Georgia Performance Standards Task for English Language Arts – GRADE Kindergarten

Grade: Kindergarten
Title: Making Connections

Task Annotation:
This lesson plan follows the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, and it details lessons over the course of several weeks. Initially, students are introduced to the term "schema". The teacher begins by modeling how to use schema to make text-to-self connections. Gradually, the teacher involves the students in making text-to-self connections, and eventually the students are able to do this independently.

Focus Standards:
ELAKR6 The student gains meaning from orally presented text. The student
g. Connects life experiences to read-aloud text.

Essential Questions:
What is schema?
What is a text-to-self connection?
How do text-to-self connections help you to better understand a story?

Knowledge:
Schema refers to all the "stuff" that is already inside your head--things you already know
A text-to-self connection is a way to connect with a book. Something in the book reminds you of something in your schema.
Text-to-self connections help you understand the characters and events in a book.

Skills:
Make a text-to-self connection that helps you better understand the text, thereby reminding you of something in your life (recalling schema)

Circumstance of Assignment:
Your instruction should take between 10- 20 minutes.

The Task Directions:
Lesson Format #1
Teacher Modeling
1. Introduce the “Using Your Schema” anchor chart. (A sample poster has been uploaded to the unit builder.)

Teaching Tip- Use precise language here. Say what you have to say, and then move on! You will probably see many blank stares, but you will show the students what schema is over the next several days.
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2. Tell the boys and girls about T-S connections. Here is a sample dialogue, “There are many ways readers use schema, but today we are going to talk about just one way: using schema to make connections from our reading, or the text, to ourselves. We’ll call these text-to-self connections. When you make connections as you read, it’s kind of like having a conversation going on in your head.”

3. Tell the students that you are going to show them what you mean. Explain to them that you will read the story to them and, as you read, you will stop and think out loud to show them how you use your schema to make connections from your life to the story. Tell them that you are going to show them what’s going on inside your head while you are reading the story out loud. To avoid confusion, tell the boys and girls that when you are holding the book up, you’ll be reading. However, when you put the book down on your lap, you’ll be thinking out loud.

Teaching Tip- Proper planning prevents poor performance. Explicit modeling requires thoughtful planning. Ask yourself, “Of all the places where I could authentically think out loud, which 2-3 would best illustrate my point?” Mark those places. Be absolutely clear about your teaching point. Be aware of your focus, and keep it. Also, authenticity matters. Your T-S connections must be genuine. Remember, you’re modeling for your students the level of responses that you expect them to give. Our goal in asking kids to think aloud is that we want genuine and thoughtful responses that use precise language.

4. Repeat this lesson, modeling the way good readers make T-S connections, for approximately 1-2 weeks. During this time period, gradually involve the students. Call on them to add their connections as well.

Teaching Tip- We must “teach through” shallow, surface-level connections. We must gently redirect these responses before they become the norm. Focus on the goal of making connections that help us with our reading.

Lesson Format # 2
Guided Practice

1. Before your lesson: Read the book you will be using in your lesson to determine several critical parts. These should be parts with which students should be able to connect. You may also choose parts where students are required to infer. Show students how their schema can be used to help them understand a book and infer meaning. You may also choose specific vocabulary words that students may use their schema to better understand.

2. As you read the book aloud, you will pause at these predetermined parts to ask students to share their connections. As you gradually involve the students in making connections, you should start recording their connections as the students make them.

Teaching Tip- Quickly jot down the students’ connections on a notepad during the mini-lesson. After school, transfer them to an anchor chart. This saves time during the mini-lesson.

3. On the following day, show the students the anchor chart with the connections that they made. Read through the connections with the kids, asking them if each connection helped them understand the story better. Ask them, “Does that connection help us learn more about the story?” Put a “1” beside connections that helped them understand the story and a “2” beside the connections that did not help.
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4. When you finish going through all of the connections, ask the students a question such as, “What can we learn from all this great thinking that we just did?” This will help sum-up their thinking and give it a focus.

5. Repeat this mini-lesson format several times, focusing on the notion of making good connections to help better understand a text.

Lesson Format # 3
Guided Practice

1. Choose a text to read aloud. Tell the students that today they are to keep their connections in their heads. They will not be given an opportunity to share them aloud. Explain to them that once the story is over, their entire work time will be about making text-to-self connections.

   Teaching Tip- Think through this lesson carefully. What words will you use to explain its procedures clearly? What language will best convey your thinking and serve as a model for theirs? What must you do to ensure that when their work together begins, the tone of the classroom is not broken by children who don’t know what to do, where to go, or what to do when they’re finished? Be explicit. Let children in on what they will be doing and why, what it will look like and your expectations for their work together. Be sure to choose a book with which all students will be able to make a connection.

2. After reading the book, explain your expectations for the work time. Students will be placed in groups of four. They will go to big pieces of butcher paper on the floor around the room (one child to a side, four to a group). They are to talk together about their connections to the story and record their most important one using pictures, words or both.

   Teaching Tip- As the children work in groups, talk with a few, but mostly listen. Do some informal assessment. You want to know things like: Are children making real connections to the story?, Do they understand how these connections help them?, What kind of language do they use when they talk to each other in small groups?

3. Give groups an opportunity to share their connections during share time.

   Teaching Tip- Hopefully, you will find that, as students share, they are able to make some type of connections to the story. However, they may still be having trouble thinking aloud about how connections help them as readers. Remind yourself that your students will be able to use a strategy without fully understanding it and that they will gradually gain control of it through continued modeling and guided practice.

4. Repeat this lesson several times.
Lesson Format # 4
Teacher Modeling

1. Tell the students that you are going to record your connections as you make them. Introduce the symbol T-S, and show the students a pad of sticky notes.

2. Choose a text to read aloud. Model making connections and recording them on sticky notes, using the T-S symbol.

3. Repeat for several days.

Lesson Format # 5
Guided Practice

Teaching Tip- This lesson format may be more than some kindergartners can developmentally handle. It is included in the sequence of instruction as an example of a possible direction to take kindergartners. However, it can be completed orally rather than in written form with the sticky notes. Another option would be to do the sticky notes with higher performing guided reading groups.

1. Tell the students that they will be recording their connections today. Review your expectations for their behavior. Give each student a clipboard with 2-3 sticky notes on it.

Teaching Tip- Pre-read text and mark 2-3 probable connection-making pages. It is helpful to pause during the read aloud session, especially during these connection-making times, to allow students an opportunity to record their connections.

2. Choose a text to read aloud.

3. Read the text, stopping to allow students the opportunity to record their connections. Student may either write a short phrase or sketch a quick picture of their connection.

Teaching Tip- It can be easy to get bogged down in the procedures associated with this lesson format. Do not allow the students to spend too much time writing their connections. The purpose is to have them begin their work of making connections independently.

4. Guide the students in using the T-S symbol, and then give them a few moments to record one connection on their sticky notes.

5. Continue reading and giving students the opportunity to record their connections.

6. After school, make a chart with the sticky notes attached to it. Review the chart tomorrow, discussing whether the connections helped them better understand the text.

7. Repeat this lesson several times.
Lesson Format # 6
Independent Practice

1. Continue to model using the sticky notes in the mini-lesson.

2. Give students an opportunity to record their own connections on sticky notes during work time. Model how they will go about doing this.

*Teaching Tip- Think through this lesson carefully. What words will you use to explain its procedures clearly? What language will best convey your thinking and serve as a model for theirs? What must you do to ensure that when their work together begins, the tone of the classroom is not broken by children who don’t know what to do, where to go, or what to do when they’re finished? Be explicit. Let children in on what they will be doing and why, what it will look like, and your expectations for their work together.*

Differentiation of Instruction

Readiness

**Lesson Format 1:** Define “schema” as what you already know. Schema is used when we read and check with what we already know about a topic or idea.

Use visuals to help students understand the vocabulary being introduced: example – draw a picture of a head with an outline of a brain. Label the brain with the word “schema.” Draw a book open and a double pointed arrow between the book and the head to show that we think about what we read to compare it to what we know and if we need to add to our information or change our ideas because we learned something new.

**Lesson Format 2:** to support students who are delayed in achieving this skill, allow them to “pair and share,” where two students can discuss and then share what they think. This supports students with limited language skills.

Check Text-to-Self connections in small groups or individually as needed to ensure that all students are actively participating and not being unnoticed.

**Lesson Format 3:** For students whose drawings are undecipherable, ask them about their thoughts and record words or phrases next to their illustrations. Have them “read” the words with you to build vocabulary and to help them express their ideas.

**Lesson Format 4:** During lessons, allow students to put the sticky notes in the correct places as you guide them to help illustrate the T-S connections. This is will set up the required expectations for the next lesson format.

*Work with the ELL teacher, the SLP, and the special education teacher* to help support students with limited vocabulary. They may need visual icons, pictures (realistic or representative), or photographs to help express connections. Include small objects that students make connections with as they read and/or write.