

Encouraging Student's Thinking about Text

Some questions to consider for conferences

General Think Aloud

I want to ask you some questions about what you think about while you read. When you were reading this book, tell me exactly what you were thinking about. You can tell me anything that the book makes you think about, any problems you had while I read it, and what you think it is about.

Using Schema

When you listened to the text, did it remind you of anything you know about or believe? What? Why did it remind you of? (If student's response is no, ask, did it remind you of any experiences or things that have happened before?)

Are there things you know about your life, yourself as a reader, this author, or this type of text that help you to understand this book? How does that help?

Choose one of the questions below to ask the student:

- We have just talked about what this book reminds you of. (Restate student's response.)
What do you understand now that you did not understand before?
- How does schema or background knowledge help a reader understand a text while reading?
- How did thinking about your own schema or background knowledge help you understand this text?

Inferring

For narrative text: Can you predict what is about to happen? Why did you make that prediction? Can you find something in the book that helped you to make that prediction? Or, what do you already know that helped you to make that prediction?

For expository text: In addition to what you have read so far, what do you think the author wants you to know or learn at this point in the text?

Select an event or fact from the text that calls for a conclusion, opinion, or interpretation. Refer to the event or fact when asking the following questions.

What did the author mean by _____? What details in the text help you to know that? What do you already know that helped you to decide that?

Choose one of the questions below to ask the students:

- We have just talked about inferring. (Restate one of the child's conclusions, opinions, interpretations, or predictions and identify it as an inference.) What do you understand about this text now that you didn't understand before?
- Why do readers understand better when they infer? Why should readers infer? How does inferring help a reader understand a text better?

Asking Questions

What did you wonder about while you read this text?

What questions do you have now about what you read?

Choose one of the questions below to ask the student:

- We have just talked about the questions you asked. (Restate student's response.) Do questions help you understand more of what you're reading?
- What do you do when you are reading and a question comes into your mind? Do questions help you understand some kinds of text better than others? Tell me more about that.

Determining Importance in Text Oral Assessment

Are there some parts of this text that are more important than the others? Which ones? Why do you think they are the most important?

What do you think the author thinks is the most important part so far in the text? What signals or clues did the author give that made you believe _____ (restate child's response) was important?

Choose one of the following:

- We have just talked about parts of the text (restate child's response) that you feel are important. How does thinking about the more important parts help you to understand the text better?
- Do you think or do anything while you are reading that helps you remember the important parts?
- Do you ever have trouble remembering what is important after you read? How do you solve that problem?

Monitoring Comprehension Oral Assessment

What problems did you have while you were reading this text? Did you have more difficulty reading the words or understanding the ideas? When you are reading at other times, what kinds of problems do you usually have?

What did you do to solve the problem? How do you usually solve the problems you have when you read?

How do you know that you understand a text? What would you tell another student that a reader should try to understand each time he or she reads?

Choose one of the questions below to ask the student:

- We have just talked about the problems you have while reading and the ways in which you solve them. What is important to know when you have a problem while you are reading and (restate student's response)?
- What are the different choices you can make to try to solve that problem?
- What would you tell another reader who might not realize when a text doesn't make sense?

Using Sensory and Emotional Images

When you read this text, did you create pictures or images in your mind? Tell me everything you can about the image in your mind while you were reading. What details in your images are not in the words or pictures in the book?

Can you remember creating pictures in your mind to help you understand the ideas when you read another book? Tell me everything you can about those pictures or images.

Choose one of the questions below to ask the students:

- We have just talked about the pictures you created in your mind while you read. Do those pictures help you to understand the text better?
- How do images help you understand more about what you read?
- What would you tell another reader about how to create images to better understand a text?

Synthesizing

If you were to tell another person about the text you just read and you could only use a few sentences, what would you say?

When you are listening to another person read, do you ever think of books, movies, or people you know? Does this help you understand the book you are reading?

When you were reading, did you change your mind about what the text is about? Can you show or tell me where you changed your mind and why?

Think about what you have just said about the story. What do you understand now that you didn't understand before?

Story Structure/Structural Patterns Oral Assessment

In this text, did you find text elements or structures? What were they?

How were text elements or structures in this text used?

How did those text elements or structures help you better understand the text?

How can text elements or structures help you better understand any text you read?

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