Level 5 Design, Creativity and Technology - Weekly Progress Sheets in Woodwork

PEEL in Practice: 1300 ideas for quality teaching
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Problem:

I found that the kids were not asking themselves, "What do I do next?" and thinking about the next step in their projects. They were just coming up to me and saying, "What do I do next?" for each step of the process. An added problem that this created was the huge bottleneck of students wanting my help at the beginning of every lesson. Even if I described the whole sequence at the beginning, it would get out of kilter because they all work at different levels. I wanted to make them reflect on their own work and not constantly come to me expecting answers.

Response: WEEKLY PROGRESS SHEETS OR DIARY, F 13

I started by setting them a work diary with three questions: "What did I do today?" "Did I work to the best of my ability?" "What is the next thing that I need to do?" At the end of the lesson, or during the lesson if they had time, they would answer these questions. The future oriented question meant that the kids had to think about their next step. It also meant that if they needed to do research or sketches, these could be done before class. This was really important because in a practical subject, they often resent having to spend their time doing theory.

This method both enabled them to see the need for, and link between, theory and practice, and to organise their work to get optimum benefit from class time. If they did have problems, they would note them in their diaries so I could see how they solved the problem.

Reading the diaries when they'd finished the project also gave me a chance to find out their feelings about what they'd done so I could see where they were coming from, instead of just looking at the finished product 'cold' at the end. The entries also showed me if the students had gone through the problem solving process themselves. If the student comes to me with a problem, I try to point them in the right direction with questions. The student often knows what to do but just hasn't gone through the thinking stage. They'd prefer to be handed the answer without the effort of thinking.

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