SUPPORTING HIGH-QUALITY LITERACY INSTRUCTION: DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES FOR READING LITERARY TEXT

CPH CONFERENCE ON LITERACY

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PURPOSE

This presentation expands the concept of disciplinary literacy in English/Language Arts (ELA) by discussing two questions:

1) What are the discipline-specific strategies that literary experts and novices use when reading literary texts;

2) What can we take from their approaches to support high-quality disciplinary literacy instruction in English/Language Arts classes?
WHAT IS DISCIPLINARY LITERACY?

• AT ITS CORE, DISCIPLINARY LITERACY IS THE AWARENESS OF AND THE TEACHING OF THE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES THAT MAKE EACH DISCIPLINE UNIQUE.

• ESSENTIALLY, EACH DISCIPLINE USES LANGUAGE TO CREATE, CRITIQUE, COLLABORATE, AND CONNECT IDEAS IN WAYS THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO THAT DISCIPLINE.

• WHEN WE TEACH DISCIPLINARY LITERACY, WE ARE MAKING THOSE DIFFERENCES EXPlicit TO OUR STUDENTS, SO THEY CAN NAVIGATE THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THEIR DISCOURSES AND THE DISCOURSES EXPECTED IN THE DISCIPLINES.
What is Disciplinary Literacy in English/Language Arts?

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

• PILOT STUDY

• EXPERTS/NOVICES READING LITERATURE AND TALKING ABOUT MEANING

• DIFFERENCES –
  • EXPERTS ARE DOING MORE INTERPRETATION;
  • NOVICES ARE DOING A GOOD JOB OF COMPREHENSION
GENERATING, WEAVING, AND CURATING
GENERATING

- GENERATING IS THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS FOR READERS AS THEY BEGIN TO SEE PATTERNS IN THE TEXT, USE COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES THAT THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH (I.E. PREDICTION, QUESTIONING), NOTICE WORDS AND CONCEPTS THEY MIGHT NOT KNOW, AND ACCUMULATE EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT.
WEAVING

- WEAVING IS THE PROCESS READERS USE TO DESCRIBE THE MEANING THEY MAKE FROM TEXT, WHEN THEY INCORPORATE INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM THE TEXT THROUGH A PROCESS OF INTERLACING, AGGREGATING, AND COMPARING IDEAS, USING STRATEGIES SUCH AS HYPOTHESIZING, INTRATEXTUALITY, AND INTERTEXTUALITY.
CURATING

• AS MUSEUM CURATORS SELECT, ORGANIZE, AND DISPLAY THEIR ARTIFACTS, SO DO LITERARY EXPERTS ACTIVELY SELECT PIECES FROM WHAT THEY HAVE WOVEN TOGETHER TO MAKE AN ADVANCED DISPLAY OF THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT.
GENERATING, WEAVING, AND CURATING

Generating  Weaving  Curating

Comprehension  Interpretation
DEFINING COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION


EXAMPLE -- PAUL

• We can also note just thinking about the rhyme scheme – man does not rhyme with toil. We don’t have rhymed couplets, right? The first rhyme rhymes with the third line. The second doesn’t rhyme with the fourth which kind of disturbs me reading. I expected with “toil” a rhyme, and then “‘what then?’ sang Plato’s ghost.”

• The poem is about violation of expectations, which is what makes it so beautiful. “Thought,” “plan,” “naught,” “brought” repeats the rhyme scheme of the third stanza. “Son,” “plan,” “man.” So the second line is really the rhyme that enunciates the biography of planning – of getting everything right, of son repeating father, of winning the just desserts that you want and living according to plan, right? So that rhyme scheme carries those words across the entire poem, and that is given to the character – “man,” “won,” “son,” “plan.” It’s about the perpetual repetition of the same as opposed to the rest of the poem which is about the perpetual repetition of the question which then gets violated at the end.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN ELA CLASSROOMS?

- HAVE STUDENTS GATHER INFORMATION IN A CYCLICAL AND ONGOING MANNER AS THEY READ, INSTEAD OF WAITING UNTIL THE END OF THE TEXT;
- LOW-STAKES OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE INTERPRETIVE MOVES;
- ALLOW STUDENTS TO REACH CURATION, INSTEAD OF ASKING THEM TO GATHER AND WEAVE BASED ON OUR CURATIONS.
WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?
SAY SOMETHING INTERPRETIVE

• TO DEMONSTRATE, WE ARE GOING TO SHOW YOU STANZAS OF A POEM.

• AFTER EACH STANZA, WE WILL ASK YOU TO SAY SOMETHING TO SOMEONE AROUND YOU:
  • MAKE AND/OR **REVISIT** YOUR PREDICTION AND ADJUST AS NECESSARY
  • **CLARIFY** OR **EXPAND** ON A POINT
  • ASK QUESTIONS AND/OR **ANSWER** PREVIOUS QUESTIONS
  • **MAKE** AN INTERPRETATION
  • **ELABORATE** ON CONNECTIONS ALREADY MADE
  • **EXPLAIN** **WHY** SOMETHING THAT YOU NOTICE MIGHT BE PRESENT IN THE TEXT
WE REAL COOL
THE POOL PLAYERS, SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL
GWENDOLYN BROOKS

WE REAL COOL. WE
LEFT SCHOOL. WE

LURK LATE. WE
STRIKE STRAIGHT. WE

SING SIN. WE
THIN GIN. WE

JAZZ JUNE. WE
DIE SOON.
DEBRIEF – SAY SOMETHING INTERPRETIVE

• QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE STRATEGY?
ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

• STUDENT-GENERATED WEAVING AND CURATION
• LOW-STAKES OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERPRETATION THROUGHOUT THE TEXT
• JOURNALS AND DISCUSSION
• EMBRACE THE POWER OF PICTURE BOOKS
QUESTIONS/ SPØRGSMÅL