

Summary Task 7a

I am a dance teacher at an acting academy, I teach on a Saturday to three groups of mixed ability, mixed ages – both boys and girls. I am also a full time Teaching assistant in a Secondary school.

My inquiry came from reflecting on my dance classes, I identified that the boys in my class often lacked the motivation and/or attention span to thoroughly engage with the lesson. Consequently, they were a common source of disruption for the class.

By increasing the motivation of the boys, I was certain the whole class would benefit. Firstly, disruption would decrease, and learning for the whole class would be improved, as pace and focus could be better maintained. Also, I felt that a more positive learning environment could be established, with a greater focus on praise and reward, rather than punishment and sanctions. I began to consider intervention strategies that were specifically aimed at raising boys' motivation and engagement, with the firm belief that it would benefit all class members.

I carried out research into boys' preferred learning styles and identified techniques that I could use in my teaching. (Interestingly I found research that indicated that such techniques actually have a benefit on both sexes). With each strategy I found, I considered its impact on all pupils in my class. I asked myself if the technique or task was appropriate for both sexes, and whether it would allow both groups to make good progress.

I have now planned to carry out an intervention with two of my dance classes. Following valuable advice and feedback I have made changes to my initial plan. Rosemary felt that I should choose one element of my dance class. I identified that boys were most disruptive in the warm-up section of my lesson, warm-up lasts 20 minutes and I decided to look at interventions I could apply to that section of my class.

Intervention Plan

Assessing current motivation

Firstly, I would like to take stock of the current motivation of all class members during the warm-up session. I would like to do this through the completion of anonymous questionnaires, and through the professional judgement of an impartial observer. This will allow me to see what effect (if any) my intervention strategy has had. I will also make notes on my own personal reflections of the lessons.

Introducing Intervention Strategies

I would then like to implement some of my identified strategies into this part of the lesson. This will require on-going evaluation of all pupils' engagement and progress, so that, if necessary, the intervention can be stopped.

Assessing the impact of strategies

After 3 weeks, I would like to assess the effectiveness of the intervention strategies that I used. I will again use the same questionnaires and the professional judgement of an impartial observer to assess the motivation levels of pupils post-intervention. I can then compare the levels of motivation levels before and after the intervention to identify its impact.

Although my strategies are aimed at boys, it will be important to ensure that they are not having a negative effect on the progress of the girls. It is therefore essential to assess the motivation of all pupils.

Identifying Variables

Control Variables

The two classes will have experienced 6 weeks of standard teaching techniques. The same two classes will then be used as part of my intervention. The assessment of motivation will be the same before and after the intervention, so that any changes are due to the intervention and not the assessment method.

Independent Variable

I will be changing the teaching techniques and learning tasks during the 20 minute warm-up session for 3 lessons. Changes will be geared towards researched motivational strategies aimed at boys' i.e. teamwork, competition, short engaging activities, visual activities.

Dependent Variable

I hope that my intervention will have a benefit on the motivation and progress of all my pupils. I will be assessing this by using a pupil evaluation survey, the professional judgement of an impartial observer, and my own reflections. Pupil evaluation will necessarily be anonymous but will ask for gender identification.

Ethics, Morality and Inclusion

I believe that my intervention will have a positive effect on the boys in my classes. I also

believe that my strategies will not be of detriment to the girls' learning, and in fact expect them to have an indirect positive effect. I have considered each strategy individually and how it would affect the learning of all my pupils. I will continue to evaluate their effectiveness throughout my intervention, and if I believe that my changes are having a detrimental effect on any group of pupils in my class, I will stop my intervention immediately. I have discussed my planned intervention with my Employer and he is supportive of the project.

Artefact

The intervention is only one component of my inquiry. I intend to use the data I receive to produce a booklet for teachers, with ideas on motivating boys in the classroom. In order to do this I intend to use a triangulation (multiple method approach) to data collection, combining several research methods:

- Questionnaire aimed at both Performing Arts and Mainstream Teachers. (I believe that it is important to develop cross curricular links as I identified in my research that a lack of motivation in boys exists not only in the dance class, but across education.) Providing expertise and knowledge of teachers who work with students.
- My own intervention – evaluation by Students on my teaching practice pre and post intervention
- Telephone interviews with both Performing Arts and Mainstream Teachers. Giving me an opportunity by structured interviews to explore in depth teachers perceptions of motivating boys to learn.

This will allow me to produce an artefact that will work alongside my inquiry.