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CI 403
Professor Willis
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Group Review: An Index Card Activity

Time and Setting

The lesson is a fifty-minute lesson in a Sophomore English Honors class. The class consists of twenty-five students, with thirteen females and twelve males. There are thirteen white students, five African-American students, four Asian students, two Hispanic students and one Native American student in the classroom.

Theory into Practice Background

This lesson is meant to help students prepare for the quiz on the following day. It is a reading quiz that has a sampling of questions based on chapter seven to twelve in *Catcher in the Rye*. It is meant to be a more low-key day in which they convene into small groups and review the reading section by asking various questions about the text that they may be confused about. While reviewing and quizzing each other, I thought it would be a good idea to have the students write the questions and their answers down on a designated sheet so they can refer to it when they are home studying. This also gave me the opportunity to address note-taking, a vital practice that becomes more vital as they progress in high school and beyond in college. They would not be taking notes from *Catcher*, but from listening to their peers' suggestions and answers to their questions that can help them comprehend the text and perform well on the quiz. Throughout my past two years at the University of Illinois, I have heard how important it is to model activities, to do the assignment yourself so you can see the flaws or issues that can be raised, as well as show students good reading, writing and speaking practices. Modeling is a valuable practice to many researchers, including Penny Kittle, which we had read some of her work in my English 482 class, *Composition Theory and Practice*. In this case, I wanted to show students the kind of notes I was suggesting, which is something Kittle feels is crucial, "we don't learn many things well just by following directions. We have to ride together. The apprenticeship with a master in the field is still the best model for learning" (Kittle 7-8). Yes, the main goal for the students is to have questions and concerns about *Catcher* and the quiz answered and understood, but it is also important that they learn how to take effective, quick notes so they don't miss out on important information or go home and cannot understand their scribbles on the Note Sheet. By asking a question to the class and taking notes based on their answers and suggestions, the students can see what I expect and consider this example when writing their own notes. The lesson will not only help them prepare for the following day's quiz, but also with taking notes in and out of class.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

- Review the reading material effectively to prepare for the next day's quiz
- Demonstrate communication skills through the group review session
- Practice effective note-taking skills

Materials

- Copy of *Catcher in the Rye*
- Index Cards
- *Catcher* Notes Sheet
- Overhead
- Transparency of *Catcher* Notes Sheet

Preparation

Prior to the beginning of class, copies of the *Catcher* Notes Sheet- and transparency- need to be made as well as the Quick Write needs to be written on the board. Also, review groups of three or four should be arranged by the teacher so the most productive groups are made. The overhead should also be in position, ready to go.

Procedure

- As students come in, they will be instructed to begin the Quick Write
 - Allow **ten minutes** to respond to, “Think about how Holden talks about Jane Gallagher. Do you think he loves her? Or do you think he’s mistaken his sympathy for her for admiration?”
- Collect the Quick Writes as you explain the quiz (see below)
- Remind students of the format of the quiz (students have taken a quiz similar to it)
 - Four multiple-choice, two true-false, and two short answer questions (**three minutes**)
- Pass out one index card per student, ask them to write down two questions they have about the text. Ask them not to put their names on them for the sake of anonymity. Allow **five minutes** to give students time to think of questions.
- Pass out the *Catcher* Note Sheet, explain its purpose briefly and then model a question.
 - Ask and write on the transparency the question, “Why does Holden go into Ackley’s room after his fight with Stradlater if he doesn’t like Ackley that much?”
 - Allow students to give answers and suggestions, writing down quick remarks and phrases to show one form of the note-taking process
 - Takes about **four minutes**, answer any questions students have
- Put students in their assigned groups, asking one student to collect everyone’s index cards and shuffle them up (**two minutes**).
- The same student is to pick a card and read the question out loud to the group and they are to discuss it, writing necessary notes as they go along. When they are done discussing the question, the first student passes the rest of the cards to another, who reads another question. The goal is to have every student in the group read a question out loud at least once (**twenty minutes**).
 - As students work, walk around the classroom stopping at groups on occasion. Check to see if they have questions for you about the novel or questions raised.
 - Warn the students when they have five minutes left, and write the Feedback Question somewhere on the transparency (see below for question).
- Have the class reconvene for the remaining **six minutes** and have the students write down their answer to the Feedback Question, “How was your group review? Did you contribute to the group discussion? Who was especially helpful for you? Was anyone too

shy to talk?”

- Emphasize this is not meant to “rat people out” but to have the students reflect on their participation and to show me how these groups worked out. This would not effect their participation grade for the day, unless they do not answer the question and give it to me.
- As students walk out of class, collect their responses at the door, wishing them “happy studying!”

Discussion Ideas

- The lesson is arranged so that students are working in small groups that work together to discuss questions their peers ask and can participate without the pressure of a large audience. However, if I notice the students asking me fairly similar questions, it would be a good idea to address the question to the whole class so we can answer it together. Also the idea of the lesson is to answer questions the student have, but if time allowed, the teacher can make up some questions all the groups can answer and the class can see what each group came up with. This could be a good extension idea.

Bilingual/ ESL and Englishes Accomodations (ELL Spanish-Speaking Student)

When it comes to the group review, it is very important to arrange groups so students are not only comfortable with one another so they participate, but also focused on the task at hand, which is essentially reviewing the past few chapters of *Catcher in the Rye*. Accommodations will certainly be considered for students that speak the AAE dialect and the ELL student so they do not work with someone that may be impatient with those that do not speak the same dialect. However, that does not mean I am going to group all the AAE and ESL kids in similar groups, because that does not encourage language diversity and tolerance. With that said, I would make sure they are with students that they are comfortable with and can work together splendidly.

Special Education Accommodations (Student with Asperger’s Syndrome)

In the previous lesson, I had recognized students that are especially helpful for this student and ones that the student is comfortable working with. I would arrange the groups so that this student works with at least two of the students he often works with in pairs, but also with someone they are not as familiar with so he can learn to work with people he does not know as well. This is meant to encourage social engagement outside of his comfort zone while maintaining familiarity with the two other students he knows well. This can either go good or badly, which I will learn through observation and the responses I receive at the end of class.

Assessment

The purpose of the lesson is to give students the opportunity to study with their peers for the quiz, while also practicing good note-taking skills. To assess their communication and interaction skills, the response question at the end of class will not only give me students’ self-assessment on their participation, but also how they felt about other peer’s participation. This is not meant to be a tattle-tale activity. This is meant to help give insight on how the group dynamics were, something you cannot necessarily see when you are walking around and stopping at groups. When doing this, a teacher must consider the

students responses as opinions and not necessarily fact, but if more than one of the students is claiming another did not speak at all, that could indicate shyness, apathy towards the activity or that they did not do the readings. This student's self-evaluation of their participation would support or deny their peers' claims, which could be addressed in a conversation outside of class if needed. The note-taking sheet is meant to help students study, so it would not be collected until after the quiz to see how the students did. There would not be points given other than minor participation points, because this was meant for them and helping them prepare for the quiz.

Extension Ideas

If I receive fairly positive responses to the Feedback Question, where the groups are pretty happy with whom they worked with, I would consider keeping them in these groups for other review activities. There would be other times students would be working with different people, but if there's a good group dynamic going, I do not see any reason that justifies breaking that up. Another idea would be to answer questions that were not answered and answer some of them the next day before the quiz. However, this could be problematic if I don't get to answer everyone's questions or if I answer ones that are on the quiz. One solution could be having students write their name on their index card question they would like to ask me, and I would e-mail them on their school e-mail an answer. That way, they would have the answer and use it in their studying.

Source of Activity

I would like to acknowledge Professor Willis for the Quick Write idea.

Resources and References

Kittle, Penny. *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice and Clarity in High School Writing*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 2008.

Illinois State English Language Arts Goals

- **State Goal 4.A:** Students listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
 - In this lesson, students have to pay attention to the teacher to understand what the mission of the activity is. Students also have to listen to their peers as well, from listening to questions being read out loud to listening to others share their answer to the questions.
- **State Goal 5.A:** Students locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
 - Students are practicing good note-taking skills as well as looking in the novel to find answers to questions. They then need to interpret what they read and share this information with their peers, who also write notes down to help retain the information.

Reflection

As I look at my completed lesson plan, I would consider getting rid of the Quick Write altogether. I like Quick Write; they ease the students into 'classroom mode' and give them the chance to reflect on the previous nights reading or whatever subject is on their minds. However, I would consider getting rid of it if the students did not have enough

time reviewing in groups. I wanted to use it as a way to check if they did the reading and for them to reflect on it, but the time may be better spent elsewhere. I guess I would have to actually use this first to see how the review groups go before I completely axe the opening activity.

***Catcher* Group Review Note Sheet** **Chapters 7-12**

This is meant to help you retain the information you receive during your discussion. Before each question you're about to discuss, write it down and follow with little phrases and notes underneath so you don't miss any important points your peers may share. Feel free to use the back for more questions.

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____