

FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month

Created by Dr. Vicky Zygouris-Coe & Catherine Glass (2004)



Rationale:

"Comprehension is an active cycle of mental activity (Duffy, 2003)." The cycle begins when readers anticipate meaning by predicting what they will find in the text. As readers move into the text, they monitor their own comprehension, they ask questions, and when necessary readers abandon earlier predictions and make new ones. Good readers do not sit back and passively wait for meaning to come to them. As they read they grapple with and make meaning from text (Duffy, 2003). This mental activity happens in a flash and comes naturally to good readers. Struggling readers however, often think that meaning will come to them; they do not understand the comprehension cycle and how to construct meaning through active reading. The comprehension cycle is hard to teach for many reasons and therefore, students simply cannot mimic the teacher. First, the comprehension cycle is invisible, happening in the head of the reader. It is also personal, relying on an individual's prior knowledge. Predictions that are made must often be abandoned based on the text. And finally, it takes energy; students cannot coast along passively (Duffy, 2003).

Predicting involves previewing the text to anticipate what will happen next. The thinking processes involved in predicting assist students in making meaning (Block, Rodgers, & Johnson, 2004). By making predictions, readers are using the following processes: prior knowledge, thinking on a literal and inferential level, adding to their knowledge base, linking efferent and affective thinking processes, making connections, and filling the gaps in the author's writing (Block et. al., 2004). Making predictions while reading keeps the mind **actively focused** on the author's meaning and provides the reader with **motivation** and a **purpose** for reading.

Readers must make logical predictions based on information from the text and their prior knowledge. Knowledge of fictional text structures such as characters, setting, problem, resolution, theme or lesson assist students in making predictions. Nonfiction reader aids such as text headings, illustrations, and features such as maps, captions, and tables also help students make logical predictions about what they think they will learn from the reading. Giving students the opportunity to preview what they will be reading by discussing text features and using graphic organizers provides students with visual clues for predicting (Oczkus, 2003).

How to Use the Strategy:

Students, especially those struggling readers, will need guided practice and many opportunities to use the prediction wheel.

Before reading, good readers make predictions about what they are going to read. Students should be encouraged to look at the front cover of trade books and picture books. Subheadings, illustrations and captions, and graphics and charts in informational text. Students should make logical predictions based on what they have seen. Asking students, "Based on the information you have seen, what do you think you will learn?" Ask students for their rationale. "What in the text