

Poundland Pedagogy

Bringing the joy back into teaching and learning, for just £1

by Ryan Fisher, Journalist

With pressure on school budgets, and resources at a cost, The Marlborough Science Academy, St Albans, has launched an exciting new initiative called Poundland Pedagogy aimed at utilising low cost items to enhance learning, and giving teachers the chance to be creative in the classroom.

Using a random draw, staff names were pulled out of a hat and allocated with an item; the atmosphere was fantastic and what was particularly exciting was the dialogue from colleagues focussed on how they were going to introduce pipe cleaners, a One Direction duvet, balls of string, plasticine etc into their lessons."

good thing. And the total cost came to just £90, including £40 of prizes."

Annie Thomson, Headteacher, also noticed a change in the classroom: "We wanted to bring the enjoyment of teaching back into the classroom. Teachers are creative but that is sometimes taken away, as focus is with tests or assessments. This new approach to teaching will give teachers the chance to be creative again, at a cheap cost. It has worked really well and there has been fantastic dialogue between staff. Students have also found it useful and have loved it."

of a mixture. The roles were salt, sand and water. The students had to describe what was happening to them in the different stages of the separation of the mixture (filtration, evaporation and distillation) and respond to the questions from the interviewer. The students said that it was challenging to try and describe what was happening to them in each of the stages. Other students said that hearing the ideas of others verbally gave them ideas on what to write down in their own written responses.

"At Marlborough our focus on teaching and learning is at the heart of everything we do. Weekly Teaching Tip Tuesday staff meetings utilise students' observations through 'Learning Counts' meetings. These are weekly meetings with students from Years 7 to 13, giving feedback on innovative and creative approaches being used within the classroom," said Deputy Headteacher Mark Fitzgibbon, who introduced the competition to the staff.

Staff then gave a synopsis of how their item was used in their classroom. Prizes were given out for the most creative use of an item and how effective it was for pupils.

"The mood around the school has been electric, with staff entering into serious competition with themselves to win the top prizes but also to incorporate their resources into their lesson in the most ingenious way possible," added Mark.

For a full list of items used visit:
bit.ly/TE-PoundlandPedagogy

Below are two examples of how staff used their items in their classes:

Inflatable microphone (science):

I used the microphone for an interview activity. The students took on roles of the components

Neon board (media/English):

The student task was to design and develop the front page of a tabloid or broadsheet. I used the neon board as an opportunity for the students to create success criteria based on the information I had given them. A student would have to come up with appropriate success criteria and nominate someone else by passing the board on. The neon board was then placed at the front of the class for reference. The task was very successful and I hope to use it more often in the future.

"With budgets being as they are, we launched Poundland Pedagogy and were delighted when 47 members of staff signed up to take their chances in trying to incorporate the use of items bought from pound shops into their teaching.

"We are delighted with the response and the impact it has had across the school in so many areas. At a time when staff morale is low, recruitment a huge worry and budgets falling, injecting the life back into the classroom has got to be a