

What are Numeracy teachers doing right at Sheffield College?

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“I enjoy maths for the first time in my existence”. (student)

Aim

To identify and share good practice in the teaching of Numeracy at Sheffield College.

Objectives

To compare and contrast the numeracy provision at Sheffield College with an outstanding college.

To visit numeracy classes throughout Sheffield College to identify good practice/resources that can be shared across the 3 main sites.

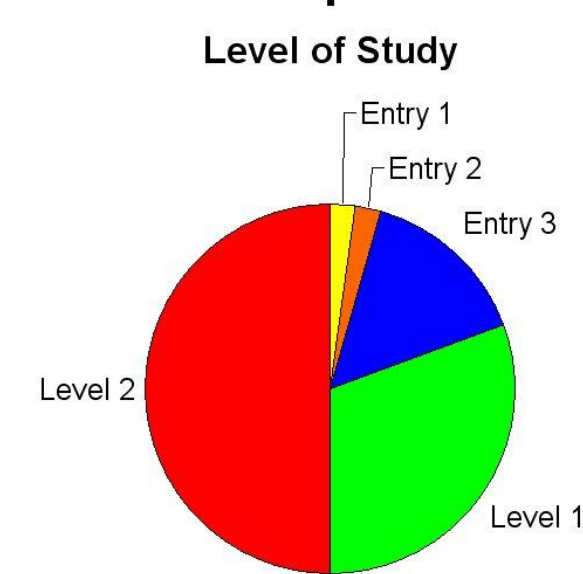
To survey all adult numeracy teachers, enquiring about good practice already in use.

To survey adult numeracy students in their lessons to discover their opinions about numeracy lessons.

What the students think.

*48 adult students from all 3 sites were asked their opinions on Numeracy lessons.

*They were studying a variety of levels.



Students were asked “Is there anything you would like to say about your Numeracy lessons?”

All but one student made a positive comment. Here is a small sample.

They have boosted my confidence in conquering my life long fear of maths. When I started in 2010 doing L1 numeracy I almost gave up. I also enjoy the social aspect and have met some lovely people I'd like to keep in touch with after the exam in June.

I LOOK FORWARD TO MY MATHS LESSON. THERE IS A GOOD RAPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM AND EVERYONE IS THERE TO HELP EACH OTHER.

I'm finding being a mature student that if I'm stuck on anything I've got the confidence to ask for help and the tutor always has a better way of explaining it to me.

ADULT LEARNING IS BETTER IN MATHS BECAUSE IT IS MORE RELAXED AND PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE THERE AND LEARN.

I AM GETTING BETTER AT WORKING THINGS OUT AND TEACHER MAKES IT EASY TO UNDERSTAND. WHEREAS BEFORE IT JUST LOOKED IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE. TEACHER IS AMAZING.

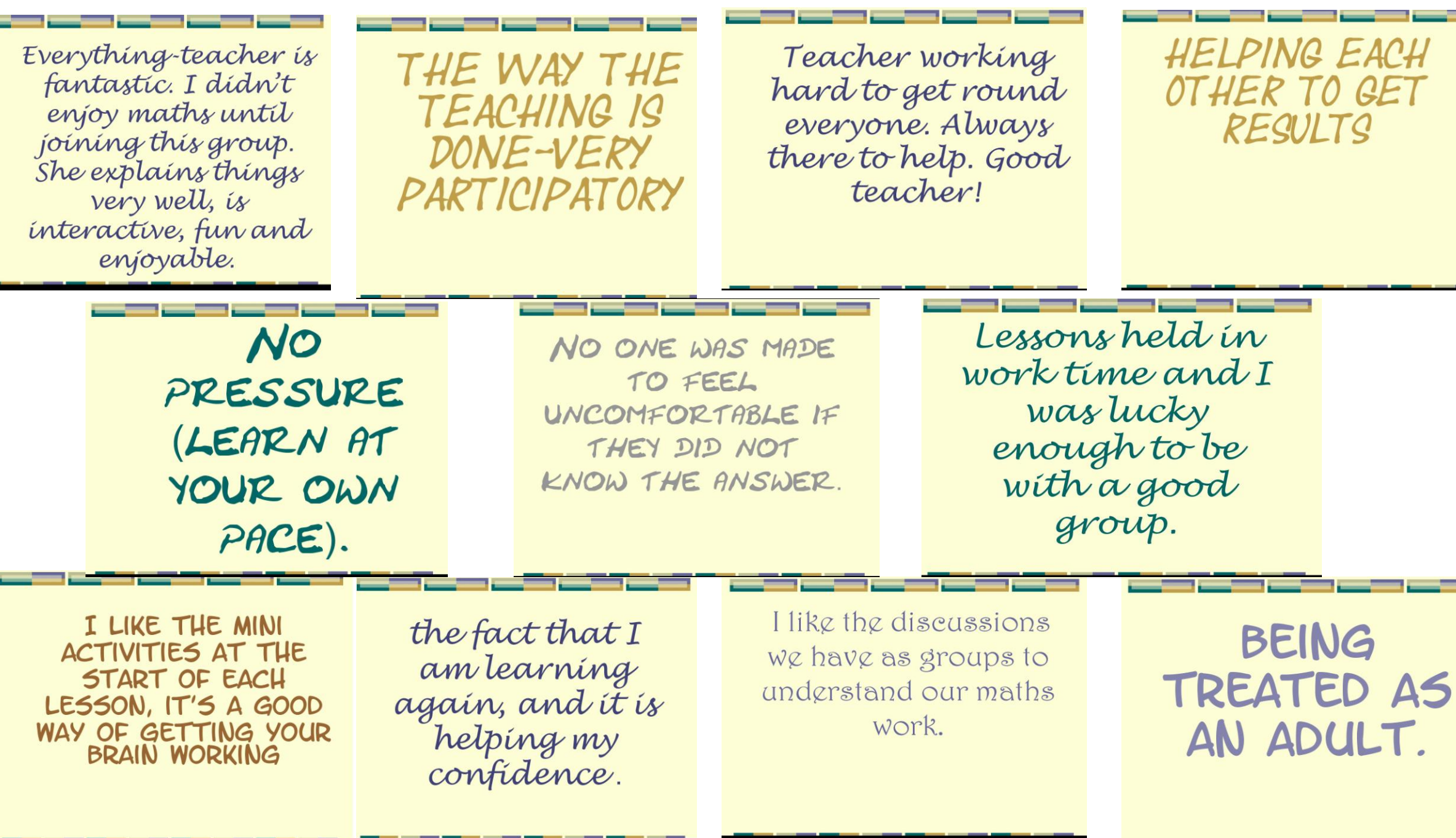
I enjoy maths for the first time in my existence.

I found it interesting and am really pleased I did it- it gave me confidence. The tutor was very patient and got me through to level 2 which I didn't think I would achieve. Thanks to him!

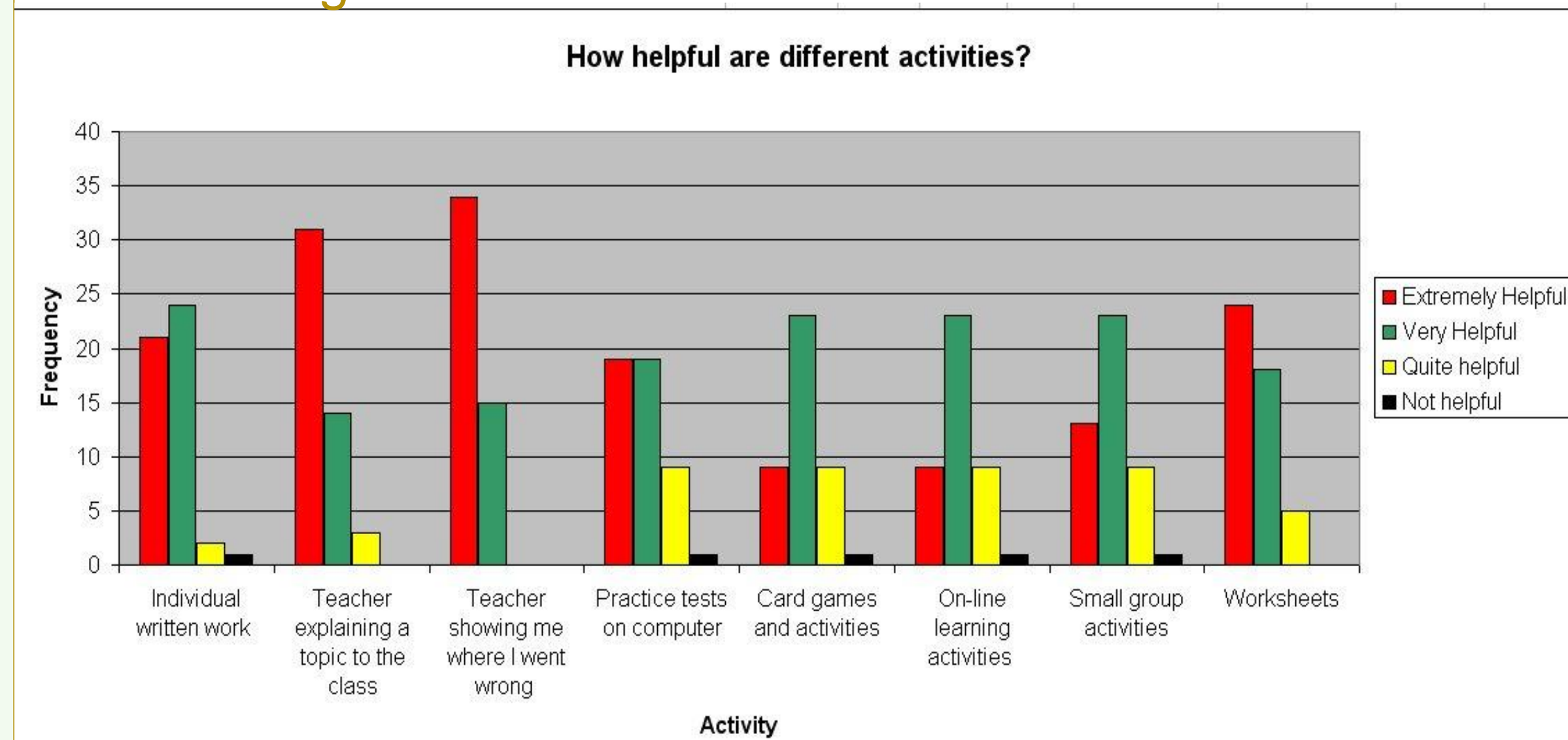
I really enjoyed the sessions-teacher is very supportive in his explanations to individuals and groups. I would recommend this to anyone wanting to learn or refresh their maths.

Students were asked “What do you like most about your lessons?”

The responses were extremely positive. Here is a small sample.

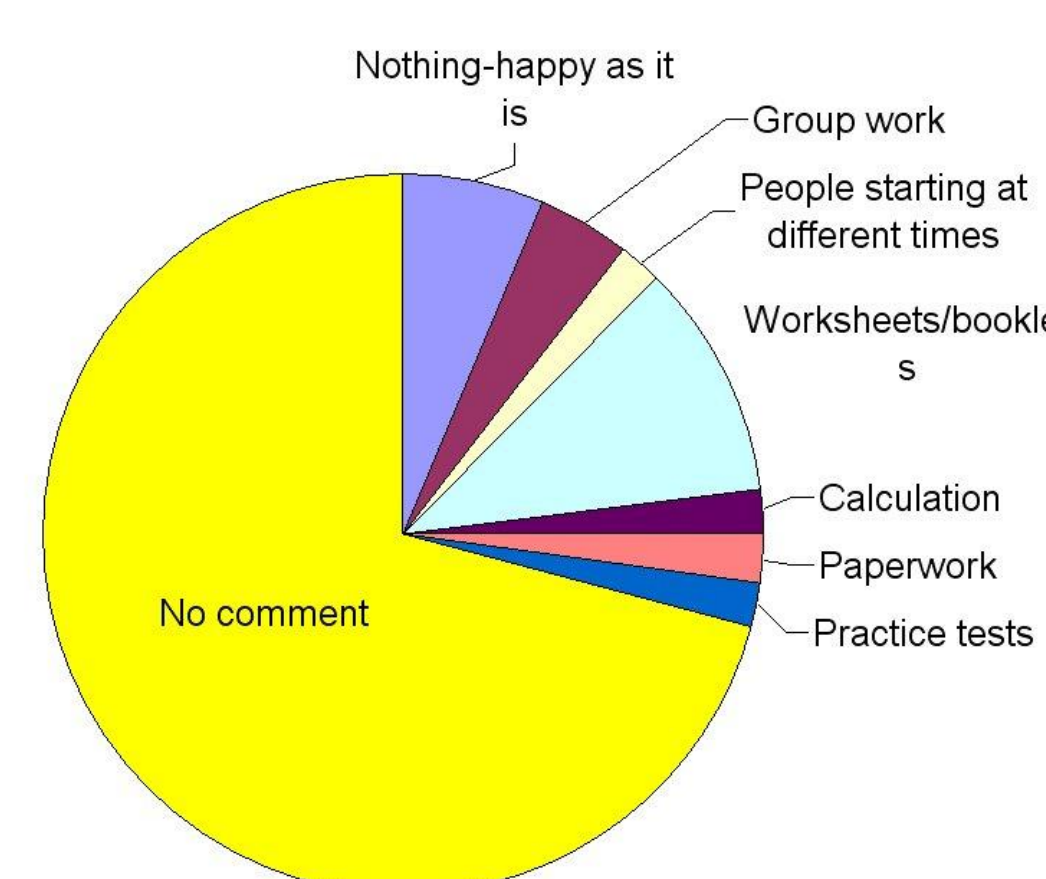


Students were asked how helpful different activities were to their learning.



Students were asked “What would you like to do less of in your lessons?”

83% replied “Nothing” or didn't respond



Students were asked “What would you like to do more of in lessons?”



Conclusion

Students are overwhelmingly satisfied with numeracy lessons at Sheffield College.

What the tutors think.

The 11 Numeracy teachers at Sheffield College were surveyed. There were 7 responses, 2 from City, 1 from Hillsborough and 4 from Norton.

Tutors were asked “What resources are available in the classrooms where you teach numeracy?”

Tutors that teach in the workplace or the community have to manage without many of the resources that are on the main sites, but even main site students do not have access to computers in most classrooms.

Many numeracy teaching rooms lack basic resources such as mini white boards, active learning resources, calculators, measuring equipment, shapes and traffic light cards.

The problem is partly lack of storage facilities. A typical comment from staff when asked about active learning resources was “I make my own but there is nowhere to store them here”

Tutors were asked “Are there any resources that you are aware of that are not currently available that would improve your students learning?”

IWB software such as Mymaths or Whiteboardmaths or Boardworks. More active learning resources

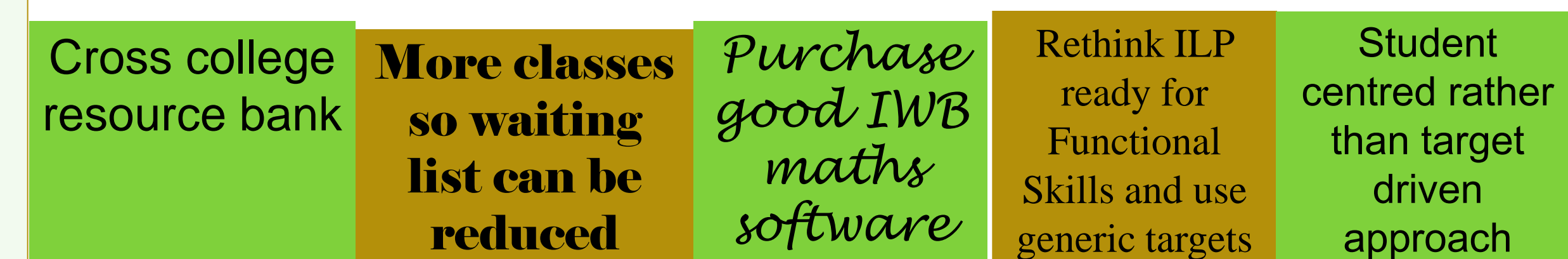
Tutors were asked “How often do your students do the following?”

Homework	30
Get verbal feedback on progress	30
Individual work	30
Fill in diary sheets on ILP	26
Group work	25
Get written feedback on homework or assignments	24
Use active learning resources	22
Do practical work eg measuring/weighing	19
Practice tests	18
Do open ended tasks such as investigations.	11
Fill in review sheets on ILP	10
Watch a presentation (eg powerpoint/video)	10
Use mini white boards	6

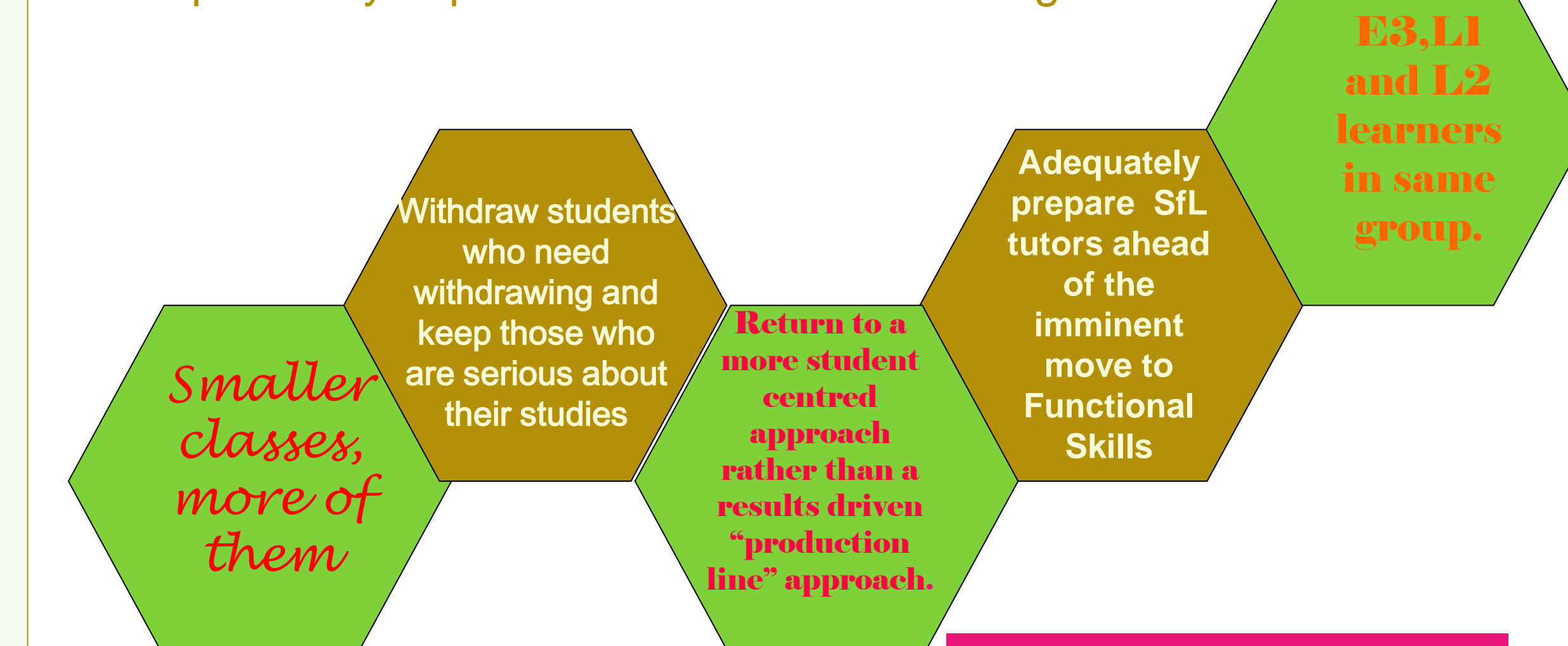
By using a points system I constructed the following league table of most frequent activities in class.

The low use of presentations is partly due to the lack of projectors/IWB but also lack of good software. Low use of mini white boards may indicate a training need.

Tutors were asked “If there was one thing you could change to improve numeracy teaching at Sheffield College what would it be?”



Tutors were asked “What single action could Sheffield College take that would positively impact on our students learning.”



Tutors were asked “Which of the following websites do you encourage your Adult Numeracy students to use?”

The most popular sites were

1. [move-on.org.uk](http://www.move-on.org.uk)
2. [bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise)
3. [skillsworkshop](http://www.skillsworkshop.com)
4. [mathswithgraham.org.uk](http://www.mathswithgraham.org.uk)
5. [bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)
6. [you tube](http://www.youtube.com)
7. [transum.org](http://www.transum.org)

How does Sheffield College differ from an outstanding College?

A team from Sheffield College visited Bradford College in February 2012. Things that impressed us included

- A continuously staffed maths workshop where students from any course could access support with maths.
- Every classroom had an interactive white board.
- Mymaths/whiteboard maths resource for Interactive White Boards.
- The new Edexcel qualification Level 1/2 Number and Measure which may be ideal for our ESOL 16-18 students.

The most significant difference between the two colleges was that Bradford had a much stricter initial assessment procedure which excluded students who were unlikely to pass.

What is changing at Sheffield College as a result of this research? Recommendations

- We are investigating which IWB maths package will be best for us.
- We are producing a comprehensive set of Tarsia puzzles for each site to be stored in Learning Centres.
- We are considering offering drop in maths workshops.
- We have created a cross college network folder to share resources.
- We are looking at how we can improve the enrolment process to level classes and ensure students are on a course where they will succeed.
- Publicity to use some of the student quotes to advertise numeracy lessons.

Literature

Ofsted: A good adult numeracy tutor. 2011

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/tackling-challenge-of-low-numeracy-skills-young-people-and-adults>

Ofsted: Sheffield College Report 2010

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130531>

Collaborative Learning in Mathematics. Malcolm Swan 2006

Prosperity for all in the global economy- world class skills. Leitch Review of skills
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

Mini white boards and discussion

<https://www.ncetm.org.uk/community/thread/9232>