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Introducing Strategy # 1
Connect to Text

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You Use This Strategy ...


As Curtis looks at the newspaper, he sees an article on his old elementary school and its basketball team.

Automatically, Curtis returns in his mind to third grade when he had to guard "The Giant"—a boy who towered over him at 5' 5".

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It's important as we teach each strategy that we relate it to real life. These strategies exist for survival—not just in the academic world. Making "learning" personal increases intrinsic motivation and hooks attention for 10-90 minutes.

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You Make Connections All of the Time..

- Curtis really **CAN'T** stop himself. The brain is wired to connect new information with the old knowledge that is in the brain.
- It's a way of making sense of the environment.

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Information turns into chemicals which are shot down brain branches and then drip onto other cells. The electrical impulse is equal to about a 25 volt light bulb. If there is a match, a common experience, the chemical is able to be absorbed into the brain branches where it can accept the information.

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Brain Research Tells Us That...

- Connecting the text to your own experience allows you to understand more.
- When you ask yourself, "What does this remind me of?" you have "opened" a mental file where new information can go.

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Getting any brain “ready” to receive new information is done by activating the knowledge he/she already has. Learning takes place when the brain sorts out patterns using past experiences to make sense out of input the brain receives.

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Before You Start to Read...

- You can activate your schema or background knowledge.
- What do I already know about this subject?

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“Schema is all the stuff that's already inside your head, like places you've been, things you've done, books you've read—all the experience you've had that make up who you are and what you know and believe to be true.” Debbie Miller

Students can activate prior knowledge by doing a quick write and telling everything they know about the subject or making a web with the various associations.

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Did you know that...?

“To every text, a reader brings his/her personality, present mood, and memories, making each person's experience of text almost as unique as a fingerprint.”

Laura Robb

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The meaning that a reader gets from the text will be different because of his/her unique experiences. Often, in interpretations of text there are not right or wrong answers—just ones that can be supported by the text.

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Proficient learners. . .

- Connect rapidly with the text without thinking about it.
- Stick new information in their short and long term memory by hooking old information with the new.

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“ Students should spontaneously and purposefully recall their relevant, prior knowledge. . They use their schema to make sense of new information they read and learn and to store new information with related information in memory.”
Ellin Keene

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With this strategy, you can...

- Relate to characters.
- Visualize. Have a clearer picture in your head
- Avoid boredom.
- Pay attention
- Listen to others. What are their stories?
- Read actively.

Cris Tovani

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Students can learn about themselves and what they might do by vicariously experiencing a character’s dilemma. When teaching a strategy, it is important to stress what the students will gain.

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**Three Ways to
“Hook Up”
with the Text...**

1. Text to Self
2. Text to Text
3. Text to World

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At some point, students may wish to code their responses when reading: TS, text to self, TT, text to text or TW text to world. As they read, they may wish to use “sticky” notes and points where they make associations.

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A presentation slide with a black background. At the top, the text "When Do I Use Strategy #1?" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below this, there are three bullet points, each starting with a white checkmark and followed by the text "Before Reading", "During Reading", and "After Reading" respectively. To the left of the text is a small, white, stylized icon of an open book with a pencil resting on it. At the bottom left, the date "10/28/2005" is written in small white text. At the bottom center, "Elkhart Community Schools" is written in small white text. At the bottom right, the number "10" is written in small white text.

When Do I Use Strategy #1?

- ✓ *Before Reading*
- ✓ *During Reading*
- ✓ *After Reading*

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Reading is a dynamic process and involves continuous thinking. Stressing that strategies can be before, during and after makes the comprehension more complete.

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A presentation slide with a black background. At the top, the text "Stop Isolating Information!" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below this, there is a paragraph of text in white: "Realize that your background knowledge is a storehouse of information with memories, experiences and facts. It sees a larger picture." To the left of the text is a small, white, stylized icon of a globe with a book and a pencil. At the bottom left, the date "10/28/2005" is written in small white text. At the bottom center, "Elkhart Community Schools" is written in small white text. At the bottom right, the number "11" is written in small white text.

Stop Isolating Information!

Realize that your background knowledge is a storehouse of information with memories, experiences and facts. It sees a larger picture.

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Students are used to compartmentalized learning. What they learn in science can be connected with the social studies class.

Slide 12

A presentation slide with a black background. At the top, the text "Open Your Brain" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below this, there are two bullet points, each starting with a white square and followed by text in white: "You have something in common with the text!" and "Take all of your life experiences— even those outside of the classroom— and bring it into the text in front of you." To the left of the text is a small, white, stylized icon of an open book with a pencil resting on it. At the bottom left, the date "10/28/2005" is written in small white text. At the bottom center, "Elkhart Community Schools" is written in small white text. At the bottom right, the number "12" is written in small white text.

Open Your Brain

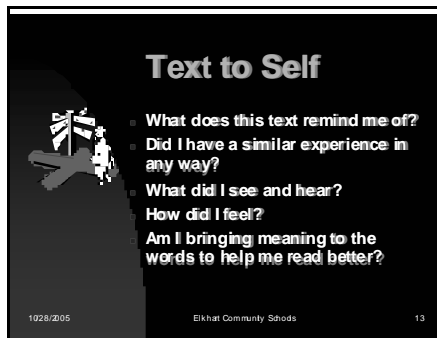
- You have something in common with the text!
- Take all of your life experiences— even those outside of the classroom— and bring it into the text in front of you.

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Even if students have not “experienced” the event—such as a story about a soldier in war, they have read books, watched the news or heard stories from others.

However, in asking students what they already know, the teacher may need to supply background knowledge or even experience with a subject prior to reading the text. Sometimes, the teacher will encounter misconceptions regarding the topic. It is important for the teacher to assess this aspect as well.

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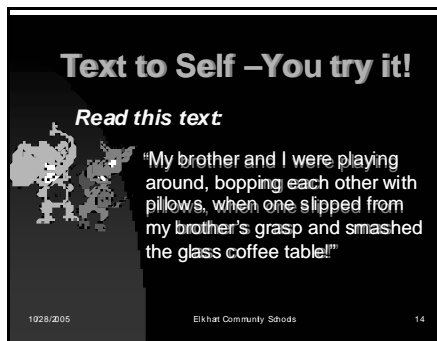
Text to Self

- What does this text remind me of?
- Did I have a similar experience in any way?
- What did I see and hear?
How did I feel?
- Am I bringing meaning to the words to help me read better?

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Ask, “How does the connection make you understand the story better?”

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Text to Self –You try it!

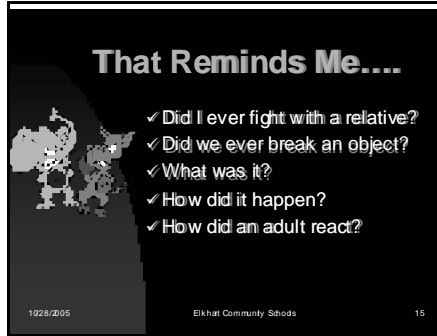
Read this text

“My brother and I were playing around, bopping each other with pillows, when one slipped from my brother’s grasp and smashed the glass coffee table!”

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As a teacher, you can “think-aloud” to show your mental processes as a reader. What words grab your attention? What personal experience could you share?

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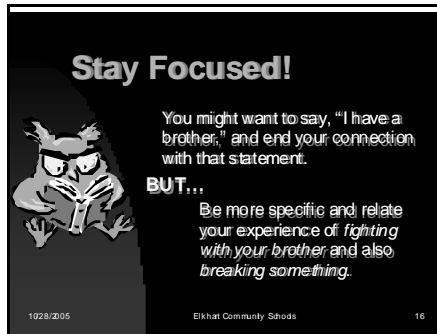
That Reminds Me....

- ✓ Did I ever fight with a relative?
- ✓ Did we ever break an object?
- ✓ What was it?
- ✓ How did it happen?
- ✓ How did an adult react?

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Fleshing out a prior experience prepares the reader to see, hear, taste, touch and feel a similar one in the text.

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Stay Focused!

You might want to say, "I have a brother," and end your connection with that statement.

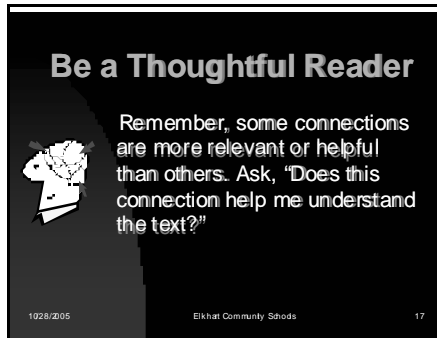
BUT...

Be more specific and relate your experience of *fighting with your brother* and also, *breaking something*.

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Some connections are more helpful than others to understanding text.

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Be a Thoughtful Reader

Remember, some connections are more relevant or helpful than others. Ask, "Does this connection help me understand the text?"

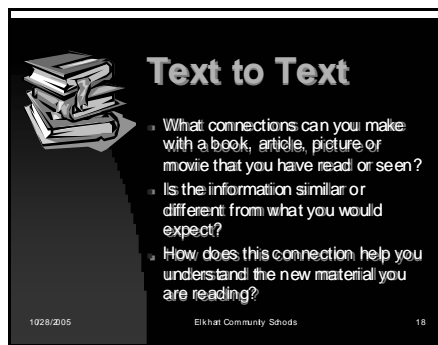
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As a teacher, you might make a list of the responses, and then return to these responses after reading the text. Have students categorize which responses were most helpful. It is important to honor, however, each experience. One's represent a helpful response, two's are less helpful. The question is did that experience help learn more about the story. As students categorize, ask them what they learned.

One way to avoid the at times chaotic response of experiences is to select pertinent events from

the text prior to the reading and have students walk around and sign each other's papers if they have had a particular experience. The student signing the paper will be expected to write some brief details of that experience. For instance, if the experience is changing schools in the middle of the year, Joe will write what grade and the schools involved a small box. This sheet is available in the teacher's resource book that is in all schools.

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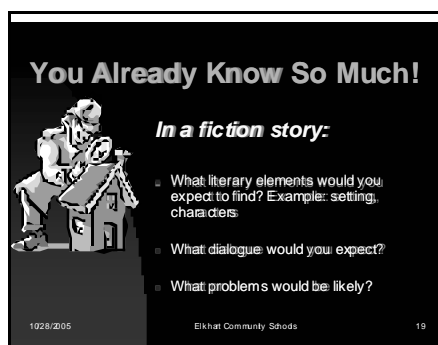
Text to Text

- What connections can you make with a book, article, picture or movie that you have read or seen?
- Is the information similar or different from what you would expect?
- How does this connection help you understand the new material you are reading?

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At times, other books and movies will “flesh out” the events as described in the unfamiliar text. Students are already expecting certain characters, setting and plots.

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You Already Know So Much!

In a fiction story:

- What literary elements would you expect to find? Example: setting, characters.
- What dialogue would you expect?
- What problems would be likely?

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Students often are exposed to fiction quite quickly in their school life. After a few years of school, their schema is developed enough that they can overcome many hurdles as they read fiction text.

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You Already Know So Much!

In a nonfiction story:

- What text forms would it have? Example: table of contents, glossary, bold-faced words, graphs, tables, chapter summary
- What terms would I expect to find?
- How could the information be organized? Time-order, cause-effect




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The new Indiana Academic Standards stresses comprehension of non-fiction or informational text. In the past, students have had less exposure to its structure and are less prepared to deal with more complex text. This is changing as K-12 is emphasizing how to read nonfiction text.

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Connect with this...



- What story does this lion remind you of?
- Did you think of the movie, *The Lion King*?
- Did you think of Kipling's *The Jungle Boy*?
- Is that lion similar or different to the main character of your book?

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Share your response with someone near you. Often, being able to respond to a partner increases further motivation to read.


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Text to Text

Think of books you've read as you read the following text...

The wizard looked up at the stars. Surely, the lunar eclipse was a bad omen!

He must tell the king quickly, before the marriage ceremony began.




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What words catch your attention? Wizard... lunar eclipse... bad omen?

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Text to Text- You try it!

- Is this fiction or nonfiction?
- What type of story (genre) is this likely to be?
- What events are likely to happen?
- What other texts does this remind you of?
- Have you read a book about a wizard and astronomy?



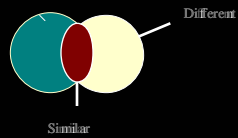
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Once a student has thought of a story, predictions can be made.

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Comparisons Are Natural

- Use Venn diagrams to see how the stories are similar and different from what you know.



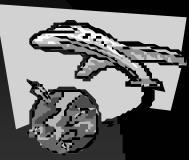
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Venn diagrams are often used in ISTEP+. This is a natural place to visually show similarities and differences.

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Text to World

- What specific facts do you know about this subject?
- Make a web.
- Begin a KWL+ chart.



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Making a web is a graphic organizer which shows how one thought can remind you of other details. A KWL chart follows.. What do I already know? What do I want to know? What have I learned

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Text to World

You may have read it or heard about it in a class, at home, in a newspaper on television, or on the Internet.

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Sometimes, the teacher will encounter misconceptions regarding the topic. It is important for the teacher to assess this aspect as well.

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Connect with this ...

"Unlike Iraq, which most experts agreed was five to seven years away from developing its own nuclear weapons, there is broad agreement that North Korea is only months away."

Klurfield-Newsday

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Tell a partner what connections are made for you.

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What Do I Know?

- ✓ President Bush was concerned about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.
- ✓ North Korea has been a security threat when it announced its intentions to do nuclear testing.
- ✓ United States dropped nuclear bombs in Japan in World War II.

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This component of "What do I know" can be recorded on a KWL+ chart. Students can return to that chart and discover if any of their world beliefs are inaccurate.

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Dig Deeper...

- ✓ The dictator Kim Jong Il threatened to turn old fuel rods into weapons-grade plutonium.
- ✓ The world realizes that the risk of more nuclear weapons affects everyone.
- ✓ If North Korea has nuclear devices, it could sell the weapons to terrorists.

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Too often, teachers accept the first answer given with a short wait time. Waiting at least 5 seconds for a response is a start. Also, continue to ask students regarding their responses, “What makes you say that?... How do you know?.. What else does it make you think about?”

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As You Read...

Don't be shy:
Connect with the text.
Copy quotes and make notes.
“This reminds me when....”

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Numerous graphic organizers are available in the Teacher's Resource Book to support students making connections.

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Connect to Text Strategy #1

- Text to Self
- Text to Text
- Text to World

Be a strategic reader!!!

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Review the difference between the different connections. Review again how the strategy will help students. Questions for informal assessment: “Are children making real connections to the story? Do they understand how these connections help them? What kind of language do they use when they talk to each other in small groups?” Debbie Miller