

Learning Activity: Film as Text 'Pay It Forward'

Learning Behaviours: *Developing questions at different levels/Gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of questioning.*

Teacher: LWP **DATE:** 10/11/05

Class: Year 9 English

The students were to watch the Film ' Pay It Forward'. They were told before it started that they would be setting the questions for a review of the film for another member of the class. When they had done that they would swap questions and complete the question they had been given and then return them to the student who wrote the question to be assessed. As we went through the sheets below we discussed the difference between 'surface' questions and those questions that go deeper.

The students then watched the film and started setting the questions .In this process they were not only expected to come up with questions but also the answers. With the surface questions this was easy but as they went deeper they had to come up with other possibilities than the first one they thought of. I felt that this was important for them to do to help them understand the difference between the different levels of questions.

I attempted to give them minimal helping this task and my main purpose was to reinforce or explain the difference between the questions.

When the students swapped questions I ensured they were not with friends.

From this part on I took a very "hands off" approach. If a student was having a problem with a question they were told to ask the student who wrote it. The question that the students had the most difficulty with was the going deeper question. In most cases it was because they found it hard to write a significant amount on the question. When they went back to the author it was either explained to them the sort of things that they could write about, but in more cases they author would re-word the question to allow the student to complete the task. In both cases I felt that this process helped each student with their understanding of the film.

I also felt that the process of the students working together helped with their understanding of the different levels of questioning, not just what they were but what was expected of them when answering them.

Pay It Forward

Name _____

Section 1

Surface Questions

These are questions that can be directly answered from the text. They usually start with 'What' or 'Who' and can have only one answer.

1.

A.

2.

A.

3.

A.

4.

A.

5.

A.

Section 2

Under the Surface

These are questions that require some more thought about the text. They usually start with 'Why', 'How' or 'Do you think' and there may be a couple of ways of answering them.

1.

A.

Other possibilities

2.

A.

Other possibilities

3.

A.

Other possibilities

Section 3

Going Deeper

This is a question that requires even deeper thought and a more detailed answer (one page). The answer should require a response that talks about issues, themes, characters or ideas from beyond the text.

It could compare things in the text to other texts or events or issues that happen in everyday life.

The answer may explore a major theme of the text, the development of a character or an issue raised.

The answer should contain a wider discussion of the issue, theme etc but also refer to part of the text that are appropriate.

1.

Things the answer could include.

Parts of the text that could be referred to.

Discussion Tool: *Journal Writing*

The discussion tool was simple journal writing in which the student were given questions to answer. The questions were;

1. What did you think of setting the questions for your classmates?
2. Did it help you understand the difference between surface and deeper questions?
3. What was it like assessing other student's work?
4. Did you give your partner any help?
5. How did you feel about the way we did Pay It Forward?
6. How did you feel I went?
7. Draw "Pay It Forward. The Activities"

Student Comments

Pay It Forwards


- 1) I liked setting the questions out like this because it was something different
- 2) Yes it did help me understand the difference between surface and under the surface questions
- 3) It was okay assessing other peoples work, it was something different
- 4) I gave my partner a little help by explaining the questions better.
- 5) Overall I liked the way we did pay it forward because it was different to the way we normally do things

6) No

7)



Pay It Forward

- ① I liked the setting the questions because most of them were easy.
- ② Yes, it helped me, but with alex I had 5 deeper questions and 3 of the surface questions but he it was fun.
- ③ It was fun! It felt like I was young again playing so but it was also slightly annoying.
- ④ Of course! silly question, I had to make him think of the first letter of each answer!
- ⑤ It was probably more fun than it would've been.
- ⑥ No comments Oh 3 days of school left!!
- ⑦  I guess it was OK.

Teacher Journal

"Select from this exercise" - I found the most rewarding. It took the kids, initially, out of their comfort zone and could have been a disaster. But I have a really good year 9 group and they took to the activity very well. I feel they gained a lot from it. Firstly I believe they now have a better understanding of the different levels of questions but that they also have a better understanding of how to approach the deeper levels. It was fun and the kids enjoyed it and I think it may have been beneficial for the dynamics of the group. I may try this earlier in the year in 2006

Overall with the discussion with kids I feel that I have let a number of opportunities slip. I think I needed to be more specific about what they were reflecting on. How did you feel..... What did you think.... (looking back) did not get the responses from the students that I feel I could have. Expecting deeper thought or comment may have left some students out, but some of them only wrote in their journal superficially any way. The other thing I would do is follow up, either individually or in small groups, is the response the kids made in the journals.