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*Sincerely,
Karen Haag*

Steps Toward the ULTIMATE GOAL --- Managing small-group instruction.

ROOM

1. Room is arranged for whole-group and small-group activities.
2. Whether in minilesson time or group time, students are able to turn and talk to a partner easily.
3. Support for learning is in the classroom and on the walls, which may include charts, word walls, spelling dictionaries or buckets, dictionaries, classroom libraries, daybooks, portfolios, student bulletin boards, etc.

INSTRUCTION

4. Instruction includes teacher modeling, student exploration, whole group closure that brings all levels together, and reflective discussion/writing.
5. Instruction includes minilessons where teachers *show* students how to comprehend with the intent of asking students during closure to reflect on what they learned *about how to learn*, not content.
6. Teacher modeling includes think alouds – Keene says geared around ONE strategy when teaching a strategy. Think aloud integrates all strategies once students know how to use multiple strategies. (Same for read aloud.)
7. Closure addresses some sort of reflective activity like answering a 2-part I-learned statement, “What strategy did we learn today *and* how does that apply to what I will do in the world?”
8. Teachers plan for movement and talk within each activity.

GROUPS

9. Reading and discussion in small group of 4-5 students. 6 or more gives diminishing returns.
10. Most often, children read on an instructional level when they are with the teacher. However, teachers and students should be given other opportunities as well: grouped by interest, challenging texts, content, genre, independent reading level, book clubs, strategy instruction, etc. Teachers select appropriate reading material for different purposes and share objectives with students.
11. Children read texts in a variety of ways to maximize reading time for each child: rehearsal reading, echo reading, stop-and-think reading, silent reading, part reading. No round-robin or popcorn reading. No reading aloud of unrehearsed text in front of other students.
12. Teachers can use conversation structures, which encourage students to make sense of content: four-way share, think-pair share, book clubs, literature circles, notice and share, strategy study groups, interest groups, inquiry circles, Question the Author, Socratic Seminars, Guided Reading, Reading Workshop, etc. In this way, students talk more than the teacher during group time: Eventually, teacher releases responsibility for conducting groups to students.

ASSIGNMENTS

13. Differentiated tasks that involve choice whenever possible: So-What projects
14. Seatwork = Think Work. Students engage in meaningful work they’re doing when not with the teacher.
15. Students create personal work whenever possible.
16. Students read on 3 levels every day, as much as possible: (1) easy reading develops fluency, (2) just-right reading gives students opportunities to use strategies and build those particular reading muscles, and (3) challenging reading for vocabulary development and learning new text structures.

REFLECTIVE WRITING AND GRADING

17. Teachers do not grade notebooks.
18. When working in small groups, teachers assess who is with them and who is not. For example, students take risks by writing guesses in reflective notebooks. Teachers check to see whether students understand by asking to see specific pages.
19. Students record learning in a notebook. Instead of completing worksheets, students work on real-world assignments: take notes, try strategies, record thoughts, set daily goals, and assess progress, reset goals, draft, plan, guess, dream, predict, sketch – in a notebook.
20. Students reread notebooks to assess progress.
21. Teacher gives feedback about notebooks when meeting with students. Students use evidence from the notebook to support their theories or their progress towards goals. They sticky note their best pages for the teacher to read.
22. Students respond to texts in authentic ways. Teachers show students how thinkers respond to texts when reading independently.
 - Create Artwork
 - Code text
 - Create character charts
 - Slow down and think using double entry journals
 - React dramatically
 - Graph
 - Highlight
 - Map
 - Create Multi-Column charts
 - Outline
 - Write Quick writes
 - Reflect
 - Record thoughts on Sticky Notes
 - Sketch
 - Sort information (Venn diagrams)
 - Summarize
 - Synthesize
 - Make story maps/webs Talk
 - Make Timelines
 - Take notes
 - Underline
 - Write letters to other readers or authors
 - Write in the book
23. Students set and assess goals: sometimes daily or weekly, at midterm or end of term, after a unit of study or tests, after projects are due, etc. Students keep these written reflections in a portfolio to review their progress over time.

SITES with nonfiction texts:

FREE TEXTS: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/free-lesson-plans>

READING PASSAGES!!! <http://www.readworks.org/>

BrainPop Nonfiction Text:

<http://www.brainpop.com//socialstudies/famoushistoricalfigures/martinlutherkingjr/fyi/>

Internet4Classrooms: http://www.internet4classrooms.com/lang_mid.htm

National Geographic: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com>

Magazine (Youngzine): <http://www.youngzine.com/>

High Interest Selections: <http://www.dogonews.com/>

Newspapers