

Comprehension Strategy - Drawing Inferences

Debbie Miller states in her book, *Reading with Meaning*, "I remember when I wasn't even sure what inferring was, let alone how to go about teaching it."

Hopefully, after reading this section and learning about activities we can do with our students we won't be stuck anymore.

What is Inference? - *Guided Reading the Four Blocks Way*, page 46 states, "When you read, you use all your senses. You see things in your "mind's eye" and hear the sounds you connect to that about which you are reading. When you really get into what you are reading, you can sometimes almost taste, smell, and feel the physical sensations you would actually have if you were in that situation. You get "lost" in the book and may sometimes be startled if someone interrupts your reading. ... As you read, you imagine the situation about which you are reading, and you infer things the author has not told you in the text. You infer why things happen, why characters behave the way they do, and how characters are feeling. You enter the world created by the author, and you create images and inferences based on what the author tells you and your own knowledge and beliefs about that world."

The imaging and inferring thinking process is the perfect complement to the summarizing and concluding thinking process. In order to summarize and conclude, you usually read part-to-whole -- synthesizing word meanings into sentence meanings, sentence meanings into paragraph meanings, and so forth. In order to image and infer, however, you do the opposite - you usually read whole-to-part. You use your background knowledge and your understanding of the sections and paragraphs to image and infer events or features not stated in sentences. You use your background knowledge and understanding of the sentences to image and infer details not given in those sentences."

Strategies That Work, Chapter 8 Visualizing and Inferring: Strategies That Enhance Understanding

On page 105 of *Strategies That Work*, inferring is defined, "Inferring is the bedrock of comprehension, not only in reading. We infer in many realms. Our life clicks along more smoothly if we can read the world as well as text. If our boss looks grumpy in the morning, it might not be the best day to ask for a raise. ... Inferring is about reading faces, reading body language, reading expressions, and reading tone as well as reading text."

Mosaic of Thought adds this information regarding defining inference on page 23, "Drawing inferences from text. Proficient readers use their prior knowledge (schema) and textual information to draw conclusions, make critical judgments, and form unique interpretations from text. Inferences may occur in the form of conclusions, predictions, or new ideas."

Prediction or Inference

Stephanie Harvey writes, "To help our students understand the difference, we encourage them to consider the outcome of an event or action each time they make a prediction and notice whether there has been a resolution. After reading notice if a prediction was contradicted (-) or confirmed (+). He left those that were unresolved coded with only I for inference (*Strategies That Work*, pages 108-109)."