**EC-6 Content Specific Instructional Strategies**

1. **Think, Pair, Share**

The teacher will allow students time to work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned reading. This strategy requires students to think individually about a topic or answer to a question and to share ideas with classmates, maximizing participation and engagement.

**How to Use:**

**Read the assigned material**

Students will read/listen the assigned material.

**Introduce the question for discussion**

Ask students a specific question about the text.

**Think**

Students will "think" about what they know or have learned about the topic and write down their thoughts on a piece of paper or note card.

**Pair and Share**

Students will find a partner to share their ideas and thoughts with. They will then share these ideas with the class.

**When to Use:**

* Class introductions at the beginning of the school year
* Small Group Instruction
* Whole Group Instruction
* At the beginning of a lesson/unit
* Exit ticket

**Variations:**

**Turn and Talk:** All students are encouraged to participate in discussion, rather than only a few students participating in a class-wide discussion. All students are able to process new learning while engaging in meaningful conversation with a classmate.

**Purposeful Sharing:** Students lead the discussion.

**Stir-the-Class:** Teams stand around the outside of the class with spaces between teams. Teammates stand shoulder-to-shoulder. The teacher poses a question then students write their own answers on an answer board or slip of paper. Teammates huddle to reach consensus, then un-huddle when done. The teacher selects a number and tells students with that number how many teams to rotate forward to share their answers.

1. **Act It Out**

Teachers can help make academic concepts more engaging for students with visual and practical learning experiences, helping students to understand how their schooling applies in the real-world. By acting stories out, students can better comprehend stories.

**How to Use:**

**Select a Story**

Select a book that you think would work well. Choose one with characters that have strong personalities and clear roles in the story. Tell the child you’ll be acting out the story or poem. Then read it aloud together.

**Discuss the Story**

Briefly talk about what happens in the story: What is the problem? How it is solved? Ask students where the story takes place and who the main characters are. What happens at the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?

**Act It Out**

-Younger do not need to memorize a script. Let children do the best they can acting out the story by just choosing a character and recalling the lines of dialogue from the story.

-Work with older children to write a simple script that will help them remember their lines. The script can show exactly what the character will say or can just offer a prompt,

**Collect Props**

Let students gather props and think about scenery. Student may wear regular clothes and other accessories or make a project out of it by making masks or other costumes.

**Switch Roles**

Have students switch roles to explore how different characters react to the same events.

**Discuss Each Role**

After the performance, talk about what it was like to be a particular character. Ask the child: What do you think your character was thinking when that happened? What do you think the character will do next?

**When to Use:**

* Small group instruction
* Whole group instruction
* Morning meeting
* Exit ticket
* Reading stations

**Variations:**

**Logic Lineups:** Team members each role play a different object and use deductive thinking to sequence themselves.

**Journal Reflections (students write their thoughts, questions and what they learned):** Journal Reflections is a simple structure to help process academic learning and promote self-awareness. Students may record emotional reactions to anything which occurs in school: successes, failures, and relationships.

**One Stray:** One teammate strays from his/her team to a new team to share or gather information. A number is randomly called and that student from each team stands up, others remain seated and raise their hands when the teacher calls “Stray”. Students will then move to a team that has their hands up and work in their new teams to share of gather information.

1. **Choral Practice**

The teacher will give students instructions then check for understanding by having students repeat them back to the teacher. By doing so, the students are able to reiterate their understanding of the directions or activity at hand.

**How to Use:**

**Give instructions**

The teacher will give students instructions or ask a question. Instructions should use simple language, not be too long, and be easy for students to follow. As students get older, the instructions the level of difficulty and length of instructions may increase.

**Finish the Sentence**

The students will finish the teacher’s sentence, or repeat instructions, in unison back to the teacher to show understanding. This step may be repeated as necessary.

**Complete the Activity**

Once students have an understanding of the directions and activity, they will complete it and then turn it in. Teachers can then have students repeat the instructions to check for students’ understanding upon completion.

**When to Use:**

* At the beginning of an activity
* During small group instruction
* Whole group instruction
* Throughout the lesson to check for understanding of the assignment
* Right before students turn in the assignment

**Variations:**

**Choral Response:** At a cue from the teacher, all students say a response aloud, in unison. Often the response is the answer to a question, sometimes it is just a repeat of what the teacher say.

**Carousel Review:** Provides an opportunity to generate ideas, check understanding, and raise unanswered questions. Teams rotate from one poster to the next at given intervals, adding ideas.

**Corners:** The teacher will pose a question with multiple responses and have students stand in a corner that best fits with their answer/personality. The students will talk with others in that corner about why they choose their particular answer and share out with the rest of class as to why they understood it that way.

1. **KWL**

The K-W-L strategy stands for what I Know, what I Want to learn, and what I did Learn. This allows teachers to activate students' background knowledge, it improves comprehension of related texts.

**How to Use:**

**KWL Chart**

The teacher will give each student a KWL chart or blank piece of paper.

**Know (K)**

Begin a discussion with students about what they may already know about a topic, and begin brainstorming with students. Then ask students to discuss what they know and how they learned the information. They will then organize the information into general categories with the teacher’s help.

**Want to Learn (W)**

Discuss with students what they would like to learn about the topic by reading an article or story. Then have students write down specific questions that they are interested in learning.

**What I Learned (L)**

Ask the students to write down what they learned from the reading and class discussion and then check for the answers to the questions they came up with in the “W” step.

**Check for Understanding**

The teacher should check for understanding by comparing comprehension question answers before and after completing the KWL chart.

**When to Use:**

* For research activities
* At the beginning of a new activity/unit
* At the end of an activity/unit
* Enrichment activity
* Tracking activity during a reading lesson

**Variations:**

**Reading KWL:** Use a KWL chart to monitor learning while students are reading. As they read, have students come up with new questions in the “W” section and record answers to their questions in the “L” section.

**KWLS:** Add an “S” at the end of the KWL chart for students to note what they still (“S”) want to learn about the topic. This can be broken down into subsections: important information (I), where they found their information (F), and a list of information they would like to remember (R).

**Foldable Templates:** Have students fold a blank sheet of paper into thirds. Then open the paper and place on desk in landscape orientation.  Then have the students fold the top of the page 1 1/2 inches from the top.  Unfold again and lay flat.  The folded lines create the template for the KWL chart.  Label the top above the horizontal line with K, W, and L.

1. **Echo Reading**

The teacher can use echo reading by having students read text after a teacher reads the same text aloud in order to help students develop fluency, expression, and decoding skills. The teacher will model fluent and expressive reading while reading chunks of the text to the students. After listening, students will read aloud the same portion of text. Through modeling by the teacher and peers, students can learn to express fluency and expression into their reading.

**How to Use:**

**Select a Book**

Select a book with limited print that is familiar to students. This should be a predictable book, such as The Three Little Pigs or Little Red Riding Hood.

**Read the entire book to students**

First, the teacher will read the entire book to students.

**Chunk the text**

Next, the teacher will read one sentence, pointing to each word.

**Students Echo**

Students reread what you have read as they point to the words. The teacher will repeat this during the whole story. As students become more familiar with echo reading, the length students repeat may be increased.

**Check for Comprehension**

The teacher will check for comprehension by asking students questions about the text or having them complete a written activity about the events of the story.

**When to Use:**

* Reading—Small and whole group instruction
* Math--Teachers can have students echo read particular steps and procedures in solving a math problem. Students might echo read the problem itself, to ensure they are comprehending what the problem is asking
* Social Studies—to engage students in historical fiction text.
* Science—Introduce new topics using read alouds
* Writing—Teachers can have students echo read as they write text with the teacher

**Variations:**

**Choral Practice:** The teacher will give students instructions then check for understanding by having students repeat them back to the teacher.

**Gambits:** The teacher will supply students with useful phrases that are needed for a team to work together effectively. They could include ways to ask for help, check for understanding, disagree politely, encourage effort, etc. This allows students to reiterate what each of their team member is saying using different phrases.

**Choral Response:** At a cue from the teacher, all students say a response aloud, in unison. Often the response is the answer to a question, sometimes it is just a repeat of what the teacher say.

1. **Plan for Tiered Learning**

This approach relies on planning lessons at different tiers of difficulty. This allows teachers to develop deep and complex activities for gifted students while writing regular lesson plans, providing work at the beginning of a lesson, as well as more advanced extension activities at varying levels. Tiered assignments work well in skill areas where the student has not yet met the outcomes but can do so easily and requires additional challenge and potentially reduces the number of behavior issues caused by boredom. This challenges advanced learners more and serves other students better as well.

**How to Use:**

**Pre-test students**

Teacher need to be sure to pre-test students, or get an understanding of what level they may be on, in order to provide them with effectively differentiated activities.

**Create Effective Lessons and Activities for Students in Each Tier**

Teachers must write effective lesson plans that can be differentiated for all students, as well as provide corresponding activities for students in each learning tier to ensure that each student is able to learn the material effectively. The activities will vary from Tier 3 (easy) to Tier 1 (advanced).

**Assess Students’ Understanding**

Teachers should use informal assessments and hands on activities to ensure that each student understands the content.

**When to Use:**

* At the beginning of a unit
* The beginning of a lesson
* For station work
* For extension activities
* For unit tests

**Variations:**

**Extension activities**: When students finish early, allow students to do the extension activities at the end of chapter. These may be suitable ways for them to get the challenge and depth of understanding they require. Open-ended, real-world problems are also great ways to extend their learning.

**Mentorship:** A gifted student may benefit from contact with a specialist in their field of interest. This is particularly the case in lower grades when the teacher cannot keep up with the student’s capacity to learn the subject.

**Independent study**: In an independent study, the student selects a topic of interest in any academic area where he shows strength. The student and teacher work together to determine what materials will be needed, who will be involved, and the This works best for students who tend to finish their regular work quickly and correctly.