

DOINGWHATWORKS



Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

High School Academic Literacy Intervention Class

Burlingame High School, California • February 2009

Topic: Adolescent Literacy

Practice: Intensive Intervention

Highlights

- Teacher Morgan Hallabrin provides an overview of the ACCESS (academic success) literacy intervention class, which focuses on helping students identified as struggling readers to develop the skills they need to become academically successful.
- Hallabrin explains how the academic weekly record helps students to become better organized, set learning goals, and learn to take responsibility for their academics.
- A critical component of the ACCESS class is helping students to improve their reading comprehension. Hallabrin describes some of the strategies that she introduces to facilitate comprehension and several techniques for encouraging vocabulary development with her students.

About the Site

Burlingame High School

Burlingame, CA

Demographics

63% White

15% Hispanic

14% Asian

6% Other

1% Black

1% Native American

5% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

Burlingame High School provides reading and academic intervention support to ninth graders through an academic literacy class called ACCESS. Teachers Jim Burke and Morgan Hallabrin have developed a comprehensive curriculum to help students develop reading, vocabulary, academic literacy, and comprehension skills. Features of the high school reading program include:

- Districtwide testing of all eighth graders to identify struggling readers
- Academic literacy course for identified struggling readers in ninth grade
- Use of note-taking organizers and templates designed by Jim Burke to promote meaningful discussion about text

Full Transcript

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Welcome to High School Academic Literacy Intervention Class

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My name is Morgan Hallabrin. I teach ninth grade Reading Intervention, which is otherwise known as ACCESS. I teach ninth grade College Prep English and I teach twelfth grade AP Composition and Literature at Burlingame High School in Burlingame, California. I have been teaching different forms of reading classes otherwise known as Adolescent Literacy classes for around six years.

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Students are chosen to be in the ACCESS class depending on a score that they receive when they take a test called the Gates-MacGinitie Test. The Gates-MacGinitie Test is given to every student who is coming into our district at the end of their eighth-grade year and based on their grade-level score; if it's below ninth grade, they are then placed in the ACCESS program.

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It is very important that the students in ACCESS learn how to set goals and learn the details of making a plan and how that directly relates to achieving a goal. And when I teach the students how to set a goal and make a plan, I use a graphic organizer called the weekly record, which is created by Jim Burke, and it's in his tools and text booklet. This is a piece of paper that the students get at the beginning of period at the beginning of the week. And so they set a goal for themselves. They make a two-step plan for themselves. And then in addition to that, they fill out all of their classes that they have and any homework, quizzes, or tests they have for the week so that they can be able to see how their schedule will fall down and they begin to utilize the appropriate time it takes to achieve their goals. And then we pick back up on the weekly record on Fridays so that the students can reflect on their week. They can reflect on all of their tests, their quizzes, the plans that they have made, the plans that they possibly haven't followed through on. They can assess their behavior or their decisions for the week, and they fill out a self-evaluation guide.

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As a result of using this tool, I not only see a change in the students' ability to set goals that are appropriate and are attainable, but I also see the more that they use this tool, the better their plans become and the more linked they are to truly achieving their goal.

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Whenever we have a piece of reading material, I always have the students list off the Three "P"s: Preview, Plan, and Purpose. Depending on whether we read the article in class or outside of class, the plan changes, but we usually discuss why we make a plan, which relates back then to the weekly record. Also, we have a purpose for reading, and sometimes we have a dual purpose. We have a purpose for reading and then, on top of that, we have purpose for annotating. And we always talk about intentions for reading and how it's important to set a purpose before you read because if you don't set a purpose before you read, we as readers have difficulty identifying important information. But, before we begin talking on plan or purpose, I have the students preview what they are reading and choose three things that struck them while they previewed.

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I like to practice the model of gradual release of responsibility, so when practicing the Three "P"s, I model and they watch, and I model with the text. I will photocopy a text on to an overhead. I will pull out the overhead that students will have the text in front of them, and I will model my reading process, a think aloud of sorts, for the students to see me practicing the Three "P"s. And then after that what I will do is

that we will together find things that some of the students pick out.

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After that, sometimes I will have the students get in pairs and they will work together so that they can highlight different ideas and different things they notice and share them with a partner and then share out, and then from there I have them practice individually.

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When I teach vocabulary in my ACCESS class, I have four different strategies of teaching vocabulary that I choose from. There is “Drive-By-Teaching,” which is when I am reading a text, a student needs me to clarify the definition of a word and I will. There is “Front-Loading,” where I front-load vocabulary with the intention of giving the students a better understanding of the text, but I do not expect them to retain or utilize the words after we read the text. The third type is where I use a graphic organizer, where I give the students the definition, I have them use a word in a sentence, and I have them draw a picture and image or a symbol. And I utilize this strategy with the intention of the students being able to use the words in their conversations as well as in their writing, and then there are words that are concepts, and I do concept maps of those.

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One of the ways that I make our content in ACCESS relevant is that I stay up on the news, and I listen to NPR and the Nightly News, and I go on and I read articles on BBC, and I am constantly searching the web for any new stories that deal specifically with teens, and that’s first and foremost. Another way that I keep the material relevant is at the beginning of the year I have the students write a list of things that they are interested in and I make sure to possibly work in articles or unit plans or writing assignments that have to do with the student’s personal interest. I think that it is incredibly important to make every reading piece relevant to the students in some way. I think that buy-in piece is really critical when you are teaching students who need to learn structures to be able to navigate through all different types of reading material.

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To learn more about high school academic literacy intervention classes, please explore the additional materials on the Doing What Works website.