

THINKING STRATEGIES KNOWN TO BE UTILIZED BY PROFICIENT LEARNERS

Determining What is Important in Text

Readers

- * Readers identify key ideas or themes as they read.
- * Readers distinguish important from unimportant information in relation to key ideas or themes in text. They can distinguish important information at the word, sentence and text level.
- * Readers utilize text structure and text features (such as bold or italicized print, figures and photographs) to help them distinguish important from unimportant information.
- * Readers use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of text to prioritize in long term memory and synthesize text for others.

Writers

- * Writers observe their world and record what they believe is significant.
- * Writers make decisions about the most important ideas to include in the pieces they write. They make decisions about the best genre and structure to communicate their ideas.
- * Writers reveal their biases by emphasizing some elements over others.
- * Writers provide only essential detail to reveal the meaning and produce the effect desired.
- * Writers delete information irrelevant to their larger purpose.

Drawing Inferences

Readers

- * Readers use their schema and textual information to draw conclusions and form unique interpretations from text.
- * Readers make predictions about text, confirm their predictions and test their developing meaning as they read on.
- * Readers know when and how to use text in combination with their own background knowledge to seek answers to questions.
- * Readers create interpretations to enrich and deepen their experience in a text.

Writers

- * Writers make decisions about content inclusions/exclusions and genre/text structure that permit or encourage inference on the part of the reader.
- * Writers carefully consider their audience in making decisions about what to describe explicitly and what to leave to the reader's interpretation
- * Writers, particularly fiction and poetry writers, are aware of far more detail than they reveal in the texts they compose. This encourages inferences such as drawing conclusions, making critical judgments, predictions, and connections to other texts and experiences possible for their readers.

Using Prior Knowledge -- Schema

Readers

- * Readers spontaneously activate relevant, prior knowledge before, during and after reading text.
- * Readers assimilate information from text into their schemata and make changes in that schemata to accommodate the new information.
- * Readers use schema to relate text to their world knowledge, text knowledge, and personal experience.
- * Readers use their schema to enhance their understanding of text and to store text information in long term memory.
- * Readers use their schema for authors and their style to better understand text.
- * Readers recognize when they have inadequate background information and know how to create it --- to build schema --- to get the information they need.

Writers

- * Writers frequently choose their own topics and write about subjects they care about.
- * A writer's content comes from and builds on his/her experiences.
- * Writers think about and use what they know about genre, text structure, and conventions as they write.
- * Writers seek to better recognize and capitalize on their own voice for specific effects in their compositions.
- * Writers know when their schema for a topic or text format is inadequate and they create the necessary background knowledge.
- * Writers use knowledge of their audience to make decisions about content inclusions/exclusions.

Asking Questions

Readers

- * Readers spontaneously generate questions before, during and after reading.
- * Readers ask questions for different purposes including clarification of meaning, making predictions, determining an author's style, content, or format, and to locate a specific answer in text or consider rhetorical questions inspired by the text.
- * Readers use questions to focus their attention on important components of the text.
- * Readers are aware that other readers' questions may inspire new questions for them.

Writers

- * Writers compose in a way that causes the reader to form question as they read.
- * Writers monitor their progress by asking questions about their choices as they write.
- * Writers ask questions of other writers in order to confirm their choices and make revisions.
- * Writer's questions lead to revision in their own pieces and in the pieces to which they respond for other writers.

Monitoring Meaning and Comprehension

Readers

- * Readers monitor their comprehension during reading -- they know when the text they are reading or listening to makes sense, when it does not, what does not make sense, and whether the unclear portions are critical to overall understanding of the piece.
- * Readers can identify when text is comprehensible and the degree to which they understand it. They can identify ways in which a text becomes gradually more understandable by reading past an unclear portion and/or by rereading parts or the whole text.
- * Readers are aware of the processes they can use to make meaning clear. They check, evaluate, and make revisions to their evolving interpretation of the text while reading.
- * Readers can identify confusing ideas, themes, and/or surface elements (words, sentence or text structures, graphs, tables, etc.) and can suggest a variety of different means to solve the problems they have.
- * Readers are aware of what they **need** to comprehend in relation to their purpose for reading.
- * Readers must **learn** how to pause, consider the meanings in text, reflect on their understandings, and use different strategies to enhance their understanding. This process is best learned by watching proficient models "think aloud" and gradually taking responsibility for monitoring their own comprehension as they read independently.

Writers

- * Writers monitor during their composition process to ensure that their text makes sense for their intended audience at the word, sentence and text level.
- * Writers read their work aloud to find and hear their voice.
- * Writers share their work so others can help them monitor the clarity and impact of the work.
- * Writers pay attention to their style and purpose. They purposefully write with clarity and honesty. They strive to write boldly, simply, and concisely by keeping those standards alive in their minds during the writing process.
- * Writers pause to consider the impact of their work and make conscious decisions about when to turn a small piece into a larger project, when revisions are complete, or when to abandon a piece.

Fix Up Strategies

Readers

- * Readers use the six major systems of language (grapho-phonetic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, schematic, and pragmatic) to solve reading problems. When not comprehending, they ask themselves questions such as: does this make sense, does the word I'm pronouncing sound like language, do the letters in the word match the sounds I'm pronouncing, have I seen this word before, is there another reader who can help me make sense of this, what do I already know from my experience and the context of this text that can help me solve this problem?
- * Readers have and select a wide range of problem solving strategies and can make appropriate choices in a given reading situation (i.e., skip ahead or re-read, use the context and syntax, or sound it out, speak to another reader, consider relevant prior knowledge, read the passage aloud, etc.).

Writers

- * Writers revise (add, delete, and reorganize) and edit (apply correct conventions), continually seeking clarity and impact for the reader. They experiment with and make changes in overall meaning, content, wording, text organization, punctuation, and spelling.
- * Writers capitalize on their knowledge of writers' tools (i.e. character, setting, conflict, theme, plot structure, leads, style, etc.) to enhance their meaning.

Synthesizing Information

Readers

- * Readers maintain a cognitive synthesis as they read. They monitor the overall meaning, important concepts, and themes in the text as they read and are aware of ways text elements "fit together" to create that overall meaning and theme. They use their knowledge of these elements to make decisions about the overall meaning of a passage, chapter, or book.
- * Readers retell or synthesize what they have read. They attend to the most important information and to the clarity or the synthesis itself. Readers synthesize in order to better understand what they have read.
- * Readers capitalize on opportunities to share, recommend and criticize books they have read.
- * Readers may respond to text in a variety of ways; independently or in groups of other readers. These include written, oral, dramatic, and artistic responses and interpretations of text.
- * A proficient reader's synthesis is likely to extend the literal meaning of a text to the inferential level.

Writers

- * Writers make global and focal plans for their writing before and during the drafting process. They use their knowledge of text elements such as character, setting, conflict, sequence of events and resolution to create a structure for their writing.
- * Writers study other writers and draw conclusions about what makes good writing. They work to replicate the style of authors they find compelling.
- * Writers reveal themes in a way that suggests their importance to readers. Readers can create a cogent synthesis from well written material.

Using Sensory and Emotional Images

Readers

- * Readers create sensory images during and after reading. These images may include visual, auditory and other sensory as well as emotional connections to the text and are rooted in prior knowledge.
- * Readers use images to draw conclusions and to create unique interpretations of the text. Images from reading frequently become part of the reader's writing. Images from a reader's personal experience frequently become part of their comprehension.
- * Readers use their images to clarify and enhance comprehension.
- * Readers use images to immerse themselves in rich detail as they read. The detail gives depth and dimension to the reading, engaging the reader more deeply, making the text more memorable.

- * Readers adapt their images in response to the shared images of other readers.
- * Readers adapt their images as they continue to read. Images are revised to incorporate new information revealed through the text and new interpretations as they are developed by the reader.

Writers

- * Writers consciously attempt to create strong images in their compositions using strategically placed detail.
- * Writers create impact through the use of strong nouns and verbs whenever possible.
- * Writers use images to explore their own ideas. They consciously study their mental images for direction in their pieces.
- * Writers learn from the images created in their minds as they read. They study other authors' use of images as a way to improve their own.