

Reading Strategy Lesson: *Making Inferences*

MAKING INFERENCES & DRAWING CONCLUSIONS:

Most authors often tell the reader more than just directly what they write. They provide hints and clues about the story that let the reader “read between the lines.” When one uses these clues to learn more about the story, one is inferring. When one infers, one is going beyond the surface information to discover meanings and ideas that the author has implied, rather than explicitly stating them. “Inference” is a conclusion or judgment that one makes. The reader must choose a likely inference based on the facts she/he is given and knowledge she/he has. Although they are related, inferring is often confused with making predictions. Predictions made about outcomes, events, or actions are confirmed or contradicted by the end of a story. Inferences, on the other hand, are more open-ended and may not be resolved at the conclusion of a story. Readers will often use other aspects of a piece of writing to make inferences. Emergent readers, for example, often use pictures to infer meaning in a story, especially when they are unsure of the meaning of a word. Illustrations can greatly affect the inferences a reader makes. Analyzing pictures and text together can help create insightful and meaningful inferences.

Making inferences is important to reading for many reasons. One reason is that inferring helps readers to comprehend words and text that they are unsure of. Secondly, making inferences allows the reader to get to the heart of things—the deeper meanings and value of the writing. Through inferences the reader discovers what is important, why it is important, how events and characters can influence one another, and how one incident can lead to another. Making inferences allows the reader to connect to the writing and figure out how the text relates to them or what the text means to the reader personally. When readers make an inference, it plants intrinsic motivation in them by involving them in the story and relating them to the happenings and meaning behind the text.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

Strategies That Work by Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis

Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions from <<http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/AS/309.HTM>>.

Inference Cards from <<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/gr1inference.htm>>.

Swimmy by Leo Lionni

Typed Student Objectives

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) After the activity with the short story cards and being given the definition of “making inferences,” TSWBAT apply this strategy to his/her reading by formulating questions and/or thoughts which lead them to specific conclusions.
- 2) After learning the definition of “making inferences,” TSWBAT make their own inferences while doing a book walk and reading the book, *Swimmy*, guided by the instructor.
- 3) After engaging in a book walk and reading the book, *Swimmy*, TSWBAT recognize and relate to the diversity component in the story.

ANTICIPATORY SET:

Greet students and arrange them in groups of 3 or 4. Explain to the class that each group will be getting a Story Card; the groups are to read their short story and answer the questions following the story. Each group will be presenting their story and their answers to the questions. When all the groups seem to have finished with the cards, bring the class back together and have the groups present.

“While you were reading your short stories and answering the questions, each of you were using a reading strategy. Do any of you know what this strategy is called?”
(students answer) Next, explain what “Making Inferences” means to the class. **“Today we will be**

making inferences about a book we will read as a class. But before we read, let's go over our goals for today's lesson. Present the learning objectives to the class on the Elmo.

PROCEDURE:

Have the class sit on the floor around the reading chair, making sure each child can hear and see. **"Today we will be reading *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. Before we read the book, however, we are going to go on a Picture Walk through the book. During our picture walk, we will be making inferences about the story based on the story's illustrations."**

- Page 1:* **"What do you notice about this picture?"** (there is one black fish)
"How do you suppose that this fish ended up different?" (various responses)
"Have you ever felt alone or like you were different from everyone else?"
"Are there any advantages to being different?" (do things others can't, can teach others new things, no one else like you)
- Page 2:* **"What is happening in this picture?"** (the shark is chasing the little fish)
"What do you think will happen to the black fish?"
- Page 3:* **"How do you think the black fish feels based on the colors on these pages?"**
(alone, scared, worried, sad, etc.)
- Pgs 4-9:* **"What is the black fish doing or where is he going?"**
"What do you think will happen to the black fish?"

Have those students with good inferences write them on the whiteboard. Tell the students that we will compare these predictions to the actual ending of the story once the book is read.

"Now that we have made some inferences about what will happen in the story based on the illustrations, let's read the story." Begin reading the story.

- Page 9:* **"How is the story different so far than what you had predicted?"**
"Are your predictions any different now than they were before?"
- Page 10:* **"What would you do if you were *Swimmy*?"**
- Page 11:* **"How are they going to swim like a big fish when they are all so little?"**
- End:* **"Did the story end like you thought it would?"**
"How close were your inferences that you wrote on the board?"
"What have you learned about being different through *Swimmy*?"
"How can you use the strategy of making inferences while reading other things?"

Students' previous inferences and answers to the questions should provide evaluation on whether or not the students' objectives have been met. Have the students practice making inferences again by splitting them into pairs and having them read a book aloud together, making inferences as they read.

Class Goals

Thursday, January 23, 2006

1. We will learn what inferences are and how to make them.
2. We will make inferences while doing a book walk and while reading the book, *Swimmy*.
3. We will learn about what it means to be and what it feels like to be different and discover advantages to being different.