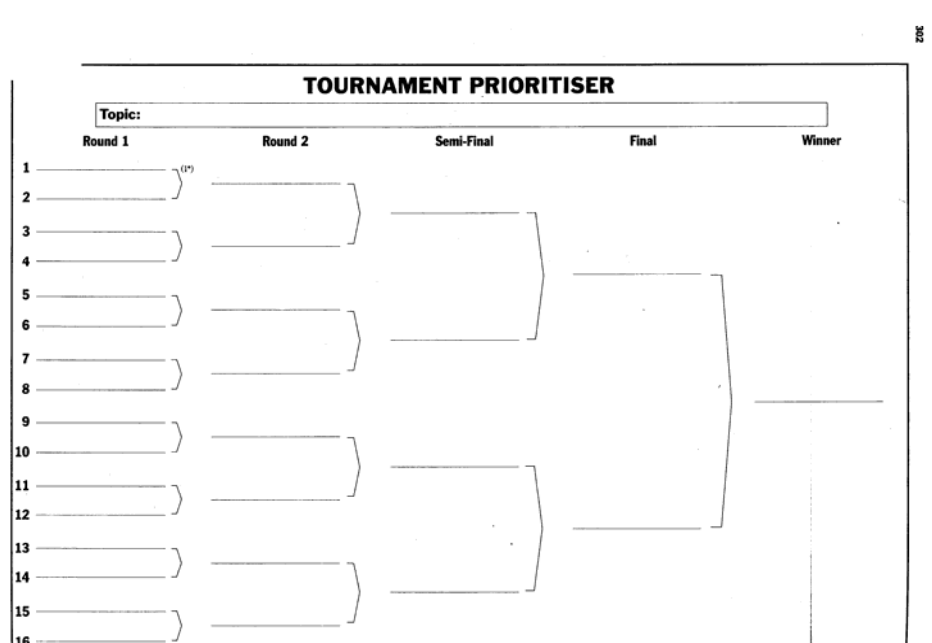
Learning Activity 3: Tournament Prioritizer

Learning Behaviours: clarifying existing ideas

Teacher: LNB **DATE:** 3/5/05 **Class:** 7F English

Activity: To use Tournament Prioritizer sheet to help student clarify their thoughts on four questions

- What is a good student?
- What is a good class?
- What is a good teacher?
- What is a good school?



Discussion Tool: Structured Discussion / clarifying ideas

I used the *Tournament Prioritiser* on the whiteboard to illustrate the way you can come to a conclusion by a process of elimination.

As a class we brainstormed what qualities were possessed by 'good learners'. Rather than have some students dominating the discussion I went around the class and had every student add one quality. If they were unable to come up with a new one they were to further explain (clarify) one that was already on the board. For example, if 'good listener' was already on the board a student could explain why that was a good quality and give examples.

After collecting a class sample of good qualities we transferred the list onto the *Prioritiser* sheet.

Students needed to consider two qualities in relation to each other and make a decision on which one was more important. We discussed one set of qualities on the board, but the rest of the sheet was done individually by the students – producing a variety of results.

We had used the *Prioritiser* earlier in the year and they were familiar with its purpose, although we hadn't used it to discuss qualities. Students were asked to use the tool for at least one of the questions, but there were possibly six or so who liked the tool enough to use it for all three questions.

Classroom discussion was based on questions like -

- “When you are being good, what is it that you are doing?”
- “What would you like to improve on?”
- “Who has been one of your favourite teachers or coaches in the past? Ask yourself why?”
- “What would you like to improve about your own learning style? Why?”
- “If you cannot think of a new quality, explain (clarify) why one of the ones on the board is important. Give an example.”
- “Why is [quality] more important than [other quality]? Is it always more important, or are there times when [other quality] is more important?”

Example: *Why are good listening skills more important than organisation? Is it always more important, or are there times when organisation is more important?*

Student Comments

There was a definite groan when the questions on the board were noticed, but after discussing the ideas with the class the students seemed to accept the task well. They were relaxed throughout the lesson and there was a lot of discussion and comparisons of work.

Every student completed the three questions (some in more detail than others). The front pages are still a work-in-progress but I envision that as an activity that will continue as we continue the workbook activities.

The initial reaction to the questions was a blocker, but was relatively easy to overcome. It simply took some discussion on how people change, as well as emphasising the differences between us all. There was no one right answer.

Some students found it difficult to work out what a good student was because they felt that they were inherently a bad student. When they were asked to identify what they did right when they were being 'good' and 'trying' they were better able to provide answers.

I think the students seemed to enjoy the sense of ownership of the journals. They were surprised that they could decorate the front pages in any fashion they liked.

Examples of student work on subsequent pages →

Student.

A good student always concentrates on work and enjoys it at the same time. They have to be reliable and behave towards others. A good student asks questions and helps others with their work. I think a good student should always listen too.

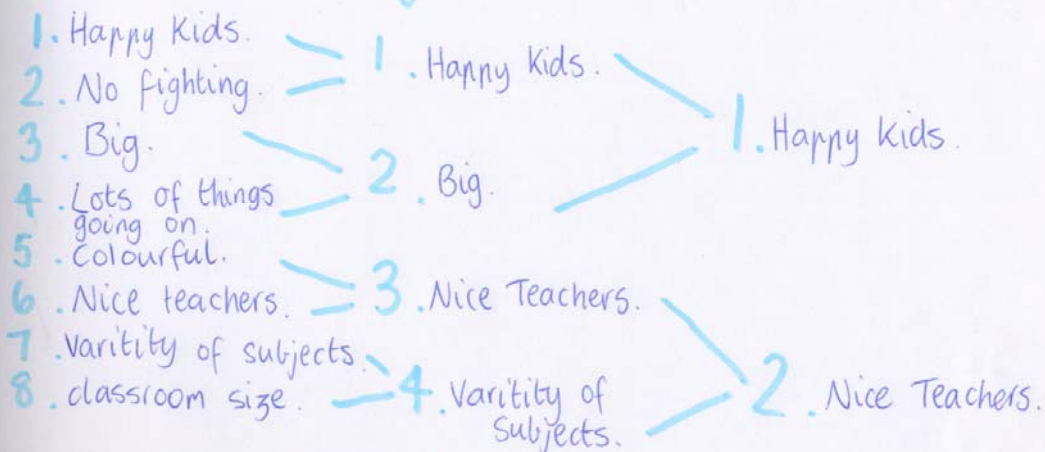
Teacher.

A good Teacher is easy to understand and listens to everyone. They have to be kind to students and doesn't yell. They have to be happy and like teaching so it is easy to know what they are saying. I think a good teacher should always be helpful too.

School.

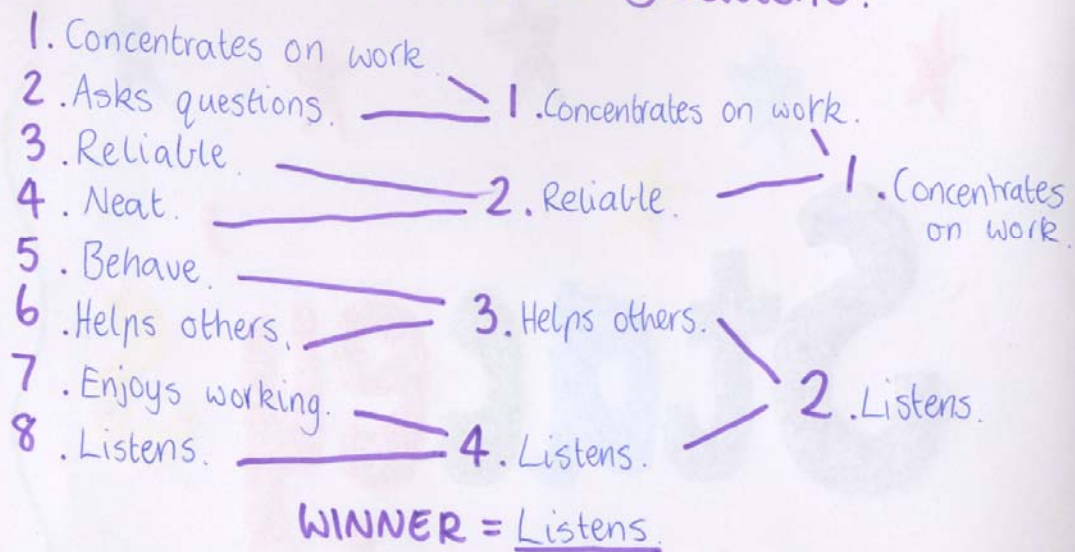
A good school is big but has no fighting in it. It has lots of activities going on and students enjoying it. The classroom has to be big and colourful. Most of all a good school should have happy teachers and students.

What is a good School?

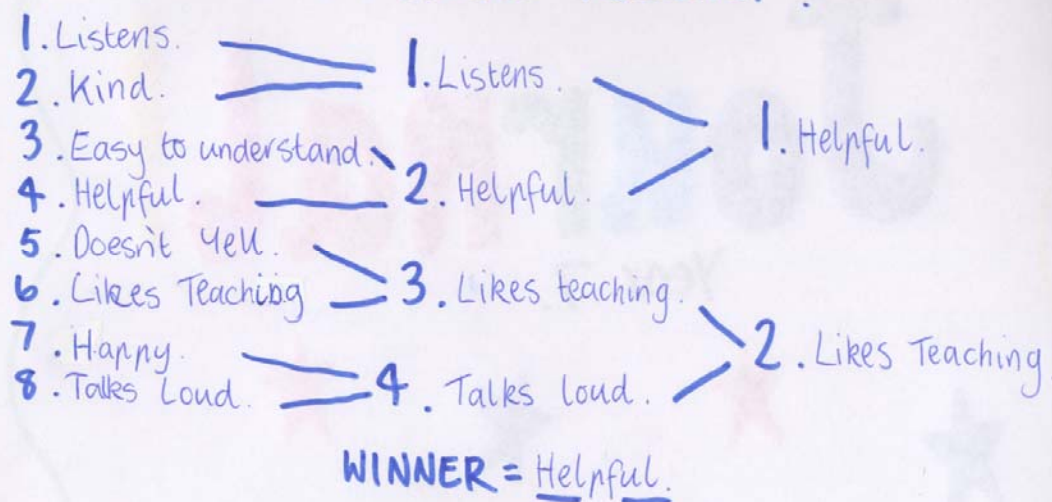


WINNER = Nice Teachers.

What Is A Good Student?



What Is A Good Teacher?



Teacher Journal

What is my intention? What do I want to achieve?

This is the class when I'll bring out the scrapbook journals and hand them over to the students. I am hoping to get them to start thinking about the journal as their own 'space', as well as get their thinking on to the *right track* in relation to their thinking about what makes a good student, a good teacher, and a good school. I expect that most of the students will have some fairly basic ideas of these concepts but am certain they will all have a go.

How does my intention fit in with current practice?

The journals are a combination workbook (for the LSF Unit on Issues) and a place to record and explore their ideas and attitudes towards thinking and learning. The three questions: **what is a good student?** **what is a good teacher?** and **what is a good school?** will help to set down the students' impressions early so that we can return to them at a later date. This will hopefully illustrate some changes in thinking.

I will be using the '*Tournament Prioritiser*' learning tool to answer at least one of the questions. Students will need to identify eight qualities of a good student and compare them with each other until one **primary** quality is achieved. All eight qualities are important, but the one that the student ends up with will be an interesting indication of the student's current stance.

What happened?

The class were obviously interested in the scrapbooks, but offered some groans of protest when they were asked to think about the three questions. Several students said they had answered the same questions in primary school, which I used as a good example of how attitudes and views can change over time. I suggested that they had changed from last year, and they agreed.

I used the *Tournament Prioritiser* on the whiteboard to illustrate the way you can come to a conclusion by a process of elimination. We had used the *Prioritiser* earlier in the year and they were familiar with its purpose. I asked the students to use the tool for at least one of the questions, but there were possibly six or so who liked the tool enough to use it for all three questions.

After the questions were answered, including some discussion amongst members of each table group, they were free to work on developing their front page.

All students remained active throughout the class, although it was definitely a very social-type lesson which encouraged discussion and interaction amongst members of table groups.

What was my role?

My role was to introduce the scrapbook journal and outline the upcoming unit of work. I guided their attention to the three questions on the board and talked with them about the possibilities of each question without giving any 'answers' – in fact I emphasised the idea that there was no single answer to each question.

After setting up the lesson I moved around the room to make sure everyone was on task and was able to answer questions as I went around the room. At these times I reminded the class that their first option when seeking an answer should be to think about the question themselves, then ask someone on the table and then ask me if needed.

What was the students' role?

The students were given the opportunity to think about how they think.

The students were required to think about their ideas of what a good student were. This kind of reflective practice will continue throughout the Unit on Issues and hopefully develop into an unconscious reflex, which can be applied to all other areas of their life.

What was I thinking? What was I feeling?

I was impressed with some of the students, particularly those who took the *Tournament Prioritiser* and used it for each of the questions. It was good to see that they saw the tool as being a useful way to examine themselves.

It was a defining moment in the LSF, in that this was the lesson that kicked off the scrapbook journals. The work that they were doing this class was the first part of an overall document that would help us (everyone, really) to plot the progress of the student and the work we are doing.

What were the important elements of the event?

The questioning was the most important aspect of this class. The three questions were answered by the students in a variety of 'depths', which is going to be very interesting down the track.

I've also decided that for any tool to work it needs to be readily available to the students. I've enlarged copies of the *Tournament Prioritiser* to put on the wall in G6 and A4 versions to be stored in the G6 teacher's desk so that if students want to use the tool there will be material for them to do so.

What might I change next time around?

I would probably get the students to answer the three questions using the *Tournament Prioritiser* but I would provide them with photocopies of the tool rather than have them draw it by hand.

Otherwise I would do a class *Tournament Prioritiser* and list the qualities on the board, getting the class to vote on them at each stage.