

STRUCTURING ACTIVE LEARNING: “Tools for your engagement tool kit”

“It’s not what we say or do that ultimately matters... It **IS** what we get the students to do as a result of what we said and did that counts.”

- 1) Choral responses** - all say it/do it together-wakes students up -give thinking time - very helpful to provide a cue such as holding your hands up - then drop to signal it’s time to respond
- √ cue students to show you they are ready...e.g. ”thumbs up when you know...pencils down & look up”
 - √ non-verbal choral responses too, “touch the word... put your finger under...hands up if you agree”
 - √ provides a safe way to practice academic language together – e.g. repeating a model sentence
 - √ self evaluation/self assessment (thumbs up/sideways/down, “fist of 5”, voting agree/disagree, etc.)

- 2) Partner, Small Group responses** – one of the most potent strategies we have to increase academic language use (“more miles on their tongues”), attention, higher order thinking, etc. during instruction.
- √ teacher chooses partners – alternate ranking based on literacy/social skills
 - √ assign roles & designate speakers – A and B, one and two (“A’s tell B’s 2 things we have learned about__”)
 - √ specific topic – “What do you predict___; Two things we’ve learned about___”)
 - √ monitor individual students, provide feedback & scaffolding as necessary
 - √ small groups (4 works best) **IF** the topic/task warrants a group – be sure to structure accountability for each student (e.g. roles, so EVERYONE is accountable for the learning)

**** Structure** use academic language in responses (e.g. sentence frames, “Two critical attributes of ___are _.”)

- 3) Written responses (brief expository writing)** – especially as you move up the grades (3 and above)
- structure/teach the thinking (analysis/interpretation, make a point & support it, summarize etc.) .
 - structure/teach the language w/sentence frames, word banks, phrase cues (Although... ,)
 - provides the teacher with concrete feedback (e.g. “Do they grasp _____?”)
 - connects written language to oral language, provides practice w/vocabulary, syntax & grammar

- 4) Randomly (or faux randomly!!) - Strategically call on students – Structure Whole Group Discussion**
- √ **NO** hand raising questions (e.g. “Who can tell me _____?”) – If it is worth doing **ALL** students need to be “doing the doing” of learning, NOT just watching others! No bystanders, no one “on the sidelines”
 - √ “Everyone, “– cue ALL to think and be ready to respond – 100% responding is the goal!
 - √ Ask for volunteers to provide “value added” **AFTER** 2-5 students have been strategically called upon

Explicit Academic Language Teaching

- √ Provide students with the language tools (vocabulary, grammar & syntax) necessary to competently discuss the topic (modeling, sentence frames, word banks, prompting & cueing, etc.)
- e.g. Sentence Starters: Model for students the use of a sentence starter and have them repeat the model sentence chorally BEFORE rehearsing their sentence w/a partner... and later writing it down.

How Well WE Structure = How Engaged THEY Are

We haven’t taught, until They have Learned

- John Wooden