

Parent School

Newsletter #1-Reader's Workshop/Schema



...A Monthly Parent Education Newsletter to help explain the what, why and how of your child's new reading vocabulary.

OK, so how many of you parents are hearing new vocabulary out of your child's mouth this month? Words like Schema, Text to Self Connections and Text to Text Connections? Are you impressed? Well, you should be. Your child is doing some hard thinking at school and learning more and more that "reading is thinking." But, what does this all mean, you ask. Your child is receiving very specific comprehension strategy instruction in a classroom setting known as Reader's Workshop. In this format, your child watches and listens to the teacher read a lot of books while the teachers shares out loud and models what he or she is thinking while he/she reads. Then the teacher asks the children to help in the strategy, and the teacher and children practice using it together. After about 5 to 6 weeks of the teacher releasing more responsibility of the strategy use to the children, each child becomes more independent at using the strategy and begins to use it on his/her own. This year, your child will become proficient in six comprehension strategies throughout the year using a variety of texts and genres of books.

The first strategy that our class is currently practicing is called, "Making

Connections." This means students connect their background knowledge to the text they are reading.

The Purpose of the Strategy:

Readers comprehend better when they actively think about and apply their knowledge of the book's topic, their own experiences, and the world around them. Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis in their book, *Strategies that Work* (2000), state that, "When children understand how to connect the text they read to their lives, they begin to make connections between what they read and the larger world. This nudges them into thinking about bigger, more expansive issues beyond their universe of home, school, and neighborhood."

How to help your child use this strategy:

To help your child make connections while they are reading, ask him/her the following questions:

- What does the book remind you of?
- What do you know about the book's topic?
- Does this book remind you of another book?