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Mini-Lesson 5: The QAR Model

Overview: Students must be able to question the text before, during, and after they have read in order to increase comprehension.

Objective: for students to recognize and use focus question stems in the QAR model when reading and discussing a text

Resources/Materials: pre-programmed chart of QAR strategy (bulletin board), chart paper, reading passages or sample texts, QAR bookmark, overhead projector

Activities

1. Display chart or use an interactive bulletin board of the QAR model. Instruct students that it is time to start asking better questions when reading a given text.
2. Distribute copies of the focus-question QAR Bookmark (see Chapter 10: Reproducibles, page 71). Review the questions of each level. Remind students that the question stems they see are all good. Encourage students to move up and down or in and out of each level of questioning.
3. Display a short reading passage overhead. Instruct students to read silently while you read aloud. Instruct students that when they have finished reading they are to use their bookmark as a guide to form a teacher-like question that can be answered from the text.
4. Model a good teacher-like question that can be answered from the text. Discuss the level of question and how it helps the reader to understand what has been read.
5. Allow students to share their questions. Allow each student to be the teacher and call on another to answer it. They may grade the answers according to the scoring rubric.
6. Repeat and reinforce the use of the bookmark each day.

Extensions: Read aloud passages from social studies, science, an anthology, and weekly periodicals, encouraging students to formulate questions with the bookmark.

Use the bookmark as a review for a quiz. Students can create three focus questions to ask their classmates.

Mini-Lesson 6: Analyzing and Understanding the Author's Craft

Overview: Students must be able to analyze the art of writing—techniques that help the reader connect with the text through the author's love of writing, passion for literature, and skill at using language to create clear images in the reader's mind.

Objective: for the students to analyze the author's craft in order to comprehend what has been read, to connect the text to personal/outside experiences, and to analyze various literary devices used by the author

Resources/Materials: various activities on literary devices, various text using a specific literary device, chart paper, markers, blank paper

Activities

1. Survey students as to why they think people write books. Chart responses.
2. Discuss that authors generally have a love of writing for their audience (readers). They also like to “play” with words in such a way as to paint a picture in the reader's mind.
3. Distribute a sheet of blank paper. Instruct students to fold it in half vertically to create a T-chart. Model how to fold and label it.
4. Instruct students to label one side of the chart with the heading of “Key Words and Phrases” and the other with “Produces Strong Images about . . .”
5. Instruct students to record any key words or phrases they hear as a poem is read aloud. Allow students to record the title of the poem at the top of the chart.
6. Read a poem aloud.
7. Upon reading, allow time for students to think about the images these words produced in their minds.
8. Allow volunteers to share the images.
9. Choose specific teaching moments to discuss a given literary device used by the author. Point out that this device is one part of the craft or art of writing.
10. Allow students to draw a picture to connect to the image they saw in their mind.
11. Students can reflect on what these words tell them about the craft of writing and how they can use what they have learned.

Extensions: Generate a list of literary devices used by authors to deepen the interpretation of the text. Chart responses and keep them visible in the classroom.

Provide weekly investigations on various devices encouraging students to review, interpret, and use the device in many disciplines. Some examples of these are as follows:

- Similes
- Metaphors
- Powerful verbs
- Alliteration
- Analogies
- Portmanteau words
- Hyperboles