

Remaking Learning

Rosie Parnell



A Classroom

Date: 26th July 2004 onwards

Place: Elsecar Heritage Centre, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Time length: 5 day workshop (repeated)

Partnerships: Organised and funded by Barnsley Council's Education service, with support from the University of the First Age (UFA)

Participants: 500 young people from across Barnsley aged 10-14 years. Students worked in sub-groups of 10-15 students. A total of 25 students took part in the Architecture group. Included 2 peer mentors (older students) and 1 adult supporter per group.

Goals/Aims: The over all aim of the programme was to help young people 'learn how to learn'. Students were to explore how their brain works and gain an understanding of the different learning styles preferred by different people. With the theme 'Remaking Learning', the event in 2004 was intended to also form part of the Council's programme of work to help young people achieve and succeed - a programme which includes rebuilding the area's secondary schools.



View of science block | Reception slide

Methodology:

Students chose a creative workshop from a range including dance, drama, art or interior design. Architecture was a particularly appropriate focus, given the overall theme of the challenge. The architecture workshop included a variety of tasks and games, each intended to increase the students' awareness of their built-environment and encourage critical discussion, as well as exploiting different learning styles (kinaesthetic, auditory, visual, tactile).

Description of Events:

Following ice-breakers, students took the Post-it challenge, evaluating their school environments. A mind-mapping exercise explored learning environments appropriate for different types of learners. The workshop then focused on evoking the qualities of spaces and buildings, through story-telling. First descriptive passages were read from popular children's books and the students were asked to recall which parts were effective. Images of buildings were then shown and the students called out descriptive words & phrases which we recorded. The students' final task was to design their own school, building on what they had learnt. This process began with storytelling, students working in small groups to conjure up the atmosphere of one particular place in the new school. These images, conveyed through words, were then translated into collages and further developed through working models. In parallel to the development of the dream school there were team games exploring different aspects of architecture: Estimation game, Zoom-in Zoom-out, Site walkabout & name game, Music & Architecture, Building types. Brain gym was also carried out at intervals and each day time was set aside for the students to complete

their portfolios - records of their process with space for reflection on activities and their own learning. Once completed, photos were taken of the spaces in and around the school model which were used to create a storyboard. The students were able to share this story, alongside images and the model itself, with guests, fellow students and parents at the celebration event at the end of each week.



Window



Learning bricks

Outcomes:

Students increased their critical awareness of their built environment, with a focus on learning environments, gaining insight into the design process and working in a team through direct experience. Students reflected on their own learning approach and how this related to exploring Architecture.

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