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*Kannapolis Middle School October/November 2008*

*Note: In order to save copies, future issues will be sent through e-mail/website.*

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***Timeout with   
Coach Wolford***

*Alright, team, good job out there! You’re doing great work! We got the kids right where we want ‘em with the technology – thinkin’ about it, using it, engaged with it! You guys are givin’ it 150%! I know you’re sweatin’…you’re tired. But don’t quit now. Your teammates are here to help you. They won’t let you down. Take a water break if you need it.*

*But…we’re only through the first quarter. We’ve got the rest of the game to think about. We’ve still got some work to do. I’ve got some Literacy plays I want us to try…some we’ve already practiced, but I think you’re ready for some new ones. Whaddya say? Are you with me? Are you with me?? Let’s do it!! Who’s going to be my starters this quarter? Who wants to try some new plays and see what we can do with these kids?? Alright…let’s do it…GO EAGLES!*

*Part of our playbook is on the Coaches’ Corner website! Review it at:* [*http://kmscoaches.weebly.com/instructional-strategies.html*](http://kmscoaches.weebly.com/instructional-strategies.html)

Focus On:   
 Taking Notes

According to Marzano’s Classroom Instruction That Works (ASCD, 2001), note-taking is the second most likely instructional strategy likely to improve student achievement across the board. Since note-taking is so critical to student success, it’s important to make sure we teach students to take notes in the most effective ways. Below are *my* notes on the topic: ☺

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Students take notes to… | Therefore, we should… |
| record information they will need later | teach them to take notes in a way that can be used as a study guide |
| “chunk” and organize information in a way that helps them remember it | help students identify the main ideas, recognize text patterns, and use appropriate organizers  (L*inear notes are least useful.)* |
| ease the load on the working memory so they have “room” to process | make sure they are taking enough notes (*but verbatim notes are least effective.)* |
| identify relationships among information | see notes as a work in progress and teach students to add to, revise, and review them |

Each time you have new information to teach, ask yourself, “What is the best way to teach students to take notes on this?” And ask Cara for ideas!

Classroom Close-ups

Here, your fellow teachers share literacy experiences and strategies.

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*Mr. Todd Devlieger, 8th Grade Science*

Strategy: RAFT writing activity

Having Cara come into my classroom to do a RAFT writing activity was eye opening for me. The students actually do enjoy writing!! With this activity, the students were focused and having fun as they produced some of the best writing samples I've seen out of my classes. Thank you Cara and I will be inviting you back soon.

*Mrs. Doretha Grier, 8th Grade Science*

Strategy: RAFT writing activity

What a great way to get students to express what they learned in class. It was also a great way to review vast amounts of material in one class period.  My students went on to publish their writing in a water notebook that parents viewed at open house. They really enjoyed using the technology.  Thanks to Cara for working collaboratively with me.

*Mrs. Anita Parker, 8th Grade Science*

Strategy: RAFT writing activity

Cara came into my room to do the RAFT assignment with my kids. I thought they did an awesome job of becoming a drop of water and explaining their trip through the water cycle. I love having Cara come in - it gives the kids someone different to listen to and work with, and it gives me more confidence to try new things.

*Cooperative Learning Strategy*

***Numbered Heads Together***

This strategy promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. Students are placed in groups and each person is given a number. The teacher poses a question and students "put their heads together" to figure out the answer. The teacher calls a specific number to respond as spokesperson for the group. Teacher repeats throughout activity.

*Ms. Anna Watson, Life Skills*

Strategy: Walk Around Survey

With Cara's help, I did a Walk Around Survey to introduce a new topic to my class. The kids really enjoyed it, I even had a student who was absent that heard about it and wanted to make it up!

*(as posted on Coaches’ blog at kmscoaches.weebly.com/blog)*

*Mr. Bernard Waugh, 7th Grade S. Studies*

Strategies: Mindstreaming, Plot Organizer

Cara came into my class last week, and helped me teach,by that I mean she taught and I watched, a lesson on the epic hero story sequence. She used the Epic of Gilgamesh as a springboard. The kids and I loved the lesson. We were able to extend the lesson the next day by having the students write their own historical epics.

*(as posted on Coaches’ blog at kmscoaches.weebly.com/blog)*

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Best Practices

* Feel like you spend too much time correcting every grammar mistake in your students’ writing assignments? Well…stop marking them all. Instead:
* Look for patterns of errors and focus on those.
* Circle or note the problem(s), but don’t fix them…require *students* to make the correction(s).
* Identify common mistakes and do a quick mini-lesson on it. Then have students check their own papers.
* How are those vocabulary test scores? Are you helping your students *memorize* the words or really *know* them? Best practices include:
* selecting vocabulary words that are relevant.
* forcing students to produce the definition in their own words and a picture after you explain it.
* planning activities throughout classes that allow students to use, discuss, and play with the words. (See Cara or the Literacy page of the coaches’ website for ideas!)