

ELA Strategies for Grades 4-6

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Instructional Strategies

Journals & Learning Logs

This instructional strategy lets students record their thoughts, feelings, and reflections on a variety of topics. Journal entries could refer to something discussed in your lesson, a relevant newspaper article, or piece of media. Journals can also be used for getting students to think critically about the course material and how it can be applied to the real world. This activity lets students make predictions, brainstorm ideas, connect ideas and even identify solutions to problems presented in class.

Think-Pair-Share

After presenting a lesson, pause for a moment to ask students to pair up with a partner. Have them discuss the material they just learned. Prepare questions, and after some time to discuss with their partner(s), students take turns presenting their observations to the rest of the class. Think-pair-share works especially well for the first few lessons of class, keeping students on their toes and interested in the material that is to come. It can also help recapture student enthusiasm reminding students that they aren't alone in their learning and that others share their views or concerns, and that there are different perspectives to support an issue that are worth considering beyond their own.

Assessment Strategies

Minute Papers

Pose a question about the day's lesson and give students a moment to reflect before writing down their answer on their own or in pairs. It helps to set a timer for think time and then release the students to write. The responses can provide valuable insight into student comprehension of the material.

Minute papers can be presented in a number of ways, but the easiest is a "ticket out," where teachers wrap up class a few minutes early. They ask students to answer what the most important thing you learned today and what questions do you still have. The first question requires students to think quickly, recall class material, decide on the main points, and put it into their own words. For the second, they must think further about what they've understood thus far.

Teachers can use the responses to determine how well students understand the material. Minute papers can also help students understand their own learning gaps. Once this is realized, both students and teachers can identify and address weaknesses. Reflection and writing should be part of a regular routine in all classrooms!



Classroom / Time Management Strategies

Verbal & Nonverbal Positive Reinforcement

Verbal reinforcement is given through words or sentences such as complimenting students or congratulating them for what they have done. Verbal reinforcement should always include describing the behavior. While non-verbal reinforcement is given through gesture, proximity, activity, token/symbol, and contact. When you see a student is doing well, acknowledge it by saying it aloud.

Nonverbal reinforcement is a form of social reinforcement that is delivered as a nonverbal communication. Such reinforcers would include nods of approval, smiles of delight, pats on the back, thumbs up, etc.

The benefits of positive reinforcement include: learns new behavior, increases morale & productivity, leads to better performance, and allows others to feel appreciated.