

ELA Strategies for Grades 7-12

Vol. 1 Issue 4
June 2022

Instructional Strategies

Case Studies

Case studies are more spontaneous than structured group projects. This is a good thing. It helps prepare students for the workforce, where problem solving on the fly is an essential skill. In a practical work environment, students can't just do what they're told and expect to succeed. Case studies can help prepare them for life.

To use case studies, put students into groups and task them with finding a way to apply the knowledge they've acquired from reading course materials and listening to lessons into real-world scenarios.

In a classroom setting, working on case studies encourages students to think critically about what they've learned, not just recite points back to the class.

Four Tips For Setting Up A Case Study

Identify a problem to investigate: This should be something accessible and relevant to students' lives. The problem should also be challenging and complex enough to yield multiple solutions with many layers.

Give context: Hook the students to help them understand just enough about the problem to want to learn more (similar to a movie or book trailer).

Establish a clear rubric: Give structure to your definition of quality group work and products. Students may help build the rubric and descriptors.

Provide structures for presenting solutions: A case study product can be something like several pieces of evidence of students collaborating to solve the problem and ultimately presenting their solution with a detailed slide deck or essay.

Assessment Strategies

Graffiti Wall

The graffiti wall is a fun activity for students and provides a visual representation of what your students have learned during a lesson or unit of study. Encourage students to write or draw what they have learned about a topic. Students can jot down facts, write a personal opinion, connect their learning to other areas of study, etc.

Using the graffiti wall activity partway through a unit provides you with information for further planning of instruction. If there appear to be gaps in your students' learning, you can target those specific areas. Students may make connections that you were not expecting or even thought about! Leave the graffiti wall up during the remainder of the unit and students will continue to add comments and drawings.

Start with a large piece of paper. Hang up on the wall.

Group work is best. The ideas and contributions of many students are better for a graffiti wall than just the work of one.

There isn't a plan. There is no "right" final graffiti wall. It grows and changes as the learning continues, and represents important parts, new ideas, connections, etc.

Layer, layer, layer. Just like the ideas in our heads, the representations on a graffiti wall are not stand-alone, neatly organized, or perfect.

Use both words and pictures. Visual is key with a graffiti wall. Pictures are important, but so are words.



Classroom / Time Management Strategies

Stay Positive

Students just want to fit in! You are the authority figure in the classroom and typically the students want to please you. Stay positive even when correcting a student. This doesn't mean that you can never point out a mistake; just do so privately and add some positivity. For example: *It's great that you got your homework in on time. Nice job! There are some things that I want to see for next time, so let's talk about it.* This provides a way to motivate the student to be better or do a better job. Teachers are coaches and you are constantly trying to help your students improve. Express concern about sharing ways that they can improve. Provide specific suggestions for improvement.