



Teaching Strategy

Teaching with PowerPoint or Overheads

Description

The teacher creates a presentation or a mini-lesson that focuses on either content knowledge (e.g., electricity, multiple intelligences), a theme designed to build vocabulary, a reading strategy. Slides containing visual information are created and supplemented with slides that contain visual information plus text and eventually just text alone. This process is an effective way of teaching content and also an ideal medium for introducing strategies as words can be highlighted and sentences deleted or added to make a point.

The slides are used to set the context, focus students' attention and pace the class. Students are encouraged to work individually or in teams to create their own PowerPoint presentations to teach others. PowerPoint lessons allow teachers to create and store images and text permanently, allowing for easy retrieval, modification, and update. (If computers and digital projectors are not available, projection transparencies can be created from drawings or collages.)

Compelling images help create a picture in students' minds. They connect visual information with text and activate prior knowledge. Images enrich background knowledge in ways that are not dependent on print. Students are asked to respond to visuals with a series of question prompts, memory pegs, or the use of diagrams to show relationships between ideas.

Purpose

Low literate students have difficulty understanding information provided primarily in print and they have difficulty taking notes from a lecture. PowerPoint presentations, however, allow students to access information or concepts without getting mired in print. Images and graphs represent ideas that the teacher can make accessible to students through interactive discussions or a mini-lesson. Images allow struggling readers to access information without having to read text and help to both activate and enrich background knowledge. When images are connected to concepts or to text, they act as "memory pegs," and become anchored in the brain.

What to Do

1. Show a PowerPoint (or overhead projection) presentation using only visual information. Keep your slides simple and related to one another.
2. Describe the ideas represented by each slide, reinforcing key concepts and introducing new vocabulary as needed.
3. Repeat images on subsequent slides to reinforce key vocabulary on subsequent slides.
4. Ask the students to respond to key words and concepts on the slides from time to time and keep the presentation interactive.

5. After working with students using only pictures and oral input, show the same or similar slides but this time include written text or use text only.

Keep in Mind

As you go through the presentation, ask questions periodically to check for comprehension.

Create your slides in such a way that the first run through consists of students hearing the information presented and ideas reinforced by visuals. On the second and third presentation, written text is introduced and visual information serves merely as a prompt to help students remember the key ideas.

You can use text only slides to engage students in various forms of interactive reading (echo reading, shared reading).

Consider printing out the PowerPoint slides as hand-outs so that students can make notes or highlight key ideas as they review the materials after the initial presentation.

If you don't have PowerPoint capabilities in your classroom, use overheads and a projector to similar effects.

Involve students in various forms of retelling (putting prints of PP slides in order; using Event Maps to talk about *Who, what where and why* or *Story Boards* to show sequencing).

Ask students to create their own presentations using either PowerPoints or Posters with graphics and pictures to provide information. Encourage team and pair work and offer opportunities for students to present their projects to a wider audience (other classes, program staff; the wider community).