**October 2015**

**News you Can Use…**

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**Total Participation Techniques**

As we dig deeper in Gradual Release of Responsibility, we’ll take a closer look at the methods we use to engage students in their learning. You may already know how strategies like ‘think, pair, share’ or a ‘quick write’ can engage your students, but have you heard of these others????

**Whiteboard Splash**

*What it is -*

“What have you noticed about yourself as a reader because of this unit?”

“Which of these forms of pest management do you think is the best? Why?”

“What is the most important thing you learned about today’s topic?”

These are all questions that you could ask students to consider in a Pair-Share or a Quick-Write, but if you want the entire class to see the collective responses of their peers, then the best way to ask these questions may be in a Whiteboard Splash. All students record their responses onto random or assigned spots on the room’s whiteboard or on pieces of chart paper. After recording their responses, students are asked to analyze peer responses for three things: similarities, differences, and surprises.

*How it works –*

1. Create a sentence starter, prompt, or question for which you would like all students to see all of their peer’s responses.
2. As students generate responses, ask them to copy their responses onto random or designated places of the white board or chart paper.
3. Debrief by asking students to walk around, analyze, and jot down similarities, differences, and surprises, perhaps using a form like the one below.
4. Ask students to get into small groups and share what they noticed before sharing out with the whole class.

*Ensuring higher-order thinking –*

Whiteboard Splashes are great for addressing the big picture and the relevance factor with whatever topic you are teaching. For example, you may want to periodically use this to address the following prompt – “So what? Why is this important?” As the students analyze the responses of their peers, new learnings or questions may emerge!

**Processing Cards**

*What it is –*

Allowing students to take even a brief time to process their reflections to a prompt is critical if you want to get quality responses – especially if you have student with special needs or English language learners. This tool serves as a great unspoken reminder to student that they should all be in the process of reflecting on the prompt.

*How it works –*

1. Give students Processing Cards. These are index cards, laminated cards, or printed papers folded into “tents” that on one side say ‘still thinking’ with a yellow highlight or a picture of a yellow square, and on the other side say ‘ready to share’ with a light-green highlight or a picture of a green square.
2. Ask students to place the card on the edge of their desk, with the side that says ‘still thinking’ facing up or out.
3. As soon as the students have completed their task, they should flip the card over so that the side that says ‘ready to share’ is facing out or up.
4. Decide on an in-between activity that gives student who finish early an opportunity to apply or extend their learning.

**Numbered Heads Together**

*What it is –*

Numbered Heads Together allows all students to be held accountable for being able to relay information that was learned during a group activity. It is a way of ensuring participation and engagement during such an activity.

*How it works –*

1. Before asking the group to begin their activity, ask them to count off so that each group member is assigned a number.
2. It’s a good idea to confirm student numbers by asking all of the ones to stand, then all of the twos, then all of the threes, and so on.
3. Inform the students that all group members will need to be able to present their group’s information. Wait until after all group work is completed before informing students of the student number that will be presenting.
4. During the debriefing portion of the activity, call out the number for the team member who will be presenting for the group. Because they don’t know in advance which person in their group will be presenting the information, all group members are equally responsible for knowing the information discussed, as well as making sure that their peers know it equally well.

**\*LIKE THESE STRATEGIES? WANT ME TO MODEL ONE OF THEM IN ACTION? WANT TO SEE MORE LIKE IT? I HAVE 34 MORE!\***

Food for Thought –

“I don’t think I’ve ever met a child who wasn’t motivated to figure things out, to find the answers to personally relevant questions. However, I’ve met (and taught) plenty of kids who aren’t motivated to sit quietly and listen to someone else talk or to memorize the definitions of a list of words. That lack of interest doesn’t suggest an absence of motivation (to be remedied with carrots and sticks) but a problem with the model of instruction or with the curriculum.” Alfie Kohn, The Schools Our Children Deserve

Stop by my room for a chat!

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