

Daily Quotes

I begin each of my integrated reading/writing class meetings with a quote on the screen or board in front of the class. Students quietly begin class by copying the quote into their notebooks and then writing a response to it. I then invite students to share their thoughts. This takes 5-10 minutes depending on how many students want to share and whether I ask them to share with the whole group or to share with one or two others. This has the following results:

1. a quiet routine to begin class that includes brief, thoughtful reading and writing that is ungraded but meaningful
2. an opportunity to positively respond to every student who shares and to model thoughtful listening
3. students recognize that they can share without feeling threatened
4. a collection of sayings that are important to the students. I have had students write to me one or two semesters after our class to let me know that when they are feeling down or overly challenged, they go through their quotes for strength and ideas.
5. introduce or reinforce content. For instance, one week I might use these quotes:
 - a. "Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day, saying, "I will try again tomorrow." -- Mary Anne Radmacher
 - b. "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts." -- Winston Churchill
 - c. "You must do the things you think you cannot do." -- Eleanor Roosevelt

Topics I can use these quotes for include punctuation marks, subject and verb, theme, personification, voice, person, and parts of speech. I can also use them to talk about schema, text connections, and topic sentences or theses. This technique of using a quote to introduce or reinforce content material as well as to begin (or end) class could work in any discipline.

I often include a picture of someplace I have been or someone in my family and that creates another opportunity to connect with my students. Some of my students are willing to loan me a picture of their own and this creates another opportunity for students to connect to each other, too. I have a group of quotes that I like, but each semester I find something new that is occurring either in class or in the world, and I do a quick search for quotes either with "quotes from ___" or "quotes about ____."

Because I am choosing quotes that are meaningful to me and that I think will relate to my students, I feel as if I am beginning class with my heart and mind open.

Submitted by:

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