Strategy: Connections

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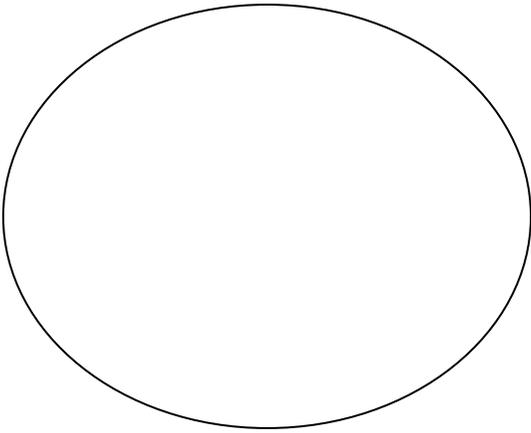
Grades K to 7

Learning Intention: Show how connections/schema are like VELCRO – need them to stick to be able to understand text. Need to activate background knowledge to understand text.

Resources: kid culture resources - example: Yu-Gi-Uh! Shonen Jump Graphic Novel by Kazuki Takahashi, BOLDPRINT– STOMP IT skateboarding, FRAME BY FRAME comic code words, etc.

Activity/Lesson:

1. Find resource that is something that the students would be very familiar with (I phones, video games, skateboarding, music, superheros, Manga comics etc)
2. Find Velcro gloves, Dart board, or Velcro paddles sold at dollar store OR make your own target using Velcro strips. 'Connections' can be tennis balls, wrap Velcro around waffle/squish balls/etc. Disconnects would be balls of paper, with no Velcro.
3. Start with explicit description of what today's lesson is going to be about – how accessing prior knowledge and making connections helps us think about and understand text.
4. Have students read section of text to themselves silently
5. Do turn and talk about section
6. Teacher state that section was not 'sticking' for them – doesn't have 'Velcro' background knowledge that allowed it to make sense. Didn't understand. Teacher would take phrases or sections from text that they didn't understand and show how it 'slides off' the connection side and falls onto the Teflon disconnect piece on the floor......
   - ex: "Magical power comes from bit beasts. P 42 Frame by Frame". What are bit beasts? What are the powers? I could have a small Velcro connection about magical powers, cause I've read about those in other books and saw a magic show once, but I don't get the bit beast part."
   - Ask students to give us 'Velcro connections' that helped them understand that sentence – have them throw/place their connection onto Velcro side as well as some of their disconnect pieces.
7. Continue doing this, until VELCRO connections mitts/target has many attachments, even smaller thoughts/connections that all contribute to understanding text. Show how if you don't make connections – Teflon- you won't understand it.
8. Show how you can take small connections – I know about magical powers, so I can build on that- to increase connections. Have to actively make connections with text that is unfamiliar or 'boring'.

9. VELCRO connections   Teflon disconnect