

Enhancing Students' Inferencing Skills in Reading Comprehension

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English in a Future-ready Singapore

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The banner at the bottom of the slide features a blue-tinted city skyline of Singapore, including the Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo consisting of a red circle with the letters 'ELIS' in white, surrounded by a network of white spheres and lines. The text 'English in a Future-ready Singapore' and 'EUS Conference 12 September 2017' is overlaid on the left side of the banner.

What is your current practice in teaching inferencing?

**BUZZ
TIME**

Overview

- Literature review on Inferencing
- Teaching Inferencing
- Q&A

Literature Review on Inferencing

Inferencing skills are important for reading comprehension, and also more widely in the area of literary criticism and other approaches to studying texts. The ability to make inferences is the ability to **use two or more pieces of information from a text in order to arrive at a third piece of information that is implicit**. A key finding was that the ability to draw references predetermines reading skills: that is, **poor inferencing causes poor comprehension** and not vice versa (Kispaal, 2008).

Literature Review on Inferencing

Infering with Text Clues:

When we infer, we take what we know and merge it with clues in the text to **draw a conclusion** to **predict an outcome**, to surface a theme and so on.

$$\mathbf{BK + TC = I}$$

Background Knowledge + Text Clues = Inference

Teaching Inferencing

Watch this video



Question	Visual Clues	Background Knowledge	Inference
Question	Find information from the video that will help answer the question.	Think about what you know about the information from the video.	Combine what the video shows with what you know to come up with the answer.
Why did the grasshopper take the fruit?	It was a hot day and he had walked a long way, so he was thirsty. The grasshopper did not have any water with him.	When people are thirsty, they need to drink water to quench their thirst. Some fruits contain a lot of liquid.	He was thirsty and wanted to quench his thirst.
Was the grasshopper honest?	He paid two gold coins. The camera accepted his payment.	Honest people pay for their purchases.	Yes, he was.
	He paid only two gold coins instead of three. He was planning to walk away without paying. He only paid when he saw the camera.	Dishonest people cheat by purposely paying less than the actual price. Dishonest people do the wrong thing when nobody is looking.	No, he was not.

Time to read the PSLE 2015 passage

First thoughts...

- 1) What is the theme of this story?
- 2) What are some things about this story that stand out for you?

Refer to Handout 2

Read the passage again

Question	Textual Clues	Background Knowledge	Inference
Q1) Why was Sarah panting?	Sarah stopped by the honeydew patch and the honeydew patch was halfway between the school and the village where most of the pupils lived. So it was quite far away. Sarah ran very fast because she did not want to be late.	People pant when they have been running a long time and are feeling tired or breathless.	Sarah had run all the way to school from the honeydew patch and was tired.

Question	Textual Clues	Background Knowledge	Inference
Q2) Why did Peter hide in the bushes?			He did not want people to see him eating the honeydew.
Q3) Why did Peter stamp on the fruit?			He wanted to destroy all evidence of the fruit so that nobody would know that he had opened it on his own.
Q4) What do you think Mandy “instinctively understood”?			Mandy understood that sharing was a good value and so, she invited all her friends to her house to share her fruit.

Q & A

References

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