

CREATAHOLIC

CONVERSATION WITH A CLASSROOM TEACHER

USE OF READING AND WRITING STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM



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Diversity in the Classroom

8) What strategies do you implement to overcome reader diversity (non/poor/ESL)?

Vocabulary, Vocabulary, Vocabulary. Geography is heavily based on vocabulary that most students have not encountered before. I use lists of key terms religiously especially for poor and ESL readers although I do find it useful for all of the students. I pay extra attention to those students who may require additional help and privately ask them if they understand what they are reading when I walk around the classroom. I am currently trying to find out what level all of my students are because we haven't had the reports yet for those who have been identified as exceptional learners. Those students who are identified qualify to receive extra time for writing tests and handing in assignments. If students have not been identified, but are borderline and tend to struggle with deadlines, I try to offer them extra help and be flexible.

9) Are you concerned with student's use of the traditional "business-english" within the classroom?

No, although I do correct for grammar. The Peel Board of Education is offering classes for dialect in the near future.

Personal note: Upon reflection, I am not sure if Jane was clear on what I meant for dialect, and I believe she assumed it was for students coming from other countries who spoke with an accent. I would think that dialect is more a problem for inner-city schools versus suburban schools, although I could be wrong.

Lesson Planning

10) What types of pre-reading strategies do you use to arouse curiosity with your students?

Discussions. I use cartoons in my History classes, but it would work for geography too. I often read to the class. I do reading comprehension quizzes at the end of a selected reading and tell the students before they do their readings that this will happen. The applied class likes the idea of a reward ("candy") for doing a task.

General Use of Reading and Writing in the Classroom

11) What other specific advice do you have about using Reading and Writing Strategies in the classroom?

Encourage the students to read. Read anything! It doesn't matter what they read, as long as they read. This will increase their ability to write with improved sentence structure, word context, and vocabulary. I also use peer editing. This makes the student aware of mistakes that others make and forces them to think about structure, grammar, and vocabulary.

In conclusion, I found this to be an accurate description of Jane's classroom techniques. I also found that many of the concepts we are currently learning at D'Youville were not evident in her classroom, such as; scaffolding, pre-reading exercises, and group work that encourages active learning. It seemed to me that the students in the applied class were there to get the credit and get out. There was no major impact being made on their life, it was just another classroom, another teacher, another day at school. Jane had mentioned that the curriculum was so "jammed" that it was difficult to incorporate extra "fun" material into the classroom. I am still of the "naïve" opinion that all learning can be made interesting and fun, and that teachers can make a difference in the lives of "high-risk" students—silly newbie!☺