

Strategy for the Implementation of the Common Core in Co-Taught Global History & Geography 9

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Brief Background and Class Composition

We co-teach a section of Global History & Geography 9. Global History & Geography 9 is the first half of a two year course that culminates in a New York State Regents exam.

Our class is comprised of fifteen students with varying levels of ability, which includes ten general education students and five students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). We teach a very diverse population of students. For example, some students in our class are identified with a learning disability in the areas of basic reading and reading comprehension, while others are currently reading independently at an eleventh grade reading level. Further diversity includes a student with a Hearing Impairment whom requires an interpreter, captioning, and an FM system, as well as a student with Autism as one of his many attributes. Furthermore, as is typical of ninth grade students, many struggle with written expression, particularly when “Regents Quality Writing” is expected. We define “Regents Quality Writing” in our class as written responses that use accurate facts and specific historical details and are written neatly in complete sentences with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Vignette

In order to meet the needs of our students and the rigor of the Common Core, a strategy we teach is Cornell Note-Taking*. We have adapted this strategy for taking notes during a close reading of an assigned text. Students are required to read an assigned text, record notes that include the main ideas and key details, review those notes to formulate essential questions, and lastly write a summary (refer to attached Cornell Notes Outline). We utilize this strategy within each unit taught but often vary the method. For example, we use Cornell Notes for whole group cooperative instruction, small group collaboration, as well as independent learning.

When using Cornell Notes for whole group instruction, students all read the same text selection. In the co-taught setting, teachers determine and chunk the reading selection and students take turns reading aloud. After each section teachers ask scaffolded questions to guide students in determining the main ideas and key details that they record as notes. At the start of the year, a common scaffold was provided to students. Teachers modeled note-taking for students by writing class generated notes on the SMARTBoard in an organized manner. As the school year progresses, students become familiar with the format of Cornell Notes and no longer require such a model. Once notes are complete, students reread the notes they have taken and teachers ask guiding questions to help students generate Essential Questions. Essential Questions serve multiple functions such as processing course content, connecting and synthesizing key ideas and concepts, and as a study tool for students to review course material at a later date. Next, students summarize their notes, or in other words answer their Essential Questions. Students are required to complete “Regents Quality Writing” when

answering Essential Questions. Students are encouraged to construct summaries that consist of one to three declarative sentences with the ultimate goal being that students will compose a strong thesis statement. Students will frequently share their summaries with the class by writing them on the SMARTBoard. Through class discussion students collaborate to edit peers' summaries using SMARTBoard technology, editing for both content and grammar. All students then review and edit their own summaries. Teachers assist individual students as they edit their written work. Small group collaboration requires that students apply the same process. Teachers group students heterogeneously prior to class and facilitate group progress as needed. When Cornell Note-Taking is assigned to foster independent learning, teachers differentiate text selections based on students' abilities. For example, teachers may assign a sixth grade textbook excerpt to some, a standard ninth grade text selection to many, and an academic journal article to a few. As is evident, such a strategy may be used to analyze a wide variety of text.

This adaptation of the Cornell Note-Taking strategy aims to address various aspects of the new Common Core Learning Standards including those for Reading, Writing, as well as Speaking and Listening.

*Cornell Note-Taking is a note-taking strategy that was developed at the University of Cornell for college students to utilize during lecture courses. The strategy is meant to provide students with a method to not only record notes but to synthesize, analyze, and study their notes. For further information refer to Cornell University Learning Strategies Center.

The following is an outline of the Cornell Note-Taking Strategy we will be utilizing throughout the school year. Use the right hand column labeled "Notes" to copy down notes from an assigned reading selection or class lecture. Then, review your notes and in the left hand column labeled "Questions" write down essential questions (1 or 2 for each major topic). These questions are meant to help you process your notes (figure out what the main ideas are and develop study questions from them). Once you are done developing questions, write a brief summary (1-3 sentences) of the notes in the box at the bottom labeled "Summary." Your summary must be Regents Quality Writing.

Questions

Notes

Summary