Making Connections

**Definition:** Children connect their background knowledge to the text they are reading.

**Purpose of the strategy:** Readers comprehend better when they actively think about and apply their knowledge of the book's topic, their own experiences, and the world around them. When children understand how to connect the text they are reading to their lives, they begin to make connections between what they read and the larger world. This nudges them into thinking about bigger, more expansive issues beyond their universe of home, school and neighborhood.

**How to help your child use this strategy:**

To help your child make connections while they are reading, ask him/her the following questions:

- What does the book remind you of?
- What do you know about the book's topic?
- Does this book remind you of another book?

Questioning

**Definition:** Through the use of questioning, children understand the text on a deeper level because questions clarify confusion and stimulate further interest in a topic.

**Purpose of the strategy:** Through questioning, children are able to wonder about content and concepts before, during and after reading by:

- constructing meaning
- enhancing meaning
- finding answers
• solving problems
• finding specific information
• acquiring a body of information
• discovering new information
• propelling research efforts
• clarifying confusion
  (Strategies that Work, 2000, p.22)

How to help your child use this strategy:

• model questioning in your own rereading
• ask "I wonder" questions (open-ended)
• ask your child to come up with questions before reading to see if it's answered in the text
• keep track of questions verbally or in an informal question log
• stop and predict what will happen next
• discuss what questions you still have after reading

Visualizing

Definition: Children create pictures in their minds and visualizations when they read.

Purpose of the strategy: The reader uses the text material and their own prior knowledge to create their own mind pictures of what is happening in the text. "Visualizing personalizes reading, keeps us engaged and often prevents us from abandoning a book." (Strategies that Work, 2000, p.97).

How to help your child use this strategy:

To help your child visualize while reading, try the following:

• share wordless picture books with your child - have your student tell the story
• make frequent stops while reading aloud to describe the pictures in your minds
• after reading time at home have your child draw what they see in their mind
Inferring

**Definition:** Children use background knowledge and "read between the lines" of the text they are reading to interpret meaning and develop deeper understanding.

**Purpose of the strategy:** Readers comprehend better when they make connections and construct their own knowledge (using prior experiences, visualizing, predicting and synthesizing) to interpret the "big idea." It is like a mental dialogue between the author and the reader.

**How to help your students use this strategy:**

Ask them:

"How did you know that?"
"Why did you think that would happen?"
"Look at the cover and pictures, then make predictions."
"Discuss the plot and theme."
"What do you think this story was about?"
"How do you think the character feels?"
"Does it remind you of anything?"

Determining Importance

**Definition:** When children are reading nonfiction they have to decide and remember what is important from the material they read.
**Purpose of the strategy:** The purpose is to teach children to discriminate the "must know" information from the less important details in a text. The ability to identify essential ideas and salient information is a prerequisite to developing insight.

**How to help your child use this strategy:**

To help your child determine importance while they are reading:

- Initiate discussion before reading by asking what your children know about the topic and what they would like to learn.
- After reading discuss what important information they have learned.
- While reading, help your children look for clues in the text to determine importance.
  - Pay attention to:
    - first and last lines of a paragraph
    - titles
    - headings
    - captions
    - framed text
    - fonts
    - illustrations
    - italics
    - bold faced print