

# Tools for Coaches

## 01. Professional Development Training Session



In the ***Making Connections*** training session, participants were provided with information on ways to effectively build new background knowledge and activate existing background knowledge necessary for comprehension. The session also addressed how to effectively teach the strategy of Making Connections.

## 02. Modeling



Following the professional development training session, participants should view a demonstration lesson in the classroom. The teacher who will be demonstrating the lesson should pre-conference with the observer(s) and provide a lesson plan to aid in the discussion.

Demonstration lessons and plans should reinforce the following skills, strategies and techniques. The teacher:

### General

- Makes an effort to know students well so that s/he has a good understanding of the students' existing background knowledge.
- Demonstrates to students that their background knowledge is valued by providing multiple opportunities for them to discuss and share their thinking.
- Listens to student conversations and gathers anecdotal information about individual student comprehension.

### Building Background Knowledge

- Selects texts to build background knowledge of topics/concepts that are crucial to comprehension.
- Plans for multiple exposures of the topic/concept over many days, no more than two days apart.
- Connects new learning to students' existing background knowledge.
- Utilizes virtual experiences to build background knowledge of crucial topics/concepts.

### Activating Background Knowledge

- Plans carefully and thoughtfully in advance of the lesson; careful not to take away the problem solving that should occur during the reading.

- Spends 2-10 minutes prompting discussion of information that is crucial to comprehension.

### Teaching the Strategy Making Connections

Demonstration lessons and plans should reinforce the following skills, strategies and techniques:

- Making connections is explained explicitly (following steps 1-4 of the Cognitive Strategy Routine)
- A CPQ that links to the strategy is presented before reading
- Making connections is modeled at least three times through think-alouds
- Students have opportunities to share their thinking using Think-Turn-Talk
- All students are accountable for thinking about the CPQ
- Comprehension is extended or deepened through further questioning or discussion

After observing the demonstration lesson, teachers should meet to complete making connections lesson plans.



### 03. Observation and Feedback

The literacy coach or other mentor should then observe as teachers focus on building and activating students' background knowledge before reading. The coach provides feedback for further reflection and discussion. Such observation/feedback cycles should include opportunities to:

- Meet to conference before and after the lesson and review the Pre-/Post-Conference Discussion Tool. (There are three Pre-/Post-Conference Tools included in the "Tools for Coaches" section. Choose the conference tool that works best for you and the teacher, or you may wish to create your own conference tool.)
- Determine a specific focus for the lesson.
- Meet to debrief at the conclusion of the lesson.
- Ask the teacher to reflect on the lesson and explain what s/he thought was done well and where s/he might make improvements.
- Share observations. Provide positive feedback as well as constructive comments or questions that will move the teacher toward improvement.
- Keep observations specific to the area of focus identified during the Pre-conference. Ask questions such as, "How **might** you \_\_\_\_\_ in the next lesson?" "In what ways **might** you \_\_\_\_\_ the next time you build background knowledge?"
- At the end of the meeting, decide what the next steps will be.

## 04. “Right-On-Time” Professional Development



“Right-on-time” professional development may vary according to teachers’ needs, time available, and the complexity of the strategy being implemented. Coaches may:

- Have teachers meet to reflect on their lessons.
- Encourage teachers to share successes and challenges. Collaborate to think of ways to overcome the challenges.
- Ask teachers to share methods they use for assessing students’ comprehension of text.
- Take time to revisit aspects of the coaching cycle as needed before moving on to new modules or priorities.

## 05. Meet With the Principal



The literacy coach and other campus leaders will meet with the principal. At this meeting they may:

- Share and discuss the progress of the implementation of ***Making Connections***.
- Revisit the Campus Data-informed Plan(DIP) and consider any updated data that is available.
- Select the next campus-wide focus for improving comprehension instruction.



## Professional Development Training Session Planning



Module: ***Making Connections***

Date(s):

Start Time:

End Time:

Training Location or Room #:

Audience (please list grade levels, departments etc.):

Notes:

Materials needed for presentation:

Considerations:

Administrator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-/Post-Conference Discussion Tool for *Making Connections* (A)

Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>BEFORE READING</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you select this text to teach the cognitive strategy making connections?</li> <li>• How did you assess students' existing knowledge of key ideas presented in the text?</li> <li>• How will you activate or build student background knowledge?</li> <li>• How will you explicitly explain the strategy?</li> <li>• How will you link the CPQ to making connections?</li> </ul>	
<b>DURING READING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you model or reinforce the importance of accessing background knowledge during reading?</li> <li>• How will you explicitly model the strategy making connections?</li> <li>• How will you engage students in thinking about/comprehending the story?</li> <li>• How will you guide students to practice and apply the strategy during the reading?</li> <li>• How will you assess comprehension during reading?</li> </ul>	
<b>AFTER READING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you ensure that ALL students are accountable for thinking about/answering the CPQ?</li> <li>• After answering the CPQ, how will you deepen and extend comprehension?</li> <li>• How will you assess students' understanding of the cognitive strategy?</li> <li>• How will you decide next steps in strategy instruction? How will students move toward independent use of the strategy?</li> <li>• How will you know if your lesson was successful for ALL students?</li> </ul>	

## Pre-/Post-Conference Discussion Tool for *Making Connections* (B)

Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>BEFORE READING</b>	<b>Pre-Conference Notes</b>	<b>Post-Conference Notes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you select this text to teach the cognitive strategy making connections?</li> <li>• How did you assess students' existing knowledge of key ideas presented in the text?</li> <li>• How will you activate or build student background knowledge?</li> <li>• How will you explicitly explain the strategy?</li> <li>• How will you link the CPQ to making connections?</li> </ul>		
<b>DURING READING</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you model or reinforce the importance of accessing background knowledge during reading?</li> <li>• How will you explicitly model the strategy making connections?</li> <li>• How will you engage students in thinking about/comprehending the story?</li> <li>• How will you guide students to practice and apply the strategy during the reading?</li> <li>• How will you assess comprehension during reading?</li> </ul>		

<b>AFTER READING</b>	<b>Pre-Conference Notes</b>	<b>Post-Conference Notes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you ensure that ALL students are accountable for thinking about/answering the CPQ?</li> <li>• After answering the CPQ, how will you deepen and extend comprehension?</li> <li>• How will you assess students' understanding of the cognitive strategy?</li> <li>• How will you decide next steps in strategy instruction? How will students move toward independent use of the strategy?</li> <li>• How will you know if your lesson was successful for ALL students?</li> </ul>		

### Observation Tool for *Making Connections* (C)

Skill/Strategy	Observed Y/N	Comments
Text for teaching Making Connections is thoughtfully selected		
Teacher has a solid understanding of students' existing background knowledge		
Effective methods for activating or building background knowledge are planned in advance		
Teacher explicitly explains the strategy of Making Connections		
Teacher models connections that deepen understanding of the text		
Students are engaged and have opportunities to share their thinking using Think-Turn-Talk		
Teacher guides students to practice using the strategy during reading		
Comprehension is extended or deepened through further questioning or discussion		



# Troubleshooting

## Making Connections

Observation	Possible Solutions (for coach and teacher to consider)
Teacher lacks understanding of students' existing background knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and teacher review the importance of knowing students well</li> <li>• Teacher discusses students' background knowledge with previous year's teachers</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) models the anchor lesson to help uncover students' background knowledge</li> <li>• Teacher utilizes student-friendly interview tools to get to know students better</li> <li>• Coach and teacher refer to assessment and anecdotal data to clarify students' existing background knowledge</li> </ul>
Teacher does not activate or build student background knowledge that is crucial to the understanding of the selected text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) asks teacher to reflect upon the process of determining crucial information in a selected text</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) meets with teacher to identify crucial concepts/topics in an upcoming lesson</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) meets with teacher to plan how to build or activate crucial background knowledge for a selected text</li> </ul>
Teacher does not provide opportunities to build essential background knowledge necessary for comprehending the selected text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) meets with teacher to plan multiple exposures to a concept/topic over several days, no more than two days apart</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) meets with teacher to plan a variety of virtual experiences which will help build background knowledge</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) models a lesson using the internet or other source for building background knowledge of a concept/topic</li> <li>• Coach and teacher review the examples for building background knowledge provided in the training</li> </ul>

<p>Teacher spends 15-20 minutes prior to reading activating background knowledge, taking away much of the problem solving for the students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) uses a timer to guide teacher to understand where the majority of lesson time was spent</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) models a brief introduction to a lesson showing how activating appropriate background knowledge may take only a few minutes</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) plans an effective introduction to a lesson with the teacher</li> </ul>
<p>Before-reading activities are not supporting student comprehension during or after reading.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) plans with teacher an effective introduction to a lesson</li> <li>• Teacher refers to the teacher resources to select appropriate activities for activating background knowledge necessary for comprehension</li> <li>• Coach (or other mentor) models a lesson where s/he activates appropriate background knowledge before reading</li> </ul>
<p>Students are unclear about definitions/uses of comprehension strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and coach review the <b>Cognitive Strategy Routine Card</b> and plan to explicitly introduce (or re-introduce) the comprehension strategy</li> <li>• Teacher copies comprehension strategy posters and hangs them in classroom</li> <li>• Teacher uses anchor charts and hand signals as concrete reminders to students</li> </ul>
<p>CPQ does not link to the focus strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and teacher review handout “What’s Important to Remember When Setting a CPQ?” found in <b>Reading With Purpose</b> training materials.</li> <li>• Teacher observes another teacher who uses strong CPQs and is able to link the CPQ to the strategy</li> <li>• Coach and teacher plan CPQs together</li> </ul>
<p>Students are not engaged during strategy lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach models reading with voice inflections, facial expression, body movements, and energy</li> <li>• Teacher observes another teacher who reads aloud in an engaging style</li> <li>• Teacher or team select high-quality literature that students can relate to</li> <li>• Teacher uses Think-Turn-Talk at key points throughout the reading</li> </ul>

<p>Students do not respond to teacher’s questions/prompts to use the strategy <b>or</b> a limited number of students respond <b>or</b> teacher calls on the same students repeatedly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher institutes Think-Turn-Talk procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher and coach plan questions for Think-Turn-Talk and incorporate into lesson plans</li> <li>- Teach procedure to students</li> <li>- Coach provides support as needed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>See <b><i>Think-Turn-Talk</i></b> training for more information</p>
<p>Teacher asks questions of students throughout the story with little modeling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach models think-alouds</li> <li>• Teacher observes another teacher who uses strong think-alouds</li> <li>• Coach and teacher plan think-alouds together</li> <li>• Teacher practices think-alouds with coach or partner teacher providing feedback</li> </ul>
<p>Students make surface-level connections <b>or</b> distracting connections <b>or</b> connections to irrelevant information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher returns to Step 5 of the Cognitive Strategy Routine – modeling through think-alouds. Teacher models high-quality connections.</li> <li>• Teacher uses the stem: “... that helps me understand because ...”</li> <li>• After modeling several times, when students take responsibility for strategy use, teacher uses question prompts such as: “How does that help you understand?”</li> </ul>
<p>Other:</p>	