



Literacy Connects-Table of Contents

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Issue I: Think-Alouds—Modeling the reading process to teach active reading: This issue provides step by step instructions on how to model the reading process for students by making visible to them the invisible internal dialogue essential to make sense of text. Repeated use of this strategy will help students internalize and integrate effective comprehension strategies into their own reading. Think Alouds can be used before and during reading.

Issue II: CONCEPT BUILDING—Helping students define and expand on one topic: This issue focuses on providing students with a framework to encourage concept development. This strategy works well for social studies, math and science selections, in which understanding concepts is crucial to understanding the next topic.

Issue III: Cornell Note-Taking with a Twist: This issue provides details on a note taking and summarizing strategy for students. This note taking strategy carries students through all stages of the learning/reading process.

Issue IV: Cubing: Cubing is a fun and effective way to explore a topic from various dimensions. It provides students with a concrete visual way (a six sided die to roll) to analyze any concept. It can be used before, during or after reading or learning about a concept.

Issue V: Simple Summaries: This issue provides step by step instructions on how to teach students to summarize information. It encourages students to use questions to determine the importance and relevance of information and how to incorporate that into a summary using their own words. This strategy works well during and after reading.

Issue VI: Vocabulary Cards: Vocabulary Cards are an effective vocabulary learning tool as they allow students to use vocabulary in a variety of ways, thus providing multiple exposures to the words while utilizing various learning modalities. This strategy can be used before, during or after reading or a lesson.

Issue VII: Let's get them writing—R.A.F.T.: RAFT is fun and effective writing strategy that encourages students to look at a topic from multiple perspectives and to experiment with multiple genres and audiences. This strategy guides students to consider questions about the author's role or voice, audience, format, and topic. R.A.F.T. can be used to analyze a topic of study or as a creative writing exercise. This strategy works best as a way to demonstrate what has been learned or as a pre-writing strategy to explore potential writing topics.

Issue VIII: Round Robin Writing: Round Robin Writing is a fun and non-intimidating way to encourage reluctant writers to write. Depending on the topic or instructions given, it can be adapted to emphasize



any number of objectives. This strategy helps students develop fluency in writing while having fun. It can be used at any stage of the learning process.

Issue IX: The Power of Reading Aloud in all Areas: This issue discusses the benefits of reading aloud to students and provides suggestions for using the “read aloud” across the curriculum. Reading aloud can be used before or during instruction and works well when coupled with the Think Aloud.

Issue X: SQ3R and a Math Variation: The SQ3R is a reading strategy intended to guide students before, during, and after reading. It provides the structure and prompts to encourage active reading in all content areas.

Issue XI: Using Journals to Learn Content: This issue discusses the many ways to use journals to facilitate student learning of content information. Journals work well as a way to initiate learning, build or access prior knowledge, and build motivation.

Issue XII: Writing for Precision and Concision Across the Curriculum: This issue introduces several short writing activities that require students to write one or two paragraphs of three or four well-developed, information-rich sentences each. This strategy develops research skills while teaching students to be precise and concise in their writing. It also teaches content and writing without taking up too much time.

Issue XIII: Peer Reading—A Collaborative Summarizing Technique: *Peer Reading* is a partnering (collaborative) technique that teaches students how to break down a reading into manageable chunks, use questions to focus on essential information, and distill a reading into a concise summary.

Issue XIV: Strategies for Reading and Responding to an Article or Editorial: This activity encourages students to use the reading and writing process to generate a one-page reaction to an article or editorial that advances a certain point of view. Addresses all levels of the process.

Issue XV: Vocabulary: This issue describes the three levels of word knowledge and how to use that understanding to teach for full vocabulary acquisition. It also discusses ways to select vocabulary terms for instruction.

Issue XVI: Contextual Redefinition: A vocabulary activity to facilitate context recognition and establish a purpose for reading: Contextual Redefinition is a strategy that introduces new vocabulary in rich contexts that help to define words and facilitate memory by giving the words meaningful associations. When paired with discussions of text structure and context clues, it can help move your students to higher levels of reading comprehension.

Issue XVII: Word Family Tree: This issue describes how students can use the *Word Family Tree* map as an acquisition strategy that promotes deep concept processing as it moves students from analyzing word origins to real world applications.



Issue XVIII: Question-Answer Relationship (QAR): QAR is a strategy that teaches students how to identify and correctly answer the different types of text questions (literal and inferential). Promotes reading assessment.

Issue XIX: Interactive Lectures: Direct instruction is often the most efficient way to impart information, but without breaks for students to think, write, discuss, and process what has been taught, it is not the most effective. This issue details five ways to make content lectures more interactive and more brain compatible.

Issue XX: Text Preview and Prediction: With modifications, this strategy can be used with any type of reading material not only to introduce and reinforce how to use text features, but also to help students understand the importance of previewing and predicting BEFORE reading. If you plan to use any type of text in your classroom, teaching students how to use their textbooks effectively is time well spent.

Issue XXI: Reciprocal Teaching: Reciprocal Teaching provides students with the four main strategies proficient readers employ to understand text: *predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing*. Working in groups, students learn how to navigate text using these skills

Issue XXII: Reflective Learning: This issue focuses on teaching students how to use reflection and metacognition to better understand the what and the how of their learning. It provides activity suggestions and thinking and writing stems.

Issue XXIII: Scaffolded Reading Experience: Building a purpose for reading: The Scaffolded Reading Experience (SRE) is a strategy that uses direct instruction to teach all parts of the reading process. It is flexible enough to be used in all subject areas, and with all levels of readers.

Issue XXIV: Test Taking Tips for Reading Exams: This issue discusses reading exam prep and suggests ways for students to prepare for reading comprehension assessments.

Issue XXV: Marking Text: A reading comprehension strategy: *Marking Text*, a during-reading strategy, promotes the development of active reading skills by requiring students to record their thoughts, connections, and wonderings while reading.

Issue XXVI: Brain Games for Review: This issue features a selection of interactive games and activities designed to help students learn and review content material in fun and effective ways.

Issue XXVII: The Power of Imaging: The ability to image is essential for reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and memory. This issue discusses the impact of imaging on the brain and learning and provides activities that can be used across the curriculum at all levels to promote imaging.

Issue XXVIII: Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum: The importance of teaching questioning cannot be over stated. In this issue there are numerous strategies for raising the level of questioning in the classroom. This issue provides a list of question starters that may increase the level of thinking in almost any context.



Issue XXIX: Using Pictures to Engage Reluctant Writers: This issue discusses easy ways to support the teaching of writing and motivate struggling writers through the use pictures, magazines, catalogs and newspapers.

Issue XXX: Building Classroom Community: This issue focuses on building a classroom community during the first few weeks of school. It provides mixers, names games and memory games for all levels and subject areas.

Issue XXXI: Building Classroom Community, Part II: This issue continues the discussion of the importance of building a positive classroom climate. It has suggestions for building classroom norms, establishing procedures and building community.

XXXII: Critical Stance Across the Curriculum: This issue discusses the importance of teaching students to take a critical stance when reading and writing and describes the skills needed to critically evaluate text. For each suggested critical skill, I provide critical question stems for teacher and student use.

XXXIII: Sentence Combining—an authentic way to teach grammar. This issues cites extensive research on the effectiveness of teaching students sentence combining--a method for combining short, choppy sentences into longer, more effective ones—as a way to teach punctuation, parts of speech, clauses and phrases in the ELA classroom. I also provide examples of how to use this strategy to teach a variety of sentence types.

XXXIV: Teaching the Language of Written Response: Teaching students how to respond to the writing of others will not only help them grow as writers, but it will greatly relieve the onerous chore of grading all those messy first drafts. In this issue I suggest an effective peer response protocol to facilitate student discussion and peer response during the revision stage of the writing process.

XXXV: Adapting “List/Group/Label” to Pre-Teach Vocabulary: This pre-reading vocabulary strategy can be used with any type of text; it allows students to preview and discuss vocabulary and predict content before they read a text. Students sort, categorize and speculate about a series of key words and phrases chosen from a text before they read the text itself; they then begin to construct ideas about the words’ relationships and meaning of vocabulary before they read.

XXXVI: “Don’t Smile until Christmas” This beginning of the school year issue discusses the importance of establishing a climate for learning at the beginning of the year BEFORE behavior issues occur. It gives suggestions for pre-testing, interest and modality surveys and establishing norms.

XXXVII: NCTE National Day on Writing: Celebrating Who We Are! This issue celebrates the NCTE writing day by introducing a creative writing activity that students of all ages and ability levels always love. Students write “Where I’m From Poems” based on a poem of the same name by George Ella Lyon. The lesson explains steps at all levels of the writing process.



XXXVIII: Test Taking Tips for Reading Exams: This issue discusses reading exam prep and suggests ways for students to prepare for reading comprehension assessments.

XLIX: Collaborative Learning—Working with Pairs: This issue discusses the positive impact of cooperative learning on student learning and motivation. Suggestions for implementation and activities are also provided.

XL: Creative Alternatives to the Book Report: In this issue are creative suggestions for changing the traditional book report into an activity that will engage students, promote higher level thinking, and help teachers get through grading the final products with their wits and their hair intact.

XLI: Motivating Students: This issue is the first in a series of three on student motivation. It presents research on internal motivation and provides practical and easy suggestions for increasing motivation in any classroom.

XLII: Cooperative Learning: A Powerful Tool for Motivation: This is the second in the motivation series. It continues the discussion of motivation and suggests cooperative learning strategies that will increase motivation.

XLIII: Using Games to Motivate Students to Learn through Fun, Competition and Cooperation: The third in the motivation series, this issue suggests fun ways to increase learning through games, competition and collaboration.

XLIV: Using Multi-genre for Summarizing and Concept Development: Using multiple genres of writing is an effective and fun way to develop and assess understanding, promote concept development, and increase retention of content knowledge and vocabulary. This issue presents cross curricular examples of ways you can motivate students to write and increase their understanding of your content.

XLV: Sweet Beginnings: How to Start the School Year: The classroom climate you create the first few weeks of school often determines the entire year. Creating an environment where students learn (and you keep your sanity) depends on your ability to create a community—a family of learners who can work and grow together. Not only is it important to learn names and establish norms and procedures, but it is essential to collect baseline data through content specific pre-tests and modality and interest surveys. This issue suggests ways to help you get off to a good start.

XLVI: Understanding Text Complexity within the CCSS: The first in a series on the Common Core State Standards, this issue discusses text complexity within the CCSS. It suggests ways to determine text complexity and provides rubrics to evaluate and scaffold text.



XLVII: Reading with Rigor and Relevance: This issue addresses the disparity between the reading levels of many of our students and the complex texts suggested by the CCSS. By intentionally selecting reading that supports instruction and deliberately layering the types of texts students read, teachers can better support the complexity and range of reading demands of the CCSS.

XLVIII: Close Reading: An Essential Skill for Understanding Complex Text: The third in the CCSS series, this issue suggests an effective strategy to teach students how to grapple with complex text. Close Reading--the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage--is a time-tested strategy that provides students of all ages and in all content areas with the tools to successfully navigate complex texts while teaching them how to annotate, question and analyze what they are reading.

XLVIX: How to Analyze Non-fiction: This issue presents a cross-curricular reading strategy designed to teach students how to analyze text and cite evidence. SOAPStone consists of a series of questions that provide a basis for analysis.

L: Text Dependent Questions: This issue explores text dependent questions: What they are; what they are not; the different types; how to write them. A list of text dependent question stems are posted in the Literacy Connects Resource Folder.

LI: Common Core Resources at a Glance: The purpose of this issue of Literacy Connects is to present a few of the most useful and reliable resources for the CCSS that are currently available on the Internet.

LII: The Power of Formative Assessment: This issue explores the topic of formative assessment. It includes suggestions for when and how formative assessment should be used and offers examples of formative assessment strategies.