FOR-PD’s Reading Strategy of the Month

Quick-Write

October 2008

Rationale:

The quick-write is a basic literacy strategy that can be incorporated across the content areas. The purpose of the quick-write is to give students an opportunity to reflect on their learning quickly via writing. It usually involves posing a question and giving students a set amount of time (from one to a few minutes) to respond in writing. This writing activity can be used at the beginning, middle, or at the end of a lesson; usually, teachers allocate one minute to a quick-write. Younger and older students can benefit from the quick-write strategy. Punctuation and spelling do not usually count in this type of writing.

The quick-write is used as a reflective vehicle to reading/learning. Teachers could ask students to reflect on what they read/learned, key ideas from reading, problems they encountered, or questions they still may have about the text(s). Students can record their quick-write statements in a journal, on a note card, on a piece of paper, or on the computer.

A teacher can decide if students will share their responses with the class, or if the teacher will collect the quick-write at the end of a class (at times it can be used as a short learning log or an exit slip). Although the quick-write activity is not graded, some kind of response by the teacher is encouraged. The quick-write can be modified to meet curricular/learning goals.

Quick-write benefits:

- It is a non-threatening and quick activity.
- It encourages writing and promotes reading-writing connections.
- It facilitates critical thinking skills.
- It allows students to collect thoughts and to briefly respond to reading/learning.

Quick-write ideas:

- Use at the beginning of a class as a pre-reading strategy to informally assess and activate students' background knowledge on a topic, concept, or text.
- Stop in the middle of a class discussion or reading and ask learners to write about what has been said, what they read so far, and what key points they made individually or as a group (if they were working in small groups).
- Give at the end of the class and ask students to prepare at home and use as an opening activity for next class.
- After reading, working in a small group, or after researching a topic, ask students to do a quick-write to summarize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate or explain a concept/idea/problem.
- Read a poem or speech and ask students to do a quick-write about the entire poem/speech or some key aspect you would like them to reflect upon and write about.
- Use quick writes to encourage student-student or teacher-student discussion.
- Use quick writes as an exit slip.
- Split the class into groups: give 3 groups a minute to quick-write about the beginning of the book/story/text/topic, 3 groups to write about something that happened in the middle of the story, book, or event, and 3 more groups can write about the end. Collect all quick-writes and build the story/event/discussion/topic from students’ writing and ask them to evaluate as a class how well they captured the story, book, text, discussion, or event.

How to Use the Strategy:

For the purposes of this publication, we decided to streamline the quick-write strategy and apply a “template” to it that would allow teachers to obtain some targeted information from students’ quick-write activity.
The following template asks students to quickly report on key points they learned about a topic (from reading a piece of text, a book, viewing a video/film, a word, participating in a discussion, or listening to a presentation) and note some questions they still might have about the topic/book/issue at hand. This approach will also help teachers to get a quick glance at what students learned from what they read, heard, or discussed and they will also be able to use students’ quick-write questions to further explore the topic.

Use the following quick-write as an after-reading strategy. Give students one minute (or a maximum of three minutes) to complete it.

Example for Elementary Grades:
Example for Secondary Grades:

Assessment:

Teachers can use the quick-write strategy to informally assess (a) students’ understanding of key points read in a book/text or discussed in class; and, (b) questions students have about the topic, book, or issue at hand. Information from the quick-write can assist teachers in planning for further instruction, providing more
information on a topic, or creating small groups based on students’ questions that can further research a topic, book, or book character. The quick-write strategy can also be used to informally assess students’ writing.

Resources:

Composing Cinquain Poems: A Quick-Writing Activity (K-2 grades)
http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=51

Middle Web
Strategies and lesson plans for building the reading and writing skills of students in the middles grades.

The National Council of teachers of English (NCTE): Writing in the early grades (K-2)
http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing/research/113328.htm

The National Council of teachers of English (NCTE): Writing in the intermediate grades (3-5)
http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing/research/115617.htm

The National Council of teachers of English (NCTE): Writing in the middle grades (6-8)
http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing/research/113177.htm

References:


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