The Wig of Knowledge developed as a starter activity for a Year 7 mixed ability class in response to the issues faced with a class arriving from multiple locations across a large school site without an allowance for movement time. Students were arriving in small numbers and it was taking as long as 15 minutes to get everyone into the classroom, settled and engaged. This loss of time and disruptive start to each 15-minute lesson required a starter activity that would make effective use of the time and establish clear routines and expectations.

The starter activity needed to:

- act as a drill activity
- engage students to encourage prompt arrival at the lesson
- establish a clear routine at the start of each lesson
- set clear expectations of behaviour upon entering the classroom
- relevant to current learning

Upon entering the classroom, the prompt arrival at the lesson as a drill activity would make effective use of the time and establish a 50-minute lesson required a starter activity that considers these activities to set the tone of the lesson and why the student is present. This recognition for the student and clarifies the focus of the lesson in which 'to signal straight away how you expect student behaviour.'

By creating social norms, removing the query of ‘what is and is not acceptable conduct and reduces student anxiety.

Gershon (2011) identifies starter activities as a way in which to signal straight away how you expect students to behave, learn and interact. The use of a regular starter activity develops a sense of recognition for the student and clarifies the focus of the lesson and why the student is present. This recognised routine is supported by Cowley (2014) who considers establishing a pattern for a lesson as a key tool in behaviour management.

In his 2017 report focusing on optimising behaviour in schools, Bennett recommends establishing routine to remove uncertainty about school expectations. Bennett states this can save time and effort by avoiding repetitive instruction by creating social norms, removing the query of 'what is and is not acceptable conduct and reduces student anxiety.

Gershon (2011) recommends using open ended questions to get all students thinking and considers these activities to set the tone of the lesson by establishing a 'purposeful atmosphere in which the teacher is in charge and the students are ready and willing to work.'

At the end of each lesson, a brainteaser question is shared with the class which forms part of their homework. The brainteaser requires them to investigate a topic that relates to current learning and bridges a link with the next lesson.

At the start of the next lesson, students collect a ‘strand’ upon entering the classroom and add as much information as they can to this. Students are encouraged to share facts, thoughts, ideas and opinions. The strand provides an opportunity for expression without fear of getting the answer wrong which is crucial to reducing student anxiety and encouraging engagement, discussion and sharing of ideas within a new subject area. Once everyone is seated, students share their strands with one another. The strands provide a starting point for a discussion and with minimal teacher led instruction, students can share, discuss and challenge one another's strands.

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