

Video: Teacher Reflection - Evidence-Based Reading Instruction in the ABE Classroom (Length: 8:30)

Descriptive Transcript

Context: Ms. Gaboury reflects on the lesson she taught on Comprehensive Strategies in the video Evidence-Based Reading Instruction in the ABE Classroom.

[Title slides, with music:

- *[Logo: Public Adult Education of Massachusetts: Live to Learn]*
- *Public Adult Education of Massachusetts Presents*
- *[Logo: SABES] a SABES: Massachusetts Public Adult Education Professional Development System Production*
- *[Video Title] Teacher Reflection: EBRI Comprehension Lesson*

[The camera is focused on Ms. Gaboury's face. Part of the whiteboard and bulletin board are visible in the background.]

[Ms. Gaboury] My name is Stephanie Gaboury. I am the reading instructor here at Blue Hills Adult Education. I have been working here for just one year, but I've been in English education in the high school and college environment for over 10 years. I chose the lesson this evening because I find it far more effective when students can feel empowered and relate to a text. So tonight's reading is about Marley Dias and her passion for connecting with literature. It's a shared passion of mine, myself, and I think it's something that students really can appreciate and understand, such a tangible goal, right? To say that a young girl saw a need and went out there and did it. And so if that inspires even one student to do the same or to feel empowered to connect in their community, then we've reached them, not just on a reading level, but on an activism level too.

When I look through readings and try and make that decision on which ones I'm going to work with, I do the best I can to try and vary the style of writing in addition to the content. We've worked a lot this year with different social studies readings and science readings, because that's something they will experience eventually on the HiSET. So if I can do it in a connected way now, it won't feel as daunting when they reach it at a higher level.

But some of the areas that I feel are a little lacking or, um, not as strong with some of the readings that we found have been the nonfiction pieces. They're either about a person they've already heard of or has a nice, neat wrapped up with a bow type of ending. Uh, and that's not gonna be how life works. And so this being right at the beginning of Marley's life, we're seeing her at 11 years old, and she's only 19 now. She has so many more things she can do, just like our students tonight. So that, that was kind of the logic behind that choice, especially at this point in the year where they've been exposed to a lot of different styles of reading and content. This was one that I thought would work well now.

I think that the HiSET is the ultimate goal with the program. Adults come back and say, "I want my high school equivalency so that I can apply for a college degree or get a promotion at work" or things like that, right? So for a lot, that's the long-term goal. However, there are plenty of students who enroll knowing that that's either not their goal or not their goal for a while. I've had students this year who were in the United States for two weeks before I started working with them, right? We're not even thinking about the HiSET yet. We're *[you're]* so excited to be working on fluency and pronunciation, and you feel comfortable having a conversation with a person with a totally different background from you by the end of the month, maybe. So while the HiSET is definitely present with the level that we were working with this evening, the goal is not as immediate. I think it's important to have it as a long-term goal, but if it feels like a day-to-day, overbearing presence, then every student who is just not ready yet feels like they failed. And that's so far from the truth.

I was speaking with a student tonight who was very appreciative for what's been going on this year, and she said she's had multiple friends and family members come up to her recently and say, "Oh my goodness, your English has improved so much!" Every time that she says that, *[she says,]* "Oh my gosh, it's, it's even better now!" So it's palpable how, how wonderful it is that the improvements that each student is making in their own way, on their own path, that journey is going to be different. And so, having it be a long-term goal is great, but it shouldn't feel like a failure if that's not where you are now.

So the students that we saw here tonight are in the intermediate or the high intermediate levels. At our program, we have intermediate, high—intermediate and advanced. Tonight, we had some students combined more based on lexile level and reading skills because, throughout the evening they have reading, writing, and math. And sometimes it doesn't perfectly line up to to choose. So the students here tonight, we're working with a 1000 level lexile level reading, and their reading ability is at or above their level here. They've been working very hard to kind of push those boundaries on that.

Of the students who are here tonight, most were English as a second language students. There are several who are recently out of high school or returning to education pretty quickly, but most have been out of an educational format for a while. Um, and the range of other languages is huge. We didn't have a consensus on what other languages—most of our students in the program come from a Haitian background, but tonight we had a variety of backgrounds.

Often the administrators or people who've been out of the classroom for a little while might fear that a student can't do something or something's too challenging. And sometimes I might push it too far and say, we're gonna try something that, that is maybe too challenging. But, you know, every, every time they rise to the occasion. And so by starting with something that might be a little above their reach, they are pushing those boundaries and they're learning so much every day.

Tonight our focus was to work on a strategy to summarize a text. So we use the T-chart strategy in order to identify the topic and then the main idea of individual paragraphs. The summarizing strategy is essential for looking at unfamiliar texts. This will be important in their jobs, in their future educational careers. It's a really good way of staying engaged and in touch with the text. I think when students read without reading aloud or are reading when they're in a disengaged mode or, or busy or rushed, you tend to glaze over, right? And so by having that, at the end of every paragraph, have it as a check-in to say, wait, stop. What was this paragraph actually about? What does the author want me to know? You can't get too lost. You can't go too far without understanding the actual goal. So our summarizing strategy was key for tonight's lesson.

In terms of digital literacy, in a world that is so technology based, it's a huge gap that I find here with my students that is so needed to be able to say, just because you have technology doesn't mean you know how to use it effectively, right? So everything from basic typing skills and figuring out where the shift key is to do capital letters is something that we have to work on. And so there's a big gap between what students can do and what they're practicing at home. You'll have one student who is logged in at Google Classroom and ready to go with the reading while someone else is, is figuring out how to type in their password. So, but they're definitely important skills to be able to say, how are you typing? How are you navigating a webpage? How are you logging in, signing out of a Chromebook? Some of these students don't have devices like that at home, they might have a phone but not have a larger device like that.

Tonight, I was not really surprised by anything my students did because they're honestly such an amazing group. They worked beautifully together. You know, they are an engaged group. They're connected. They're constantly pushing me to be a better instructor. I appreciate their questions, their concerns, their ideas. They get, you know, so excited about various things. And the thing that I'm constantly trying to push with them is to not doubt themselves, because more often than not, it's a reluctance to say something or to actually click on the answer. And nine times outta ten, they're correct. It's that thinking, thinking worse of themselves and, you know, boosting that morale and self-worth that is key.

[Video ends and credits appear on the screen.]

[Credit slides, with music:]

- *[Logo: Blue Hills Regional Technical School: Adult Education Program]*
- *Thanks to Blue Hill Adult Education, Director: Tammy MacDonald, Teacher: Stephanie Gaboury, the students!*
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