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*Gretchen
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COMPREHENSION KEYSTONE VOLUME 3

I

Connecting

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A Guide for Teaching Comprehension:

*Building Readers for **LIFE** with
Balanced Reading Instruction*

Welcome

Volume 3 of the *Comprehension Keystones* is an expert's guide to teaching connecting. **Reading for LIFE**, the central philosophy driving the *Comprehension Keystones*, provides maximum support for teachers and students during each stage of the learning process.

The four phases of **LIFE**—Learning, Instructing, Facilitating, and Extending—correspond to the precise stages of balanced reading instruction. Each Keystone chapter fully prepares teachers to deliver successful comprehension instruction.

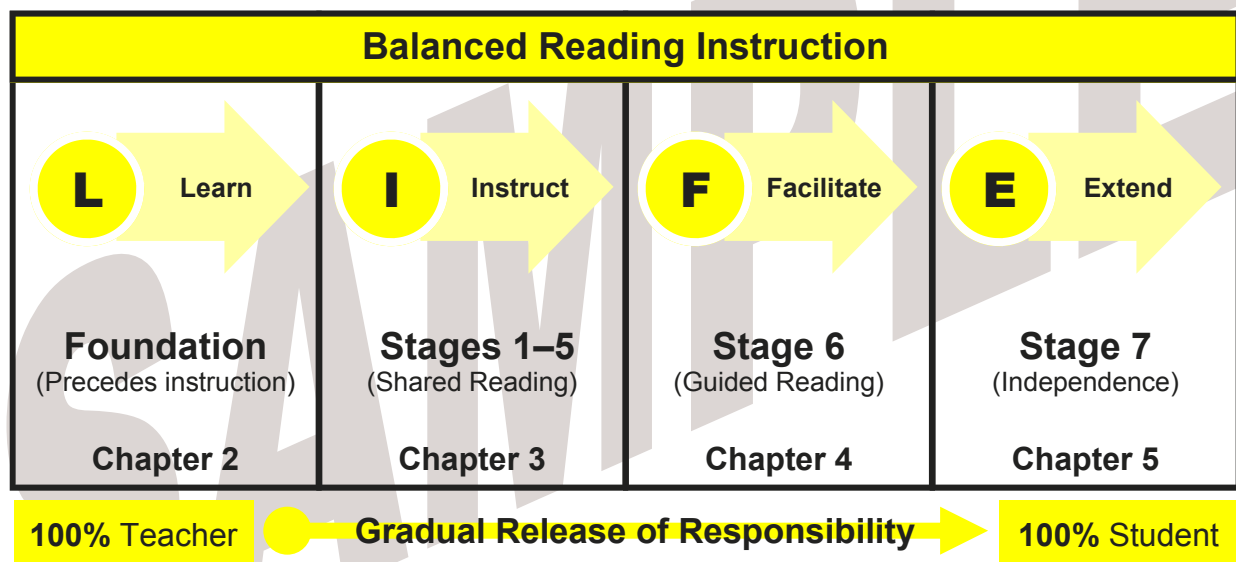




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Primary Level (K–2)

Teach students to connect their personal experiences, what they have learned, and general knowledge to text in order to deepen and enhance understanding.

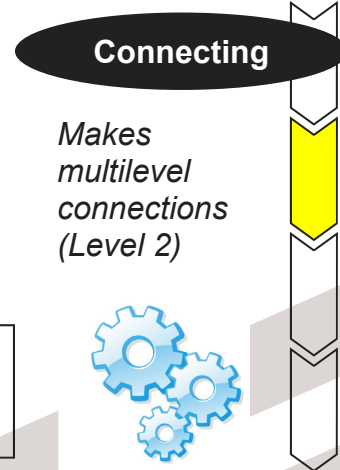
1. Read a section of text. Ask students to think of something they already know about the text. Encourage students to focus on things they have seen, heard about, or learned.
2. Discuss how already knowing something makes it easier to understand something you are reading.

Prompt *Did this part of the text remind you of something you have already seen, know about, or have learned? What is it?*

3. Use a separate organizer for personal, general, and learned knowledge to model your connections (pp. 37, 38, 39).

Model *When I read this, I thought, “I just learned about this in class yesterday!” Connecting what you know to what you read helps you understand.*

4. Have students draw or write something that connects their background knowledge to the text.
5. Continue reading the text, making connections that illustrate how background knowledge aids text comprehension.



Graphic Organizer: Makes Multilevel Connections (Primary Level)

Bein’ with You This Way

W. Nikola-Lisa

(Lee and Low Books)

p. 7



Connections
Comprehension Library

Description: This engaging picture book celebrates the unique physical characteristics we all have. In a sing-song rhythm, it leads you through a multicultural celebration, ending with the satisfying lyric, “Now isn’t it satisfying, simply electrifying, bein’ with you this way!”

Application: Help students to make connections to this text by tapping into all of their background knowledge, not just what they have experienced, but what they have learned about the ways to celebrate the physical differences among people. This text is written with poetic rhythm, and students may make connections to the author’s style of writing. What do they know about stories told in a chant or rhythmic manner? Does it remind them of something else that they can share?

HINT: Students can make connections to anything they have learned about. Remind them to think about all the different ways they learn things (books, TV, movies, newspaper).

Name: _____

Multilevel Connections

I can connect to . . .

It reminds me of . . .



SAMPLE




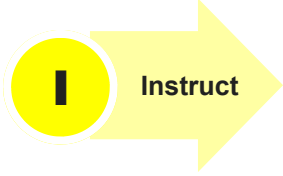


LIFE Assessment Matrix			
	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Assessment Tool</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
	Teacher examines and learns assessment activity	Teacher practices using rubrics with self-assessment of strategy use	Teacher collaborates with colleagues to develop assessment benchmarks
	Teacher reads preselected grade-level text aloud, students complete reading actively assessment	Reading Actively Assessment (pages 100–105)	Students respond in orally, pictorial, or written form on Reading Actively Assessment
	Student reads instructional-level text with decoding assistance from teacher	Strategy continuum questions and rubric (Guided Reading Interview, page 96)	Students respond orally, prompted by teacher if necessary
	Student reads text at independent reading level	Strategy-specific organizers and thinking sheets (pages 72–89)	Students respond in pictorial or written form

Figure 6.1: Assessment Matrix for All Areas of Reading for LIFE

Key Ideas: Assessment

The power of comprehension instruction lies in precise, strategy-specific assessment. When instruction is informed by knowledge of student readiness and deficits, optimal conditions for learning exist. Appropriate and relevant instruction is not possible, however, without varied assessments and regularly scheduled progress monitoring. The almost surgical precision needed to teach comprehension strategies is guaranteed when correct diagnostic procedures are used. Embedding assessments throughout the LIFE process accomplishes this goal. Focused attention on student progress allows teachers to use their allotted instruction time to the fullest extent, maximizing the benefits for all students.

Valid assessment is guaranteed when multiple lenses are used to examine student

4	Uses personal experiences and/or outside materials to make insightful connections related to the main topic or theme. Connections are explained. Explains how connecting enhances comprehension.
3	Uses personal experiences and/or outside materials to make thoughtful connections related to information in the text. Connections are explained.
2	Relates background knowledge/experience to text. May include superficial connections unrelated to topic or theme.
1	Makes an irrelevant connection.
0	Unable to make any connections.

Figure 6.2: Connecting Rubric for Assessing Student Comprehension

progress. Teachers' use of three varied assessment tools ensures that all students are able to respond. This provides the multiple dimensions necessary to give teachers and students a clear picture of comprehension strategy progress. Figure 6.1, the LIFE Assessment Matrix, shows the relationships between each stage of the Reading for LIFE process and its corresponding assessment tools and activities.

The basis for making all judgments of students' progress on the curriculum continuum of comprehension skills is the strategy-specific rubric (Figure 6.2). Each assessment tool is linked to the same strategy rubric. These performance descriptions remain constant throughout the grades providing a consistent and reliable standard of measurement. Such precision becomes increasingly important as students travel from grade to grade and gaps in their comprehension begin to differ dramatically.

Assessment During Instruction

During the LIFE phase of instruction (Stages 1-5), the connecting strategy rubric is used to gather information in two ways:

1. *Formative assessment.* The connecting rubric is used to judge students' oral responses during whole-group discussion. This focused observation of

Reading Actively Assessment: (Primary, Intermediate Level)

Instructions:

1. Students read, view, or listen to a piece of text selected by the teacher.
2. Students use what they have learned in connecting lessons.
3. Students respond to the prompts on the Reading Actively organizer.
4. The Reading Actively Assessment is evaluated on the connecting rubric for assessing student comprehension.
5. The Reading Actively Assessment scores can be recorded on the *Student Profile, Reading Comprehension* form found on page 107.



4

Uses personal experiences and/or outside materials to make insightful connections related to the main topic or theme. Connections are explained. Explains how connecting enhances comprehension.

3

Uses personal experiences and/or outside materials to make thoughtful connections related to information in the text. Connections are explained.

2

Relates background knowledge/experience to text. May include superficial connections unrelated to topic or theme.

1

Makes an irrelevant connection.

0

Unable to make any connections.

Name: _____

Reading Actively

What did you connect to in the text?

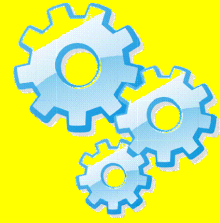
What does it remind you of?

What information do you know about your connection?

How does this connection help you understand the text?

Explain how you connected in this text.

Appendix



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