



Literacy at Hartford Public High School
September 22, 2003
Volume 1 Number 3

Thoughts for the Day

Are you always aware of what is going on in your classroom?

What do you do to let students know that they are behaving inappropriately?

Do you remind your students of the correct procedure or rule that they are ignoring?

Do you ask the student to repeat the correct rule or procedure?

Do you post your assignments daily?

Are your assignments always posted in the same spot, where students are trained to look for them?

Do your students ask, "What are we supposed to do today?"

Do your students know what is expected of them each day?

Do your tests copy the format of the CAPT?

How do your students know exactly what they are responsible for on your tests?

Do you have your students complete assignments or do you teach for mastery?

What is the best thing about your classes?

Which of the suggestions offered in the Harry Wong video tapes have you used in your classroom?

What are your current thoughts about the effectiveness of the suggestions?

Word Walls

Adapted from Doug Buehl

A baseline step in providing a vocabulary-rich classroom environment is teacher modeling. Teachers can model usage of both general and content-specific vocabulary. When teachers use only a few unfamiliar words as a natural part of daily discourse, students begin to develop a comfort zone with adopting these words for their own speaking. Teacher modeling of new vocabulary is especially effective when these words are embedded in language packed with contextual prompts: "The proliferation of new construction on the far east side of town is very noticeable. It seems that each time I drive by there are more and more new houses, businesses, and streets."

Word walls are another, powerful way for reinforcing content-specific vocabulary. For example, a math teacher might use a word wall to support the learning of significant math terminology. After the teacher discusses the meaning of a key word, the word is written on the front of a sheet of paper folded in half and placed on the word wall. Students passing by who have forgotten the meaning merely have to lift the word flap to read the definition written on the inside half of the paper. As new terms are encountered, and previous terms reviewed, the word wall grows and becomes an essential classroom resource.

A science teacher might use a word wall to build a classroom reservoir of essential terms related to key concepts that will recur over the course of the year. Secondary terms can be pruned out as a new unit interjects new words for intensive study.