

Quickening the Pace of Students' Background Knowledge Acquisition

1. Consider the students in your classroom or school who are English learners. What background knowledge do they need in your class in order to succeed? What background knowledge do they possess but rarely have the opportunity to display?
2. What are the differences between direct and indirect learning experiences for building background knowledge? What examples of both occur in your class?
3. How do you capitalize on field trips and other experiential learning activities back in the classroom?
4. What are your experiences with modeling using a think-aloud approach? If you don't have much experience at this, what do you think would help you?
5. Compare the reading lives of two students in your class—one who seems to read all the time and another who is almost never seen with a book or magazine. How does this differential level of exposure to reading play out in your classroom?
6. Would your students describe you as a reader? What evidence would they use to support their claims?
7. Pilgreen (2000) says that effective SSR (sustained silent reading) programs do not feature an accountability requirement (book report, test, number of pages read, etc.). This is a controversial stand. What's your opinion? Why?
8. What are the most useful graphic organizers in your content area? How do students utilize them once they have completed these tools? How do you build their capacity to select their own graphic organizers to visually represent information?