Standards:
Indiana State Standard- EL.3.2.2 2006 Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Nonfiction and Informational Text:
Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information from the text.

Common Core Standard- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources.

Lesson objectives:
- Students should be able to make different connections while reading a passage or story: text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.
- Students will be able to use information from the text to support their connections and create meaning of the story.

Materials:
- Writer’s Notebook
- Small sticky notes
- Large sticky note for group discussion
- Colored pencils for making connections diagram and making connections table

Context for learning (pre-requisites):
This lesson will be taught in a whole-class setting by the classroom teachers during a reading/writing period. The strategy of making connections will benefit all students, especially those who are in Tier 2 of RtI for reading and writing and who struggle with the curriculum in general. Some students are at risk for being identified with a disability and having IEPs written. All of our students are able to ask questions, but are not able to make connections with the text to better understand it.

Pre-instructional set/pre-lesson:
- We will begin by having students brainstorm what they know about the word “connections.” Student responses: hooking things together, being attached, etc. After hearing their responses, we will define what it means to make connections in reading:
text-to-text (TT), text-to-self (TS) and text-to-world (TW). We will go into further detail during the actual lesson phase and provide examples using physical text.

- On a big Post-It note, we will draw a diagram explaining how these connections work together (see attached worksheet). Students will draw this diagram in their Writer’s Notebooks. We will use different colored sticky notes for each type of connection for students to organize while reading. On another page in their Notebooks, students will draw a “Making Connections Table” that will be used later to assess their understanding of making connections (see attached).
  - We are following the first UDL principle of ‘Providing Multiple Means of Representation’ by using sticky notes, a diagram for the Writer’s Notebook, and the “Making Connections Table.” Depending on the student’s ability level, he or she may use one or more of these tools to help with comprehension while reading.

Lesson:

- We will continue the lesson by reading aloud “Slower than the Rest” by Cynthia Rylant. The students will sit in a circle while one of the teachers reads the story. We chose this story because it allows us to make all three types of connections while reading. During the read-aloud, we will pause on certain pages to model what the students should be doing while reading.
  - “This page reminds me of another book I read about, “The Tortoise and the Hare.” The character in that story also had the problem with being slow, but ended up winning the race. What type of connection did I make? **Student response:** Text-to-text connection! Can someone remind me what that means?”**
  - **Student response:** It means you relate something from this book to another book you have read. After the students give their responses, we will place a yellow sticky note on that section. “Anytime you make a text-to-text connection when you read, place a yellow sticky note on the page. This way, you can keep track of your connections without stopping to write them down!”
  - We will continue to do this with text-to-world and text-to-self connections in order to introduce and model all the ways of making connections. Text-to-world connections will use orange sticky notes and text-to-self connections will use green.

- Before, during, and after the reading, we will ask students to try to make connections of their own with this particular story.
  - “Have any of you ever felt a little different like Leo did? Have you seen things like forest fires anywhere around the world? etc.” By giving students the opportunity to discuss their experiences and connections, they will feel more comfortable about making connections that are relevant and applicable to the reading.
○ The second UDL principle, ‘Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression,’ applies here. Students who like to verbalize their thinking or who process information better by saying it aloud have the opportunity to do so during the read-aloud.

● At the end of the reading, we will see how many TS, TW, TT connections the group came up with and discuss how this helped them to comprehend the material better. We will transfer some of these connections onto the diagram we created on the big Post-It chart. This will model what the students will do in their Writer’s Notebook.

● After discussing, we will let students practice making connections on their own with the story Little Red Riding Hood. Students will read the story independently and use their sticky notes as we have modeled for them during the lesson. When they are finished reading we will discuss the connections they made as a group.

Assessment:

● The students will have time to read their own silent reading books. We will provide them with sticky notes to mark their connections as they read. Once they finish reading a chapter, they will fill out the “Making Connections Table” in their writer’s notebook. They will turn in their notebooks so we can see the different types of connections they made. Since they transferred those connections in their notebooks, they will still have the sticky notes in their books to refer back to.

○ The third UDL principle, ‘Provide Multiple Means of Engagement,’ is satisfied here. Students have the option of choosing their silent reading books, giving them choice and autonomy. We can set individual goals with each student, or with students who need improvement with goal-setting. Depending on the student’s reading level, we can begin by having him/her make one or two connections for each category (TT, TW, TS). As they begin feeling comfortable making these connections, we can move their target to 5 or 6 connections.

● We will have reading conferences with our students at a later date in order to talk about their connections and see how making these connections allowed them to comprehend the material better.

Closure:

● After completing the lesson, we will bring the whole class back together by using our class transition method. One of the teachers rings a bell that signals to the students that the lesson is over. The students stop what they are doing, place their work in their desks/cubbies, and prepare for the next lesson.
References


