Connections

A majority of students in the upper elementary and middle grades are beyond decoding instruction and need more assistance with comprehension to help them become successful, independent readers. Strategic reading allows students to monitor their own thinking and make connections between texts and their own experiences. Students who make connections while reading are better able to understand the text they are reading. It is important for students to draw on their prior knowledge and experiences to connect with the text. Students are thinking when they are connecting, which makes them more engaged in the reading experience. By making connections to the text they are reading, students will gain a deeper understanding of the material.

Well, what is a connection then?

Connections are the relationships between things we already know about and what we are reading. There are three categories for connections:

TEXT TO SELF connections are the easiest to make for most of us. These connections are made between a piece of reading material and the reader's personal experiences from his or her own life.

ex. *This story reminds me of the vacation my family took to Florida. When I was at the beach I got sunburned just like the character in the story!*

- **Focusing on text-to-self connections:**
    What does this story remind you of?
    Can you relate to the characters in the story?
    Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life?

TEXT TO TEXT connections are made between what we are currently reading and something else that we have already read. 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.

ex. *This story reminds me of Henry in* Tunes for Bears to Dance to *because the main character's struggle with his brother makes me think of when Henry had to decide whether or not he should smash Mr. Levine's village.*

- **Focusing on text-to-text connections:**
    What does this remind you of in another book you have read?
    How is this text similar to other things you have read?
    How is this text different from other things you have read?

TEXT TO WORLD

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 go far beyond our own personal experiences. We learn about things through television, movies, magazines, and newspapers.

ex. *This article on monkeys we are reading makes me think of Charla Nash, the lady who was attacked by her friend's monkey. I saw it on the news.*

- **Focusing on text-to-world connections:**
  What does this remind you of in the real world?
  How are events in this story similar to things that happen in the real world?
  How are events in this story different from things that happen in the real world?

Chart:

This chart can be used to help guide students in their connections.

Detail from the Text: My Connection:

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EX: *In the story "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros, the character gets yelled at by the teacher about a sweater that isn't hers. When the owner of the sweater finally realizes it belongs to her, the teacher doesn't apologize to the main character for yelling at her even though she was wrong.*	*At work once I got yelled at for something that wasn't my fault, and when I told the person that someone else was responsible, he refused to apologize because he still thought he was right even though he wasn't.* Type of Connection: TS TT TW
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