

Lesson Plan #3 – Reading

Title: Reading for tone and inference

Objectives: Using a humorous passage, students will

1. participate in sustained silent reading for 10 minutes;
2. listen to a read-aloud and follow along with their copy;
3. use fix-up strategies to resolve examples of unfamiliar vocabulary;

Session Time: 50-60 minutes (may take more than one session)

Materials: reading passage on the next page; pencils; highlighters; dictionaries

Methods: teacher-modeled reading strategies; silent sustained reading; teacher reading aloud to students; guided questions specific to comprehension.

Procedure

In this activity, students learn to build reading comprehension three ways:

- 1) through silent sustained reading that is modeled by the teacher
- 2) through listening to the passage being read aloud as they follow along
- 3) through the use of “fix-up” strategies such as highlighting or underlining text or words and consulting a dictionary, also modeled by the teacher.

Teacher - tell students:

“I want you to silently read this passage. We will take 10 minutes to do this. If this is not enough time for you to finish, don’t worry. Just get through as much as you can. I will read the passage silently to myself at the same time.”

Then, read the passage aloud to students while they follow along.

Then, tell them, “Now I want you to silently read it again for 10 minutes, this time using a highlighter or a pencil to mark any words you don’t understand or to put a question mark in the margins. You may also use a dictionary at any time to look words up. I will do this, too.”

Then, ask them:

- What is the article about?
- What did you highlight or underline?
- What words did you look up in the dictionary? How did this help?
- What made you laugh?. Why?
- Did you enjoy reading this article? Why or why not?”

Note: This lesson is included in the workshop, *Reading Comprehension: a multi-faceted approach*, in the *SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities*.

“Nippy or not, out go ‘Fern’ and company”

Before I left on vacation this month, I took all the plants that had wintered in the warmth of the house and put them out in the garden. Actually, I did it a couple of weeks ago. The woman at the local plant store advised me against it. It was too early, she said. Mother’s Day at the earliest, she said. But I did it anyway. I have ignored her before. She told me once that I live a reckless life.

One 80-degree day is all it takes for me to fling open the windows, get out the shorts and tell the Boston fern it’s time to let the spring breezes ruffle her frumpy fronds for a change.

Last April, I put the plants out even earlier, and I fear “Fern” was in a state of shock for a while. She turned a lighter shade of pale and didn’t really get her full coloring back until July. She made it, though, and now she’s back for another season of soaking up the sun, the rain and the smoke from the neighbor’s grills.

Every year at this time, my partner, Jack, says he can hear the houseplants screaming at night when the temperature takes a dip. I’ve never heard a thing. I think he’s making it all up to make me feel guilty. But I don’t. I believe it’s good for them. Makes them strong.

Like millions of you, I enjoy gardening. I just go about it my own way, and I’d bet my Smith & Hawken hose that many of you do, too.

I don’t know the names of most plants, other than a fern or two. And a rose, of course. I know a rose is a rose is a rose. And I know impatiens, although for years I thought they were called impatient, as if they were impatient to get growing. I’m well acquainted with them because most of my garden is in the shade, and those little guys are the only things that will produce for me.

But the rest? A mystery. We had our garden redone a few years ago by a landscape architect who came in and planted all sorts of things I’d never seen or heard of before. Quiet exotic-looking things bearing Latin names. Lucky for us, he left behind a blueprint, so when people ask what something is, I refer them to the plan. Otherwise, it’s all a green blur to me.

We have a friend from Toronto who can name every plant alive – not only in the confines of our small garden, but also when walking through the woods with the dog. I’ve always thought him a bit of a show-off.

To me, it takes the surprise out of gardening, always knowing what you’re dealing with. What fun is that? I love it when something thrives through no knowledge of my own. A few years back, a sunflower sprouted next to the street lamp out front. It grew so tall we finally had no other choice but to have the neighbors over to celebrate such serendipity.

I’ve even been known to traffic in poison ivy, which never fails to add an element of tension to any summer garden party.

Years ago, on one of those gardening shows hosted by English women with names like Priscilla Hobbyhorse, one such woman said gardening should be an adventure, that plants needed to be roughed up and slapped around every now and then (she was repotting at the time), their roots shaken to make them feel alive.

She has been my inspiration ever since. I just haven't heard any screams yet.

Source: Craig Wilson (*USA Today*, April 20, 2005)