

## START: Characteristics of Effective Instruction



- Student Centered
- Teaching for Understanding
- Assessment for Learning
- Rigor and Relevance
- Teaching for Learner Differences

### Writing Breaks

**Why:** Enhances retention (70-90% range); expresses and deepens learning

**When:** During presentation, reading, or discussion

**Planning:**

- Decide when to insert Writing Breaks:
  - During lecture or large group discussion, every 10-12 minutes
  - During film, every 15-20 minutes
  - During in-class reading, find frequent natural breaks, every 10-20 minutes
  - After studying diagram, graph, or chart
- Write prompts that are engaging and elicit specific or higher-order thinking.



**Moves:**

- Organize students into pairs prior to lesson.
- Pause at the pre-planned spots and give prompts.
- Students write for a brief period.
- Students trade papers with their partners and read silently.
- Cruise the room to read over shoulders; use as assessment for learning.
- Follow with brief partner talk.
- May conclude with brief large group sharing.
- Before moving on, address any misinformation or confusion.

### Paragraph Frames

**Why:** Facilitates understanding and retention; provides structured way of using Write to Learn; eases the transition from narrative to content area writing; introduces students to organizational structures to convey information

**When:** After students have had the opportunity and time to work with the information. Use to review and reinforce content.

**Planning:**

- Determine text structure of passage to be shared.
- Create a simple model paragraph and copy the sentences onto sentence or transparency strips.
- Prepare a blank paragraph frame on chart paper or overhead.
- Create blank paragraph frames for student use.



**Moves:**

- Students arrange the sentence strips appropriately, based on content.
- Discuss structure and read the completed paragraph together.
- Complete the group paragraph frame together, using responses elicited from the students. This may be done the next day.
- Students use the paragraph frame to write their own paragraphs. This may be done the next day.

**Considerations:** Gradually let students fill in their own information within the context of a framed paragraph. It may be appropriate to only complete as a group rather than individually.

### Exit Slips



**Why:** Consolidates thinking, reflect, metacognitive thinking

**When:** End of a class period

**Planning:**

- Decide what to assess (i.e. comprehension, collaboration, skills, metacognition).
- Write one or more prompt(s) to elicit specific information or higher-order thinking.

**Moves**

- Have small cards available.
- During the last 3-5 minutes of class:
  - Pose the prompt(s)
  - Students write
- Collect cards as students exit the room.
- Review prior to next day's class period.
- At the beginning of the next day, address misconceptions, items of interest, humor.

## Admit Slips

**Why:** Consolidates thinking, reflect, metacognitive thinking

**When:** Assign as homework

**Planning:**

- Decide what to assess (i.e. comprehension, collaboration, skills, metacognition).
- Write one or more prompt(s) to elicit specific information or higher-order thinking.

**Moves**

- Have prompt written on *small* sheets to be handed out at the end of class as homework. You want brief answers.
- Collect as students enter the room the next class period, review quickly as they are handed in.
- Quickly address misconceptions, items of interest, or humor. May be used to prompt discussion.



## Drawing and Illustrating

**Why:** To consolidate background knowledge; build understanding of complex ideas and relationships; to enhance retention

**When:** Before, during, or after instruction

**Planning:**

- Decide what to assess (background knowledge, elaboration of complex idea, etc.).
- Write very specific prompt to get to the key concept being taught.

**Moves**

- Have paper/transparencies and writing tools available.
- Assure students they may use sketches, stick figures, etc. (It's not about the art work.)
- Provide drawing prompt—be specific:
  - May be quick individual sketch at start of class, used to contribute to whole class version on overhead; builds background knowledge collaboratively and teacher can address misconceptions
  - May be sketching during instruction—Read Aloud, video, demonstration, silent reading
  - May be sketch after instruction as Exit Slip
- Work the room and *quickly* address misconceptions—the visual is powerful.
- Students must draw their own—it is the creating that helps the brain understand, elaborate and retain.



## Picture Predictions

**Why:** To teach and use predicting to enhance comprehension of text

**When:** Before, during and after instruction

**Planning:**

- Choose a rich picture or illustration from the text to be read; should include some key elements from text.
- Copy onto Picture Prediction template.

**Moves**

- Pass out copies of Picture Prediction for students to study.
- Each student writes a prediction of what the text will be about and shares with a partner; may share some large group.
- Assign text or read text aloud, pausing as appropriate to allow students to confirm or change predictions and share.

**Considerations:** This may be done as a whole group or in small groups for kindergarten and first grade.



## Possible Sentences

**Why:** To share and build background knowledge; to use predicting to enhance comprehension of text

**When:** Before and after instruction

**Planning:**

- Choose 5 to 10 critical vocabulary words from the text.
- Record word list on chart paper, overhead or individual student sheets.

**Moves**

- Briefly introduce the topic and present students with the list of words.
- Students select two words to use in one sentence—a sentence they think might be in the text.
- Students record their sentences on the board, sentence strips or overhead strips. (This step may be done in whole group, collaborative groups or individually.)
- Assign text or read text aloud.
- Students evaluate the sentences—they may eliminate, revise or combine sentences in light of the information presented. The goal is not to match the text exactly, but to get the information correct.
- Revised sentences may be used for further writing and/or illustrating

**Considerations:** This may be done as a whole group or in small groups for kindergarten or first grade.

