Successful Assignments

4 Corners Activity

This activity allows students to move around, be engaged, express ideas (with textual evidence), and to visually see how the class is unified or divided on certain issues. I used this activity with *Othello,* but it is highly adaptable. It is great for classes that are not very talkative or energetic on their own. (It worked beautifully for my 8am section!!)

You will need:

* Controversial statements prepared ahead of time (I put them on a PowerPoint)
* 4 signs
  + Strongly Agree
  + Agree
  + Disagree
  + Strongly Disagree

Activity:

1. Put one sign in each of the four corners of the classroom
2. Explain the activity to students:
   1. The teacher will read a statement
   2. Students will decide whether they (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) disagree, or (d) strongly disagree with the statement.
   3. Once decided, students will physical move to the designated corner of the room (Yes, they must leave their seats!)
   4. When they arrive there will probably be a small group of students in that corner. These students will need to discuss why they (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) disagree, or (d) strongly disagree with the statement
   5. The group will designate a spokesperson to report back to the larger group and defend their answer (with textual evidence!)
   6. The teacher will call on spokespeople to report.
   7. After all spokespeople have reported, the teacher offers a chance for students to change sides if they have been persuaded.
   8. Teacher reads the next statement and the class repeats the process.
3. Engage in activity!
   1. I participate with my students. I often join the group with the less popular stance and help the students brainstorm a good defense.
4. Reflect
   1. After the activity, I have students do a short reflection / exit slip. On this reflection, they must state 2 new ideas they’ve learned and 2 ideas the activity reinforced.

\*Note: I read 5 statements and this activity took 45 minutes.

Statements I Used for *Othello:*

* Othello’s real problem is his own jealousy.
* Desdemona is not a wimp. She is a soldier’s wife and fit to be so. She has good senses, and can stand up to Othello when when she thinks he is wrong or he’s in a bad mood.
* Iago has no motive for what he does.
* Emilia is blameless.
* The feud between Othello and Iago is fundamentally a dispute between goodness and evil of the world.