

Collaborative Question and Research

Example Lesson: An Introduction to the Solar System

Time: Can be varied (25 minutes in this case). Once the children have learned the approach, it can form starters, main independent work, collaborative homeworks, or even registration activities.

Overview: The aim of this learning approach is to improve the *questioning, research and collaborative skills of the children*. The methodology and skills learned can be applied across the curriculum, and in a variety of situations.

- Each group is given ownership of a 'Expertise Padlet' which covers an aspect of the Solar System; for example, the Moon. Using one of their group laptops, the children have to act as experts and answer any questions posted onto their board by the other groups, using the websites they have been given to carry out research.
- Whilst researching the questions, the group also has to use the other laptop to generate questions and post these onto the Expertise Padlets of the other groups to research.

In this way, the class will very quickly build an information bank about the Solar System. You could ask the children to present their answers to the rest of the class, but one of the things that I like about this approach is that ALL children have to ask and answer questions. It is also anonymous - reducing the stakes of the questions whilst ensuring that these key 'soft skills' are just practised by confident children.

Differentiation:

- Support can be provided by creating mixed-ability groups
- Access to specific boards can be restricted depending on ability
- Higher-ability groups can be tasked to ask higher-order questions and provide higher-order answers
- Example question prompts can be given
- Children can be asked to leave written / audio or video responses

Equipment Required:

- 2 Laptops or tablets per group + Internet access
- 1 printed task sheet for each group

Preparation Required:

- Enough 'Padlets', commensurate with the size of the class / groups.
- A bit.ly account to simplify accessing the websites
- A list of research websites to help the children

Tracking progression and providing evidence: Very easy to print off the Padlets or take screenshots of the work.

For extra-added awesomeness:

- Why not share the padlets with parents (either before or after the lesson) and get them to generate some questions for the children?
- Or put a 'view only' page or QR code in the school newsletter? Or even better - post the links on Twitter or school blogs - asking for comments and feedback? The children find having an audience incredibly motivating - and it's a great way to raise the profile of the school!