SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGIES

A variety of simple instructional strategies that incorporate the use of digital media in meaningful, effective, and practical ways.

SURROUND SOUND

BACKGROUND

Hearing a few notes of sound can transport us back in time to an important moment or take us to faraway places that we find comforting. According to Fast Company, "There's no doubt about it, sound is immensely powerful. And yet 83% of all advertising communication we're exposed to daily (bearing in mind that we will see two million TV commercials in a single lifetime) focuses, almost exclusively, on the sense of sight. That leaves just 17% for the remaining four senses. Think about how much we rely on sound. It confirms a connection when dialing or texting on cell phones and alerts us to emergencies." Essentially, sound is an under-utilized tool/resource. By taking away the sense of sight for a moment and allowing students to focus on the sounds themselves, we allow students to use their creative imaginations to visualize situations and travel back in time and all across the globe.

EXAMPLE

* As students enter the classroom have the sound effect, "Military: Battle: Cannons" (CDN Subscriber)" playing in the background.
    * When students take their seats, have them close their eyes and visualize the situation.
    * With the sound still looping, have them open their eyes and answer the following questions:
        * What do you hear?
        * What do you know about what you are hearing?
        * How do these sounds make you feel?
        * How do you feel the people in this situation are feeling?
        * What do you wonder about this event?
    * This activity will allow you to assess your students as you listen for misconceptions and background knowledge.
* Follow this activity with discussing the important components of war. Compare this sound to sounds they may hear in a current battle. Explain that even though this was hundreds of years ago, we are still facing similar feelings and disagreements.

CHALLENGE

* Select a sound effect that matches your current curriculum (forest ambience, cars crashing, etc.)
    * Loop and play sound effect as students enter the class.

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SCRAMBLED PLEASE

BACKGROUND

Most teachers, at some point in their teaching, have helped their students learn the important skill of sequencing. From class schedules to steps of the scientific process, incorporating and modeling sequencing helps students learn to organize information. According to TeacherVision, "Finding meaning in a text depends on the ability to understand and place the details, the sequence of events…. As students listen to or read text, they are best served if they can understand the information as it is presented and then recall at a later point…. Sequencing activities also provide an opportunity for students to examine text and story structure which, in turn, strengthens their writing skills."

EXAMPLE

* Print the reading passage "All Charged Up" (CDN Subscriber) and white out the last paragraphs.
* Using your own reading strategies, read through the beginning of the passage.
* When you reach the 5th paragraph, explain that you have not shown the rest of the reading passage, because you will be serving it to them scramble style.
* Display the following 4 chunks:
    * You get zapped. That is electricity. Talk about being all charged up!
    * That was electricity. Electricity can jump from one object to another.
    * Have you ever been shocked by touching something made of metal, such as a doorknob?
    * As you walk across a rug, electrons move from the rug to you. When you touch something metal, the electrons jump from you to the metal.
* Have students work independently or with a partner to place sentences in the correct order.
* When they are complete, have students identify the topic sentence.
* Have students find a reading passage about the same topic and scramble paragraphs for each other.

CHALLENGE

* Select a reading passage and scramble the last one or more paragraphs.

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JIGSAW

BACKGROUND

Jigsaw is a well known cooperative learning strategy that empowers students to become "experts" on one aspect of a topic. "Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece--each student's part--is essential for the completion and full understanding of the final product. If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential, and that is precisely what makes this strategy so effective." (Jigsaw Classroom) Using resources compiled into "my content" folders in Discovery Education, students work with their peers who have identical assignments in different groups to research their topic and become "experts" before bringing the information back to their assigned group. My content (CDN Subscriber) folders in Discovery Education allow you to collect, organize, share, and retrieve your favorite DE media resources and assignments in one place.

EXAMPLE

* Students will be studying the ancient civilizations of the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.
* Explain to students that they will be focusing on the religion for each of these civilizations.
* Organize students into groups of 4. Each student will need to be assigned to an ancient civilization.
* Students will meet with their peers who have the same civilization to explore the DE resources provided in a "my content" folder.
* The Egyptian folder might contain the following:
  * Ancient Egypt Video (CDN Subscriber)
  * Egypt encyclopedia article (CDN Subscriber)
  * Egyptian Religion (CDN Subscriber)
  * Everyday life in Ancient Egypt: An Overview (CDN Subscriber)
  * Living History: Living in Ancient Egypt (CDN Subscriber)
  * Pyramids at Giza (CDN Subscriber)
* Students will meet with their peers who have the same civilization assignment to explore the DE resources, work together to learn the content, and come up with a list of 3-5 details to take back to their home group.
* Students will return to their home group to teach their peers about their assigned civilization's religion.
* As a whole group, compare and contrast the religions of the four civilizations.

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**JIGSAW
CONT.**

CHALLENGE

✳Select a series of topics, events, or people that matches your curriculum.
✳Create "my content" (CDN Subscriber) folders of information in Discovery Education for each topic.
✳Divide students into groups and assign each group member a topic.
✳Have students meet with their peers who have the same topic to explore the DE resources to learn the content.
✳Students return to their home group to teach their topic.
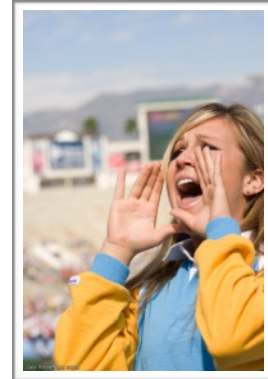✳Discuss what they have learned whole group.

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SOUND CHECK

BACKGROUND

When students are learning new information, it is important to engage their senses. Video leverages both visual and auditory senses, but if students are not asked to do something with the information, watching a video can become a passive learning experience. By using audio files in the classroom, students can use their imagination to create a visual image of what they hear. This can help engage their emotions as they create a picture in their mind. According to Brain World Magazine, "the stronger the emotions connected to an experience, the stronger subsequent memory."

EXAMPLE

* After reviewing the video segments Identifying Grassland and Savannahs (CDN Subscribers) and Animals around Us: Grasslands (CDN Subscribers), explain to students that you will be checking for their understanding of a prairie (North American grassland) and a savannah (African grassland).
* Have them call out or raise hands after a sound effect is played, indicating whether the sound effect applies to a prairie (North American grassland), savannah (African grassland), or neither. After each one, have students provide evidence from the video segments.
* Play the following DE sound effects:
  * Elephant (CDN Subscribers): Savannah
  * Heavy rainfall (CDN Subscribers): Neither on a regular basis
  * Cattle Stampede (CDN Subscribers): Prairie
  * Ocean (CDN Subscribers): Neither
  * Jungle (CDN Subscribers): Neither- this may be confused for African Savannah, so provide support clues if needed
  * Toilet flushing (CDN Subscribers): *optional, just to add a little giggle
  * Chimpanzee (CDN Subscribers): Savannah
  * Sea Lion (CDN Subscribers): Neither
  * Prairie Chicken (CDN Subscribers): Prairie
  * Tiger (CDN Subscribers): Savannah
  * Big Horn Sheep (CDN Subscribers): Prairie
  * Wolf (CDN Subscribers): Both

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SOUND CHECK
CONT.

✳ Pro Tip:
  ✳ Have students create a compare/contrast Venn diagram on the two major types of grasslands.
  ✳ Listen to the song "Habitat Scat" (CDN Subscribers), then have students write their own rap, song, or poem about animals or a specific animal found in a particular grasslands habitat.
  ✳ Watch the video segment "Protecting the Balance of Nature on the Savannah" (CDN Subscribers); then, create a poster to campaign for grassland survival.

CHALLENGE
  ✳ Select a topic that matches your curriculum.
  ✳ Find a variety of audio files (sound effects, songs, speeches, etc.) on Discovery Education about your topic or concept.
  ✳ Have students listen to the sounds. Ask them to identify the sounds by raising their hands and/or explaining what they are hearing.