

NUA Summer Academy 2008 Albany, New York

Structuring the Lesson with Denise Nessel

Thoughts about designing lesson like the one she taught last year -- see Summer Academy 07 Notes.

Getting kids to be comfortable with "NOT" knowing the answer. We have to understand the process of uncertainty and be comfortable with it too.

"The lesson is ruined if the students know the answer already."

Denise Nessel, 2008

How _____ think can affect their success as much as how much they know or how much experience they have. "Currently, in _____ _____, we fail to recognize the importance of critical thinking and critical reasoning." The New Yorker 29 January 2007

*Taking answers from the group on what words go in the blanks. (answer: doctors, medical training)

Anticipation Guide

- Activates prior knowledge
- Sharpens critical thinking skills
- Arouses curiosity
- Generates specific purposes
- Promotes active involvement
- Creates a sense of discovery
- Makes information memorable

Anticipation Guide Statements

- Are concise and clear
- Need little qualification
- Allow all to respond
- Promotes uncertainty
- Generates differences of opinion (debate)
- Leads to surprise

Example: The first Ferris Wheel was built in 1830.

Teacher Questioning

- Expect justification

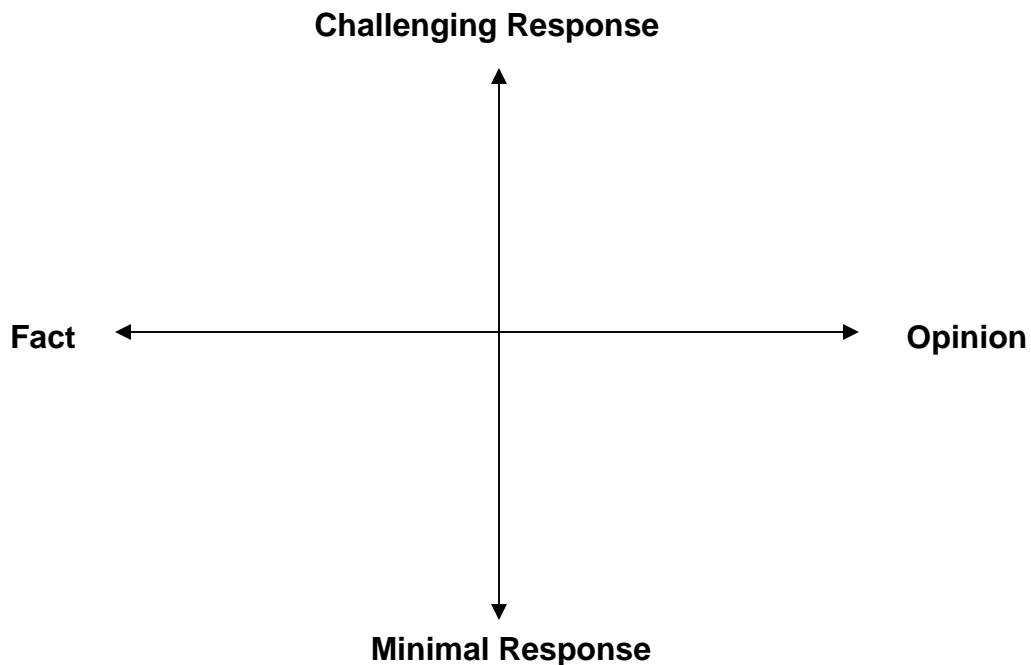
- Avoid references to guessing (I know you don't know, but what do you think?)
- Introduce uncertainty (How do you know?)
- Probe for more information (Why do you think that?)
- Promote debate (Are you sure? Is there another way of looking at this?)

Fact or Opinion

Should statements be facts or opinions?

Example:

- The first Ferris Wheel was built in 1830.
- The first Ferris wheel was the greatest engineering feat of the century.



Anticipation Guide: Thinking Strategies p.19

This priming activity helps students activate prior knowledge and reflect on the topic being studied.

Students receive a sheet with several declarative sentences about the topic they will be reading about. The students decide if they 'agree' or 'disagree' with each of the sentences by putting an 'A' or 'D' after each statement. After completing

the sheet, students gather in groups to discuss their answers and share why they 'agreed' or 'disagreed' with the topic. Students read the text and then review, revise and discuss what they learned from the text with their answers in the Anticipation Guide. Typically anticipation guides are used with informational text to prepare students for new information.

Before Reading

Have students work in small groups to discuss the items and decide on their responses. Then have groups share their ideas with the whole class. Facilitate the discussion so as to arouse curiosity, exercise critical thinking, and generate clear purposes for reading.

After Reading

Have students review their original responses and revise as needed. Encourage them to reread to prove points, restate key ideas, comment, and ask questions. Have them represent what they learned in writing, drawing, a Thinking Map, or some other form. You may also want to lead a discussion of one or more of these questions:

- What was the most interesting thing you learned? Why was it interesting?
- What was the most surprising thing you learned? Why?
- Did you change your mind about anything? Why?
- Is there anything you are confused about at this point?
- What new questions do you have? How could you find the answers?