Instructional Strategies that Encourage Students' Engagement with Text

August 5, 2013

Reading as a transactional process

Reading is obtaining meaning from printed material (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2006). Historically, it was held that meaning resided exclusively in the text. However, Rosenblatt (1978) changed this perception when she posited that reading is a transactional process. The transactional theory maintains that the reader must transact with the text to make meaning. According to the transactional view, meaning does not reside in the text itself nor can meaning be found just with the reader; in fact, it is when the two transact that meaning occurs. Also, the transactional view further indicates that meaning is derived from the context of a given social interaction (Almasi, 1996).

Additionally, when reading or listening to text, the reader or the listener draws on several interacting knowledge sources to make meaning (Anderson, 1994). These knowledge structures include comprehension strategies, such as prior knowledge (Pearson, Hansen, & Gordon, 1979), making connections (King, Staffieri, & Adelgais, 1997), question answering, question generating, and presenting alternative perspectives (Chan, Burtis, Scardamalia, &

Bereiter, 1992). It is essential to make students aware of these different knowledge sources; thus we must teach students how to apply a variety of strategies to promote their ability to read and listen.

Researchers indicate that motivation is a top predictor of whether students will engage with texts in meaningful ways. A reader's motivation can include the context of the reading situation, choice in text selection, and reading of high-interest material (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Pressley, 2006). Furthermore, because learning is a social activity, it is important for us to allow social collaboration as part of our instructional practice (Baker et al., 2000; Guthrie, 2004). Numerous studies claim that peer interactive learning is conducive and perhaps essential to cognitive development. Findings from a large body of studies show that students learn more through peer collaborative learning approaches compared with learning in isolation or teacher-dominated instruction (Slavin, 1983). Peer collaborative learning is an educational practice where peers interact with one another to achieve learning goals (DeLisi & Golbeck, 1999).

Benefits of the read-aloud process/Shared reading

The read-aloud process has enormous benefits to literacy learning. Read-aloud is an instructional practice where teachers, parents, and caregivers read texts aloud to children. The reader incorporates variations in pitch, tone, pace, volume, pauses, eye contact, questions, and comments to produce a fluent and enjoyable delivery. Reading texts aloud is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for successful reading (McCormick, 1977).

Trelease (2001) postulated that reading aloud is a powerful way to engage children in the literacy process. Several researchers and practitioners have demonstrated the significant impact of the read-aloud practice in different areas of reading development (Barrentine, 1996; Sipe, 2000). Klesius and Griffith (1996) concurred and explained that the read-aloud experience increases students' vocabulary development and comprehension growth. They also noted its potential to increase motivation to want to read while building the knowledge necessary for the successful acquisition of reading and writing.

Reading aloud to children builds and supports their listening and speaking abilities and enhances their overall language development (Barrentine, 1996; Sipe, 2000). Trachtenburg and Ferruggia (1989) agreed after they examined the impact of oral language development through the shared book experience with high-risk beginning readers. Both claimed their students developed a rich language base and came to understand the power of words by listening to stories, reading stories, and responding to stories through a variety of engagement activities.

Rationale for promoting engagement with texts

Teachers can create a variety of situations to extend opportunities for literacy learning; however, having students listen to a read-aloud then participate in an engagement activity relevant to the text is one context in which to keep conversation focused on a target learning goal. A related extension activity before, during, or after a read-aloud can help students connect or extend their prior knowledge to the text being read and discussed (Hoyt, 1999). To help students become proficient readers and thinkers, it is necessary to teach them a handful of highly effective literacy strategies, such as techniques to use before, during, and after reading or listening to a text and various ways to monitor their understanding as they read or listen to a text.

Researchers and classroom teachers advocate that engaging students in extension activities as part of a read-aloud is good practice because the read-aloud event provides a beneficial context for students to see how language works (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Gunning, 2010). Engaging with text requires active thinking and reflecting, which enhances comprehension; therefore, activating and making use of cognitive resources can enable understanding of texts.

Making connections in first grade

When reading a text, proficient readers activate numerous interacting knowledge sources to construct meaning of the message. One of these knowledge sources is schema, which is the stored body of knowledge one already has in memory. Schema theory maintains that reading is an active process, whereby readers construct new ideas and concepts based on their prior knowledge (Anderson, 1994). Using this same line of thinking, we can argue that when listening to a text, listeners must also make meaning by using already-established knowledge structures and integrate this with incoming information. That is, they interpret the information they are listening to and relate it to what they have already read, heard, or experienced. Additionally, the more prior knowledge one has stored about a topic, idea, or concept, the easier it is to understand a text discussing that topic, idea, or concept (Pearson et al., 1979).

Making connections is another effective way to encourage students to actively engage with text. Some (King et al., 1997; Morrison, 2005) claim that learning increases when students make connections to what they are reading. King and colleagues (1997) demonstrated in their study on peer interactive learning that thought-provoking questions forced students to link newly acquired information to material outside of the current lesson, as well as make connections to the concepts they were learning.

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link newly acquired information to material outside of the current lesson, as well as make connections to the concepts they were learning.

The crux of making connections lies at the time readers or listeners relate something they are reading or listening to, with something in their schema. The research literature identifies three types of connections: text-to-self connections, text-to-text connections, and text-to-world connections. Text-to-self connections involve making a connection between the target text and relating it to some personal experience, prior knowledge, or understanding—for example, an activity shared in the text and a similar one experienced by the reader or listener.

Text-to-text connections examine the relationship between the current text and relating it to texts read or listened to in the past—for example, comparing story elements in one book with another. Text-to-world connections require relating certain aspects of the text to what is happening or what has happened in the larger community or world—for example, comparing current and historical events and people with that of the text.

When teaching to make connections, students can be taught that their schemata includes experiences, which are lived through events they have encountered as part of their daily lives; knowledge, information they already have stored in their minds about a specific topic; and thoughts and opinions, ideas they have about people, places, and events in our world. Text-to-self connections are the first type of connections to teach students, followed by text-to-text, and then text-to-world. As with the teaching of all strategies, it is essential to model the process for students; the following suggestions can serve as a guideline (Miller, 2002):

Modeling text-to-self connections:

- Tell students that they are making text-to-self connections when they are reminded of something from the text they are reading or listening to and can connect it to something from their own lives.
- Tell students that you are going to show them a strategy that good readers use to help them understand stories they read or listen to.
- Conduct the activity by prereading your selected book and writing notes to guide your instruction.
- Gather students in a large group and tell them to watch and listen as you read aloud and make text-to-self connections.
- Read aloud, model, and verbalize the connections you are making.
- Be sure to stop frequently to share your connections.
- Be sure to use strategy-related language, for example, "This part where (refer to what happened) reminded me of...."
- Give students a turn and record their responses on large chart paper.

Modeling text-to-text connections:

- Tell students that they are making text-to-text connections when they are reminded of something from this text and can relate it to something they have read in another text.
- Tell students that you are going to show them another way to make connections to help them become better readers and listeners.
- Conduct the activity by selecting two books that offer similar elements as this will help to make the process explicit for students.
- Read aloud the selected texts on consecutive days.
- Model connections you are making between one book and the one you already read.
- Be sure you have preread and made notes on the sections of the text you want to refer to.
- Be sure to use strategy-related language, for example, "When I read this part of the story where (refer to the part), I thought about...," "This part is just like...," or "This is similar to...."
- Give students a turn, and record their responses on large chart paper.

Modeling text-to-world connections:

- Tell students that they are making text-to-world connections when something in the book makes them think about something that is happening or has happened in their neighborhood, community, country, or the world.
- Model the process as outlined for making text-to-self and text-to-text connections.
- Give students a turn and record their responses on large chart paper.

Figure 2 is a version of the responses given by the first graders as they worked together in making the three types of connections. After listening to a read-aloud of *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe (1985), the students contributed these connections. *Fireflies* tells the story of a young boy who joins his friends to catch fireflies. He catches hundreds and puts them in one jar. Excited and happy to see their bright glow, he places the jar on the nightstand, but soon the jar grows dim. Saddened by this sight, the boy releases the fireflies into the night where they immediately begin glowing again. For text-to-text connections, the students were encouraged to relate *Fireflies* to *The Very Lonely Firefly* by Eric Carle (1995), a story they had heard earlier about a firefly who had just hatched but found itself all alone. The story traces the journey of its quest to find other fireflies.

Teachers can use the strategy of making connections to support and enhance students' understanding of texts, which is the ultimate goal of reading or listening. When students make connections, they are actively constructing meaning of the event, thus building higher levels of learning.

Text-to-self	Text-to-text	Text-to-world

I catch fireflies in the summer time and put them in jars, but I let them go cause I don't want them to die.	It happened in the evening.	If someone locks you up, you will be sad.
It's really fun cause you have to jump high to reach the ones flying over your head.	It happened outside.	You can't lock up wild things.
I catch them too, and it's fun seeing who gets the most.	They are about fireflies.	You can't put so many (*fireflies*) in one jar.
I wanted to find out what he would do with them in the end because I always let them go.	Fireflies wanted to be with their family.	Sometimes you can't have something you want.
I was scared for them when he went to bed and left them in the jar. I never did that.	All the fireflies are happy in the end.	

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Comprehension Strategies

Making Connections

This document is the first in a series of support materials. It contains a synthesis of material from a variety of on-line and printed sources. It has been designed to support the Northern Adelaide Region Comprehension focus 2010-2012

Debbie Draper, DECS Curriculum Consultant, Northern Adelaide

Making Connections

Comprehension is "making meaning" of texts. Texts, for the purpose of this document, include printed, visual, auditory, digital and multi-media texts.

Students find it difficult to comprehend or make meaning when they lack:

- A repertoire of comprehension strategies
- Background knowledge of the content – including the specific vocabulary
- Knowledge of the structures and features of the text
- A purpose for engaging with the text

Making Connections is a strategy that can assist in making meaning from a text. Students can make connections between:

- Text and self
- Text and text
- Text and world
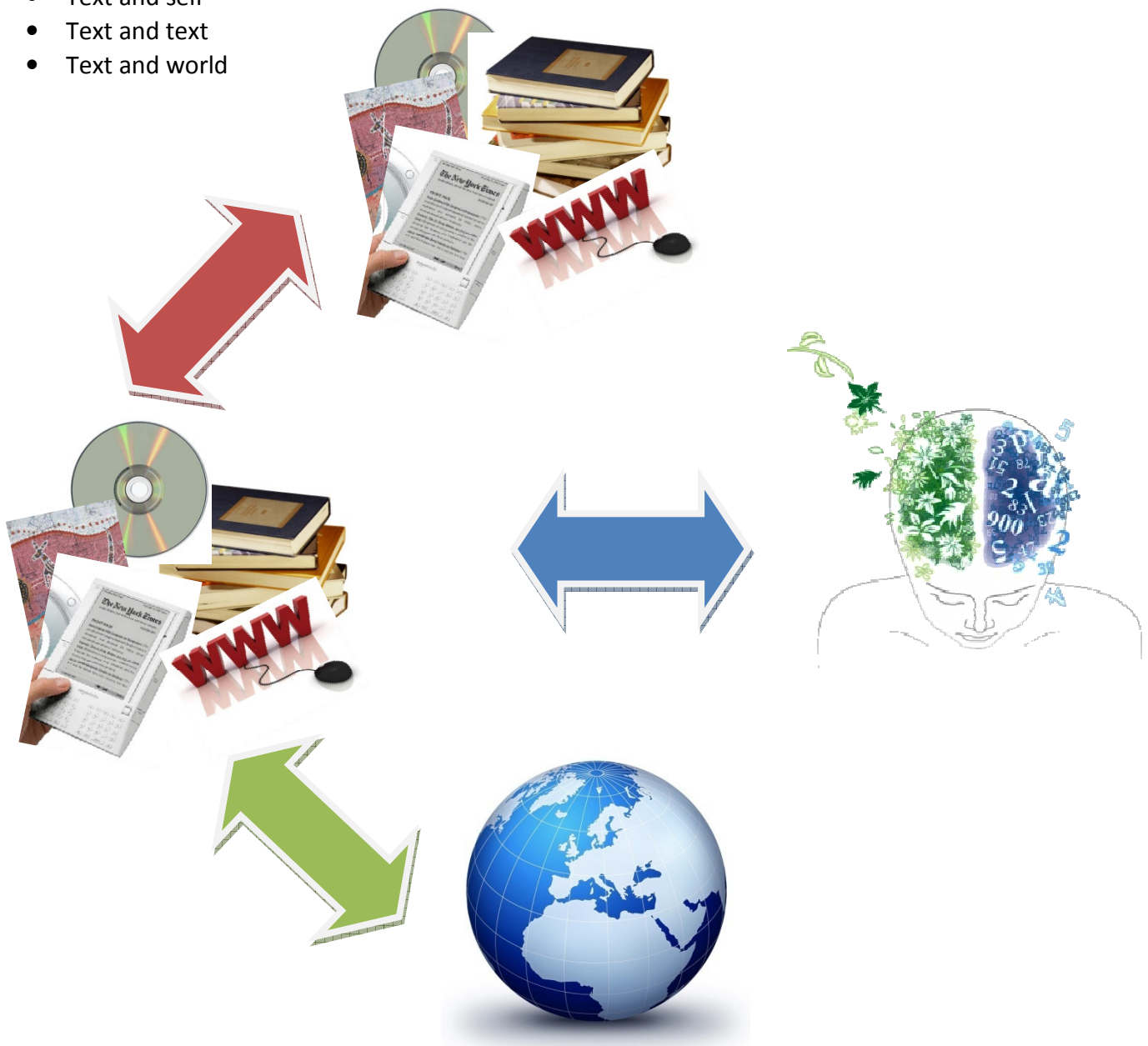
Please note: the following pages provide examples and ideas that can be adapted for your classroom. The lesson plans, graphic organisers and posters are provided as support materials and are not meant to be used as one-off independent activities. It is expected that all strategies be modelled and made explicit to students before they are able to apply them independently. See "Strategies that Work" Part 1 for rationale and methodology.

text to self

Connecting personal experience to texts

What does this remind me of in my life?

What is this similar to in my life?

How is this different from my life?

Has something like this ever happened to me?

How does this relate to my life?

What were my feelings when I read this?

Have I changed my thinking as a result of reading this?

What have I learned?

Are there similarities / differences in ...

My life

My family

My friends

Holidays I have been on

Things I have seen

Feelings I have had

Experiences

A place I have been

text to text

Connecting big ideas and themes across texts

What does this remind me of in another book I've read?

How is this text similar to other things I've read?

How is this different from other books I've read?

Have I read about something like this before?

Are there similarities / differences in ...

Genre

Text structure

Author

Topic

Theme

Message

Plot

Character

Fact

Opinion

Information

Vocabulary

text to world

Connecting real world happenings to texts

What does this remind me of in the real world?

How is this text similar to things that happen in the real world?

How is this different from things that happen in the real world?

How did that part relate to the world around me?

Are there similarities / differences in ...

Something I have seen on TV

Radio news

A newspaper story

Historical events

Current events

Something I have studied before

Real world happenings – local and global

A conversation

Making Connections Strategy

From: http://forpd.ucf.edu/strategies/stratText.html

Rationale:

Schema theory explains how our previous experiences, knowledge, emotions, and understandings affect what and how we learn (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Schema is the background knowledge and experience readers bring to the text. Good readers draw on prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading and are thus able to use that knowledge to make connections. Struggling readers often move directly through a text without stopping to consider whether the text makes sense based on their own background knowledge, or whether their knowledge can be used to help them understand confusing or challenging materials. By teaching students how to connect to text they are able to better understand what they are reading (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Accessing prior knowledge and experiences is a good starting place when teaching strategies because every student has experiences, knowledge, opinions, and emotions that they can draw upon.

Keene and Zimmerman (1997) concluded that students comprehend better when they make different kinds of connections:

- Text-to-self
- Text-to-text
- Text-to-world

Text-to-self connections are highly personal connections that a reader makes between a piece of reading material and the reader's own experiences or life. An example of a text-to-self connection might be, "This story reminds me of a vacation we took to my grandfather's farm."

Sometimes when reading, readers are reminded of other things that they have read, other books by the same author, stories from a similar genre, or perhaps on the same topic. These types of connections are **text-to-text** connections. Readers gain insight during reading by thinking about how the information they are reading connects to other familiar text. "This character has the same problem that I read about in a story last year," would be an example of a text-to-text connection.

Text-to-world connections are the larger connections that a reader brings to a reading situation. We all have ideas about how the world works that goes far beyond our own personal experiences. We learn about things through television, movies, magazines, and newspapers. Often it is the text-to-world connections that teachers are trying to enhance when they teach lessons in science, social studies, and literature. An example of a text-to-world connection would be when a reader says, "I saw a program on television that talked about things described in this article."

Cris Tovani (2000) offers reasons why connecting to text helps readers:

- It helps readers understand how characters feel and the motivation behind their actions.
- It helps readers have a clearer picture in their head as they read thus making the reader more engaged.
- It keeps the reader from becoming bored while reading.
- It sets a purpose for reading and keeps the reader focused.
- Readers can see how other readers connected to the reading.
- It forces readers to become actively involved.
- It helps readers remember what they have read and ask questions about the text.

How to Use the Strategy:

To effectively use this strategy, teachers should spend time modeling for students how to make *meaningful* connections. The easiest connection to teach is **text-to-self**. Teachers should model text-to-self connections initially with selections that are relatively close to the student's personal experiences. A key phrase that prompts text-to-self connections is, "this reminds me of...." Next, teachers should model how to make **text-to-text** connections. Sometimes when we read, we are reminded of other texts we have read. Encourage students to consider the variety of texts they have experienced which will help them understand the new selection. Finally, teachers should model how to make **text-to-world** connections. When teachers suspect that students may lack the ability to make meaningful connections, classroom instruction will be necessary to bridge the gap between reading experiences and author assumptions. Building the necessary background knowledge is a crucial means for providing text-to-world support and may be used to pre-empt reading failure. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) caution that merely making connections is not sufficient. Students may make tangential connections that can distract them from the text. Throughout instruction, students need to be challenged to analyze how their connections are contributing to their understanding of the text. Text connections should lead to text comprehension.

Below are some examples of **connecting statements** for students to use as a reference or teachers can use them as **prompts** for classroom discussion.

This part reminds me of....
I felt like...(character) when I....
If that happened to me I would....
This book reminds me of...(another text) because....
I can relate to...(part of text) because one time....
Something similar happened to me when....

Below are some examples of **questions** that can be used to facilitate student connections:
Text-to-self:
What does this remind me of in my life?
What is this similar to in my life?
How is this different from my life?
Has something like this ever happened to me?
How does this relate to my life?
What were my feelings when I read this?

Text-to-text:
What does this remind me of in another book I've read?
How is this text similar to other things I've read?
How is this different from other books I've read?
Have I read about something like this before?

Text-to-world:
What does this remind me of in the real world?
How is this text similar to things that happen in the real world?
How is this different from things that happen in the real world?
How did that part relate to the world around me?

Ideas for Assessment:
The **Making Connections** strategy will help teachers assess how students use prior knowledge to understand text. In terms of informal assessment, teachers can use the organizers to gain insights into students' connections as they are reading. The use of this simple strategy on an ongoing basis will allow teachers to provide additional (differentiated) instruction and support to students who need additional instruction. In addition, teachers will able to plan for further instruction. This strategy can be used with varied texts. Another option for assessing this strategy is the Major Point Interview found in *Mosaic of Thought* (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). This assessment can be given as an interview or in written response form. The Major Point Interview assesses the student's ability to use the strategy through a series of questions. The students' answers are scored using a rubric.

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Self Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: _____

Author: _____

After reading a book or piece of text, write about how the book is similar or different from your own life by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In my life
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading.	What does this remind me of in my life?
	What is this similar to in my life?
	How is this different from my life?

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Self Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: _Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day_

Author: _Judith Viorst_

After reading a book or piece of text, write about how the book is similar or different from your own life by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In my life
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading. This story is about Alexander and the bad day that he had. It started when he woke up with gum in his hair. He got scrunched on the way to school. The teacher liked other kids sailboats more than his. He found out he had a cavity. He got in trouble for punching his brother.	What does this remind me of in my life? I sometimes have bad days, like the time my grandmother forgot about picking me up from after-school.
Alexander lost his best friend. He found out he was the kids' 3rd best friend.	What is this similar to in my life? My best friend betrayed me because he was friends with my enemy, who tried to kick me.
Alexander was having such a horrible day that he wanted to move to Australia. Bad days happen everywhere.	How is this different from my life? My day isn't always horrible.

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Text Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: _____

Author: _____

After reading a book or piece of text, compare how it is similar and different to another book you have read by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In another book
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading.	What does this remind me of in another book I've read?
	How is this similar to other books I've read?
	How is this different from other books I've read?

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Text Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday

Author: Judith Viorst

After reading a book or piece of text, compare how it is similar and different to another book you have read by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In another book
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading. Alexander's grandparents gave him and his brothers a dollar. He thought he was rich. He really wanted a walkie-talkie so his mom told him to save his money. Alexander spent his money on gum, renting a snake, a teddy bear, a candle which was melted, and betting his brothers. In the end Alexander wasted away his money on things he didn't want.	What does this remind me of in another book I've read Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by the same author
	How is this similar to other books I've read? Alexander was the main character in both books. In both books he had a problem. Both books have the same author.
	How is this different from other books I've read? Alexander's problem in this book was different—he had money, but he spent it on things he really didn't want after all.

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-World Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: _____

Author: _____

After reading a book or piece of text, compare how the book is similar and different to the world around you by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In the world
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading.	What does this remind me of in the real world?
	What is this similar to things that happen in the real world?
	How is this different from things that happen in the real world?

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-World Connections

Name: _____

Book/Text: _Give a Boy a Gun_

Author: _Todd Strasser_

After reading a book or piece of text, compare how the book is similar and different to the world around you by using the questions in the chart.

In the book	In the world
Discuss what is happening in the book you are reading. Give a Boy a Gun is the story of two boys, Brendan and Gary, who hold over 500 students and teachers hostage in the school gym. It is told from the perspectives of people who were in the gym or who knew the two boys. On each page there are facts about guns and school violence. Brendan and Gary were picked on by the jocks because they dressed differently and listened to different music. They were just different from other students. Most of the student body and teachers treated them like aliens Brendan and Gary stole weapons from their parents and made some weapons of their own. They found ways to make bombs on the Internet.	What does this remind me of in the real world? This story reminds me of the Columbine tragedy that happened in Colorado. Brendan and Gary remind me of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. They held students and teachers in the cafeteria much the same way as the book.
	What is this similar to things that happen in the real world? One theory of the Columbine tragedy was that Eric and Dylan were picked on by other students and the teachers did nothing to stop it. Eric and Dylan also stole weapons from their parents and made their own homemade bombs.
In the book, Gary kills himself while Brendan is beaten by the other students.	How is this different from things that happen in the real world? In real life, Eric and Dylan killed themselves before they could be caught.

Lesson Plans

As teachers, your goal is to move students toward new levels of independence. That's why we like the gradual release of responsibility model.

Remember…

- These are quick activities, not long drawn-out lessons.
- You can use most of them with any text you are reading, all day long — not just during reading time!
- Never ask students to do something you haven't modeled.
- Once students get the hang of these activities, you can use them for independent practice.
- Mix it up — use these with small groups, the whole class, during, partner reading...
- These are all great classroom tools; but remember, **the point is the *reading***! Don't kill the enjoyment of reading with the exercises!

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

1. Demonstration	1. I do, you watch.
2. Guided practice	2. I do, you help.
3. Independent practice	3. You do, I help.
4. Application	4. You do, I watch.
(Gallagher and Pearson, 1983)	(Wilhelm, 2001)

Activity 1: Code the Text

Making Connections

Activity: Code the Text
Purpose: To actively engage in reading and to make connections while reading.

1. Using a read-aloud and think aloud, demonstrate examples of making text-self, text-text and text-world connections.
2. While reading a selected text aloud, model how to code a segment of the text that elicits a connection by using a sticky note, a code (T-S, T-T, T-W) and a short explanation of the connection. Discuss how these connections strengthen your understanding of the text.
3. Have the students work with a partner to read a short text and code the text.
4. Ask students to share their connections with the whole class. Be sure to focus on how the connections helped them understand the text.

Text - self connections occur when we make connections between personal experiences and the text.
Text - text connections occur when we make connections between other texts in relation to the text we are reading.
Text - world connections occur when we relate the text with what we already know about the world.

Making Connections

Activity: Connection Stems
Purpose: To encourage reflection during reading; to provide a structure to make connections while reading.

1. After reading a text aloud, show students a sentence stem and think aloud about the process you use for completing the sentence stem. Use the text and personal experiences to explain your thinking.

2. As you read aloud, encourage the students to use the sentence stems to participate in the discussion.

3. Give students a complete set of connection stems. Have students read another short text with a partner and use the connection stems to facilitate their discussion.

That reminds me of…
I remember when…
I have a connection…
An experience I have had like that…
I felt like that character when…
If I were that character, I would…

*Source: McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M.B. (2000). *Guided Comprehension: a teaching model for grades 3-8.* Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Activity 3: Double Entry Journal

Making Connections

Activity: Double Entry Journal
Purpose: To provide a structure for reading response, to make decisions about significant aspects of text, and to reflect on personal connections to the text.

1. Provide students with a Double-Entry Journal or have them make one.
2. Begin by explaining and modeling how to use a Double-Entry Journal. Encourage text-self, text-text, and text-world connections.
3. Have students read or listen to part of a text.
4. Ask students to select a key event, idea, word, quote, or concept from the text and write it in the left column of the Double Entry Journal.
5. In the right column of the Double Entry Journal, students write connections and explain their responses to the item in the left column.
6. Use the journals for large group discussions.

*Source: McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M.B. (2000). *Guided Comprehension: a teaching model for grades 3-8.* Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Double-Entry Journal

Text_____

Key event, idea, word, quote, or concept:	Connections:

| **Text – self connections** occur when we make connections between personal experiences and the text. |
| --- |
| **Text – text connections** occur when we make connections between other texts in relation to the text we are reading. |
| **Text – world connections** occur when we relate the text with what we already know about the world. |

Making Connections

Activity: Drawing Connections
Purpose: To use visual representation to express connections.

1. Demonstrate how to draw visual representations (pictures, lines, shapes) to communicate connections with text.

2. Read a section of text and think aloud about a connection you can make. Model creating a visual representation of your thoughts. Then think aloud as you write a sentence or paragraph explaining the connection you made.

3. Read another section of the text to the students and ask them to create visual representations of their connections to the text. Next, have them write a sentence or paragraph explaining their connection. Finally, have them share their drawings and explain their connections in small groups.
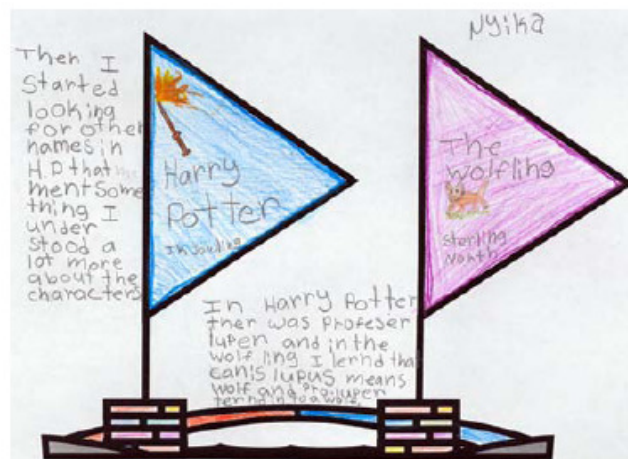
Lesson variation: Use the Connection Bridge graphic organizer for this activity. Write the text title in the left bridge flag and draw the connection in the right bridge flag.

*Source: McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M.B. (2000). *Guided Comprehension: a teaching model for grades 3-8*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.


Into the Book © 2006 Wisconsin Educational Communications Board   http://reading.ecb.org
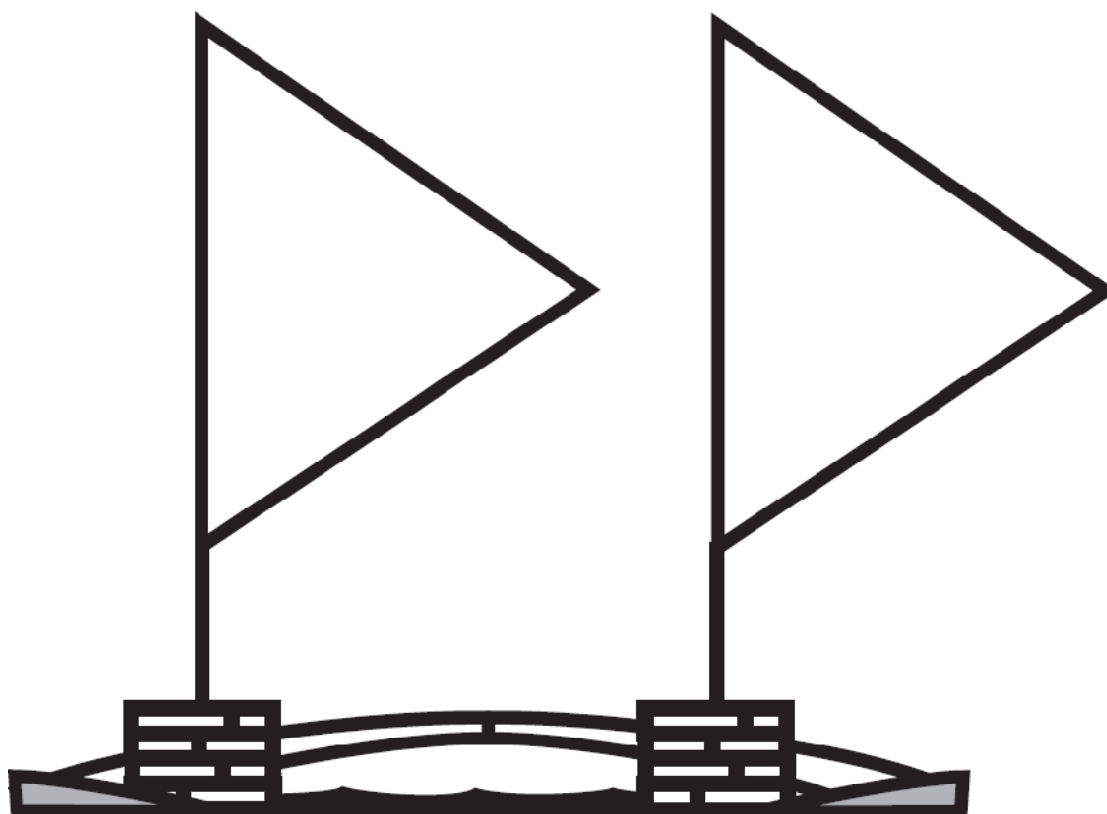
Activity 5: Is it a Meaningful Connection?

Making Connections

Activity: Is it a meaningful connection?
Purpose: To distinguish between connections that are meaningful and relevant and those that are not.

1. Tell students that you will be recording their connections as you read aloud.
2. Read aloud text and record the students' connections (text-self, text-text, and text-world connections) on chart paper.
3. Explain to students that some of the connections help us to understand text. Explain that responses that helped us understand the text get a star.
4. Review the connections. As your students try to determine if a connection will receive a star, ask questions like these:
   - Does that help us learn more about the story?
   - Can you tell us why you think that is meaningful?
   - What can we understand from that connection?
   - How does the connection help you understand?
5. Discuss how these meaningful connections supported our understanding of the text. Remind students that when they are making connections, they should stop and ask themselves how the connection helps them understand the text.
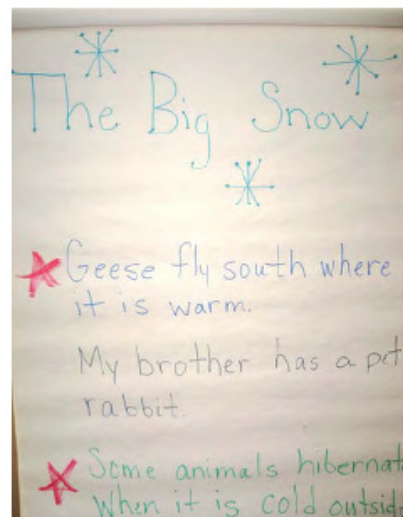
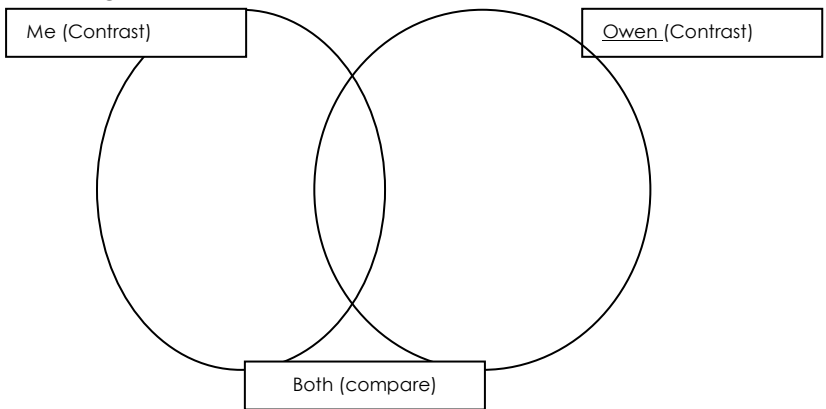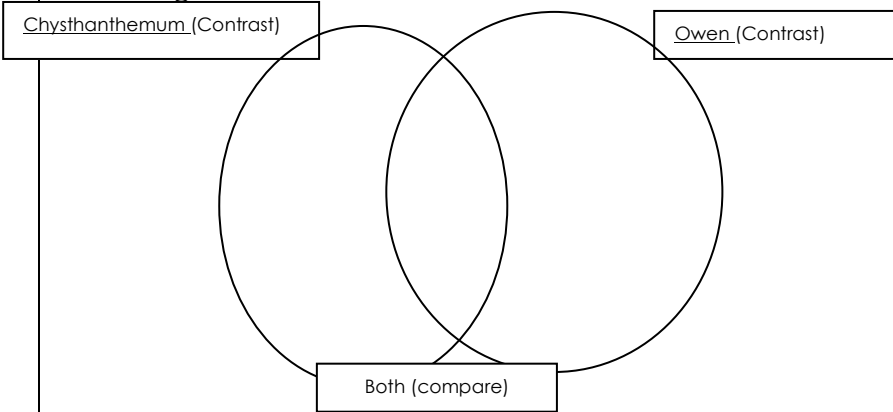| |
|---|
| Text - **self connections** occur when we make connections between personal experiences and the text. |
| Text - **text connections** occur when we make connections between other texts and the text we are reading. |
| Text - **world connections** occur when we relate the text with what we already know about the world. |

Please note: these unit utilise specific texts – it is provided as a model and can be adapted using texts that are suitable for your own students. The first unit is designed for early years and the second for primary years.

Day	Essential Question	Lesson/ Activity
1	What is a WOW page?	Explain to students what a WOW page is. A WOW page in a book is a page that gives you some kind of reaction or feeling. It can be a feeling, what you hoped would happen, or remind you of something else. You have to react to the page. Model marking the page in Wild About Books by Judy Sierra (previously read aloud when I opened the classroom library- you can use any previous read

		aloud). React to the page with the poem that the animals are writing. React how I thought it was funny and I loved the author's play on words.
		Model the again with the page in <u>Library Mouse</u> (read aloud when we started Writing Workshop) of how Sam puts the mirror in the box to show we by Daniel Kirk are all authors- I was surprised at how Sam solved his problem.
		Model writing WOW and posting it in a page. Give student post its for their boxes and ask students to mark their wow pages. We will share these tomorrow.
2	EQ: What does connect to a book mean?	Remind students about their WOW pages from yesterday. Ask students if they found any WOW moments in their books.
		Tell students I found the perfect wow in the story <u>Lily's Plastic Purse</u> by Kevin Henkes. Read aloud the story. Model the WOW page of when Lily was begging the teacher for forgiveness. Make a personal connection about how hard that must have been for Lily.
		Relate it to making up to a friend and how difficult it was reconcile after so many years of not being friends. Define this as a text to self connection.
		Connect this back to the idea of a WOW page because some WOW pages are also connections- they remind us of something in our own life.
3	Q: What does connect to a book mean?	Review yesterday how we made a connection with a WOW page. Redefine that a connection reminds you of something and redefine. Create an anchor chart defining a connection as when a piece of text reminds you of something else. Reread the connection orally. Note how when I say it I have to talk about two things: what happened in the book (text) and what happened to me (self). I cannot just write about what happened to me.
		Model how to then write the connection with the following text frame:
		Text to Self:
		In the book (title) _____. This reminded me of when _____.
		Review <u>Lily's Plastic Purse</u> by Kevin Henkes with a picture walk. Ask students to share any text to self connections orally. Guide them to use the format as they speak to make sure the connection is clear AND concise. If time allows choose 1-2 student connections and add them to the anchor chart.
		Ask students to continue to look for WOW pages. Challenge them to look for a text to self connection.
4	EQ: What are text to text connections?	EQ: What are text to text connections?
		Review text to self connections. Ask students if they found any t2s connections when they did their WOW pages. Students can share.
		Read aloud the story <u>Chester's Way</u>. Explain to students that these two books really remind me of something. In both books the main character changes. In <u>Lily's Plastic Purse</u>, Lily lover her teacher and then changes when the teacher hurts her feelings. This reminds me of the book <u>Chester's Way </u>because <u>Chester</u> and Wilson avoided and didn't like Lily, but changed when she saved them.
		Define this as a text to self connection. Add what a text to self connection is to the anchor chart. Model adding this to the anchor chart.
		Ask student to share orally t2t connections and add to chart. Expect surface connections.
5	EQ: What are text to text connections?	Reread the connection orally. Note how when I say it I have to talk about two things: what happened in the book (text) and what happened in the other

		books (text). I cannot just write about what happened in one book if I want someone to understand and know EXACTLY what I am talking about. Model how to then write the connection with the following text frame: Text to Text In the book (title) _____. This reminds me of the book (title) because _____. Ask student to share orally t2t connections between the books and add to chart. Guide them to use the format as they speak to make sure the connection is clear AND concise. If time allows choose 1-2 student connections and add them to the anchor chart.
6	EQ: What is a connection?	Review with students the connections we have learned about. Review the text frame. Show student the text frame worksheet. Read aloud the story <u>Wemberly Worried</u> by Kevin Henkes. Tell students to make some connections in their heads, but we are not going to share them aloud just yet. After reading it, dismiss students to their seats where they will write the most important connection they made to this story using the text frame worksheet. Encourage them to illustrate their connections. Then bring children back for share time to share connections.
7	EQ: Why are connections important?	EQ: What are connections? Review the anchor chart with student's responses from yesterday. Introduce how some connections help us understand the story better than others. As a class number the response 1- it helped me understand the story better or 2- it didn't help us. The whole reason we do WOW pages or connections is because it make us understand the book better. Reading is thinking- if our WOW or connection does not help us think about the BOOK (not our friend who also has a red shirt). Usually these help us when it helps us with what we think will happen next (prediction), why the character did something (this can actually be the beginning of inference) or how a character is feeling.
8	EQ: What does compare and contrast a story mean?	Read aloud the story <u>Owen</u> by Henkes. Introduce (or hopefully review it as the kids should have seen it already) the Venn Diagram. Model how to compare and contrast yourself with a book. Tell students that compare is how you are alike and contrast is how you are different. Label the Venn Diagram Me (Contrast) Owen (Contrast) Both (compare)
8	EQ: What does compare and contrast a story mean?	Review yesterday's Venn diagram. Ask students what part of the chart has connections? What kind of connections would these be? They should see the middle has text to self connections. Show students how to turn this into the text frame. Model writing at least one connection on the bottom.

9	EQ: What does compare and contrast a story mean?	Read aloud the story <u>Chysthanthemum</u> by Henkes. Introduce (or hopefully review it as the kids should have seen it already) the Venn Diagram. Model how to compare and contrast two books. Remind students that compare is how they are alike and contrast is how you are different. Label the Venn Diagram
9	Model writing at least one connection on the bottom.	Review yesterday's Venn diagram. Ask students what part of the chart has connections? What kind of connections would these be? They should see the middle has text to text connections. Show students how to turn this into the text frame. Model writing at least one connection on the bottom.
10	EQ: What does compare and contrast a story mean?	Review connections and how they help us as readers Add making connections to the CAFE menu. Ask students to choose either one or two Kevin Henkes books. They are going to create a Venn diagram comparing the book to themselves or another Kevin Henkes book- their choice. Show students the Venn diagram sheet and have them write at least one connection on the bottom. This will be the final assessment.

Day	Essential Question	Lesson/ Activity

1	What is a WOW page?	**First Mini Lesson/ Reading Focus Lesson:** Explain to students what a WOW page is. A WOW page in a book is a page that gives you some kind of reaction or feeling. It can be a feeling, what you hoped would happen, or remind you of something else. You have to react to the page. Model marking the page in <u>Rough Faced Girl</u> and discussing how I felt when the girl first said she could see the invisible being., surprised but not sure if I believed her. He was after all, the Invisible Being and the two sisters had already failed. Model the again with the page in <u>The Talking Eggs</u> by San Soucci of how I thought it was funny when the chickens were running around all colored with crazy legs, scared when the old lady took off her head and surprised with the solution in the story. Model writing WOW and posting it in a page. Give student post its for their boxes and ask students to mark their wow pages. We will share these tomorrow.
1	EQ: What is a WOW page?	Show students how to store their WOW pages after they have read the ENTIRE book. Open up to the next blank page in the reader's notebook. Put the date in the top right like always. At the top left of the page write the title of the book. A piece of tape (show how to tear off a small piece) may be needed to lay across the post it lengthwise (show them how to do this) so the post it doesn't fall out of the notebook. *Between mini lessons students will be meeting in guided reading groups or a self selected Daily Five. Students may choose from Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading , or Working on Writing. Please see Mrs. Gregory's Guided Reading Book binder for individual guided reading lesson plans.* wow pages. We will share these tomorrow.
2	EQ: What does connect to a book mean?	Remind students about their WOW pages from yesterday. Ask students if they found any WOW moments in their books. Tell students I found the perfect wow in the story <u>Thank You, Mr. Falkner</u> by Patricia Polacco. Read aloud the story. Model the WOW page of when Patricia was struggling to read. Make a personal connection about how hard it was for me in school with math. Define this as a text to self connection. Connect this back to the idea of a WOW page because some WOW pages are also connections- they remind us of something in our own life.
3	Q: What does connect to a book mean?	Review yesterday how we made a connection with a WOW page. Redefine that a connection reminds you of something either in your life or even another book. Create an anchor chart defining a connection as when a piece of text reminds you of something else. Mark example connections on the anchor chart from the post it notes yesterday. Reread the connection orally. Note how when I say it I have to talk about two things: what happened in the book (text) and what happened to me (self). I cannot just write about what happened to me. Model how to then write the connection with the following text frame: Text to Self: In the book (title) _____. This reminded me of when _____. Review <u>Thank You, Mr. Falkner</u> by Polacco with a picture walk. Ask students to share any text to self connections orally. Guide them to use the format as they speak to make sure the connection is clear AND concise. If time allows choose 1-

		2 student connections and add them to the anchor chart. Ask students to continue to look for WOW pages. Challenge them to look for a text to self connection.
4	EQ: What are text to text connections?	EQ: What are text to text connections? Review text to self connections. Ask students if they found any t2s connections when they did their WOW pages. Students can share. Read aloud the story <u>Thunder Cake</u> by Polacco. Explain to students that these two books really remind me of something. In both books the main character changes. In <u>Thank You, Mr. Falkner,</u> Trisha couldn't read and really struggled until Mr. Falkner helped her. In <u>Thunder Cake</u> the little girl was terrified of thunderstorms until her grandmother helped her. Define this as a text to self connection. Add what a text to text connection is to the anchor chart. Model adding this to the anchor chart. Ask student to share orally t2t connections and add to chart. Expect surface connections. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
5	EQ: What are text to text connections?	Reread the connection orally. Note how when I say it I have to talk about two things: what happened in the book (text) and what happened in the other books (text). I cannot just write about what happened in one book if I want someone to understand and know EXACTLY what I am talking about. Model how to then write the connection with the following text frame: Text to Text In the book (title) _____. This reminds me of the book (title) because _____. Ask student to share orally t2t connections between the books and add to chart. Guide them to use the format as they speak to make sure the connection is clear AND concise. If time allows choose 1-2 student connections and add them to the anchor chart. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
6	EQ: What is a text to text connection?	Review with students the connections we have learned about. Review the text frame. Show student the text frame worksheet. Read aloud the story <u>Chicken Sunday</u> by Polacco. Tell students to make some connections in their heads, but we are not going to share them aloud just yet. After reading it, dismiss students to their seats where they will write the most important connection they made to this story using the text frame worksheet. Encourage them to illustrate their connections. Then bring children back for share time to share connections. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
7	EQ: Why are connections important?	EQ: What are connections? Review the anchor chart with student's responses from yesterday. Introduce how some connections help us understand the story better than others. As a class number the response 1- it helped me understand the story better or 2- it didn't help us. The whole reason we do WOW pages or connections is because it make us

		understand the book better. Reading is thinking- if our WOW or connection does not help us think about the BOOK (not our friend who also has a red shirt). Usually these help us when it helps us with what we think will happen next (prediction), why the character did something (this can actually be the beginning of inference) or how a character is feeling. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
8	EQ: What are text to world connections?	Review text to self and text to text connections. Ask students if they found any t2s connections when they did their WOW pages. Students can share. Read aloud the story <u>Aunt Chip and the Triple Creek Dam Affair</u> by Polacco. Model a connection about adult illiteracy and the book. Quick Facts http://www.writeexpress.com/LearnToRead/research/literacystatistics.html Explain to students that a text to world connection is a connection to something that is happing in the world around us. It could be something on the news like the flooding we had. Ask student to share orally t2w connections and add to chart. Expect surface connections. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
8	EQ: What are text to world connections?	EQ: What are text to world connections? Review text to world and text to text connections. Ask students if they found any t2s connections when they did their WOW pages. Students can share. Read aloud the story <u>Mr. Lincoln's Way</u> by Polacco. Model a connection between bullying, racism and segregation. Remind students that a text to world connection is a connection to something that is happing in the world around us. It could be something on the news like the flooding we had. Ask student to share orally t2w connections and add to chart. Expect surface connections. Have students be marking any connections on post it notes in their books from book boxes and then taping in reader's notebooks when they are done.
9	EQ: How can I make connections?	Review connections and how they help us as readers Add making connections to the CAFE menu. Model for students how to complete the connections worksheet. Show and explain rubric. Have students choose their three best connections (must show at least two different kinds of connections) from their readers notebooks. Turn in for a grade.

These are activities that can be used when using the Making Connections reading strategy.

- **Discuss current events/news** and try to connect to novel or nonfiction text being read.

- **Pair a nonfiction text with fiction text**

- **Bookmarks** – Give students a bookmark with all three types of connections. As they are reading, have students write down their connections in the appropriate place. Use these bookmarks with fiction, nonfiction, and even science/social studies books!

- **Read aloud** – Model using the strategy by thinking out loud.

- **Vocabulary sort** – Give students a list of words from the text. Tell them to sort them into three piles: Words they absolutely know the meaning for and can make a connection to, words they think they have heard before but don't have anything to connect them to, and words they have never heard before.

- **KWL**

- **Venn Diagrams** – Students can compare themselves
- to a character (Text-to-Self)
- main characters from two different books (Text-to-Text)
- the setting of the story to our own surroundings (Text-to-World)
- the features of a region compared to where we live (Text-to-World in Social Studies), etc.

Connections Bookmark
Text-to-Self
Text-to-Text
Text-to-World

Connector

Name: _____

Book: _____

Date: _____

Assignment: pages _____ to _____
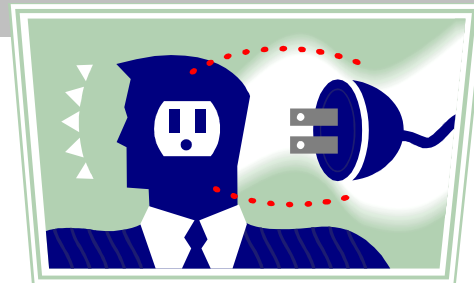
Connector: Your job is to connect the contents of the reading selection to current or past real world events and experiences. You will also connect the reading to other forms of literature, music, art and/or media.
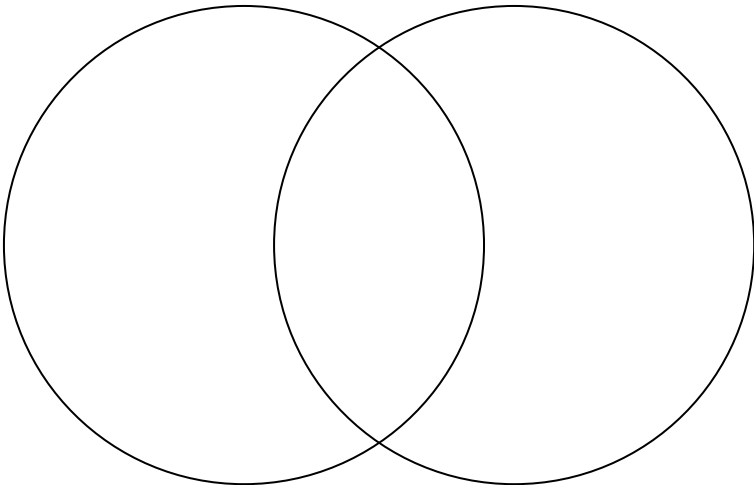

Real World Connections: Relate current reading to real situations.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Experiences: Relate current reading to real experiences you or others have had.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Literature and Media Connections: Relate current reading to other books, movies art, television, music and other media. _____

_____

_____

_____

Making Connections & Graphic Organisers

Venn Diagram for comparing and contrasting

Double Entry Diary

Direct quotation from the text	This reminds me of….

Chain Links

Text to Self	Text to Text	Text to World
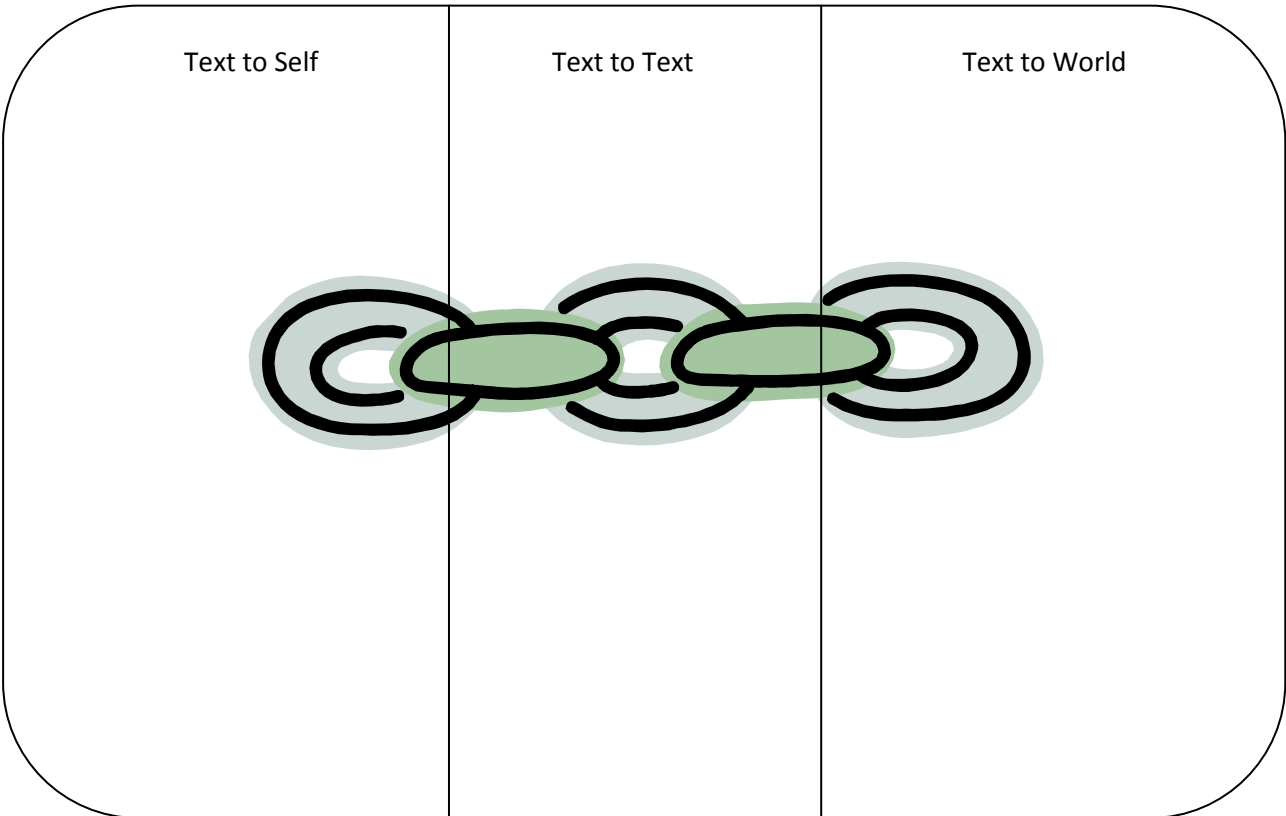
Concentric Circles

World

Text

Self
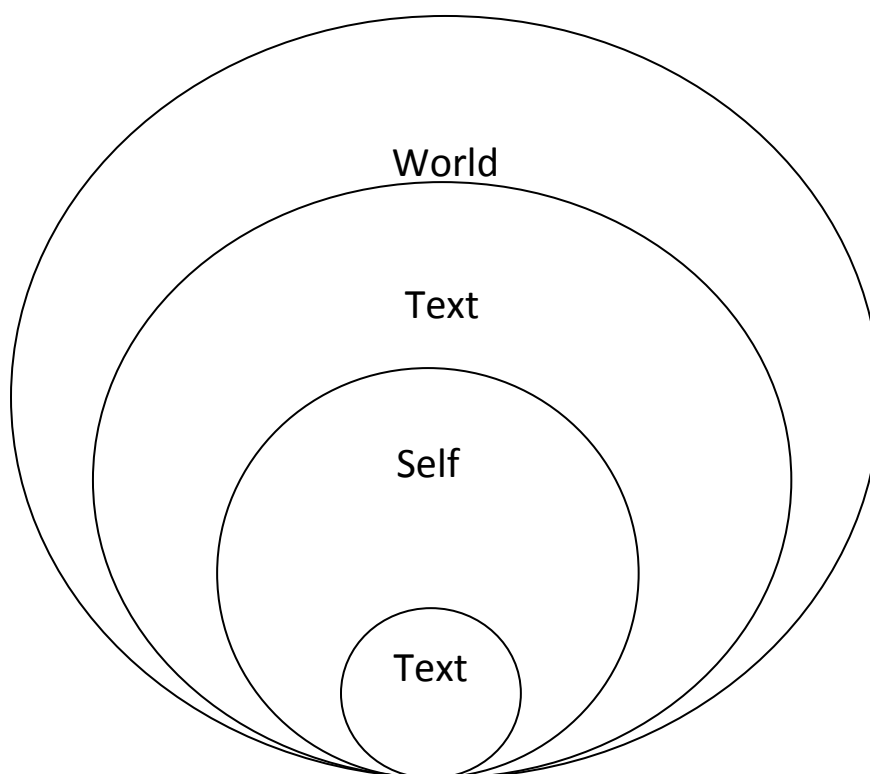
Text

KWL Chart

K (What I Know)	W (What I Want to Know)	L (What I Learned)

Knew / New Chart

I **Knew** this already	This is **New** to me

Text to Text - Narrative Connections				
Theme	Characters	Setting (time / place)	Complication/s	Resolution

Making Connections to Your Schema

During your reading, use sticky notes to mark sections in the passage where you are having connections. At the end of your reading, go back and select a few various connections to elaborate below.

Sticky Note	Book Title	Type of Connection	Explain Your Connection
		☐ Text to Text ☐ Text to Self ☐ Text to World	
		☐ Text to Text ☐ Text to Self ☐ Text to World	
		☐ Text to Text ☐ Text to Self ☐ Text to World	
		☐ Text to Text ☐ Text to Self ☐ Text to World	

Explain how your connections help you better understand your story

Making Connections

Children make personal connections with the text by using their schema (background knowledge). There are three main types of connections we make while reading text.

- **Text-to-Self (T-S)** refers to connections made between the text and the reader's personal experience.
- **Text-to-Text (T-T)** refers to connections made between a text being read to a text that was previously read.
- **Text-to-World (T-W)** refers to connections made between a text being read and something that occurs in the world.

It is important to activate children's schema (background knowledge) before, during, and after reading.

Check the website for the following links

Text-to-Self Sheet	Schema Lesson	Making Connections Lessons	Making Connections Cue Card
Double Entry Journal	Making Connections Page	Text Connections	Making Connections Lesson
Text-to-World Lesson 2			

Build a Connection

Text-to-Self Connections

- When I saw the picture of _____ I remembered . . .

- This part is like my life because . . .

- This character reminds me of myself because . . .

Text-to-Text Connections

- This book is like _____ because . . .
  [title of another book]

- This character is like _____ in the
  [character]
  book _____ because . . .
  [title]

Text-to-World Connections
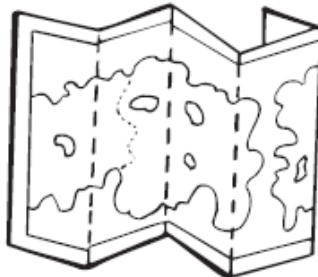
- I saw something like this when I watched/read

  _____. What I know is . . .
  [newspaper, TV, movie]

- This reminds me of something that happened in the real world:

Tic-Tac-Connect

Title: _____

Author: _____

Choose three connection starters across or down. Write a connection you made for each one.

My Life	A Book	Story Character
What I Know	**Friend**	**Place**
My Thinking	**News**	**Family**

Reading Rubric for Making Connections

	Needs Improvement	*Good*	*Great!*	*Marvellous!*
Preparation	Rarely prepared with connections to share from the assigned reading	Sometimes prepared with connections to share from the assigned reading	Usually prepared with connections to share from the assigned reading	Always prepared with connections to share from the assigned reading
Participation & Active Listening	Rarely shares connections from the assigned reading or reactions to others' comments about the book	Sometimes shares connections from the assigned reading or reactions to others' comments about the book	Usually shares connections from the assigned reading or reactions to others' comments about the book	Always shares connections from the assigned reading or reactions to others' comments about the book
Explanation of Connections	Rarely explains how connections help to understand the text	Sometimes explains how connections help to understand the text	Usually explains how connections help to understand the text	Always explains how connections help to understand the text
Variety of Connections	Rarely makes a variety of connections	Mostly makes one kind of connection	Usually makes a variety of connections	Always makes a variety of connections

Comments…