

Can sharing the RACE strategy with principals, teachers, and students help students become proficient at writing a constructed response?

Pam Mears and Kevin Milner

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn the salient features of the constructed response and obstacles students are likely to confront.
- Participants will learn the RACE strategy as an organizer for writing a constructed response.
- Participants will practice the strategy orally with a partner.
- Participants will write a constructed response and share it on the Socrative site for further collaboration.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy

W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.4.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Background:

In my role as a District Literacy Coach, which is overseen by Kevin, I have been assigned to share the research behind and strategies for teaching close reading, vocabulary, and higher level questioning. Recently, constructed response writing was added as we prepare for Smarter Balanced. I have been teaching constructed response writing at schools, developing sample lessons for teachers to use in their classrooms, and modeling instruction. While updating the Newberg Literacy Framework to reflect the shifts in the CCSS, we recognized that the constructed response is actually a culmination and an end product of the three areas of professional development our district had chosen to focus on this year.

Lesson:

1. The lesson will begin with a power-write and discussion to help clarify what we know/don't know about writing constructed responses.
2. The class will jigsaw the article *Preparing Students in Writing Responses to Open-Ended Questions* to learn about the constructed response (CR).
3. Using the article, partners will write/orally state a CR to answer: Identify three skills students will need develop to clearly answer open-ended questions, and what part does fluency play in this discussion?
4. Practice restating the question by playing I HAVE, WHO HAS?

5. Share samples of student work.
6. Using Robert Frost's poem, *Fireflies in the Garden*, the class will construct a response using Socrative.com as a medium and the RACE rubric for reflection.
7. View a video of a student reflecting on his work.

Resources:

Kapinus, Barbara. "Preparing Students in Writing Responses to Open-Ended Questions." *TextMatters* 3.1 (2014): 1-7. Web. 27 Feb. 2015.

Lathem, Edward C., ed. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1969.

Lieberman, Ann, and Linda Friedrich. "Teachers, Writers, Leaders." *Educational Leadership* 65.1 (2007): 42-47.

Perkins, David N., and James D. Reese. "When Change Has Legs." *Educational Leadership* 71.8 (2014): 42-47.

Socrative by MasteryConnect <http://www.socrative.com/>

