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Supporting Literacy with Bell Ringers

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Time Frame   2-3 hours

Essential Question(s)

- How can literacy be used to engage students?

- In what ways can Bell Ringers support authentic learning?

Summary

In this session, participants will gain a deeper understanding of meaningful Bell Ringers through the modeling of interdisciplinary instructional strategies. Participants are asked to a) address superficial uses of Bell Ringers and more meaningful uses of Bell Ringers, b) actively engage in authentic instructional strategies that support Bell Ringers to increase the number of students using higher-order thinking, as defined by Bloom's Taxonomy, and c) reflect on possible application of literacy-based, authentic Bell Ringers in their own classrooms.

Learning Goals

- Explore Bell Ringers as a way to engage students at the beginning of class.

- Identify levels of scaffolding to support higher levels of literacy.

- Apply instructional strategies that encourage authentic learning.

Attachments

- [Authentic Learning and Teaching—Supporting Literacy with Bell Ringers.pdf](#)
- [Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Supporting Literacy with Bell Ringers.docx](#)
- [Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Supporting Literacy with Bell Ringers.pdf](#)
- [Presentation Slides—Supporting Literacy with Bell Ringers.pptx](#)

Materials

- Ring That Bell! Presentation Slides (attached)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet handout (attached)
- Authentic Learning and Teaching Rubric (attached)
- Myanmar Sidecar Article ([linked](#))
- Scratch paper

Engage

Welcome participants, and introduce yourself and the session using the attached **Presentation Slides**.

Display **slide 3**. Inform participants that several new instructional strategies will be introduced to them throughout the session. These strategies are tools meant to support literacy and Bell Ringers in an authentic way. Pass out the attached **Instructional Strategy Note Sheet**, and encourage participants to use it to jot down their ideas for personalizing a strategy to be used as an instructional tool in their classrooms. Before breaks and after the strategies have been modeled, the presentation will allow time for participants to reflect on how to use these strategies.

Go to **slides 4 and 5** to briefly highlight the essential questions and session objectives. This will provide a roadmap of where you will go together during the session and will let participants know what to expect from the session.

Go to **slide 6**. Explain the Chain Notes strategy to participants. Ask participants to get in groups of four. Give them scratch paper to write on, and inform them their task is to finish the statement on the slide. Give participants 1–2 minutes to complete the statement. These statements should be only one sentence per participant.

Possible Responses

- "Bell Ringers are an activity that give me time to take attendance."
- "Bell Ringers are a great way get my students to come sit down and be quiet."
- "Bell Ringers are a way for me to engage my students."

Presenter's Note

Slide 6 provides an opportunity to engage participants and gain understanding of their prior knowledge. It also allows participants to address any superficial practices regarding Bell Ringers. The Chain Notes strategy encourages participants to go deeper with their thoughts and move beyond their initial assumptions with each round. In addition, this strategy can be a formative assessment to gain insight into students' (or participants') levels of understanding.

After participants have completed their statements, ask them to pass their papers to the person on their right. Participants will read the statement on the paper. Then, they must add a new statement to the paper in front of them. The new statement cannot be a repeat of what they wrote previously, nor can it repeat anything that is already on the paper. The new statement should be a stance that agrees or disagrees with the statement already on the paper. Give them 1–2 minutes to complete the new statement.

Possible Responses

- Original statement written by their peer: "Bell Ringers are activities that give me time to take attendance."
- New statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers do allow for attendance taking, but they must also engage the student."

Once participants have written a new statement about Bell Ringers on the paper, they will again pass it to the right. At this point, the paper in front of them should have two statements about Bell Ringers written by their peers. Once again, they should add a new statement, but it cannot be one they have previously written. It can be completely unique or add to the conversation already on paper. Give them 1–2 minutes to complete the statement.

Possible Responses

- Original statement written by their peer: "Bell Ringers activities that give me time to take attendance."
- Second statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers do allow for attendance taking, but they must also engage the student."
- New statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers can be engaging, but I'm not sure how to do them in that way."

Once participants have written a new statement about Bell Ringers on the paper, they will again pass the paper for the last round of statements. Just like before, they should read all previous statements made about Bell Ringers, and then they should add a new statement. Participants should be able to grasp the concept of adding a new statement, but that doesn't make it easier. They must dig deeper into the concept of Bell Ringers to keep adding to the conversation. Give them 1–2 minutes to complete the statement.

Possible Responses

- Original statement written by their peer: "Bell Ringers activities that give me time to take attendance."
- Second statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers do allow for attendance taking, but they must also engage the student."
- Third statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers can be engaging, but I'm not sure how to do them in that way."
- New statement written on paper: "Bell Ringers are used to engage students in my class because we use them to revisit the previous day's topic."

Since there are four people in a group, there should be only one pass left. Ask participants to pass it for the last time to the right. The paper should be with its original owner. Ask the original owner to briefly read the statements made. Ask participants to share any significant statements made on the paper that they found helpful. They can also share statements that gave them a new idea or a statement that is unclear and needs some clarification.

Explore

Go to **slide 7**. Show participants the slide with the triangle visual of Bloom's Taxonomy. Briefly, discuss with them the importance of students using higher-order thinking, rather than lower-order thinking. Inform them that the Bell Ringer activities shown in this PD session will show how students can start at the bottom of Bloom's Taxonomy but work toward the top with each day of Bell Ringers.

Presenter's Note

The Bloom's Taxonomy visual is a revised version of the original Bloom's. Instead of "evaluation" being at the top, "create" is at the top. In addition, the words are all verbs, implying that the students are doing something. Bloom's Taxonomy assists teachers in making sure that they are working their students toward higher-order thinking instead of staying at the bottom with lower-order thinking.

Presenter's Note

For the Thinking Notes activity, participants will read an article from the website NEWS ELA. This website offers free current event articles for students and also allows teachers to adjust the Lexile level to assist with differentiation. To access the article, an account is required. However, accounts are free, and once accessed, the article can be printed for anyone participating in the activity.

After briefly discussing, move to the Thinking Notes activity on **slide 8**. The Thinking Notes strategy is a way for students to actively engage with reading. Most students passively read, but the strategy encourages students to interact with the text, thus encouraging reading that is more active.

Inform participants that this is the type of activity that would take place on Monday (Day 1) for Bell Ringers. Point out the Bloom's Taxonomy chart at the bottom of the slide and show them that, on Day 1, students would start at the bottom with "remember" and "understand."

Pass out copies of this linked article about sidecars in Myanmar to participants. (You will be required to sign up or sign in to the site to access it, but creating an account is free and once in, the resource can be printed for use in your session. Instructions can be found on the Newsela Tech Tool card.)

Inform participants that they will have 5 minutes to read the article. Ask participants to use the Thinking Notes strategy during their reading. Briefly discuss Thinking Notes as a way to interact with the text. Inform them that they will use their Thinking Notes to share with their groups.

Modifications

While this PD session uses one article for the entire week, the PD leader can explain that moving through Bloom's Taxonomy through the week does not have to revolve around one article. Doing it with one article can really encourage depth of knowledge with students. However, this same method of moving up Bloom's Taxonomy can also be used to review material covered that week in class.

Explain

Go to **slide 9**. Explain to participants that Commit and Toss is a strategy that students can use to share questions or statements anonymously, so they do not have to fear rejection or ridicule from their peers. It encourages inquiry and discourse.

Point out the Bloom's Taxonomy triangle at the bottom and discuss briefly that, in Day 2 of Bell Ringers, students will move up a step further toward higher-order thinking. With the Commit and Toss strategy, students are encouraged to apply what they read to develop questions.

Ask participants to find a partner and discuss their Thinking Notes for just a minute or two. Then, they should look over the question marks. Between the two of them, each pair should choose one question to propose to the class. On a shared piece of scratch paper, each pair should write the chosen question.

After all pairs have written their questions, ask them to crumple up the papers into a ball. Have participants toss their paper to another group. Then, participants should toss the paper balls they caught again (a second toss helps keep questions more anonymous).

Make sure every group has a balled-up piece of paper. Ask them to open the paper and read the question together, giving them a minute or two to discuss. Then, ask the whole group for volunteers to read the question aloud. After the question has been read, give the whole group the opportunity to answer. If this was done with students and no students knew the answer, the teacher could intervene and answer the question for the group.

Extend

Go to **slide 10**. Explain that many testing scenarios require students to understand an argument or be able to formulate their own argument. To assist with this critical thinking skill, the Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) strategy can be used. The CER strategy can be used to either break down an argument into its components or organize a new argument from the student's standpoint.

Again, point out the Bloom's Taxonomy pyramid at the bottom of the slide. Point out that, in Day 3, students would be moving further up the taxonomy to analyzing. Allow participants to stay with their partners or work in groups of four. Give participants 5 minutes to discuss what they think is the main claim of the article. Once they have established the main claim made in the article, they should list at least two points of evidence. After the evidence has been listed, participants should give a sentence or two to offer reasoning or commentary about the claim and the evidence. If time allows, ask for volunteers to share their CER paragraphs.

Go to **slide 11**. Explain that the I Think/We Think strategy is a useful formative assessment because it allows a teacher to check individual student understanding, while also giving students the opportunity to socially construct deeper understanding.

Once again, point out the Bloom's Taxonomy at the bottom of the slide. This activity would be Day 4 in the scaffolding of literacy through Bell Ringers. Point out to participants that, by Day 4, students would be almost to the top of higher-order thinking. Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about the question, "Which component of the evidence was the most significant or influential?" Give them one to two minutes to jot down their responses.

After everyone has a response, ask participants to get into groups of three to four. Groups will have approximately 5 minutes to share their "I Think" column answer. Once everyone has shared, they must choose the best one from the group or synthesize all their answers into one clear answer. This would go in their "We Think" column. After the groups have completed the "We Think" component, ask if anyone would like to share out.

Go to **slide 12**. Point out to participants the triangle visual of Bloom's Taxonomy at the bottom of this slide, too. Discuss with them that not only have the instructional strategies provided ideas for Bell Ringers, but also they have helped to scaffold students toward higher levels of literacy. Day 5 of Bell Ringers would require the students to create. Show participants the suggested ideas for Day 5. The suggested prompts are all based on genres of writing; however, these are not the only activities for creation. If time allows, give participants time to brainstorm ideas for Day 5 in their own classrooms.

Evaluate

> **Presenter's Note**
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> TREK evaluations will be used in place of the evaluation activity when available. If you don't have access to a TREK evaluation, continue with the activity below.

Go to **slide 13**. Ask participants to take a few minutes to reflect on the strategies presented in the session and write down some ideas for how those strategies can be used in their own classes.

After a few minutes, show **slide 14.** Share with participants the LEARN website (https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/search), where they can access any of the strategies they used in this session and many more. Inform participants that the LEARN site also has many lessons that support literacy and that utilize some of the instructional strategies demonstrated in this session.

> **Presenter's Note**
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> After participants have had time to apply some of the strategies to ideas for their own classroom, you might want to open the floor for a discussion of time management. Some of these activities could potentially take much longer than the first 5–10 minutes of class, especially in the beginning when students are figuring out how to do the activities. Remind participants that, as students become more proficient with the activities, the time it takes to go through the activities will decrease. Also, allow participants to discuss ways they could modify the strategies to meet the needs of their learners if necessary.

Follow-up Activities

Research Rationale

Embedded literacy components in all content areas can assist students in achieving higher academics at the secondary level and can also assist in their preparation for higher education. Literacy has shown a significant and positive correlation with higher levels of discipline-specific mastery and overall academic achievement (Israel & Williamson, 2013; Wendt, 2013; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). One way of embedding literacy into the curriculum in a meaningful way is through Bell Ringers. Rather than passively entering the classroom, students are engaged immediately with opportunities to construct knowledge (Ueckert & Gess-Newsome, 2008). Bell Ringers can scaffold authentic strategies that empower students to work toward higher-order thinking. Through Bell Ringers, teachers can create a stable environment that supports critical literacy skills in any discipline or content area.

Resources

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- Ueckert, C., & Gess-Newsome, J. (2008). Increasing student involvement in learning. The Science Teacher, 75 (9), 47-52.
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