

FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month



(Developed by Zygouris-Coe, V. & Glass, C., 2004)

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 be 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
Describe 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?

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of the Making Connections worksheets or go to the [html file](#).)

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Self Connections

Name: _____
Book/Text: *Peacemaker and the Termites*, *Horacio*, *Mr. Smith*, *Big Boy*, *Clay*
Author: *Juanita*, *Wasson*

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
Describe what is happening in the book you are reading. Think about what Peacemaker and the Termites do. What about the other boys in the book? How do they get along?	What does this remind me of in my life? I remember how hard it was for me to have my grandmothers' help with getting me up from the bathroom.
Peacemaker tells me that he found out he was like me. He was like me.	What is this similar to in my life? My book, <i>Horacio</i> , tells me that he was like me. He was like me.
Peacemaker tells me that he found out he was like me. He was like me.	How is this different from my life? My life isn't always like that.

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a sample elementary Text-to-Self Connections worksheet.)

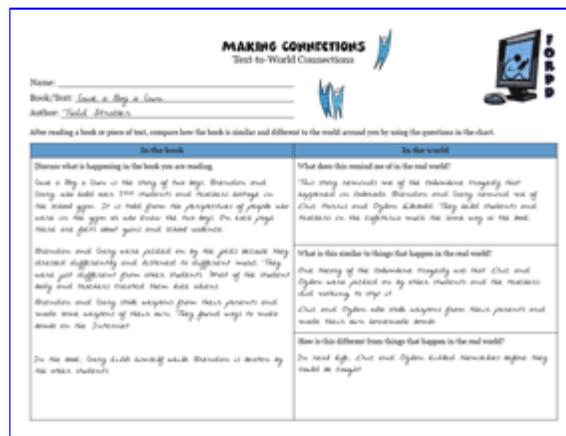
MAKING CONNECTIONS
Text-to-Text Connections

Name: _____
Book/Text: *Peacemaker and the Termites*, *Horacio*, *Mr. Smith*, *Big Boy*, *Clay*
Author: *Juanita*, *Wasson*

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
Describe what is happening in the book you are reading. Peacemaker's grandpa is gone and he has to take care of him. He thought he was like the other boys in the book. He was like the other boys in the book. He was like the other boys in the book. He was like the other boys in the book.	What does this remind me of in another book I've read? Peacemaker and the Termites. Horacio. Mr. Smith. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay.
	How is this similar to other books I've read? Peacemaker and the Termites. Horacio. Mr. Smith. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay.
	How is this different from other books I've read? Peacemaker and the Termites. Horacio. Mr. Smith. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay. Big Boy. Clay.

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a sample elementary Text-to-Text Connections worksheet.)



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a sample secondary Text-to-World Connections worksheet from an independent reading project.)

For more informative links on the **making connections strategy** see the following:

- <http://www.u46teachers.org/mosaic/tools/tools.htm> - Mosaic Listserv Tools. You will find tools used by teachers implementing Mosaic of Thought in the classroom.
- http://ayr.ednet.ns.ca/vis_strategies.shtml - this site has information on making connections and sample classroom activities.
- <http://enrollmentoptions.sandi.net/readingstrategies/makingconnections.html> - this site contains additional reading strategies that can be used with each type of text connection.
- <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/resources/languagearts/readingwriting/connections.htm> - this site contains information on using the making connections strategy in a reading workshop. Included is a listing of books that can be used to teach the strategy.
- http://www.educationoasis.com/LP/RE/text-to-self_connection.htm - this site contains a sample lesson plan for teaching text-to-self connections.
- <http://www.geocities.com/smiledcg/comprehe.html> - this site contains downloadable posters and bookmarks on making connections.
- http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=228 - Read Write Think lesson plan for making connections using a double entry diary.

References

Buehl, D. Comprehension Teaching Learning Activity Articles: "Yeah, that reminds me of...." Retrived October 6, 2004 from <http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=710>

Florida Online Reading Professional Development (2004). Lesson 8: Scaffolding Students' Comprehension and Guiding Students Toward Independence in Reading. University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL. Available at: <http://www.itrc.ucf.edu/>

Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Keene, E. & Zimmerman, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.



Go to Adobe PDF instruction page.

Last Updated October 8, 2004
forpd@mail.ucf.edu | (866) 227-7261 (FL only)

FOR-PD is a project of the [ITRC @ UCF](#) College of Education and administered under a grant from the [Florida Department of Education](#) and [Just Read, Florida!](#)