

Smith Elementary Connections

Building Comprehension through Background Knowledge

Fall 2011

During the first nine weeks, all students at Smith Elementary focused on activating their background knowledge when reading to better aid in comprehension.

To start this school-wide focus, every student created a head-cut to show what they know. Students drew pictures, cut out magazines, and used clip art to demonstrate their current background knowledge.

The heads were hung throughout the building so all students could see if they have similar background knowledge.

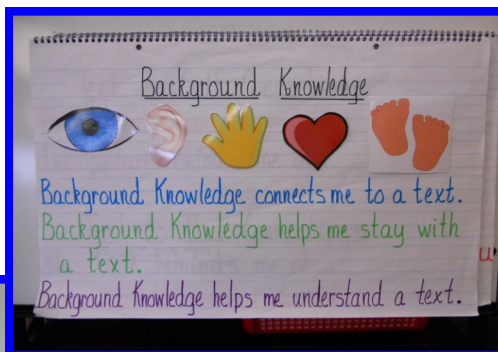
Nora Mitchell, our first grade teacher, visited several classes modeling how to activate students' background knowledge and how to make connections with a text.



Each class has made an anchor chart to remind students that background knowledge can do the following:

1. Connect the reader to the text.
2. Help the reader stay with the text.
3. Help the reader understand the text.

After modeling this comprehension strategy, all classroom teachers selected a picture book to share with their class. The students either listened to More than Anything Else or Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge. All students in the school then made a connection with the text. The children either illustrated or wrote about a Text-to-Self, Text-to-Text, or Text-to-World connection they had while listening to the story.



Students continued to practice applying their background knowledge to deepen comprehension and make connections with text in their self-selected reading and guided reading lessons throughout the grading period.

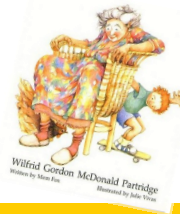
It was wonderful seeing a teacher modeling the strategy lesson(s). It was very helpful and gave me many ideas.

~ Smith Teacher

Text-to-World



Text-to-Self



Text-to-Text

When I see this picture, it reminds me... When I read these words, it reminds me..

Elaine Sims

Making text to world connections

The text said... This reminds me of...

Something as precious as gold young men When the Pizarro took gold away from the Incas and melted them down to gold bars.

This book reminds me... of when I ran errands for Mrs. Weaver like when the young boy helped the old lady with a cane.

Name: Laleb Burton

Book Title: Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge

T.S.

This book reminds me of when I first learned how to read.

carver

The picture reminds me of me and my family going to the beach.

Jenny Sarkar

Chose

The picture reminds me

This picture reminds me... of my dad telling stories around the campfire.

Name: Jeffery

Book Title: More Than Anything Else

TS

These words remind me... of how I want to learn to read better so that I can read more Star Wars books.

Name: DJ

Book Title: More Than Anything Else

T-S

These words remind me... Reminds me of when my Grandmal lost her memory.

Name: Ben 9

Book Title: W-G-N-P



Activity: What's in Your Schema?

Ask the students to think about what is in their schema. Schema is everything they already know and everything they have experienced since they were born.

Trace each child's profile using an overhead projector and black paper. As you are tracing, discuss what they are thinking of putting in their schema. While they are waiting they can look through magazines and clip art for pictures of things in their schema.

Have volunteers share their schema profiles and discuss the differences and similarities you see. Post their schema profiles on the wall so that when they are looking for a book to read, they can recall what's in their schema and choose something they are familiar with and interested in.



Professional Development Resources

