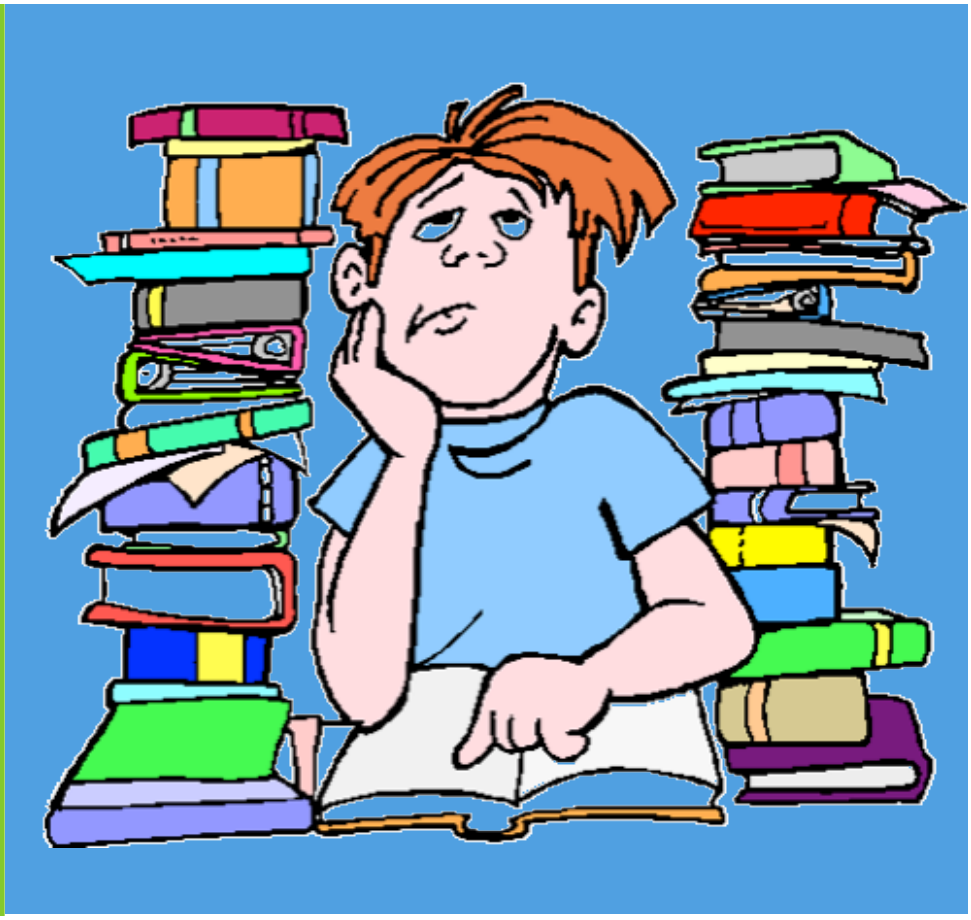
Tutorial #5

from

Marcia:

How to Read Science Textbooks Out Loud



QUESTION:

I wish our textbooks would follow your lead and create engaging and intriguing lessons. I was wondering, how did you teach the text? I teach 6th grade, and I try to make reading the text as engaging as possible, but still, I get students tuning out. I try to always find an activity to correlate with the info we just read.

MARCIA'S ANSWER:

So here's the skippy:

THERE IS NO WAY TO MAKE READING FROM A TEXTBOOK INTERESTING!

Which is why I **NEVER** did it in all the years I taught. I hope I can make a good case for convincing you **NOT** to do it ever again!

It comes down to this,

What is Science?

Marcia's Science Teaching Ideas was founded by Marcia Krech, a retired Earth Science Teacher from Missouri, who believes passionately in passing on what she knows about good science teaching. I encourage teachers to use the active learning model including team games and foldables which puts the student to work and assigns the teacher the role of facilitator.

Email me with questions!

How to Read Science Textbooks Out Loud

IF science is just FACTS, then reading from the textbook might be a good thing. However, I still think there are better ways to learn the FACTS of Science. **My website** is loaded with ways to engage students in learning the facts of science without reading the textbook from cover to cover.

IF science is a PROCESS, then you and your students should be busy with the process of science much more than ingesting the facts!

Either way, for middle school and younger kids, reading a science textbook is **THE DEATH OF SCIENCE**, a guaranteed way to build hatred for the subject or at least a big yawn.

I had one or two sets of textbooks in my classroom, one per student on the tables and the extras in a cupboard to sign out if needed. And my teaching days were loaded to the gills with science teaching using the active learning approach. And this is NOT to say they didn't use the textbook. Rest assured that much reading is occurring in this kind of classroom, just not out loud paragraph by paragraph, in a death-to-science round-robin approach.

That's why my activities work so well! Your kids are BUSY BUSY BUSY learning science--both FACTS and PROCESS--all the time. They are reading lots with a genuine purpose to read, they are writing lots, too, reports and answers to worksheets, etc.

And I can honestly say that my students scored as well or better than any other students in my district on the state tests. Plus, **THEY LOVED SCIENCE!** They loved to come into my classroom and see what fun and active things I had planned for the day.

So **PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE** put textbooks back where they belong in your classroom, and that is: as **part** of the learning process, but **NOT** the main part of any day!

I know there will be some parents that think this is really "out there" and that's why you can have science text books ready to sign out and if a parent is really anxious, sign one out for the year to that family. Just don't make it something that is front and center in your classroom. **Make active learning and running labs and writing reports and giving speeches and doing science research the focus of your days.**

Play at least ONE GAME every single day! Do at least one active learning activity every day. You can have quiet activities, too, just NOT READING FROM THE TEXTBOOK OUT LOUD!

I found this to be very freeing, in the best sense, that you now have so much more time to do meaningful engaging activities, to run more labs, etc. And if you keep notebooks all year, your parents will see that those **NOTEBOOKS ARE THE TEXTBOOK!** Crammed full of lots of the FACTS AND PROCESSES OF SCIENCE!

If your school district is resistant to this whole idea, then figure out some way to get around it. Assign it as homework, read this chapter tonight, and do some simple active review when they come in the next day, but try not to have your students reading round robin ever again!

I believe textbooks are loaded with way too many facts for students to ever learn. Most of it will **NEVER** show up on a state test! And some of it will change over time. Example: Pluto as the ninth planet. So your job as a teacher is to look at the textbook, study the state guidelines, cull from the overwhelmingly large gob of facts in that book, distill it down to what they really need to know, what it's possible for them to remember into their futures without you, and teach them those facts and processes, and not an inch more than that! You will **LOVE** it!

NEVER ASK YOUR STUDENTS TO READ OUT LOUD FROM A SCIENCE TEXTBOOK AGAIN!