

Comprehension/Knowledge Building, Grade 4-6

Classroom Management

Throughout the preparation for and reading of the *Anthology* selection, Ms. Zamora has integrated certain techniques and devices that help her and her student's progress smoothly from one activity to the next. These techniques and devices are evident in the Teaching Examples.

Classroom setup

The desks in Ms. Zamora's classroom are arranged around a clear area. This arrangement promotes discussion by allowing a space for the students to sit where they can see and hear each other and Ms. Zamora. Whenever the students are to engage in discussion, they gather on the floor. This setup allows students to easily see each other and creates a more relaxed atmosphere for the discussion. The students know that they can interact comfortably. It is a good change of pace as well.

This arrangement also allows for easy movement between the desks and the discussion area. Whenever the students need to write in their notebooks or workbooks, they return to their desks. They may switch between their desks and the discussion area several times during a lesson; however, since the room is set up for this movement, transition time is minimal and it rarely distracts from the task at hand. The shifting between the desks and the discussion area also provides the students with some movement during the class. This helps to hold their attention.

Rules of conduct

Although Ms. Zamora does not specifically mention rules of conduct in these Teaching Examples, it is clear that the students know what behavior is considered appropriate for a discussion. The students:

- Raise their hands to be recognized.
- Wait to be called on.
- Listen carefully to the comments of their classmates.
- Respond in a respectful manner regardless of whether they agree or disagree with the previous speaker.

Routines

During the prereading, reading, and discussion of the selection, Ms. Zamora engages three routines suggested in *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!—Clues, Problems, and Wonderings; Selection Vocabulary*; and *Handing-Off*. Routines are used in the program to ease the process of learning for the students. They are techniques that have proved successful. Because the activities involved with the routines are carried out the same way each time, the students waste little time trying to figure out how they should respond. All of their attention can be given to their new learning.

Clues, problems, and wonderings is a routine used when first browsing a text. The students are directed to look for certain things during their reading; this keeps them alert and focused.

- First, they will look for clues that help them understand the text. These may be words, pictures, or ideas that are familiar to them. Clues may be related to genre or text type, text organization, or organizing elements such as subheads and captions.
- They also look for elements that may be problematic for them, such as unknown words or phrases. This may also include global information, such as unfamiliarity with the subject matter as a whole.

- Finally, they look for things that make them wonder or ask questions about the text. Wonderings can be associated with many things, such as the author's purpose, the subject of the text, or the connection of the particular text to other material the students are reading.

All of the subjects brought up during the discussion of clues, problems, and wonderings are noted either on the board or on chart paper. All recorded comments remain on the board during the reading of the selection so that the students can refer back to them as they read.

The Selection Vocabulary routine is used before reading to make sure the students understand words that are key to the meaning of the selection. More importantly, it provides skills for dealing with the meaning of unknown words when students are reading independently. These skills include the use of word structure, apposition, and context clues.

Handing-off is a routine used primarily during discussion. Handing-off turns responsibility over to the students. Each student who reads or comments is responsible for choosing the next student to respond. In this way, the students direct the conversation and learn how to keep a discussion going by making comments that contribute to the discussion as well as how to respond appropriately to the remarks of others. During handing-off the teacher becomes a member of the group and he or she should ask to be recognized for comment. The teacher becomes a facilitator and group member rather than the controller of the discussion.