

Vignette 5

Enhancing homework practice

Abstract: In this class, Learning by Questions (LbQ¹) is being used about three times a week. It is also used once a week for homework; and for homework, the system marks the questions. In one class, all the children said that they liked using LbQ in class, but two said they did not like using it at home (in one case, because a father monitored use very closely).

Full vignette

This primary school takes children with a wide range of social, emotional and psychological needs. As an indication of the challenges the school faces, it is found that the learners may even have difficulty in ‘sitting still’. Learning by Questions (LbQ), a digital learning system, has been used since October 2017, and was found to offer a positive stimulus for those who found it difficult to work with paper and pen. For others, it was recognised that they could move forward using LbQ without needing to redo the things they might already know. In all cases, it was found that LbQ could provide the learners with instant success.

In a Primary 6 class (learners aged 10 to 11), the lesson topic was fractions. Initially, they were working on their own on iPads using LbQ. But many soon started to collaborate, and discussed the questions they were tackling in class. In this class, LbQ has been used about three times a week and has also been used once a week for homework; and for homework the system marks the questions. Of 17 learners in one class, all said that they liked using LbQ in class, but two said that they did not like using it at home (in one case, because a father monitored use very closely).

Another Primary 6 class has used LbQ in literacy lessons, such as those on grammar. Each Wednesday, they have used LbQ for homework – which they can access on a home tablet, personal computer, laptop, or mobile telephone. Learners in the class said that they enjoyed using LbQ, as it offered a break from other forms of activity, they got to use technology and learn at the same time, and they did not forget their homework. In terms of learning, they said that they liked LbQ because it offered tips for getting things right, they gained ‘good’ practice, learned from mistakes, gained instant marks, enjoyed problem-solving, different forms of questions, and gained help with different needs.

The teacher in this class said that LbQ had been used between two and five times a week, integrated into lesson activities at appropriate times. The interactive whiteboard in the room was used for other activities, for an introduction or plenary activity, or for more standard teaching methods. The teacher said that, using LbQ, she could pick up easily when the learners were finding something difficult, and could ask one to help another (supporting peer teaching). Learners worked in pairs for ‘reasoning’ and ‘problem-solving’ questions. LbQ was enabling practice for important activities, to provide for extra multiplication tables practice, for example. The teacher said that she could run three sets of questions together, and the learners did not know they were doing something different from the others (supporting differentiation in a positive way).

Outcomes and benefits:

- Increasing parental awareness of and engagement in homework activities

¹ <https://www.lbq.org/>