

Learning Activity : Learning about Learning and what's important to students.

Learning Behaviours: Awareness of learning, language and common understandings

Teacher: KDJ

DATE: 19/5/06

Class: 7A

Learning Activity Description

Students completed a questionnaire which asked them to reflect on their learning and the blockers to their learning and what they thought was important to the teacher.

Questionnaire is on the final page of this writeup.

Discussion Tool

The class had quite a lengthy discussion about the results from the questionnaire. Some students felt that they hadn't been sure what some of the terms that I used actually meant so they had ranked them last. Most of the debate centred around their understanding of the task so perhaps I needed to be clearer, particularly with the middle part of the questionnaire which asked them to rank their behaviours in order from most important to least important. Many students got hung up on the term least important thinking that meant not important at all whereas I was saying those things were still important but not most important. After the discussion we put together our learning behaviours checklist after modifying some language so everyone was clear what we meant. The students are going to try and collect stars on their sheets for some kinds of rewards which we are still deciding on.

Student Comments (via the questionnaire responses)

In the first section which asked students to reflect on why they are getting the marks they are this year, six students recorded that they feel happy when they do well and that this is what encourages them or motivates them to keep working hard as their primary reason. Two students felt they were good at following instructions, one felt well organised, one felt they always checked over their work before handing it in, two felt their basic skills were good and two just liked school. Seven students recorded a negative response – poor basic skills (2), never learned how to read properly (1), don't work hard enough (1), disorganised (1) and forget to do homework (2). I then asked them to rank in order 1-10 the things they felt were important if they were to do well in English. After that they had to repeat the activity recording what they thought I would write. I then told them my reality and they compared the differences. The following outlines their basic responses of what they thought was most important to me.

Being Prepared - 12/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Being Organised - 16/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Working hard in class - 18/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Having good skills - 2/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Doing homework - 4/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Keeping on trying - 6/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Using table group for help - 1 /21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Checking work before submitting it- 3/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Work being well presented -3 /21 students recorded this in their top three responses

Reflecting on learning -0/21 students recorded this in their top three responses

In addition it is worth noting that 13 students had reflecting on their learning as number 10 – the least important thing to me. I had this as number one on my list. My top five were

reflecting on learning, keeping on trying, checking work before submitting it, working hard in class and being prepared.

I then asked the students to name two learning behaviours that they thought I had been trying to change in them. Results are as follows: (not all students wrote two)

Reflect on learning - 5

Improve skills – 3

Trying hard – 6

Listening – 2

Being organised – 4

Checking work -4

Completing homework – 4

Loudness -1

Behaviour – 1

Everything -1

Next I asked the students whether together we could change their results and attitudes to English and their own learning. Results are as follows:

Yes – 15

Not sure – 2

No – 4

Many students made comments about working together, improving confidence and helping with spelling, listening better, working hard. The negative comments included one student who wrote 'No because I am already good enough for English so everyone in my family says' and another who felt he was being bullied so he didn't like school and I couldn't help.

The final question was asking the students what they needed to do differently in order to succeed. The students' responses included improving spelling (2), skills, presentation, doing work all the time, confidence, checking work before handing it in (2), reflect on learning (2) and try harder (9). There were two negative responses – "nothing" and "get a better teacher." I discussed these results with the kids and we talked about what I thought was important. Using these results and our discussion I put together a checklist for the kids to be rewarded on. We simplified the language a little so they were all clear as to what the behaviours meant. Some of the behaviours are mine but the students added two of their own – not distracting others and having the correct materials.

Teacher Journal:

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

I want students to continue to think about the elements of a good classroom and good learning behaviours that make up a good student. I asked them to individually complete the questionnaire which was asking them to reflect on their learning and the blockers and to think about what learning behaviours they thought I wanted to see.

What happened?

All students had to complete the questionnaire and then I tallied the results. I took the results back to them and we discussed their responses. We then drew up a checklist for them to keep in their planners.

My Good Learning Behaviours

I persist with difficult work and only ask the teacher for assistance when I've reread the question and checked with my table group about what to do.

I read through my work and check it over before giving it to the teacher for assessment.

I read instructions carefully and generally don't need to ask the teacher what to do.

I set my work out neatly and label it so I can easily find past work when I need to check on something.

I can always find my work and my worksheets and I always have the necessary materials for class.

I always give tasks a real go even if I think the work is really difficult.

I work quietly and steadily in class and I don't get involved in distracting others.

I read over the teacher's assessment and think about how I could have received a better result.

What feelings and senses surround the event?

The kids enjoyed this activity, although I did get some superficial answers which I was expecting. They do have a sense of good learning behaviours but not the language to talk about them so we put the behaviours into their words.

What was I thinking? What was I feeling?

I thought this was a really worthwhile learning activity because I have found you have to remind students all the time about their learning behaviours or they keep coming back to you for assistance. They like to be spoonfed – that's what they are used to from primary school and I want them to be more independent.

What were the important elements of the event?

I am going to follow up our checklist by rewarding the behaviours I see with a star in their journals. That way I can keep them thinking about learning behaviours all the time.

What were the blockers?

The blockers were really only the student's lack of knowledge and memory and this just highlights the need to teach students about learning.

How's your year going?

What do you think are the reasons for the marks you are getting so far this year?

(number 1 for the most important down to whatever is relevant)

- _____ My basic English skills such as reading, writing and spelling are poor
- _____ I've had bad English teachers in the past
- _____ I'm good at following instructions
- _____ I check over my work before handing it in
- _____ I never learned how to read properly
- _____ I hate English
- _____ I persist when work gets tough

- _____ I analyse the teacher's assessment
- _____ I don't listen to explanations
- _____ I can't be bothered with school
- _____ I'm well organised
- _____ I don't work hard enough
- _____ I give up if I can't do something
- _____ My basic skills are good
- _____ I'm disorganised
- _____ I like school
- _____ I forget to do my homework
- _____ I think about how I could do better next time
- _____ I feel happy when I do well

Put in order 1-10 what you think is important in studying English under the Me column.

	Me	KDJ	Reality
Being Prepared			
Being Organised			
Working hard in class			
Having good skills			
Doing homework			
Keeping on trying			
Using table group for help			
Checking work before submitting it			
Work being well presented			
Reflecting on learning			

**Put in order under KDJ what you think is important to me.
Fill in what I thought in the Reality Column
Explain any differences:**

What are two learning behaviours that you think I have been trying to change in you?

Do you think that together we can change your results and attitudes to English and your own learning in general? Why/Why not?

What do you think you need to do differently in order to succeed?
