

Thinking for Learning - Planning & Reflection

Sheet # 2

Background information

Name

Organisation

Elmwood College

Position/Role

Lecturer Core Skills (IT)

Teaching and learning aims

Target Group

A group of 13 most around 16 years old attending college full time. Most struggle with reading and writing and there are multiple learning and behavioural difficulties. The class is part of the Student Development department.

Course content
objective

Computing. This lesson was part of an assessment regarding Health and Safety.

Students'
'4 Capacities:
Attributes &
Capabilities'
focus

Effective Contributors - Students encouraged to discuss what they have seen in the class and share ideas at the end of the exercise.

Responsible citizens – The lesson concentrates in all aspects of health and safety around computing, gives reason for the rules and allows them the opportunity to point out when they see these being broken by others.

Your own personal / teaching development goal for this session

My goal is to introduce a somewhat boring but essential set of rules in a visual format rather than as a “set of commandments”. Hopefully the students will see this as a bit of fun with a serious purpose. I feel that these students will remember the visual impact of the lesson easily and hope because of this they will contribute to the discussion at the end of the lesson.

Lesson / Session plan

Date 31/10/2011

Observed ? No

Chosen Thinking for Learning Strategy

Collective Memory

1. Launching
Connect to previous learning & Challenge

I have (with a bit of help from a colleague) created a cartoon character called Hazard.
Hazard is a disaster waiting to happen around a computer. He sits tilted back in his chair, with the computer cables dangerously tangled around it. He is eating, drinking and smoking at the computer. The monitor is balanced precariously on a pile of books. He has a cup of coffee sitting on top of the monitor; He clearly hasn't cleaned it for a while and the room has been infested by rats because he has left food lying around. These are but a few of his mistakes. (Copy of cartoon attached).

The students have previously discussed Health and Safety around computers and have made a list of do's and don'ts previously in the class. Some of these have been used in the Hazard cartoon and others not previously discussed have also been included.

There have also been essential safety items missed out of the picture, which will be more difficult to detect.

2. Students working together

Co-construction

The students will work in small groups and be allowed a short time, in intervals to study the picture they will then return to the group to tell the others what they have seen. They will then list as many hazards as possible in a given time frame. Working in small groups will also add an element of competition.

3. Students reflecting

Metacognition & Transfer

The students will have to work collaboratively and choose roles within the team. There are artistic students in the group and I will ensure that there will be at least one in each team allowing them to have the opportunity of drawing what they have been told is in the picture along with making a list of the hazards spotted. Lined paper and large sheets of plain drawing paper will be available along with coloured pens and pencils.

The final part of the exercise will be a class discussion with the cartoon visible.

Reflections on the session

How did it go?

What was Positive, Negative, Interesting?

The class are rowdy and behaviour is not always predictable, it took a little longer than I would have liked to get the teams motivated. There are distinct mini groups within the class and I tried to split these up so that students were working with people they would not normally mix with.

For this group this may well have been a mistake on my part and could have gone terribly wrong, but I stuck with it with some interesting results.

After some fuss the first students had a look at the cartoon. One team decided to try and draw what was been seen and the other opted only to write.

This again took a while to sort out as they could not decide who would draw and who would write. I stepped in at that point and allocated roles.

One area that was raised by a particular student was interesting as she commented on a piece of safety equipment that was missing from the drawing on her first look. This was surprising as I thought they would all go for the obvious first. This provoked a lot of discussion between the students as many had never heard of surge protectors.

After the initial settling in time the lesson went well, with even the most reluctant students taking part. There were a few arguments along the way about what some thought they had seen and what others thought that certain things meant. There was also a lengthy discussion regarding whether the animal at the bottom of the picture was a rat or a mouse.

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

The initial description of the overall image from both teams was amusing; from "***She's drawn a picture of me misbehaving in class again***" to "***That's my brother's bedroom, that is.***"

These comments broke the ice and encouraged a lot of discussion between the team members and the two teams. The drawing and list were abandoned for a while as the conversations grew making the exercise run over. We did have time for a discussion at the end where I asked the class what they thought of the exercise.

The students learned that working together can be fun and productive. That you don't always have to rely only on people you know well, that people you don't always have time for can be an asset and that rules are not always there just to inconvenience you and spoil your fun.

And from one particular student the rest learned that surge protectors should always be used when connecting up computer equipment.

Some of the positive comments given were:

"A drawing makes it easier to understand."

"That was funny and I'll remember why you tell us not to swing on our chairs now."

"I don't like reading and writing so this made the class more interesting."

There were, as usual with this group one or two comments that are not printable, but on the whole everyone enjoyed the exercise.

What did you learn?

I learned that a small class even after 7 weeks together don't always easily work as a team, that although they all seem very comfortable as a whole, disturbing their "inner groups" can cause conflict and that sometimes initial fuss on students being taken out of their comfort zones can be overcome.

What will you try/change next time?

If I did this exercise again with a similar group I would make sure that the roles were agreed before the task was started.

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

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