

Teaching Students How to Talk to Each Other

Pre-AP[®] Strategies for Middle School English
Two-Day Conference
Oklahoma City Renaissance Hotel
December 12-13, 2008

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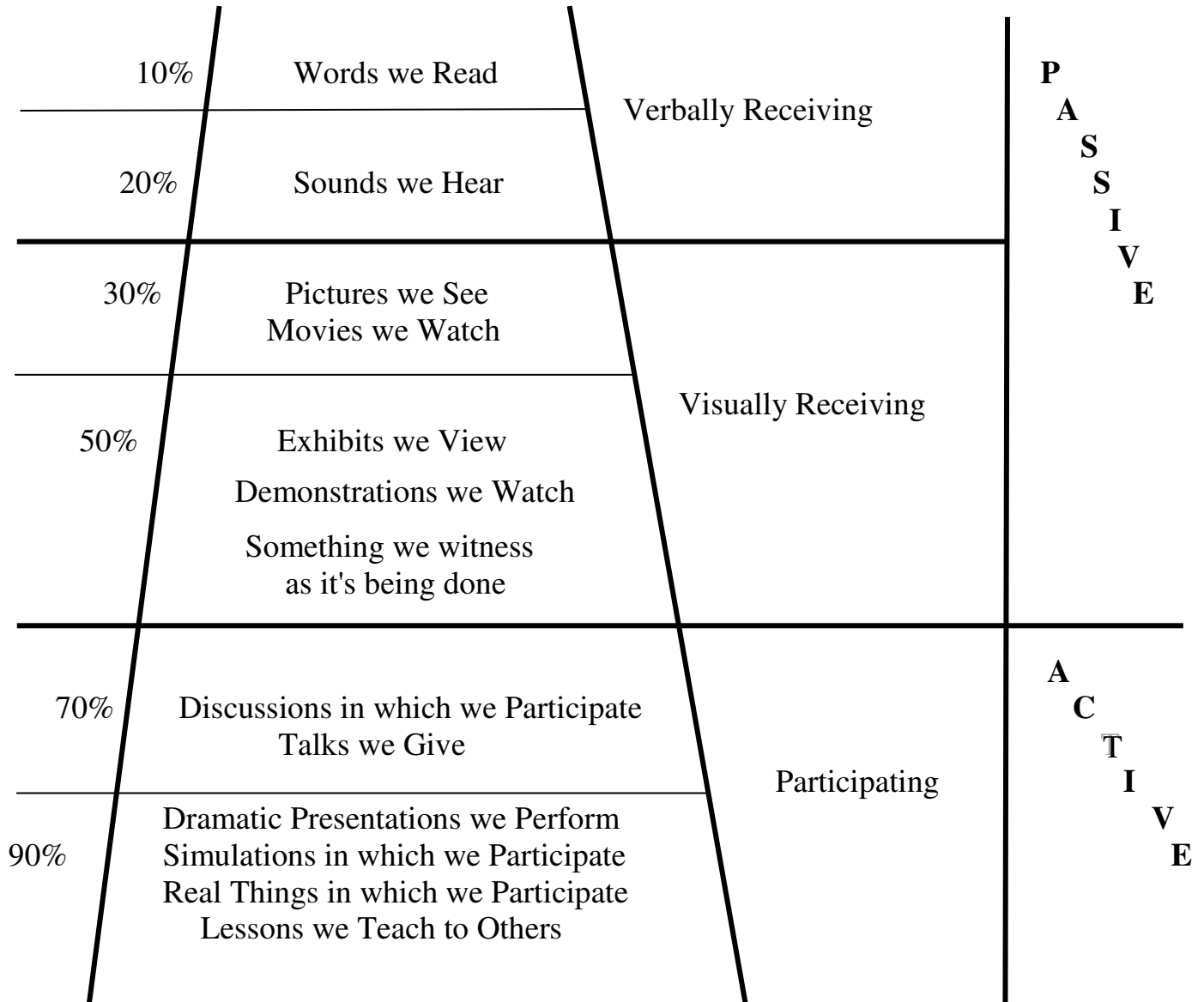
WE KNOW THAT STUDENTS RETAIN

20 % of what they learn through visual and aural means

50% of what they learn through a demonstration or an exhibit

70-90% of what they learn if they are giving a talk, participating in a class discussion, actually doing the real thing, or teaching someone else

The Learning Pyramid



Students who are active
in their learning WILL remember more.

Socratic Seminar

has four parts:

Opening Question: one general, introductory question; directs students to the text for the answer; relates to a more general topic, theme, or larger idea

EXAMPLES--From what you have read in the first two journal entries of "Flowers for Algernon," what kind of character is Charlie?

What evidence can you find to prove that Sal's mother has died?

What reasoning does the article give for NOT assigning homework to students?

Core Questions: 2- 5 questions which relate specifically to content; direct students to examine, evaluate, and interpret the information available in the text; require higher level thinking skills because responses are pulled from life experience, prior knowledge, and opinion; must be supported by evidence from the text, not pulled directly from the text

VARIATION--Have the students create these questions.

EXAMPLES-- From the companion article to "Flowers for Algernon," define *informed consent*.

Before his operation, is Charlie capable of giving "informed consent"?

What other evidence implies that Sal's mother is still alive? What do we learn about Sal when we learn that she has kept the secret of her mother's fate through the entire journey?

Is this author justified in saying that homework is "a scam"? Is unguided homework more harmful than helpful?

Closing Question: 1 final question; requires students to apply the situation to themselves or to the world; establishes relevancy of the discussion.

EXAMPLES--How would you refine the definition of *informed consent* to allow for Charlie's case?

How does reading about Sal help some people to deal with real life loss?

What can educators do to make homework more meaningful?

Extension:

Each Socratic Seminar must have a follow-up assignment--something simple like a journal entry, a focused free-write, a more involved essay, or a lab experiment to perform. The follow-up assignment rounds out the experience. It gives each student a chance to put down on paper some final thoughts which were brought up by the discussion or a chance to practice the ideas which were discussed.

Ground Rules

Participate Actively-speaking, listening and drawing others into the discussion.

Respect the opinions and ideas of others.

Refrain from interrupting.

Support your ideas with evidence.

Cooperate in a friendly debate.

Grading Criteria

A = Speaks twice, with no rule infractions & at least I mark in all other columns.

B/C =Speaks at least once, may have one infraction, and a missing mark in one column.

D/E = Did not speak, or broke many rules when speaking. Has only one column marked.

Inner/ Outer Circle has two parts:

Outer Circle: Students write and ask their own questions.

- coaching and modeling required
- Sometimes I give my students a few sample questions.
- When the process is still new to them, I give class time for writing questions.
- Students must have their questions when they enter the classroom.
- I take up questions to grade for content at the end of the circle event.
- There is no set order for questions.

Options for keeping Outer Circle engaged:

- o Students must listen to discussion to know when's the best time to ask the next question.
- o Students must take notes to use in answers they'll provide when they appear in inner circle.
- o Students receive points for asking impromptu questions which arise out of the discussion.
- o Students receive points for redirecting questions when inner circle does not answer adequately.
- o With hot seats, students can earn points for clearing up an argument in the inner circle.

Inner Circle: Students discuss answers to the outer circle's questions.

- coaching and modeling required
- My students get at least one practice run--not graded.
- In a practice run, I will stop them to redirect and comment.
- In the real thing, I will not stop them, no matter how off track they find themselves.

Options for keeping Inner Circle focused:

- o Students lose points for hogging the conversation.
- o Students have a certain number of candies which they may eat when they speak. When the candies are gone, they may not speak any more.
- o Students have a certain number of pennies which they may toss into a hat when they speak. When the pennies are gone, they may not speak any more.
- o Students receive points for successfully pulling in a reticent member of the circle, getting a quiet person to join the conversation.
- o Students receive points for settling an argument with evidence from the novel.
- o Students receive points for making a logical argument or quoting from the book.
- o Students receive points for using their dialectical journals in the conversation.

More Info Available at

Ayn Grubb's Website for Students and Teachers

www.mrsgrubb.com

- guidelines for grading
- examples of feedback given to students
- info about Socratic seminars
- structure of a Socratic seminar
- seating arrangements for Socratics and inner/outer circles
- assignments to give students before the inner/outer circle discussion
- sample questions
- and pieces of text

MAX Teaching with Reading and Writing

www.maxteaching.com

- more info about anticipation guides
- sample anticipation guides
- info about booking a MAX teaching seminar for your district

The National Paideia Center

www.paideia.org

- more info about Socratic seminars, the Paideia way
- order your own guide

The Story of an Hour

by Kate Chopin

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death. It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences, veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that bland persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking the very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE: How Students Learn Most Effectively

Before Reading: In the space to the left of each statement, place a check mark ✓ if you agree or think the statement might be true.

During or After Reading: Add new check marks or cross through those about which you have changed your mind. Keep in mind that this is not like the traditional “worksheet.” You may have to put on your thinking caps and “read between the lines.” Use the space under each statement to note the page, column, and paragraph(s) where you have found information to support your thinking.

- ___ 1. Students must participate actively in their learning in order for the learned material to become personal knowledge.
- ___ 2. The best place for low-performing readers to improve their reading skills is in a remedial reading class.
- ___ 3. Most students from kindergarten through twelfth grade can practice critical thinking about virtually any subject matter.
- ___ 4. In most school-related learning situations, students and teachers retain much more from what they discuss than from what they read.
- ___ 5. Teachers should rely heavily on the textbook as a tool to help students learn their subject matter.
- ___ 6. Through daily repetition of practice in using literacy skills to learn and process new information, students can become autonomous learners, without even realizing that the process is occurring.
- ___ 7. Reading is thinking – and students’ scores on most state-mandated standardized tests would improve if teachers were to provide students with guided practice in reading/thinking skills in their daily routine of course content instruction.