

Personal Reflective Journal

Jordan Smith



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Strategies & Techniques Section

Ice Breakers

- Ice Breakers are a strategy that requires action by the students to get to know each other, or get to know each other better. Ice Breakers could be used as an introduction strategy at the beginning of a school year but can also be incorporated into the classroom as a brain break activity.

Scavenger Hunt

- **Basic Function:**
 - An activity that provides students with information about their classmates.
 - An activity that requires to get up and move around the classroom and talk to one another.
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Students are provided with a list of items that could apply to any one of their classmates. Students must move around the classroom and ask their classmates if an item applies to them and have them sign their sheet if it does.
 - Example: Find a class mate who prefers Coke to Pepsi
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Paired Questions

- **Basic Function:**
 - Provides teacher with the opportunity to ask students questions (silly questions or material based questions)
 - Creates discussion amongst two students. When used as an icebreaker, provides students with the opportunity to get to know one particular classmate better.
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Ice Breaker: teacher asks students silly questions and students provide their answers to one another and are given time to explain their answer.
 - Example: if you had to pick a Disney character to be, who would you pick and why?
 - Material Review: teacher asks students questions based on their class material. Students are able to work as a team to answer the questions.
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Top Ten Communalities

- **Basic Function:**
 - Students work quietly as a team to discover ten items that they all have in common. This is best done in a Round Table structure (see method 2).
- **Example of Activity:**
 - This is a way for students to get to know each other by guessing similarities that might occur among a group. It might be surprising for students to discover what they do/don't have in common.
 - This is done as a process of elimination. The students write down something they might have in common and pass the sheet to the next person. The next student can either put a check mark or cross that item out and write something else down.
 - Example: a group of students might discover that they all like bubblegum ice cream and enjoy reading, etc.
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Hot Seat (20 Questions)

- **Basic Function:**
 - Students use their critical thinking skills and the process of elimination to learn about a new topic
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Teacher or student can write an uncommon word on the board and students can ask up to 20 questions in an attempt to discover the meaning of this word.
 - This can be incorporated into a Social Studies class by having the uncommon word be based in this discipline.
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Sponge

- **Basic Function:**
 - An extra activity usually used for those students who finish the main task early.
 - An enrichment activity that is not essential but definitely enjoyable.
 - Sometimes they can be used as “time fillers”
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Have an exit slip ready for the end of class with a question or get students to ask a question.
 - Example: What questions do you currently have about ____ ?

- Example: Write 3 sentences describing what you learned about ____ this week.
- **References:**
 - Time Filler Ideas: Timesaving "Sponges" for Substitute Teachers and Homeschoolers: <http://voices.yahoo.com/time-filler-ideas-timesaving-sponges-substitute-291726.html?cat=25>
 - Sponge and Transition Activities: <http://tips.atozteacherstuff.com/407/sponge-and-transition-activities/>

T-Chart

- **Basic Function:**
 - Used to visually record information and/or to compare ideas
- **Example of Activity:**
 - One column of the T-chart could be labeled “looks like” and the other column of the T-chart could be labeled “sounds like.” Have students explore what encouragement in the classroom both looks and feels like.
 - Under the sounds like column there could be phrase such as “good job” or “interesting idea.”
 - Under the looks like column there could be different types of encouraging body language such as leaning forward, smiling and nodding your head.
 - The teacher and students could both then use this T-chart as a method to evaluate whether or not the classroom has an encouraging atmosphere in it.
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Entrance Slip

- **Basic Function:**
 - A beginning of class method to engage students and/or test for knowledge.
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Ask students to answer questions/provide main points from an article that was previously assigned for reading.
 - Important to note: this can also be done in the form of an exit slip. Have students answer questions/provide an interesting fact learned from class that day prior to leaving.
- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Brainstorm

Cluster Web

- **Basic Function:**
 - A visual brainstorming technique.
 - A method for students to expand and explore a main idea/topic.
 - A method for organizing ideas and thoughts.

- **Example of Activity:**
 - Students can use cluster webs as a method for beginning the essay writing process. It is a simple way to get an abundance of ideas down on paper and begin to organize main points.
 - Students can use cluster webs as a method to organize class notes prior to a test. Cluster webs are a great tool for organizing ideas and main points from a unit.

- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray
 - <http://www.inspiration.com/visual-learning/mind-mapping>

KWL

- **Basic Function:**
 - Used to gauge a student's knowledge on a topic that is about to be studied.
 - Typically, a KWL chart is used when introducing a new topic.
- **Example of Activity:**
 - When introducing a new topic to the students, have them complete a KWL chart. For example, if introducing the unit of Provinces, have student record everything they know about the Provinces of Canada in the first column (K). Then, have students record everything they want to know in the second column (W). After the Provinces unit has been completed return to the KWL chart and have students record what the have learned in the third column (L).
- **Example of Chart:**

What do you know? (K)	What do you want to know? (W)	What have you learned? (L)

- **References:**
 - Sharon Murray

Discrepant Events:

- **Basic Function:**
 - A discrepant event presents students with a puzzle, or event, or story at the beginning of a class. Students ask questions, pose hypothesis, analyze and synthesize information and draw conclusions.

- To engage students in a new area of study, to help them develop hypothesis based on information, to solve a puzzle, to develop higher-order thinking.
- Usually it is used to introduce a new topic of study and to engage students with the material.
- **Example of Activity:**
 - Teacher generates a story or puzzle. Certain parts are omitted that creates mystery. Once created the teacher presents the story to the class. Usually the teacher asks a guiding question
 - Example:
 - *In 1837, a young boy named John lived on a farm in a beautiful mountainous, wooded area in eastern Tennessee. His family planted corn and raised animals for meat, milk and eggs. His father participated in the legislative branch of government. His mother taught English in a local school. He had four brothers and three sisters. The family appeared happy and prosperous.*
 - *In 1839, the family moved to a treeless, dry, flat prairie, where it was barely able to raise enough food to survive, Two of John's brothers and one of his sisters died. Unable to make a living farming, his father became a member of the legislature. His mother helped publish the local newspaper; John and his family missed their beautiful home in the mountains.*
 - Question: Why did John and his family leave their beautiful home in Tennessee and take such a hard journey to settle in a hot barren land?
 - Students Question the Teacher: Students make note of the facts and then they collect data by asking the teacher questions. The questions must be structured so they can be answered by a "yes" or "no". Make clear that the questions should be structured so as to infer information and not as a guessing game. Getting to the "right" answer is not the specific goal.
 - Organize and Review Information: Pause and let students organize information they already know or have "discovered". Process the ideas in a pair or small group.
 - Formulate a Response: At some point students will arrive at their best answer. Have students state their response along with the rationale for how they arrived at this decision.
- **References:**
 - Yell, Michael M., Shceurman, Geoffrey, & Reynolds, Keith. (2004). A link to the past: Engaging students in the study of history. National Council for the Social Studies, Maryland.Role-Plays

Interactive Slide Lecture

From: *History Alive! Six Powerful Constructivist Strategies*

Like the previous article examined for teaching strategies, this article focuses on various ways to motivate students to learn. The focus strategy in this article is the interactive slide lecture. An interactive slide lecture does just that; it actively involves students in the lesson and causes them to interact with classmates as well as their own personal thoughts and feelings.

Interactive slide lectures challenge students to step into the shoes of someone else and experience some of their emotions and feelings in relation to various past events. During an interactive slide lecture, students are provided with an image, typically on the SMARTBoard, and are asked to examine the image closely and interpret or even act out what they see.

This strategy actively involves students in the learning process by taking the emphasis off of the teacher and placing it on the students. Rather than lecture the students about the image, the teacher provides the students with an interactive learning experience that is up to their own interpretation. However, the teacher does provide the students with prompt questions to continue discussion of the image and ensure that it remains on topic.

This strategy could easily be employed within a New Brunswick Social Studies classroom. Any historical event that has occurred in New Brunswick, such as the launching of Marco Polo from Saint John in 1851, could be displayed in an image for the students to actively explore.

Interactive Slide Lecture Steps:

- Have an image on the SMARTBoard for the students to explore.
- The image should incorporate a lot of action or content, this will ensure that students constantly have something to contribute to the discussion.
- Prompt students to share what they see in the image. Encourage students to reflect upon the image content in relation to emotions, what might the people in the image be feeling?
- Have various questions prepared based on the image to ensure that discussion continues.
- Have students act out what they see in the image. This is a simulation strategy employed within the interactive slide lecture strategy that encourages discussion while achieving vicarious involvement.

History Alive! Six Powerful Constructivist Strategies. *Social Education*. Volume 62
Number 1 January 1998.

RAFT

Basic Function:

- Following the “RAFT” format, students explore and actively participate in a historical event. RAFT puts the students in the role of someone who lived through

a historical event and ensures that they think as this person would by providing them with the criteria to create a piece of work as if they were this person. RAFT engages students and provides them with a vicarious experience of a past event, one that otherwise they would not have had the opportunity to experience.

- RAFT is also a great strategy to ensure reading comprehension while simultaneously making a Social Studies connection. Instead of allowing the student to pick their own RAFT criteria, the teacher can provide students with a reading and a RAFT assignment.

Steps:

- RAFT stands for: Role, Audience, Format, and Topic
- Students begin by picking their role, who are they going to be when they are creating this piece of work.
- The students then pick their audience, whom are they creating this piece of work for? If it is a letter, whom are they writing to?
- Students pick the format of their final product. As mentioned, a letter is one effective example of a written final product students could create. However, students could also create press releases, diaries, travel guides, obituaries, etc.
- Finally, the students pick their topic. What is it that they are going to be writing about?
- The teacher could provide students with all of the above information in order to narrow in the focus to a particular historical event, historical figure, etc.

Example of Activity:

- In this sample activity, we had our grade four or five students select a Canadian hero and write a letter from the hero's perspective. This would be done after showing students various "Our Heritage Moments" and having them select someone that stood out to them in particular.
- The following is an example created about Joe Shuster, the Canadian Creator of Superman:

Role: Joe Shuster

Audience: Joe's cousin, Frank Shuster

Format: Letter

Topic: Creation of Superman

Dear Frank,

I am on the train to Toronto to visit you but I thought that I would write you a letter to inform you about a super idea that I just had. I have created a super hero, but not just any super hero, a strong man in tights.

I know what you're thinking, a strong man in tights, it'll never fly. Fly, maybe not! But he can leap over tall buildings. Another great quality about my super hero is that he is faster than a speeding bullet.

By day this super hero blends in as a regular person, he is a mild mannered reporter. He is also has a secret identity.

This hero's name you may ask? Superman! It is going to be big Frank, big I tell you.

Keep this letter; it might be worth something some day!
Joe Shuster

Further Examples:

- The RAFT assignment can be used in a variety of lessons. Below is a list of example RAFT assignments for a Social Studies class:

Examples of RAFT Assignments

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Reporter	Readers in the 1870s	Obituary	Qualities of General Custer
Lawyer	US Supreme Court	Appeal Speech	Dred Scott Decision
Abraham Lincoln	Dear Abbey	Advice Column	Frustration with his Generals
Oprah the	Television Public	Talk Show	Women's Suffrage in Early 20 th Century
Frontier Woman	Self	Diary	Harships in the West
Constituent	US Senator	Letter	Need for Civil Rights Legislation in 1950s
Newswriter	Public	Press Release	Ozone Layer has been Formed
Chemist combinations	Chemical Company	Instructions	Dangerous to avoid
Oreo	Other Oreos	Travel Guide	Journey through the digestive system
Plant the	Sun	Thank you note	For the sun's role in plant's growth

Scientist	Charles Darwin	Memo	Refute a point in the Theory of Evolution
Square Root	Whole Number	Love Letter	Explain relationship
Repeating Decimal	Set of Rational Numbers		Petition Prove that you belong to this set
Advertiser	TV Audience	Public Service Announcement	Importance of Fruit
Lungs	Cigarettes	Complaint Letter	Effects of Smoking
Comma	9 th Graders	Job description	Use in Sentences
Trout	Self	Diary	Effects of Acid Rain

- **References:**

- <http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/R.A.F.T.+Assignments>
- Buehl, D. (2001). Classroom strategies for interactive learning. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Wall Map with Newspapers

Basic Function:

The basic function of the wall map created using a newspaper is to provide students with a reference for new locations around the world, while simultaneously establishing the location of familiar places. A highly functioning wall map changes and grows throughout the year, providing students with the opportunity to add new locations as they read about them in the newspaper. Wall maps are a hands-on and practical way to provide students with a visual reference of where they are learning about. Wall maps also provide students with the occasion to summarize articles that they are reading, making cross-curricular connections to Language Arts.

Steps:

- The whole class receives the same newspaper to read and explore
- Students begin to cut out articles that mention specific locations
- Students summarize the articles (brief, 3-4 sentences)
- Students use yarn to locate the places mentioned in the article on the map
- Students have yarn coming from location connect to the newspaper article as well as their summary
- Students can add to the wall map as the year progresses

Materials/Resources:

- Class set of newspapers
- Big wall map
- Yarn
- Tape
- Paper & pen (if choosing to write summaries by hand)
- Computer & printer (if choosing to type summaries)
- Atlas (for students who cannot find their locations)
- Internet access (for students who cannot find their locations)

Example Activity:

We chose to use every location we found in the Tuesday, February 19th, Daily Gleaner. We located the various places on our map and provided the article and article summaries. We believe that this activity could easily be done throughout the year and that it is engaging and fun for students. We also thought that it would be a good idea to have the students come up with questions that they have about their articles, we believe that this would ensure that they are truly reading the information in front of them and not quickly putting together a summary.

Another idea that would work in a Social Studies classroom is having the students consistently search newspapers for articles for a specific location that is being studied. This would provide students with various accounts of news from their specific location. Does the news from this location maintain a certain theme? Are there particular events that they can observe unfolding?

Another example of a way to incorporate this strategy into Social Studies is to have students explore old newspapers and pinpoint the locations of the articles on a wall map. Are the locations just as spread out or did is the news more scattered around home?

End Result/Goal:

The end result/goal of our wall map is to have students develop an understanding of the various locations that their news, in Fredericton, is about. The wall map is a strategy that works well in Social Studies, geography in particular, while making cross-curricular connections to Language Arts.

Reference:

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/archive/xpeditions/lessons/18/gk2/adoptnews.html?ar_a=1

Graphic Notes

Basic Function:

- Students remember information in many different ways, when we use multiple intelligences we maximize the chance that a student will remember the content. Graphic notes incorporate the various multiple intelligences we will encounter in our classrooms.

- They utilize a visual approach and incorporate text boxes and arrows in order to simplify the note taking process.
- Graphic notes can help engage struggling students and help minimize weaknesses in language development as well as weaknesses in organization; using a visual format to simplify and shorten the text does this.
- Choosing a rich visual that compliments the text is crucial. Many of the visuals that come with the textbook or are included in the textbook itself are adequate for graphic notes. However, it may be necessary to choose visuals from other sources that may better represent the concepts, time period, or theme of the reading.
- Furthermore, Graphic Notes can be used as a reference for review later in the unit. Instruct students to keep a copy of their Graphic Notes to refer to when it comes time to study.

Steps:

- Students are provided with a text and a rich visual that compliments the text.
- Using the visual as a prompt, students will pull the important points from the text.
- Students will create a text boxes that group the important points in the text into similar categories.
- The text can be written in point form and contain questions that arise from the reading.
- The student will draw an arrow from the visual to their shortened and simplified text, connecting their main ideas to the visual.
- When finished, students can present their Graphic Notes to the rest of the class, as people often learn best when they are teaching the content to others. Graphic notes provide students with the opportunity to create an original piece of work based on the course content and then teach it to their classmates, this is all done while incorporating the various styles of intelligences in order to ensure maximum learning and remembering has occurred.

Example Social Studies Activity:

- If students are learning about Ancient Egypt the Graphic Note strategy could be employed. The teacher will provide students with a text about Ancient Egypt as well as a visual representation of this text. Students will read the text and categorize the main points they take away from it. Once students have decided upon their main points, have them connect these points to the visual representation using arrows. Students can share their creations with the rest of the class in order to discover what classmates recognized as important. Students can keep their Graphic Notes in their binders to return to when studying later in the units.

Example of Cross Curricular Activity:

- Graphic notes are incredibly easy to use in any and all subject areas. It could easily be used in Science class to organize information on Plant Growth. Students would be given information about the cycle of plants, coupled with a corresponding picture. They would then distinguish the main points from the text,

and use them as main categories to build from. Hopefully, by adding details to each category they would begin to recognize relationships between each, which would lead to the understanding of the larger concept: plant growth.

Resources:

- <http://www.adlit.org/strategies/22370/>
- <http://www.englishcompanion.com/Tools/notemaking.html>

Word Wall with Newspaper Article

Taken From: Alice MacKay and Sarah Allison

Basic Function:

- The basic function of a word wall is to give students a visual reference for new, difficult, important, or unit specific words. The most helpful word walls grow and change throughout the year or unit, and are used as a learning reference. Word walls help students see patterns and relationships in words. They can also provide reference support for children during reading and writing activities.

Steps:

- The class reads a chosen newspaper article (can be done individually in pairs or as a whole class on the Smartboard).
- Students suggest interesting words that they don't regularly use or don't understand to add to the word wall.
- Re-read the sentences of the article with the challenging words again and try to develop a definition of the word before looking up in the dictionary or using (www.dictionary.com).
- Put words on chart paper/poster board in word wall form. Words can be ordered alphabetically or perhaps by putting the article in the center and the words scattered around linked to where they appear in the article.
- Discuss the article/language and words used as it pertains to the topic you are discussion in the class.

Materials/Resources:

- Smartboard
- Newspaper article(s)
- White paper
- Construction paper
- Poster Board/Bulletin Board
- Markers/coloured pencils
- Dictionaries/ Dictionary.com

Time required:

- 30 minutes

Examples of activities:

- We chose to use a word wall with a newspaper article as an introduction to a grade three unit about promoting positive interactions among people. We chose an

article about Maurice Richard and the hockey violence from 1955 to introduce a historical aspect to an issue that is still current. Picking out the new vocabulary from the article will introduce students to new words and also create discussion about the kinds of words and actions we should use when we interact with people

End Result/ Goal:

- The end result/ goal of our word wall activity is for students to develop their vocabulary around a particular subject and understand that violence in any form is not acceptable and these actions affect other people.

Other ways to use this in social studies:

- There are many different ways that you could use a word wall alongside a newspaper article in Social Studies. You could use it simply as a vocabulary enrichment to introduce words about a particular topic you want to cover. Find a newspaper about historical topic or even a current event or unit that you will be covering and use the article to pull out the vocabulary students will come across in the unit. Students will be able to pull out new or interesting words from the article to make a word wall while also being introduced to the unit of study. Comparing a historical issue with a modern issue
- You could also use a word wall with newspaper articles to introduce a discussion about multiple perspectives. You could choose a historic event, find a local news story about the event and a foreign new story about the event (make sure they show differing perspectives about the event). Have students make thematic word walls to compare the words and language used to describe what happened in order to compare words. Are the descriptive words they use different? Are there words that contradict each other? **You could also do this activity using an issue that has persisted throughout time and find a historical article and a current article and compare the language in that way.
- You could also use this in an opposite way by using the newspaper article in whatever lesson you had planned for the day and then incorporate language arts at the end by asking students to locate and cut out words in the article from an already established word wall in the classroom.

References:

- http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/word_walls/
- <http://www.k12reader.com/10-great-word-wall-strategies-for-classrooms/>

Process Drama

Taken from: Candace Berthier, Mallory Sharpe, Sarah Galvin

Basic Functions:

- Process Drama enables students to explore curriculum and experience the content through using scripted and unscripted drama. Process Drama forces students to think critically, build problem-solving skills, and participate in higher order thinking. It presents an outlet for students to understand novel and complex

themes/concepts. The pedagogy of Process Drama utilizes imagination and creates an extensive variety of learning possibilities. In upper grades, students can be asked to improvise to a certain extent, which promotes mental agility, spontaneity, and cooperation with others. Furthermore, it can span across subject areas, and it employs the use of multiple intelligences.

Steps:

- Introduce topic area to students
- Explain the concept of Process Drama
- Assign roles (or decide as a class)
- Allow students to explore roles, and learn through the process of investigation
- Prompt students to make connection between roles, which will hopefully lead to the understanding of larger themes/concepts within the curriculum.
- Discuss the outcomes of the activity as a class.
- Students can re-act their scene after the discussion, changing aspects of their role if necessary.
- The steps can vary, depending on the goals and objectives of a particular class.

Implement Process Drama in Social Studies:

- This strategy can be used in social studies in many different ways. Students could re-enact a moment of history or create a skit based on historical facts about ancient times. These historical skits do not have to be specific things that actually happened in history; instead they could just consist of historical components with a story line that was created by your students.

Implement Process Drama across curriculum:

- This strategy can be used across the curriculum for many other subject areas such as language arts and science. For language arts, students could act out a scene from a text they are reading, and the teacher could use this to check for understanding (formative assessment). If students display the incorrect passage of the text, then the teacher can see that the student does not understand the text. Process drama can be used in science as well. Students in grade 3 could make skits about how photosynthesis works or about the growth of a plant. Process drama could even be used in math to talk about math strategies. These skits may be shorter, but they are still beneficial for students to create because it reinforces that math strategy in their head.

Resources:

- www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm
- <http://digitaldjs.info/joomla/index.php/process-drama>
- <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/from-theory-to-practice/process-drama.aspx>

Media Timeline

Taken From: Rebecca Steeves, Brittany MacPherson, Lieneke den Otter

Basic Function:

- For students to actively engage in creating a timeline of events using objects alongside of the text. By using actual objects or pictures students are able to creatively come up with ideas of different things to represent the different stages of the timeline.

Steps

- Decide on a topic and the time period if they choose to create a timeline of historical events
- As a class (or individually) come up with different objects, pictures, or creative statements to represent the different topics on the timeline. (If students come up with ideas that do not characterize that topic well do not put down their idea but rather elaborate or direct the idea in a different direction.)
- Create the objects as a class (or individually)
- Place the objects on the timeline
- If it was an individual project give the students the opportunity to present their timeline to the class.

Materials:

- Paper
- Markers
- Artifacts
- Household supplies
- Wall Space
- Tape
- Glue

Example of Class Activities:

- The class (or individual) can create a media timeline of the events in a book they are studying or reading in class.
- Students can create a media timeline of the Class Schedule. This would be a fun activity for the first week of school.
- Students can create a number media timeline for math by creating the numbers using different materials.

Social Studies Activities:

- You can use the media timeline to help students explore a variety of topics pulled from the social studies curriculum and to help students understand that timelines can be fun.
- The following topics are some examples that students can explore using the times

line:

- Create a timeline of the life and explorations of Samuel de Champlain.
- Create a media timeline of the invention and evolution of the telephone.
- Create a media timeline of the Prime Ministers of Canada.
- Create a media timeline of when each of the Provinces and Territories of Canada joined Confederation.
- Have each student create a mini media timeline of these different events.

Results/Goal:

- For students to produce either individually or as a class a visual timeline with objects and creative texts to help them remember the different events, but is also visually appealing and interactive.

References:

- http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/strategy...
- <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials...>
- http://www.ehow.com/way_5233301_creative-ways...