

I just wanted to let you know that our first session was a great success. We set up a 3 hour meeting, but it took us about 2.5 hours. We had teachers from K-5 including Reading Recovery and Sped...plus one principal...unfortunately, it wasn't our building principal although 1/2 of the teachers there were from our building. We had teachers from 3 districts represented:)


It really hit home to the participants that these are strategies that "good" readers must use or must learn to use in order to comprehend. We first discussed the importance of explicitly teaching the strategies. Then, I showed them the schema activity we did just like Debbie Miller did in her book. I told them about how I explained to my kids that creating and changing schema is okay and always happening. I used the example of how they first have a schema file for dogs until they see a cow and call it a dog. Parents tell them it's a cow and they build a new file for cow...and again with horses. I wanted this kids to know it was okay for their schema to be incorrect. That we learn by changing our schema. We only have schema for what we have done, where we have been and what we've read...to quote Debbie Miller. It was fortunate that we were studying plants at the beginning of the year so my schema lesson revolved around the text, Why Leaves Change Colors? Then, I had the adults do it with the attached "black hole" article. It's short and they didn't have a ton of schema for it. I had black hole articles to copy from my Astronomy books, but I didn't want to intimidate those who are not comfortable with Science. Instead, I found the attached article at ask jeeves for kids. It was written for lower elementary. Then, we made schema boards for them to take and use the next day in their classrooms.

Next, we launched into connections discussing why connections help readers. I shared some of my favorite text for teaching the connections strategies (When the Relatives Came by Rylant). However, I only had a few text-to-world ones. I showed them some of the example charts that we had made this year in my classroom. One was a 3-column chart headed with text, connection and how it helped me. Prior to my class lesson, I wrote short summaries of each page into the first columns (as we become more proficient in summarizing, I will leave this to them, but my focus was on connecting and not summarizing). We read the text and we added our connections and how it helped us. It was the beginning of the year, so much of the "how it helped" was still guided back then. One of the powerful connections that a girl made in my classrooms was about the page when the relatives are on their way to the relatives. They are looking back to see the home yet looking toward the relatives and reunion. The little girl said that reminded her of when she leaves her dad's house to go to her mom's. They just separated at the beginning of the year. If you look at the picture, you see this huge hill that they must overcome to get to the other side. I will never read this book the same again. Then, I shared Venn-diagrams for a text to text connection activity with Where the Trail Leads by hmmm...I can't think of who it is...and The Seashore Book by Charlotte Zolotow. After that, we used sticky notes and a 3-column chart and discuss our different types of connections to the text. I used Dick Allington's What Really Matter's to Struggling Readers and If You're Riding a Horse and It Dies, Get Off by Char Forsten and Jim Grant as my text-to-text connections for the Donald Graves piece.

Finally, we read "The Way I Remember It" piece from Micro Fiction book and grossed everybody out. We talked about using a 5 senses chart to capture the senses that were involved; however, we were running out of time. Instead, they drew enough pictures in grids for Tulips Sees America and I shared my experience doing this with my class. I shared my amazement. When I asked my kids to get into partners to discuss what they were thinking to make them draw what they drew, I never would

have thought that they be able to keep track of what each frame/page represented. I was amazed that my students knew exactly what was going on in each frame. With their discussions, we unearthed misconceptions and differing schemas that made us draw so differently. One child drew the first page with the boy way away from America because the author rights that he had not seen much of America. She could not understand later why he hadn't seen much when he only lived in Ohio. It seemed more like a Oprah Book talk:) If nothing else, just the recall that they had was so much more detailed.

I was very pleased with the enthusiasm of the group.
Tammie

	<h1 data-bbox="820 598 1291 682">Black Holes</h1> <p data-bbox="730 777 1372 934">Some scientists believe that there is a black hole in our very own Milky Way.</p>
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Black holes were once massive stars that used up all their [fuel](#). As they died out, they [collapsed](#) inward due to the pull of their own [gravity](#). The gravity of a black hole is so powerful that not even light can escape its pull! Once any [matter](#) falls into a black hole, it disappears from the [visible Universe](#).

It is very hard to see a black hole. Any object that gets too close to a black hole will be pulled inside it. We only know they are there because of the effects they have on other objects that are near them. Any object, whether some dust, or a star, or anything, that gets too close to a black hole will be pulled inside it. As the objects fall toward the black hole, they heat up and get very hot. Scientists can use special instruments to [detect](#) the heat the objects give off. That is how we know the black hole must be there.

