

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Vocabulary / Writing Strategies*

Subject Area: Language Arts

Intended Grade Level(s): 4-Adult

Description:

This unit is formulated to develop written skills. There are four components to the unit. First, students will increase spelling and vocabulary skills. Second, students will develop critical thinking skills. Third, students will develop expository writing skills. Finally, students will practice language skills with non-traditional text: a newspaper. The four components develop a stronger more interesting way of teaching grammar skills. Many words found in traditional spelling and vocabulary text are not valuable to the students because they aren't used daily in the students' every day life. I found this lesson also integrates Social Studies and Language Arts. It will hook reluctant readers on a media form that should be an integral part of their life. It can be adapted to almost any level of reader by selecting the appropriate newspaper. I also found that you can't teach students all the vocabulary they need to know to be a skilled reader, so it's advantageous to develop the ability to make an educated guess.

Narrative:

I've found that this lesson, which I use all year, is an inexpensive and flexible way of expanding my curriculum. Last school year my class participated in an NIE(Newspapers in Education) program. Once students feel successful about formulating and expressing their opinions orally and in writing, I found that they become more interested in Social Studies.

Technology is very new to adult education because of the expense. This lesson is an easy way to introduce Windows™ and the Internet. Since I use this lesson plan every week all school year, I find I need to be creative so the students don't get bored. Here are some additional ideas (the only limit is your mind):

1. Spend more time discussing the article - develop oral skills.
2. Vary the quiz on Friday - I even use essay form.
3. Use as a springboard for longer papers - use the Internet for more information or another point of view.
4. Use to develop cause-effect.
5. Write sentences with new words.
6. Change the tense of all the verbs.
7. Change singular nouns to plural nouns.

Curriculum Benchmarks:**MI.ELA.I.HS.3**

All students will read and comprehend general and technical material. (Key concept: Employ the most effective strategies to construct meaning, such as generating questions, scanning, analyzing and evaluating for specific information . Tools: newspaper, paper or computer. Real world contexts: improve vocabulary and reading by using a living textbook.)

MI.ELA.2.HS.3

All students will focus on meaning and communications as they listen, speak, view, read and write in personal, occupational, and civic context. (Key concept: Determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary, and concepts in oral , visual , and written texts by using a variety of resources, such as context, research, reference material and electronic sources. Tools: paper, dictionary, computer, Internet)

MI .ELA.11.HS.1

All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.(Key concept: generate questions about important issues that affect them or society ; narrow the questions to clear focus; and create a thesis or hypothesis. Real world concept: letter to a politician, school board or local newspaper to express their idea or plan. I've also let students create a newspaper of their own with 6-8 weeks of clippings)

Detailed Timeline:

50-60 minutes/wk. for entire school year

Materials /Hardware /Software:

Pen, pencil or computer

Access to Internet or newspaper

Underline

Teacher Preparation:

I skim the newspaper or Internet for articles that will solicit an opinion: positive or negative. An example is: legal drinking, site of a shopping mall, parents' rights, cartoon, a piece of pending legislation, etc. I study the article and jot notes etc. so I can lead or push the discussion. I also underline the proofs or important facts. I select ten (10) words I think students should know or recognize. Early in the semester I underline the words in the article or cite the line they are located on. If you use the Internet, this step isn't feasible. I use an article near my students' reading level. Several examples are:

1. Christian Science Monitor - high school level
2. The Detroit News - middle level
3. The Grand Rapids Press - middle level
4. The Daily News (local newspaper) - lower or slow reader
5. The News and You (New Reader Press-published once a week) remedial

If my time is short, I use the article just for vocabulary or spelling. The 50 minutes/wk. doesn't include the time used on Friday for a quiz.

Prerequisite Student Skills:

I usually begin every year with a unit on study skills that covers the following areas:

- Skimming
- Using context to find meaning of words
- How to summarize an article
- SQRRR
- The dictionary
- Go over terms like suffix and prefix (they usually know, but need their memory refreshed)
- Rules for discussion - no put downs respect for others ideas etc.
- Check to see how proficient students are on the computer and Internet

Activities/ Procedures:

Reading the newspaper proficiently is an important step toward making students lifelong learners. I allow students to work together and share where they found cited words, how they would pronounce the new word, and where they found it in the dictionary. Sometimes it takes a couple weeks for the class to become comfortable expressing their own opinions to others.

The basic lesson plan is very simple:

1. Distribute the newspaper, the copy of article or find it on the Web site.
2. Locate (underline if paper copy) vocabulary words in the article.
3. Define words- in student's own words
 - * Encourage guessing by context
 - * Verify correctness in dictionary
 - * Evaluate their guess/work
 - * This builds prior knowledge for reading assignment
4. Read news article (paper or On-line) by self
5. Discuss article aloud in class to enable students to form an opinion
 - *Compare and contrast
 - *Pros and cons
6. Express their opinion in writing on either paper or computer.
7. Save the article and commentary in folder
 - * Refer to again - background material
 - * Use in longer writing assignment
 - * If time permits rewrite for correctness of spelling and/or grammar (can do later)

Assessment/ Evaluation:

I have a quiz at the end of each week on Monday's assignment. VALUE = 10 pts. I mix or match any of the following:

1. Dictate five words for spelling
2. List five words and their definitions
3. Matching
 - 1) Candor a. irritable
 - 2) Canny b. shrewd
 - 3) Cantankerous c. rule
 - 4) Canker d. frankness
 - 5) Canon e. bruise
4. T or F
5. Write a short (25 words) commentary on how this article affects your life. 2 bonus pts for using 2-3 words you learned in this lesson
6. Fill-in
7. Exchange papers(can do on a computer too)
Identify and correct any mistakes on friend's/partner's paper
I feel proofreading is an important step. If you can't locate errors, you can't correct them.

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