

Classroom Tips from Ron

Give Them Their 80 Tip #4 – Paired Verbal Fluency

Oral language skills are closely tied to reading and writing skills, and the best way for students to get a workout in the second level of Bloom (comprehension) is to have them explain something to another student, discuss something with another student, and summarize something another student has said. Many students feel much more comfortable talking with another student than they do when they are faced with sharing with the entire class.

These conversations can be structured so that each student in a pair gets to explain something, while the other follows that explanation with an opportunity to summarize. This is called Paired Verbal Fluency (PVF), and the directions are on this website under Free Stuff.

Another iteration of PVF is when Eddie talks, followed by Fred continuing to talk about that same topic without repeating what Eddie said. You might, for example, have Partner A explain what it takes to be a good listener, followed by B (on your signal) continuing to explain without repeating.

Either way (summarizing or continuing to talk without repeating), the listener has to really listen in order to carry out his or her task when the speaker is done. the teacher's job is to walk around the room, monitoring the conversations and looking for one or two students who may be willing to share what they discussed in the pairs.

When working with students, I have Partner A talk for maybe 20 seconds or so, followed by another 20 seconds for B. The first thing they discuss should be something with which they are perfectly familiar (great vacations, great music, favorite leisure activities). THEN you can have them move onto content-laden topics. This can, by the way, make a great review activity.

The power here is that at any one time, half the kids are talking and half are listening prior to completing their own task (summarizing, etc.). He or she who does the talking does the learning. Give them their 80.