Tea Party Protocol: A Before-Reading Strategy

"The more we frontload students' knowledge of a text and help them become actively involved in constructing meaning prior to reading, the more engaged they are likely to be as they read the text. Dependent readers must be reminded often that comprehension begins prior to reading and extends into the discussions they have after they've finished."

–Kylene Beers (2002). *When Kids Can't Read—What Teachers Can Do.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Purpose

This strategy offers students a chance to consider parts of the text before they actually read it. It encourages active participation and attentive listening with a chance to get up and move around the classroom. It allows students to predict what they think will happen in the text as they make inferences, see causal relationships, compare and contrast, practice sequencing, and draw on prior knowledge.

Procedure

1. Decide on phrases, sentences or words directly from the text to copy onto strips or index cards.
2. Don't paraphrase the text. You may omit words to shorten a sentence, but don't change the words.
3. Have students organized into groups of four or five.
4. Hand out strips or cards with phrases from the text, two (or more) students will have the same phrases.
5. Each student independently reads their phrase and makes a prediction about what this article could be about. Then, write a quick statement on prediction graphic.
6. Next students mingle around the room, reading to each other and discussing possible predictions.
7. Return to the small groups and, as groups, write a prediction starting with "We think this article will be about…, because…." Also, list questions they have.
8. Now, read the selection. Students read independently or as a group, highlighting information that confirms or changes their predictions.
9. Write a statement on the second part of the recording form about revised predictions. Also continue to list lingering questions.

Debrief

Share-out thoughts from groups. How did their predictions differ from the text? What lingering questions do they have? What was it like to engage in reading in this way?