

Student Example: Danica's Reading Strategies



I focused on the "**Reading Strategies**" tutorial. I made notes on a few of the slides just to keep in mind while I was thinking about the text. I've provided my chart on the following pages.



Engaging In Reading

1. *Set a purpose.*
2. *Ask questions and try to find answers.*
3. *Make personal connections.*

Monitor Understanding

1. *Record observations while reading*

Start with the text:

1. *Why am I reading this text?*
2. *What kind of text is it: an essay, article, poem, or billboard?*
3. *What is the title?*
4. *What ideas do the pictures and captions suggest to me?*

Connect with the text and ask yourself:

1. *Have I read texts like this one before?*
2. *Am I familiar with the time and place it is set?*
3. *What do I know about the people involved? Do they remind me of anyone?*
4. *What is my opinion of the main idea?*



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Student Example: Danica's Reading Strategies (continued)



Danica's Reader's Response to "Self-Portrait: Variation on van Gogh"

Connection to Text	So What? What More Can I Learn?
Purpose: <i>I examined the "Self-Portrait: Variation on Van Gogh" by Robert Silvers, initially for my Introducing Me assignment.</i>	<i>I was thinking about how I could use visuals to represent me.</i>
Ask Questions and Try to Find Answers: <i>Who is Robert Silvers?</i>	<p><i>According to the biography on p. 399 of <i>Sightlines 10</i>, Silvers doesn't sound like an artist at all. He sounds more like a computer expert, because he's an MIT graduate. It looks like he has done several photomosaics in the past. It might be worth looking into!</i></p> <p><i>I've never heard of photomosaics before, but I did an internet search and found Robert Silvers' official website. He has done quite a few of these, many based on famous people. I recognized the portrait of Anne Frank, because I studied <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> in middle school. When I clicked to view the details, I was amazed to see that the tiles in her portrait were all photographs from the Holocaust. Clear connection between the tiles in her photomosaic and her life!</i></p> <p><i>I'm going to bookmark the website for later:</i> http://www.photomosaic.com/portfolio_portrait.html </p>
What is the original self-portrait like?	<p><i>I don't have any art books with Van Gogh in them! I did an online search and found out that he's done dozens of self-portraits. From what I can see on the Vincent van Gogh website, this self-portrait is the last one he painted (http://www.vggallery.com/painting/main_se.htm).</i></p> <p><i>There is a quote on this page that describes him as "good hearted" and "human", but from my first scan of the self-portraits, I think he seems sad. I'm curious to know what he was like as a person.</i></p>
Does the variation suggest a different idea than the original painting?	<p><i>Given that I noticed that Anne Frank's portrait was based on Holocaust images, I decided to take a closer look at the tiles on p. 68 in <i>Sightlines 10</i>. In those tiles, I saw almost a hundred small images based on nature: flowers, greenery, and nature.</i></p> <p><i>I looked again that the van Gogh website and saw lots of paintings of nature. He seemed to spend most of his energy in describing his world. The fact that we're focusing on a self-portrait here suggests his consideration of his role in his world.</i></p>

Student Example: Danica's Reading Strategies (continued)

What was van Gogh really like?	<p><i>Obviously, he's from a different time, so we can't ever know for sure. I searched on his website and skimmed his biography: http://www.vangoghgallery.com/misc/bio.html.</i></p> <p><i>I learned that he was anxious and very self-conscious. Reading about his life made him seem more fragile to me. He was clearly passionate about painting, but that passion seemed to overcome him. Selling only one painting in his lifetime, he committed suicide.</i></p>
Personal Connections	
<p><i>I feel really unsettled by Silver's variation of van Gogh's self portrait. Initially, I thought I was clever in picking up on the Anne Frank connection between her circumstances and the tiles that made up her portrait. Given what I know (and I know it is limited) about van Gogh, I don't know that the choices to focus on wildlife in his portrait tiles. I don't understand Silvers' decision entirely.</i></p> <p><i>I think Silvers might be trying to identify that we are influenced by our surroundings. In connecting van Gogh's brief biography though, I think we have to consider how we influence our world. Van Gogh would never know how his art would be welcomed by the world following his death.</i></p> <p><i>This reminds me of the main idea in Donne's excerpt, "Meditation xvii" (p. 2 in <i>Sightlines 10</i>). He talks about how "no man is an island", and he argues that everyone is connected. The loss of one will be felt by many. I think this connects clearly with what I've been reading and thinking about van Gogh with this assignment. It makes me think about what my own small contribution to the world might be.</i></p>	