

Reading Strategies in Practice: An Immersive Classroom Experience (Early years to end of elementary)

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Project Description:

This project aimed to create a reference for teachers in effective reading strategies for all ages, prior and during elementary school. These strategies were modeled in videos by teachers of experience and were explained through slides. It has been noted by many teachers that there are many reading strategies to choose from, but that it is difficult to know which strategies are effective and which are less-so. The strategies modeled in this project have proven to work for the students of the modeling teachers over several years. The aspiration is that through the dispersing of our project, more teachers will use these strategies, creating a positive consistency throughout our schools.

The project is presented through a Google Slideshow, presented in 4 parts.

The 0-5 section focuses on how to inspire a love of books in children 0 to 5 years old through positive interaction and associating reading with happy and comforting feelings shared with someone they love. In this section, early childhood educators should be sharing the information they learn with the parents/guardians of the children that they work with as they are an integral part of this process.

The Cycle 1 section put a lot of emphasis on Phonological and Phonemic Awareness; how sounds should be explicitly taught, practiced, and integrated in the students' reading. The order in which phonemes are taught is explored as well as sight words (tricky words/power words) and the importance of blending and segmenting.

The Cycle 2 and 3 sections encourage the importance of “book talk” to increase comprehension. In guiding reading formats, teachers can determine if students are able to infer meaning, predict, connect, and think critically with or of their reading. This is shown through different strategies of guided questions. Emphasis is also put on explicitly teaching students to choose the right books for themselves and use them to discover their passions, interests, and plans for the future.

These sections were then put together nicely in a Google Slideshow. Each section is meant to be experienced as its own workshop and the videos are not meant to be viewed all at once. For example, a cycle 1 teacher may go directly to the cycle 1 section and view it individually from the other 3 sections.

Our group of 5 met 10 times between the beginning of February 2023 to the end of April 2023.

The first and last meetings were full days whereas the meetings in between were ½ days. Each meeting had a pre-set agenda of either filming or editing and it was pre-determined who would be filming or editing on each day. Therefore, not all 5 members were present at each meeting. All of this was explained at the very first meeting where participants were told that they had been asked to do this specific project due to their experience and expertise in the subject matter and to come prepared to video-record specific reading lessons with their students (all of whom signed a waiver to be seen and heard on video) at their next scheduled meeting. Each teacher was responsible for creating explanatory slides about their lessons and why their chosen strategies work.

Meetings 2 to 5 video-recorded these especially chosen lessons and meetings 6 to 10 were dedicated to editing the videos, inserting the informative slides, and adding a voice-over to the slides. The 10th meeting also involved putting all the sections together into one final slideshow which we proudly present to you with this report.

Project Goals and Outcomes:

The realization of this project was a very successful one. The end-product is one that can be easily shared between schools and is filled with successful tips and tricks for teachers to use when promoting reading skills.

The editing process took longer than expected and 2 extra days were taken to complete the project, however, the budget was respected, and no extra release was necessary. All participants were incredibly dedicated to the success of this project and worked extremely well as a team.

For their part, the teachers expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to share their knowledge and to discuss with their peers what has been working regarding reading strategies and what has not. It was a very validating experience for all of us and we were all able to learn from each other which has been most beneficial.

Obstacles were met with positive solutions and there were no obstacles that had a significant impact on the result of the project. All the goals were met as expected.

Reinvestment:

During discussions with teachers from other schools across our school board we have already received interest about the content of our project. Having 2 consultants as well as 2 mentor teachers on the creation-team ensures that this project or sections of it will be shared where possible (workshops, meetings, Google Classrooms and Drives, Teams, PLCs, etc.)

We are hoping to be able to share our work on board-wide ped. days and possibly in QPAT workshops as well.

It is our hope that the ideas and content of this project will inspire other schools and teachers to use similar strategies and perhaps even hold workshops for parents on effective approaches to have with their children when reading. One SWLSB school is intending to use some of our project to host an evening for parents in the fall of 2023 and may even invite parents from neighboring schools.

Our team strongly believes that the strategies shown in this project will produce a strong generation of readers who can fully comprehend and think critically about what they read.