Level 1 Humanities – Mindmaps

PEEL in Practice: 1300 ideas for quality teaching
Sue La'Brooy, Jells Park Primary School

Integrated Unit Topic: *Structures and Shelters*

I decided to implement the procedure of Mind Maps into my classroom, something totally new for the children and me. Mind Maps were chosen rather than Concept Maps due to my level of expertise and the age and level of the children.

I asked the children to each complete a Mind Map at the beginning of the Integrated Unit; the purpose was to use this as a tuning-in activity to discover prior knowledge and then use this information for the planning and teaching of the topic. I also decided to get the children to do another Mind Map at the conclusion of the unit to help me assess their knowledge acquisition and ability to organise ideas.

This task required each child to organise his/her ideas and demonstrate this. I had found that if I used a Brainstorm, to gather this same information, children often did not participate for several reasons. By creating a Mind Map, every child contributed.

**Session 1**

Firstly, I needed to demonstrate what a Mind Map was, so I modelled one using 'Pizza' as the central idea. I then gave each child an A3 sheet with the title, *Structures and Shelters* printed in the centre. They were told to use drawings and/or words on the maps. This took one hour and the class was silent while they worked, fully absorbed. Unfortunately, if I corrected the spelling on a child's work (so that I could read it later) the child sitting next to him/her assumed I had given approval to an idea that I wanted. Mistake No.1!

Most of the maps had single links and some of the Preps had lots of lines without any words attached. It was obvious which children had knowledge, the extent of it and their ability to organise it.

I then displayed all of the maps in a viewed area of the school. I received positive feedback from staff members.

**Session 2**

Five weeks later, they did their second Mind Map on *Structures and Shelters*. This time, I gave them a blank piece of A3, and was interested to see where they placed the topic heading. This session took less time. The maps contained many more illustrations, more ideas, better organisation and some links. Most encouraging!
I hope to get the children to analyse their maps and determine 'What is a good one?'

I'd like the children to use their maps during the Integrated Unit for report writing or adding new knowledge. I hope to also use Minds Maps in Guided Writing as a planning tool for story writing or in Shared/Guided Reading to organise information gathered about characters from a story. I see this as a good basis for teaching Concept Maps. The possibilities are endless.

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