

Timely thoughts on analogue time...

It is not all that often these days that I meet someone in the course of running Professional Development who seriously challenges my thinking. I love it when it happens. I crave that moment when my brain speeds up and everything around seems to come to a stand-still. This week, having drinks with Val Westwell after running two days of training for the Adelaide Hills region was one such time...

Val challenged my thinking about how we teach reading analogue clocks. I have always taught by taking off the minute hand, leaving only the hour hand, but Val takes it one step further.

She takes off the numbers.

Now I realise how this sounds, but just go with it for a minute and see if the effectiveness blows your mind like it did mine.

Val turns the clock into a giant spinner, and replaces the numbers with kids' names. Instead of telling the time, kids start with saying whose name the spinner lands on. When the spinner lands between two names, the kids decide if it is half-way between or closer to one of the names.

The next level progresses, with the names replaced by numbers. The kids simply decide which number the time is closest to.

Once this has been mastered, the minute hand is introduced as a way of working out which hour the time is closest to and increasing the accuracy level. Is it past half way? How close is it to the next number?

By making simple connections to what the students already know, Val has introduced time in a revolutionary way. I can't wait to see the photos!