

## Classroom Lesson Plan 9

# Preparing for Group Discussions

**Teacher:** Barry Hoonan, The Odyssey School, Bainbridge Island, Washington

**Grade Level:** Fifth

**Topic:** Using Sticky Notes To Prepare for Literature Discussion

## Materials Needed:

- Multiple text sets (six to eight books of a single title)
- Sticky notes for student use
- Large white paper for mapping discussions

## Background Information:

Literature discussions in this classroom are influenced by the definition of literacy that Barry Hoonan and his students have adopted from Kylee Beers and Robert Probst ("Classroom Talk About Literature or the Social Dimensions of a Solitary Act." *Voices From the Middle* 5.2 (1998): 16-20). Literacy, they write, is "the ability to find what we share with the person behind a text, or the person created by a text, or the person with whom we discuss it, identifying the common pains and pleasures, hopes and fears, so that we may see that we are alike. And it is the ability on other occasions to declare ourselves other than, different from, the author and his characters and perhaps readers, rejecting bigotry, insensitivity, indifference, or illogic" (18).

Mr. Hoonan believes that helping students become literate in this sense means offering students multiple ways of understanding themselves in relationship to a literary text. He plans explicit instruction designed to foreground the ways in which skilled readers respond to literature, often using a pattern of mini-lesson followed by small-group discussion during which the teachings of the mini-lesson find application. In this particular lesson, he asks students to use sticky notes as they read to record their questions, predictions, insights, and interpretive strategies. Students are then asked to share these notations with their classmates as they discuss their shared reading texts.

## Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- read and enjoy literature.
- use sticky notes to record questions (unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar cultural or historical information, personal confusions, etc.), predictions (what they expect will happen), insights (understandings, connections to self and/or to earlier texts, recognition of point-of-view from which a character is operating or the author is presenting the story, etc.), and interpretive strategies (ways in which they made meaning from the text at specific points, ways in which they addressed complexities of meaning, etc.).
- share and discuss their observations with classmates, both in whole-group discussions or in smaller literature discussion groups.
- use language effectively to create knowledge, make meaning, challenge thinking, and expand their literary envisionments.

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- use language to develop as a classroom community of thinkers and learners, respectful of views other than their own.
- expand the repertoire of reading and interpretive strategies available for easy use.

### **Expected Products From Lesson:**

- Regular use of sticky notes as preparation for group discussion
- Focused group discussions during which students address both their developing understandings of a text and the tactics they used for doing so

### **Instructional Strategies Implemented:**

- Mini-lesson on use of sticky notes
- Student demonstrations to classmates on their use of sticky notes
- Small group discussion of *Stuck in Neutral*
- Webbing discussion issues as a way to remain focused

### **Collaborative Structure of Class:**

Because small literature discussion groups are a central feature of Mr. Hoonan's literature instruction, his classroom arrangement centers around tables and chairs to accommodate the groups. Mr. Hoonan sometimes joins a group at a table, recording a discussion, asking questions, or offering procedural suggestions. At other times, he sits outside the group, taking note of what students say and how they interact.

When the class needs to come together as a whole, they gather on a carpeted area near the class library. Equipped with a white board and an overhead, this area provides space for explicit, whole-class instruction.

### **Lesson Procedures/Activities:**

- Reading independently
- Writing sticky notes to record questions, insights and interpretive strategies
- Sharing sticky-note recordings with classmates
- Discussing shared texts
- Webbing issues to focus discussion

### **Follow-Up or Culminating Activities:**

- Discussion of readings and interpretive processes
- Sharing of text with other classmates through writing, drama, or art

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### **Assessment:**

Students may be assessed on a daily basis through:

- contributions to large- small-group discussions, and
- completion of sticky-note recordings.

The following activities might receive holistic or scaled evaluation (see the Teacher Tool Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles for a detailed explanation of holistic and scaled evaluation).

- Final individual or group sharing of text with rest of class