

Lesson 7: Putting The Pieces Together & Re-reading Chapter 2

1 Class Period

Reading Skill: **Monitoring Comprehension**
 Synthesizing
 Fix-Up Strategies

Purpose:

Lessons 4, 5, and 6 were all designed to build the students schema for the Holocaust. I wanted to introduce them to this term and its meaning. I also wanted them to experience reading Chapter 2 again from a whole new vantage point. They are not any longer quite the same people they were the first time they read Chapter 2; they know more now than they did before. I felt that reading the chapter again would help them see for themselves the changes they had made in their own knowledge bank and degree of understanding.

Process:

To introduce the concept of *schema*, I told them that learning was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Every new bit of information they learned fit together with other pieces of information they had already learned. Each piece helped make a complete picture. I asked them if they had ever put a jigsaw puzzle piece in the wrong place and had to move it or if they had ever gotten a piece from a different puzzle mixed in to the puzzle they were working on. They said “yes.” I told them that building schema was the same way. Every once in awhile, they would discover that they had filed a piece of learning into a place where it didn’t quite belong and they might have to rearrange some pieces. All the while I was talking with the students, I put together pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together on the overhead as a visual demonstration of the analogy I was making verbally. (You could also draw a jigsaw puzzle on a transparency sheet while you talk.) Then I reminded the students of all the things we had done in class since reading Chapter 2: the vocabulary work, the notes on the history of antisemitism, and the readings from TTWR. I told them that all of those activities built their schema for the Holocaust.

I explained to the students that what I wanted most for them as readers was to equip them with skills that they could use to solve their own comprehension problems. I told them that nobody understands everything that he reads. (I gave them an example from my life – financial statements from investment companies!) So the most important thing is not that you immediately understand everything that you read, but that you know how to fix your comprehension problems when you don’t understand. I asked them if they could have looked up the words they didn’t know in Chapter 2; they said “yes.” I asked them if they could have gone to a teacher, a parent, or the USHMM website to find out about antisemitism; they said “yes.” I asked them if they could have looked for another Holocaust history book to help themselves understand the concepts in Chapter 2 that they didn’t understand; they said “yes.”

I asked the students to take a brief look at the definitions on their Chapter 2 vocabulary note sheets. Then I put the list of questions back on the overhead for them to read again. Then I asked the students to re-read Chapter 2. They could choose to read from the photocopy they had already highlighted, or they could read clean copy from the book. Either way, I asked them to notice what they understood better on the second reading and what questions they still had.

After allowing them time to read, we took a few minutes to discuss their reactions to the re-reading. There was a unanimous sense among my students that they understood much better this time than last time. They also felt that their questions changed quality. Before, their questions were about information that was essential to understanding the chapter. After re-reading, their questions were more a matter of curiosity and a desire to keep reading and keep learning to find out the answers; they were motivational.