

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Teacher Collaboration Across Disciplines Video Transcript

Teacher:

Okay, guys, so the goal of today's meeting is to look at their "This I Believe" and figure out what kinds of lessons Andy could do tomorrow to help them fix different parts of it.

Andrew Spinali:

It would also be helpful if you guys could point me in the direction of any kids that I should share their document to the whole class for specific attributes and things like this is really good.

When kids know that using the same language, and the same protocols, and the same routines is going to help them in science and Spanish and social studies, I think it allows them to breathe a little bit and not be so worried about next bell, now I got to think about what the next teacher wants from me. The more consistent we are, the more successful they are.

I work on a team with a special ed English teacher, a science teacher, a social studies teacher, and a Spanish teacher. And we work pretty collaboratively to support the kids in their writing.

Teacher:

So during flex I noticed that Brynn S. actually did integrate her quote effectively, so that might be someone that could be used as a mentor text. She introduces it like we taught them, and then she follows up and ties it to her theme.

Spinali:

And what was interesting is that today when she called me over during the lesson, she was very much like concerned that it sounded, in her words, lame. They want to make a hook that's so like attention-grabbing, that they're struggling with it doesn't always have to be that way, it can just be a creative beginning.

Teacher:

No, I think she did a really good job introducing the author. She gave the quote and then she followed it up with her own ideas, which is exactly what we've been teaching them.

Spinali:

Choosing mentor text can be a tricky process. I often rely really heavily on the team that I work with, and we really sit down a lot and look at samples and discuss: A) Is this accessible for all kids? B) Does it fit the goals of what we're trying to teach them? And for me I think the easiest way to look about it is are they going to be able to understand it? Because if they can't understand what they're even reading, they're not going to be able to dissect the craft.

So today we have to figure out what am I really trying to say and am I saying it? And we're going to do that process by looking at it the same way as we'd look at any piece of writing. And we're going to start with a mentor text. I just want you to think about what is he really trying to say? There's a story, but what is he really trying to show us, okay? Does anyone want to volunteer to read?

Student:

"She is no longer with us, but her wise words I will never forget. I always repeat that to myself if I need some inspiration to be persistent."

Spinali:

Okay, we're going to do some dissecting of this, right? What do you notice about Jacob's piece, what's working here? What do you see? Let's do this, turn and talk to your groups, let's get some ideas that way.

Student:

He did a really good job of connecting like the story to what he believes in.

Student:

And then he had like a really good, but it was short, but it was like still like really... like he said a lot in his explanation.

Student:

When he'd go back to the quote, he'd start... you'd know that something was starting new, so it gave you a little preview before that. And that got me interested.

Spinali:

I really wanted the focus to stay with the learning objective today. And that being that how does he develop his theme? We found that when we had that

space and we had that time to really look at student work, A) it's reassuring to us to know that they are making gains. And B) we're able to say, okay, just like we ask the kids, what's the next step, for ourselves it's what do they need next?

Teacher:

"I believe in plateaus, to just keep going, and that no matter how treacherous it is to escape the black hole, there's a finish line, and getting there is an indescribable success. This I believe." She did a really nice conclusion, and I know the kids have been asking about conclusions.

Spinali:

Yeah, and actually, I think it's funny because I'm pretty sure on her exit ticket today she wrote that she wanted help with her conclusion. (laughing) So it might be reassuring for her to hear that we thought it was pretty outstanding, so I'll put that on the list, thank you.

Teacher:

I'm finding now that there's such an emphasis teamwide with the writing that in my subject, science, you sometimes get comments like, "We don't do writing in science, or we don't do writing in another class, math or whatever." But now there's... I don't hear that at all. It's just kind of assumed that that's part of their curriculum, it's embedded with all the different classes that they're in, and there's no real difference in what we all expect from the kids, so I think that has made a big difference in their progress.

Student:

I like how you use a lot of metaphors in this, and it like helps us with the story.

Student:

I like how all like the subjects like tie in together. It's not just subject, subject, subject. It's like a team. The lessons are based on the same things, so we just build off what we learn from the other class and just you keep building off of that.

Spinali:

Kids live in the middle school world where they go to seven different teachers and have seven different expectations. If we can simplify and be consistent, it makes it that much easier.