

Learning Activity: *Predictive Questioning*

Learning Behaviours: *Question Creation, Prediction*

Teacher: *LNJ*

DATE: *13 /9/05*

Class: *7G English*

AIM: The class was beginning a new text study and this was a way of thinking about the typical features of texts and what our expectations are when viewing a film. The film was 'The Princess Bride'.

ACTIVITIES:

The activity was to use the Question Cards to put together and create sets of questions about the film that we were going to watch (students had not viewed it yet and did not know what the film's title was).

Table groups were given two sets of cards:

- one colour of: **which, where, why, how, what, when**
- one colour of: **might, does, would, can, is, could**

The idea is to put two cards of a different colour together to form a question stem, eg "What can...?" or "Why does...?"

The second word can be conjugated to form a more appropriate question, such as 'is' can become 'has' etc.

Once the cards are explained, we did three rounds of question creation.

The students were given small cards on which to write their questions, and told that they'd be writing 8 questions in total, using information that I'd give them.

Round One: The first 2 questions were to be written without any knowledge of what film they'd be watching.

Some of the students:

- matched the question cards and then wrote questions.
- played snap to sort them out for students.
- asked if they could put a card, then their own word, then a card (eg. "which character would be...?").
- discovered that there was no 'who' card.
- one student asked if the questions were ones that should be asked either before or after we viewed the film.

Some sample questions:

- What was the main character's name?
- What is the title of the movie?
- When was the movie made?
- How does the main character get introduced to the movie?
- Why can the bad guys always win?
- What could happen at the end?

Round Two: Next, I wrote up a quote from the film and asked them to write 2 more questions based on that info, "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

In the room there was:

- more debate on the film and speculation.
- students were quicker to write these questions.
- students wrote 'who' questions without the word 'who', such as "How does he die?" and "Which character is the one Inigo wants to kill?"

Other questions included:

- When does Inigo's father get killed?
- Why does Inigo Montoya want to kill someone?
- How could they prepare to die?
- Why does Inigo Montoya have an unusual name?
- How can he get revenge?

After this short time, everyone read out to share one question, and there were some excellent ones in there.

Round Three: The last set of questions saw me explain that sometimes a film title can be misleading, and that they should consider that in their four questions. I wrote on the board the title of the film, 'The Princess Bride.'

- one student knew the film, but was good at keeping it to herself.
- more intense speculation about the film.
- again they were quick to write their questions.
- I wondered whether the questions would be of a higher order as they went along as they had time to get used to the writing process. There were more speculative questions as they had a little more information on the film.

Some questions included:

- Where does the Princess live?
- How long does the movie go for?
- How old is the movie, "The Princess Bride"?
- Is it a girls' movie?
- Is it a "normal" wedding?
- Who is Inigo to the Princess Bride?
- Is it a fantasy movie?
- Why is it called the Princess Bride?
- How does the Princess become a Princess?
- What kind of age is it set in?

We then went around and heard everyone's best question from this final round. There were some excellent examples from nearly everyone. There were also some very basic questions, from students who were not speculatively thinking about the film.

In that session, we were able to view a 10 minute section of the film and begin a discussion, which would then lead into the full viewing and further activities in the continuing classes. The extract cemented some ideas, but also threw them a bit due to its unusual structure.

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

Today was the beginning of our next unit, and so did some predictive questioning with the group about the film as text study we're commencing.

How does my intention fit in with current practice?

We did a novel study in Term 3 and this unit will take on some of those approaches, but I want to make it more an analytical response, rather than a creative one.

Learning Behaviours – developing questioning skills, note-taking, encouraging listening

English aim – teaching paragraphing skills (after the predictive questioning task and viewings).

How is the room set up? Where are the kids seated? Where am I positioned?

Table groups work well with the questioning, as they can share the question stem cards and also discuss ideas with each other.

I instructed from the front of the room to use the whiteboard. I have also a hearing impaired student, and ensure that I'm close to his table and don't move around too much.

What happened?

I told the class that they're beginning a new unit, studying a film and that we'd start some work on it today.

I went on to explain that we were doing some predictive questioning, and that they'd need cards and pens. I explained what the two sets of question cards were about and that they were the starts of their questions.

After watching about a 10 minute section, I think that it engaged them, and I know that they'll get into it more when we can watch a decent length of it.

What was my role?

I led them through the activities, but never judged or commented on their questions. I answered questions about the use of the cards, but not about the questions they formed.

What was the students' role?

To be speculative, and to use their knowledge of film and text in general to create some suitable questions. To think about what they knew of film and stories, and what they should expect in this case.

What do I think the students got out of the event?

It was a different way to start a film study, and it may have piqued their interest more than a simple discussion may have.

Notes for the next class?

At a later stage (after the initial viewing), we'll return to some of the questions, and develop some answers.

We'll also do the question-making task again and see if they can develop some higher-order questions after viewing the film. That'll help with their comprehension

and development of a better understanding of it when it comes to paragraph writing.