

Literacy Tips



Tips for middle school educators on various topics such as grammar, writing, reading, spelling, vocabulary, cooperative learning and more.

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Tip #5: Cooperative learning strategies

Cooperative learning strategies are a way to help every student in your class succeed. You have probably participated in many forms of these strategies in your own education. Here is one that was demonstrated during some training I received from Sharon Herrell (Clark) on Second Chance Reading.

1. Read aloud to your students a literature selection (non-fiction works well for this). Remember to activate prior knowledge first with a KWL chart, an anticipation guide, alphaboxes, vocabulary work, etc.
2. After you are done reading aloud the selection, tell students to work with their elbow partner (someone sitting right next to them). Have them list together on one sheet of paper as many facts as they can remember from the selection.
3. Then do a whole class sharing. Begin calling on partner teams. Tell the teams to cross off facts on their own lists as they are being read aloud so nothing is duplicated. Have a student (or yourself) keep a class tally of how many different facts are mentioned. Encourage students to add to their lists as they hear new information. Call on every team and continue until

the class has exhausted everything they can remember from the selection.

4. To prove to the students what a powerful tool cooperation is, have them tally how many facts the partner teams created on their own. Compare those results to the class tally. If my experience is an example, my partner and I remembered 8 facts. As a class, we were able to cooperatively come up with 28!

Other Benefits

What other benefits occur from this strategy besides cooperation?

- literal comprehension recall is practiced
- a retelling of the selection naturally occurs
- content information is discussed
- good reading fluency is modeled by the read aloud
- listening comprehension is modeled and will improve with practice

