

## **Exceptionally Able /Assessment for Learning programme: Learning Strategies**

Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> yr Science

Firstly I informed the group that they were involved in research on assessment for learning. With their assistance we are trying to find methods that students best learn.

Use of Learning Intentions: I put the learning intentions on the board at the beginning of class. I feel this gives a focus to what I intend to do and what I expect the students to know at the end. I also put the homework on the board as well which links the intentions with their homework. At the end of class I normally would return to the learning intentions and reflect on their understanding of them and knowledge of material covered. Students are not slow in telling me if the learning intentions have been covered by me during the lesson. This shows that they are more involved in the learning process and more focused in class.

The learning intentions keep me more focused as well. I do less deviating off the point of the lesson. Also my intention must be clear and achievable in the time frame. There have been times when my intentions have not been achieved for a variety of reasons.

Questioning: I now ask less questions and use more wait time when asking questions. When I do ask a question at the start of a lesson I ask students not to put their hands up and to think about the question and to formulate their answers. When I am asking a series of questions I would use wait time and as the questioning develops what I have noticed is that the quality of answers can improve and I would probe a little further to try and develop more higher-order thinking (HOT skills) and answering. I think I may start to use the think/pair/share idea when asking higher order questions to see what may come from this technique.

Concept Maps: I use this method at the start of a topic to find out the breath and depth of knowledge. The diagram represents a set of ideas. It can be used to explore what is relevant and what may not be relevant to that topic. It can also introduce questioning from teacher and pupils. I would give students a moment or two at the start to allow them time to organise their thoughts and possible contributions to the map. I probably will start to get the pupils to do their own concept maps and I may get pupils to do it as part of homework if the opportunity arises.

K-W-L: I sometimes use this method at the beginning of a topic or at the beginning of a lesson to encourage the pupils to share what they know which sometimes surprises me and them. Very often many of the concepts that I intend to teach come up at the start of the process. I would leave this on the board and refer to it during or at the end of a lesson.

I would also put down what the students need to know and link the 2 lists and finally I would show them what they have learned. Again it gives a focus to the class. I think the students can relate more to what is being taught. It also gives an opportunity to the exceptionally able to provide information that they may have on a topic.

PMI- Plus, Minus, Interesting: Very short exercise. I have only used it once, on climate change. I made a statement and I gave the pupils one minute to think on it and then to write

the positives. One minute on the negatives. Finally one minute on what was interesting, thoughts and questions. I found it useful to kick start a topic and to inform students on topical issues that they could find out about on the news and other programmes. It gives an opportunity to all pupils to relate what they know and it could stimulate debate on that topic.

Feedback on homework: I set the homework at the start of the lesson with the learning intentions. It avoids the rushing at the end of class to give homework with students packing up and leaving to go and not being able to get homework taken down properly. I also find that you can refer to the homework during the lesson which links the learning intention to the work for home.

I have begun to give comments only feedback where I would give one positive comment and one aim for the next assignment. I have only begun to do this so I am not in a position to comment on its effectiveness yet.

Learning Journal: I have used the learning journal when I have finished a topic so that the students and I can get feedback on that topic. The journal asks the student to reflect on

1. What they have learned
2. How they may have learned better
3. What they found difficult
4. How they overcame the difficulty
5. What they need more help with
6. Targets for next week

I found this useful as feedback for the students and for myself. It let the students know what they found difficult and what they had done to overcome it, if anything. It informed me of concepts that students found difficult and could do with more work on. I would feedback to the students on their analysis. Students with particular difficulties I would see on a one to one basis. It is useful feedback to students on that topic and can pinpoint difficulties and good understanding. It can engage the learner more in the process of their learning.

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