

BASIC FEEDBACK FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS - SESSION 1 - PAPER 1

Teachers are constantly asking questions and hardly ever answering them. This becomes evident when you answer too much or too little. If you read the question carefully it will tell you what to do. Do a question analysis, an important skill that you can later teach your children. Underline the salient words in the question. This means the task asks you to: write, pick out, mention, create, which 2 will you adapt, give an example it is giving you very specific instructions.

Is the question using 'and' or 'or' where there are 2 or 3 items mentioned? Is the question asking you for an answer that you can use as a demonstration for the class? Here, we are asking you to produce material, therefore, you cannot merely mention the title of a strategy or a topic. How will you "demo" for your students with something as little? You therefore need to write a piece to show your students. Please work through this course as a teacher and not as a student.

If you are asked to write 'short' entries or given a word limit of 4-5 lines do not write a massive paragraph or full essays. Why? Because.... the question is not testing your writing skills, it is finding out how you will produce appropriate material that will not overwhelm your wards. So, although you want to show them good vocabulary, structure and rigour, you might also want to keep it not short and manageable in the first instance. If you end up writing huge amounts, then this paper will seem interminable which it was not meant to be.

Please do not forget to write your name and the name of your school on your answer sheet.

QUESTIONS

1. From your pre-readings and viewings, create 2 separate mind maps or spider-grams to represent and consolidate the various ideas, games, and activities that you found in them, for (a) brainstorming and (b) vocabulary building which can be used for your class.

This question clearly states "from your pre- readings and viewings", NOT merely from your earlier knowledge base. You need to show that you have indeed done the readings and know the resources that you have added to your base. Your ideas can be added on.

The purpose of this question was two-fold.

1. For you to draw a visual mind-map, and
2. to have you represent in it all the ideas you got from your pre readings not a few of them.

A mind-map is visual and allows you to view in one frame many usable ideas. Mind-mapping is a form of visual note-making. Some of you took the easy way out and put down just 3 or 4 arms.

You can draw the mind-map on paper and upload it onto your answer too.

Answers:

Brainstorming (pushy salesman, cultural dictionary, famous foreheads, no subtitles, likes and dislikes, multipurpose use, talking time bombs, show and tell) Stay focused, all ideas are welcome, think divergently.

Vocabulary (word walls, word webs, word bank, verb charades, use rigour, blackboard games, shiritori (word chain), little words from big words, compound words, rhyme time, possible sentences, blah to brilliant, Pictionary, charades, letter scramble, mime it, puzzles, word of the day, sentence making, quiz the teacher, word hunt, class library, taboo - guess the 'show and tell' item, big words using context clues, semantic gradients of words)

Graphic organisers (venn, fishbone, 5 ws, diagrams, maps, charts, tables, spidergrams)

2. What are the three elements of writing? Which 2 techniques would you adapt to foster the growth of **each** of these three elements (total 6) from what you read in your pre readings, and what you learnt during your session on this paper, that would be the most effective in the short term?

The 3 Elements of Writing are Ideation, Structure and Vocabulary. All of you got this. Again, you were asked to use the pre readings and session notes to pick out 2 techniques for each that could be used in the short term. Since you are asked to “foster growth”, a mere mention of the techniques will not be enough. It is necessary to give a little sample – in brief.

Ideas - observation games, 3 stories a day, sharing personal stories, what ifs...
Songs, pictures, slogans, stories, advertisements, news, magazines, maps, research, various videos, discussions, debates, photos, movies.

(Reading material or graphics are broad terms and will not on their own create ideas. You need to give parameters to idea like wh questions, plots or conflicts in stories, a lot of exposure.)

Structure – narrative past tense, indirect speech, tense integrity, GPPS, paragraph writing practice, targeting structures through oral games, paragraph change rules, adjectives and adverbs.

Vocabulary – collect and use words in everyday contexts, do vocabulary exercises like changing adjectives to other adjectives, synonyms antonyms uses, using target words/similes/idioms/phrases in the classroom. Teacher creates a culture of words by using good vocabulary.

3. What does **VFC** stand for? What is the feather duster method? Give one example to show how you would use it in your classroom?

VFC – Volume Frequency Context

V is Volume is immersion in language that is incidental and natural. Listening to 3 stories a day, audio stories, reading aloud daily to hear good English, viewing English channels or animations on YouTube, speaking to one another if possible. Find language in all kinds of places. In maps, ads, games, in other subjects. Link learning.

F is frequency of core items that are revised or revisited. **Please note frequency revisits are not done on a daily basis.** Brief and often across the year. This is not topic based but strategy based. The ‘how tos’ or the strategies of various types of writing or terminology or aspects are learnt are revisited. How to write an adventure story? What are the requirements? (not the topic is Zoo so let us talk of the zoo animals often) You can also frequent vocabulary by using newly learnt words often. This can be done as a quiz, or part of a new assignment rubrics, or a quick recap for half a minute. Grammar should be a daily frequency item and if you are doing Language with Ease you are familiar with the benefits and success of frequency.

The feather duster is symbolic of the frequency ideology. Just as we use a feather duster for dusting frequently but briefly, we need to revisit core learning (those parts that are going to be of use for all times) briefly but many times in a year. If you do not use the feather duster but clean thoroughly once only, the accumulation of dust will lead to very strenuous cleaning or even erosion of surfaces. So it is with knowledge. How to write a genre, how to learn, what are the functions/ factors/ elements of a concept - all come under core learning. Example: What does an adjective do? Requirements: It tells us more about a noun in terms of number, quantity, age, colour, size, texture, shape, quality, origin and characteristic + noun. This must be known, recollected and repeated by the child. Do this frequently through the year – but very briefly.

C is context – what is meaningful, in a context (as opposed to what is truncated and random knowledge) is better retained by the mind. What is of interest and excitement are remembered better. Link to life is critical. Link to learning is critical. Otherwise, learning is fragmented and pointless.

4. What problems do you currently face or foresee on 'integration' and 'differentiation' in your classroom?

Differentiation is the differences in levels, interests, aptitudes, backgrounds in your class. One-size-fits-all will disadvantage more than half the class. It is your agenda of "completing portions" or time management. The whole class does not study. Differentiation need not be done on everything you touch. Diagnostics must be done to create 3 broad categories. You must be aware when you teach, set papers, have expectations of the problems of these and try to tweak your work whenever possible to suit them. It is a mind-set. It cannot be mandated as an end, but we must walk the path.

Differentiation must not be so severe and rigid as to create a "language apartheid" in your classrooms. It must be done subtly. There must be mixed groups, pair work, mentoring with high school kids, and teacher partnerships for weaker students. Plenty of praise and read outs of improvement in weaker students. Lots of affection and fraternity.

Integration is not the opposite of differentiation.

Integration is where you use inter disciplinary materials to achieve more integrated learning goals. For example: You use content from history, geography, science or maths to get students to write an essay, letter, word problem, autobiography, story etc. This helps you kill two birds with one stone. Helps two teachers to evaluate and makes learning holistic for children. You were asked to take a topic and show how you would integrate language with another subject.

5. Name the expanding and contracting genres of writing? Which is your favourite to teach and which one is the most tiresome and why?

a) The Expanding Genres

1. Description 2. Narrative. 3. Imaginative

b) The Contracting Genres

1. Discussion 2. Reporting 3. Argumentative 4. Persuasion

The reasons for favourites and tiresome are varied. I hope that as the course progresses you get to review some of your feelings about genres.

6. As ideation, to motivate children to write eagerly, give an example of a story, a game, and a song that could lead to writing.

Please note the word 'and' in this question. It indicates that you need to do a story, a game and a song. We need ideas for each of these. So, we are basically asking for resources in the given forms, to help children get ideas to write eagerly.

Example

Story:

- Use Ramayana story - Send a letter to request the manufacture of bow and arrows for Rama's army for the impending war against Ravana.
- Use Cinderella story – Write an announcement about the prince's intention to search for the girl whose foot will perfectly fit into the slipper in his possession.

Game:

- Imagine you are a banker in the game of 'Monopoly'. Write a dialogue in which you are describing your job to your friend.
- Write a conversation between 2 corners of the game 4 corners, where 1 corner is feeling lonely, as very few children come to it, and the other is preferred a lot.

Song:

Listen to a song 'Let it go' from the movie 'Frozen'.

- Write the song as if it's a diary entry.
- Imagine you are a snowman listening to the song, what would be your reaction?
- Describe the setting of the song using 3 senses, and similes.

7. Mention any 3 interesting topics you have given children for writing. Try and integrate another subject content into one of them.

Examples:

1. Celebrity lunch with heroes from history
2. A dinosaur in my backyard.
3. Cookies or cupcakes – 3 reasons for your choice
4. If you could create a country., what would you name it, describe its flag,
5. national element and come up with the governing rules that you felt was
6. important for your country to have.
7. Pick out random objects as a group from a bag and make a collective story
8. Change poems using a cloze
9. The Speaking Shoe
10. An Autobiography of Olive Ridley. Link to EVS, endangered turtles, Indian Wildlife Protection Act, Kasav Mahotsav(festival of turtles celebrated in India

8. Put down 3 structures in writing that children get wrong and you find hard to correct.

Here you were specifically asked for structures not for generic problems like Punctuation, conjunctions, tense integrity etc.

Example

1. He didn't ate his lunch. (did + past tense)
 2. The teacher told me that 'Where are you?' (use of direct questions and statements while reporting and the incorrect use of punctuation in the same)
 3. Each of the boys have done their homework. (wrong subject verb agreement)
 4. Me and my friends went for a walk. (Confusion in the usage of 'I' and 'me')
9. Write two short journal entry ideas from the suggestions given to you during the session, to use as a demonstration to tempt your students to begin journal writing themselves.

You were asked to write entries not titles. If you just offer the titles of ideas, will students be motivated to write? You were meant to write two pieces by choosing any 2 of the given ideas to show them how exciting it is and tempt them to write.

Example:

- Use old photos to write about memories.
- Research crazy facts and write them down.
- Follow a passion on magic tricks, cars, dinosaurs, Minecraft and write on them.
- Do what if reveries....
- Paste cartoons and write own captions in bubbles

10. Write a short feedback in 7-8 lines on your experience with Paper 1 with reference to the usefulness of pre-readings, the contents of this module for its orientation to the course, and the speaker for clarity and helpfulness. You may add any other remark that you wish to convey. Mention questions, if any, that trouble you regarding this session.

Your own comment

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