LEON PLAN: Note-Taking Strategies

Preparation

Lesson Overview
Students learn different ways of taking notes as they read for information or for studying purposes.

Do Before Teaching
1. Photocopy the The Lost City thinking tree and blank Double Journal lesson masters for each student.
   Be prepared to project the lesson masters for The Lost City thinking tree, Wilmot Lake, and Double Journal.
2. Have student vocabulary journals ready for this lesson.

Teaching Routine

Before Reading

Introduce Lesson: Thinking Tree Activity (10 minutes)

- Distribute the lesson master for The Lost City thinking tree. Explain to the students that this is called a thinking tree. When you read for information or to study, you often take notes. This is one way that you can take notes.
- Ask the students to look at the thinking tree for The Lost City. Read each entry out loud while the students follow along. When you have finished, ask volunteers to explain how the thinking tree works. Guide the discussion so the students understand that the title of the story was The Lost City, the next line shows the most important ideas in the story, and below each important idea are details about the important idea: language provides unique ways to describe common scenarios.
• Project the lesson master story Wilmot Lake so all the students can see it. Read the story out loud while the students follow along silently. When you have finished, complete the blank thinking tree with the students as a class activity. Use a think-aloud strategy yourself and involve volunteers. Have the students complete their blank sheets based on the story. Circulate among the students to make sure that they complete the sheet correctly. This activity, in addition to teaching students about a thinking tree outliner, helps them identify important ideas and details in a story.

Provide Direct Instruction, Modeling, and Guided Practice (20–30 minutes)

• Review with the students some of the reasons that they read. Use examples like reading for fun, reading to find information, and reading to learn to do something. Some examples are reading a book for fun, reading a newspaper article about a soccer match, and reading a magazine article so you can learn a snowboard trick.

• Explain that when you read for fun, you usually don’t take notes. When you read for information or to learn something, you may want to take notes. This is especially true when you study for school. Taking notes helps you learn as you read, and you have the notes to look at later when you study.

• There are different ways to take notes. One way you learned already: by using the thinking tree. There are other ways to take notes. It is important to try different ways so you learn which way works best for you.
  - Write the following general note-taking steps on the board. Encourage the students to copy these down.
  - Think about what you are reading. Try to understand it.
  - Write down the most important ideas.
  - Under each important idea, write the supporting details.
  - Use your own words when you write the important ideas and details. This will help you understand the material.
  - Be sure to write neatly. You have to be able to read your notes afterward.
  - Write the name of the book and the chapter for your notes. This will be useful if you have to go back to the book and review the material.
  - Don’t try to write everything.
• Project the title of the article you wish to model. Read the article aloud and have the students follow along silently. Encourage the students to listen carefully and think about the important ideas and details. For now, you do not want them to take notes. It is important that the students hear the selection read correctly.

• When you have finished, skim the article paragraph by paragraph. Ask volunteers to identify important ideas and details in each paragraph. Write the ideas on the board using the outline format shown below.

  • Important idea 1
    • Detail 1
    • Detail 2
  • Important idea 2
    • Detail 1
    • Detail 2

• Explain to the students that this is another common way that people take notes. This approach is very flexible and can be used with a lot of different material.

• Preteach the vocabulary needed for understanding the independent reading for the lesson. Pronounce the words carefully and have students say them aloud.

**During Reading**

**Student Practice (15–25 minutes)**

• Next, have students work independently to apply their learning using the 5-Step Literacy Routine.

**After Reading**

**Whole-Class Wrap Up (5–10 minutes)**

• When all students have completed the 5-Step Literacy Routine (or at least the first two steps), bring the class together to review the lesson, discuss any questions students have, and provide any reteaching that is needed.

• Have students return to their vocabulary journals and indicate their level of understanding for each of the new terms learned in this lesson.
Lesson Extensions

- Project the lesson master Double Journal about The Lost City. Explain to the students that this is another way to record research findings. Point to the left-hand column and show that this is information that came from the story. The right-hand column contains the readers’ thoughts about the information in the story. By using a double journal to take notes, you can summarize the information in the story and write what you think about it. In this journal, the writer compared the story to an adventure movie and made a connection with what was already known about pyramids. The writer drew a conclusion about food and asked a question about the stone carvings.

- Distribute a copy of the blank Double Journal form to each student. Bring in copies of several national or local newspapers. Have the students form groups of three or four and give each group a newspaper. Have each student choose a story in the paper and complete a Double Journal about it. Encourage the students in each group to help one another if needed. Circulate among the groups and check each student’s work. Be sure the students know which information goes in each column.

- Project the lesson master Rescue Dogs. As a class activity, read the story out loud while the students follow along silently. After you have read the story, have the students form groups of three or four to write study notes about the story. One student in each group should write down the ideas in the outline form with headings and subheadings. Circulate among the groups to provide the students with any help they need. Remind the students to focus on the important ideas and to summarize these ideas in their own words.
Lesson Masters

The Lost City

Location
  South America
    Near Amazon

People

Industry
  Hunting
  Gathering

Art
  Carving
  Weaving
Wilmot Lake

Wilmot Lake is near the town of Harris. The lake is more than five miles long from one end to the other. It was formed by a dam on the Star River. The water in the lake is clear and cool.

The lake is important to the town. Water for the town comes from the lake. Money comes from the lake, too. How can this be? People from all over visit the lake. They buy things in the town. This money helps the people of the town.

In the summer, people like to swim and fish in the lake. There are lots of boats in the water. Some are sailboats and others are motorboats. People also use rowboats and canoes. Some campgrounds are around the shore of the lake. People love to go camping there in tents or trailers.

The lake is busy in winter, too. When it gets cold, the lake freezes. People can go ice fishing. Sometimes they pull shacks onto the lake. They stay inside the shacks to keep warm. They cut holes in the ice so they can fish. Some people joke that it is like fishing in your living room.
Double Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes from Text</th>
<th>My Thoughts and Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explorers found the lost city, but they have no idea what happened to the people.</td>
<td>This is like an adventure movie, but it's real.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest surprise was a step pyramid in the middle of the city.</td>
<td>People made pyramids in other places like Mexico and Egypt. I wonder why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was no evidence of farming.</td>
<td>Maybe the jungle gave them so much food that they didn’t have to grow their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the art was carving with a few paintings. The carvings were mostly stone.</td>
<td>The story didn’t say how big the stone carvings were. I’d like to know that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Double Journal

| Notes from Text | My Thoughts and Connections |
Rescue Dogs

Imagine that you are skiing. You are halfway down the mountain and you hear a rumble. You look up the mountain and see a wall of snow. Within seconds, you are buried, unable to move. There is a pocket of air, so you can breathe. You are afraid, and you have no idea how long you have been buried.

Suddenly, you hear a scraping noise. A barking sound follows. In a little while, a hole opens up in the snow above you. A dog and some people are standing there. You are saved.

This story is made up, but things like this happen often. Almost all ski areas now have rescue dogs. The reason that dogs are so good at finding people is their sense of smell. They can smell about a thousand times better than a human.

Not all dogs can be trained as rescue dogs. Some breeds are better than others. The working, herding, and sporting dogs are the most easily trained. Even so, it is the individual dog rather than the breed that determines how well the animal will do.

Rescue dogs need a good work ethic. They must be able to work hard. They also must want to please their humans. They have to obey in situations that are dangerous.

A rescue dog can’t be too small or too big. A small dog might not be strong enough for a rescue. A big dog might not fit in a small space. In addition, a big dog would be too hard to get into a rescue helicopter or onto a chairlift.

Most of the time, rescue dogs start training as puppies. This will help them bond with their humans. They will learn to follow commands, like different people, and get along with other dogs. Some older dogs can be trained to be rescue dogs, but puppies are better. The earlier a dog is trained, the more people it can save.

The training for rescue dogs involves two partners, the dog and the person. They are trained as a team. In the beginning of the training, the dog is taught to find its handler through activities that the dog thinks are games. The task is simple, like finding the handler who is hiding behind a tree. The challenge becomes greater, going from just a few inches of snow to very deep snow. Eventually, the dog will be able to find any human as long as it can catch a scent.
A good rescue dog will ignore distractions. It will find the scent of a lost human in difficult conditions. The dog is also taught to signal when a person is found. It might bark, but it will always dig in the snow. This is a natural behavior for dogs, and is a good start to the actual rescue. Serving as rescue animals is one of the most important ways that dogs help humans.