



JFF'S COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

SIX STRATEGIES TO BUILD COLLEGE READINESS

PHOTOGRAPH courtesy Metro Early College High School

COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK

In Collaborative Group Work, students engage in learning by constructing group solutions, texts, experiments, or works of art. Effective group work is well planned and strategic. Students are grouped intentionally, with each student held accountable for contributing to the group work. Activities are designed so that students with diverse skill levels are supported as well as challenged by their peers. They are planned around meaningful tasks in the subject area that are conceptually rich, engaging, and have multiple entry points for all students.

WRITING TO LEARN

Through Writing to Learn, students can develop their ideas, their critical thinking abilities, and their writing skills. Writing to Learn enables students to experiment every day with written language and to increase their fluency and mastery of written conventions. By taking time to write in low-stakes exercises, students actively engage in thinking about a concept. Writing to Learn increases equity within the classroom since students have time to try out their ideas in non-evaluative activities before they have to present them to a group or as individuals. Writing to Learn can also be used as formative assessment and as a way to scaffold mid- and high-stakes writing assignments and tests.

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding helps students to connect prior knowledge and experience with new information and ideas. Teachers use information from assessments of prior knowledge to plan a careful sequence of activities that continually links that knowledge and understanding to new knowledge and skill attainment. Teachers challenge students step by step with increasingly more difficult tasks and concepts to ensure they are continuously learning.

QUESTIONING

Questioning challenges students and teachers to use good questions as a way to open conversations and further intellectual inquiry. Effective Questioning (by the teacher and by students) deepens classroom conversations and the level of discourse students apply to their work. Teachers use this strategy to create opportunities for students to investigate and analyze their thinking, as well as the thinking of their peers and the authors they read in each of their classes. The mark of a highly engaged classroom is when all students are asking thoughtful questions on their own initiative.

CLASSROOM TALK

Classroom Talk creates the space for students to articulate their thinking and strengthen their voices. Classroom Talk takes place in pairs, in Collaborative Group Work, and as a whole class. As students become accustomed to talking in class, the teacher serves as a facilitator to engage students in higher levels of discourse. Teachers introduce and reinforce the use of academic language and encourage students to use that language in their classrooms.

LITERACY GROUPS

Literacy Groups provide students with a collaborative structure for understanding a variety of texts, problem sets, and documents by engaging them in a high level of discourse. Group roles or rounds traditionally drive Literacy Groups by giving each student a role to play and a defined purpose within the group. The specific roles or discussion guidelines may vary for different content areas, lengths of text, or students' levels of sophistication, but the purpose of Literacy Groups is to raise engagement with texts by creating a structure within which students actively probe the meaning of the text or problem set.

For more information, contact:

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