

Comprehension, Grade 1

Classroom Management

Throughout the preparation for and reading of the *Student Anthology* selection, Ms. Canzone has applied transition techniques that help her and her children progress smoothly from one activity to the next. These techniques and devices are evident in the course.

Classroom setup

Ms. Canzone has arranged the desks in such a way that enables children to see each other and Ms. Canzone at the same time. This desk arrangement also leaves a large, clear space on the floor where Ms. Canzone and her children often gather for discussions. Because the discussion setting is intimate, children interact comfortably with each other and with Ms. Canzone. Whenever the children need to write in their notebooks or workbooks, they return to their desks. Children may switch between their desks and the discussion area several times during a lesson, and the room is arranged to facilitate the back and forth movement; it happens quickly and easily and it rarely distracts children's attention away from the lesson. In fact, moving around a bit during class time can help children stay attentive.

Rules of discussion

Although Ms. Canzone does not specifically mention rules for collaborative discussions in the teaching examples, it is clear that the children know what behavior is considered appropriate for a discussion. The students:

- Raise their hands to be recognized.
- Speak one at a time.
- Listen to others with care.
- Respond respectfully, whether they agree or disagree.

Routines

During the prereading, reading, and discussion of the selection, Ms. Canzone employs two routines suggested in *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!*—"Clues, Problems, and Wonderings" and "Handing-off." Routines are used in the program to support learning. Routines by their very nature provide an organization for learning since children know what to expect and how to respond to them. Children understand what the activities will require and can focus all of their attention on learning.

Clues, problems, and wonderings is a browsing routine. Children know that they need to be engaged when browsing a text. They will look for clues that help them understand the text, such as familiar words, pictures, or ideas. Clues may be, as in this teaching example, related to genre or text type, text structure, or features, such as headings and captions.

Children peruse the text for elements that may be problematic, such as unknown words or phrases or a lack of familiarity with the subject matter as a whole.

Finally, children look for things that they are curious to find out about, wonder about, and have questions about. Their wonderings may be associated with the author's purpose, the subject of the text, or the connection of the particular text to other material the children have read.

Ms. Canzone charts all the clues, problems, and wonderings that emerge on special charts that she has created for this purpose (a blackboard or the transparency supplied with the program would serve this purpose as well). As children read the selection, Ms. Canzone records their comments on the charts. The charts are posted prominently for the rest of the class time so that children can refer back to them as they read.

Handing-off is a routine used primarily during discussion to turn responsibility over to the students. Each child who reads or comments is responsible for choosing the next child to speak. In this way, the children direct the discussion, take responsibility for the content of the discussion, and learn to participate respectfully in a group discussion that has no defined leader. During the handing-off, the teacher becomes a member of the group, and he or she should ask to be recognized if he or she wishes to comment. The teacher, then, functions as the facilitator and as a group member rather than as the discussion leader.