

Thinking for Learning - Planning & Reflection

Sheet #

Background information

Name

Organisation

Elmwood College

Position/Role

Lecturer Core Skills (IT)

Teaching and learning aims

Target Group

Skills for Transition 2 – A group of students, with varying learning difficulties who have attended college through student development and are in their final year of transition to the work place.

Course content objective

Intermediate 2 Online and Internet Communication.

An insight into the technical aspects behind many of the internet and online resources they already use, to introduce them to new methods of communication and build confidence in the use of modern technology.

Students' '4 Capacities: Attributes & Capabilities' focus

Successful Learners: - Students to take the knowledge gathered in this unit into everyday use.
Effective Contributors - Working in pairs/small groups to achieve a goal through discussion and debate.
Confident Individuals- Encouraging all to state their preference or opinion in order to achieve that goal.
Responsible citizens – Student to learn about compromise and respecting the opinions of others.

Your own personal / teaching development goal for this session

My goal in this session is to introduce an element of fun, promote individual thinking, and encourage discussion and team working within the group. As there is no right or wrong answer to the completion of the task, I will act as "devil's advocate" to challenge the student's solutions and give them the opportunity to explain their choices, allowing them to show the knowledge they have already gained and to learn from each other.

Lesson / Session plan

Date 17th March 2011

Observed ? No

Chosen Thinking for Learning Strategy

Parts and Wholes

1. Launching
Connect to previous learning & Challenge

I have created a set of cards with different elements of computer hardware, software and peripheral devices, complete with prices and, additional information required to allow them to build a solution to communicate somehow through internet and online solutions.

A discussion will take part prior to the task referring to previous lessons regarding all aspects of online and internet communication ending with the introduction of the cards to establish level of understanding of the individual parts required to access the internet and correspond with others through the use of modern technology. This time of observation will help me decide which students should be paired together. For this exercise I feel it would be better if they did not have a choice of who they were working with.

2. Students working together

Co-construction

The students will be put into pairs and given the task of “building” a suitable whole from the parts provided.

The task will be split in to two specific areas.

The first will be to choose a method of online communication i.e. send an email, use Skype to communicate orally over the internet etc There will be an opportunity to discuss a solution within their individual groups and the solution to this challenge will come from this discussion through their accumulated knowledge, understanding and prior learning.

The second part will be to create the chosen solution using the cards provided and justify the choices made.

3. Students reflecting

Metacognition & Transfer

A task sheet will be issued with an area to record their discussion and list possible solutions, The end result will be dictated by the task they choose to complete, Instruction will also be given on expenditure. An aspect of all Core Skills is included in this task, IT, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Numeracy and Communication along with an opportunity to show Employability and Citizenship.

The instruction will set a limit to spending (£1100)with an allowance of a slight under spend (10%) but no overspend, so solution for freeware etc can also be sought, i.e. download free antivirus etc. This will not be discussed prior to the task but again is something that the students have already investigated and discussed in previous lessons.

The final part of the task will be a discussion provoked by myself regarding the choices they made, how the individual teams came to those decisions, with further discussion from the whole class regarding each teams solution. Ending with a request from me for their input on the lesson as a whole and how the task could be improved.

Reflections on the session

How did it go?

The lesson went very well and had some very interesting results.

What was Positive, Negative, Interesting?

This is usually a group of ten but one was missing on the day so one pair became a group of three, one of the students in that group is usually very quiet in class and does not engage with others easily, although surprisingly he was very animated during this exercise and offered solutions and justified his decisions with gusto.

Some students were a little overwhelmed by specific task involved, especially the numeracy aspect.

What did the students learn?
What had they to say about the learning process?

The students learned that sometimes working with people that have different views especially people they have not worked with or talked to much before can be fun, interesting, that others can have valuable opinions and that there is an opportunity to learn from each other.

This being an exercise in thinking and problem solving through negotiation, with no right or wrong answer provoked a lot of thought and discussion along with an element of competition.

The class really engaged in the exercise and during the latter part offered many suggestions for items that they thought should have been included in the cards. They all enjoyed the exercise and intimated that they would like to use something similar again; Everyone had something to add to the discussion, which for this particular group was very encouraging.

What did you learn?

What will you try/change next time?

I learned that some students really thrive on challenge. One particular student in this class would normally say little or nothing; he is very withdrawn and does not seem to engage with the class at all. The introduction of something new, where others were clearly feeling less than comfortable to begin with had a positive effect on him and encouraged him to speak out and empathise with those around him. From this I have learned not to prejudge, I put this student in the group of three as I thought he would not participate as much as the other two but he proved me wrong by taking the lead.

If I was to teach this unit again to a class with the same sort of needs I would use this exercise but would issue calculators at the beginning as many of the students found the calculation part overwhelming. I would also introduce this type of challenge much earlier in the unit and find other ways to stimulate thinking through problem solving in my lessons.

Please feel free to include resources, samples of work that you think we will find interesting, helpful or useful.

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