Overview

History teacher Jenny Staysniak is about to introduce to her students a culminating “Action Project” in her elective course called Catholic Social Justice in Action. In order to brainstorm ideas for students’ projects, Ms. Staysniak opts to use the “graffiti boards” teaching strategy. Graffiti boards are a shared writing space (e.g., a large sheet of paper or whiteboard) where students record their comments and questions about a topic. The purpose of this strategy is to help students “hear” each other’s ideas. Some benefits of this strategy include that it can be implemented in five to ten minutes, it provides a way for shy students to engage in the conversation, it creates a record of students’ ideas and questions that can be referred to at a later point, and it gives students space and time to process emotional material. You can use the graffiti boards strategy as a preview activity by introducing a new topic and helping students to organize any existing knowledge about that topic. You can also use this strategy to prepare for a class discussion or writing assignment about a text by asking students to share their reactions to the text on the graffiti board.

As you watch, consider the following:
1. What has Ms. Staysniak done ahead of time to make this strategy successful?
2. This particular class only has 11 students. What, if anything, would you need to do to use this strategy with a larger class?
3. Throughout the time that students are at the chalkboard, Ms. Staysniak is making observations aloud to the class. Why do you think she does this?