

Iain's story about Keith

Student Story

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Keith is an interesting young man. He seems quite unsure of himself at times, he is worried about every activity he is given.

How do I know this? Because he verbalises every thought, every emotion, at every opportunity. The only times I don't hear from Keith about what he is doing and feeling is when I ask a question to the class. Then, and only then, is he conspicuously quiet.

Keith had a "Jurassic Park moment" today in class. There is a scene in the movie where two children are approached by a T-Rex. The premise is that this particular dinosaur can only see you if you move. If you remain completely still then the dinosaur is blind to your presence; its visual acuity is based on movement. Keith raised his hand and answered a question to which I replied "Can you explain your answer?" Keith became completely still, his breathing slowed, he stared straight ahead, avoiding eye contact with me. I moved towards him, leant in and whispered in his ear "I am not a T-Rex, I can still see you!" It was a classic moment. Keith laughed, as did the class, but it gave me the opportunity to talk to the whole group about what they should expect when they give an answer. They would be asked to explain the answer. It could be during a whole group situation or small group work when working out problems with peers.

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As the lessons go on, Keith is more prepared to ask questions about what he is doing or what he is having difficulties with. He is answering more questions when asked, and is sharing his thoughts about maths with the whole class.

Positive reinforcement is something Keith needs to right his sinking ship. He is often on the right track but has negative thoughts about his work. It is a good thing he talks about his dramas and is prepared to share his worries with me.

Keith's latest thought that he shared with the class was about ratio. I asked the class about ratios and fractions—any thoughts, ideas, similarities etc. After several members of the class shared their thoughts (some that were way out there) Keith raised his hand and uttered the words "Hungry Jacks". Hungry Jacks is a common theme with Keith. When asked earlier in the year about where we could find maths outside of the school setting he answered, "Hungry Jacks!" Of course, on that occasion, he was spot-on and he went on to explain his answer, citing examples of money changing hands and staff having to order supplies as well as customers reading the menu board in the restaurant (so they could work out how much their meal would cost and whether they had the money to pay for it). This time Keith explained his theory of burgers to buns ratio. In the old days you would have had one burger to one bun. Today however, with double whoppers and double cheeseburgers, you have two burgers to one bun (or it could be three burgers to one bun if you ordered a triple cheeseburger). Thus the Hungry Jacks ratio theory is born – I do love my class sometimes!



Finding 5.4: Feedback

Provide feedback that is timely and promotes success in future learning.