

Similes

Similes compare two unrelated things. For example, a simile using the topic of TPTs might be

“TPTs are like safety nets in that they each protect students from falling through the cracks.”

Similes can provide opportunities for abstractly portraying the big picture of concept in a way that sums up their meaning. To use similes after a teacher-directed presentation, teachers can ask students to make a connection between the topic they're studying and something unrelated. This activity will need to be modeled and scaffolded by first providing examples of similes and asking students to explain why the simile might be true. For example, a teacher might ask students to complete the following statements: “Adaptations are like bank accounts in that..... ” Or after modeling the activity several times, a teacher can ask students to create a simile of their own. For example: a teacher might say something like “We have been talking quite a bit about Thomas Jefferson today. I want you to think about and jot down a simile using something you learned about Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson was like in that.....”

How it works:

1. Create similes using some of the topics you are studying. Social action is like.....in that..... Or cultural diversity is like in that.....
2. Ask students to formulate an explanation for how the simile might be true.
3. Ask students to share with their partners in small groups or in a chalkboard splash so that all can see.
4. After similes have been modeled a few times, ask student to create their own similes based on the topics they are learning about.

How to Ensure Higher Order Thinking

By creating similes or explaining them, students are being asked to compare components within both items. In doing so, they are analyzing the topic for which you've asked them to create similes. This activity takes just a few minutes and can ensure that students are understanding the intricacies, or the big picture, of whatever your teaching. Try to come up with your own similes for what you are teaching soon, and see if the students can develop explanations for how the statements might be true. Their reasons may be different than what you originally intended to be the rationale behind the simile, but if their reasons make sense, students have just participated in analyzing the concept you have taught. In other words, they have engaged in higher order thinking.

Pause to Apply

Consider reserving a spot on your bulletin/notice board, whiteboard or wall space for the following cloze sentence: “(Topic) was like In that..... ” on bulletin board add the topic using a separate piece of paper or sentence strip. Or if you are using chalkboards/whiteboards simply fill in the topic. This is a quick way to allow your students to make analogies between what has been learned and something unrelated. Also it is a great way to encourage to think about writing creativity outside the 'writing lesson'.