

## Real-world or personal connection or reflection

Many students fail to see the relevance of the curriculum and thus engage in learning not because they are personally invested in the subject, but rather because the social context of school has created a situation whereby they are expected to learn the material in order to meet social expectations. Learning in school becomes something that is happening to them, not with them. In the absence of perceiving the relevance of what they are learning to their understanding of the world or personal relevance, motivation to learn is largely artificial, so students tend to invest the minimal amount of energy needed to comply with social standards.

Furthermore, failure to understand new information within the context of within the context of their world, prevents students from developing the kind of relational understanding needed for the new information to be remembered beyond the test. As a result, students tend to attempt to learn the information well enough to meet social standards (make a socially acceptable score on the test), but soon forget the information because there is no longer a need to remember it.

Some students hold an erroneous belief that memory is like a garbage can. Once it is full, no more can be put into it, and the "trash" has to be emptied before more trash can be put in. *Thus, these students often attempt to forget recently learned information so that they can make "room" in their memory for the next batch of stuff to remember for the test.*

### **Effective Alternative**

If you cannot identify how something you are teaching relates in some way to an authentic understanding of our world as it is today, you can be assured that your students cannot either. Thus, once you have identified the core idea, main ideas, and essential details of your lesson, carefully reflect on how this information can be related to understanding why our world is as it is today, or how the information can be used to either understand or solve a real-world problem of today.

Throughout the context of your lesson as well as at the end of your lesson, help students make these connections by (a) explicitly telling them how the ideas relate to our world, and/or (b) prompting students to "reflect and connect."

### **Specific Tips**

A number of techniques and Think Sheets can be used throughout your lesson, and especially at the end, "reflect-and-connect" activities.

The "Instructional Pause" can be used during your lesson at various intervals. For example, if your class period is a 50-55 minute block of time, you might use this tactic twice, at 20-minute intervals.

To use the procedure, pause the on-going presentation or exploration of new information, and pose a question designed to get students to reflect on the subject matter in a personal way that cues them to relate the information to the real world in some way. **Think/Pair/Share, Priority-Share,** and the **What? So what?** reflection activities are excellent routines to use at this time.

In addition, a number of the routines have been specifically designed to engage students in reflecting on how a specific concept about which they are learning ties directly to their personal background, knowledge, or experience. These include: **Clarifying Person, Clarifying Place, Clarifying Event, Clarifying Belief, Clarifying Idea,** and **RELATE.**

Likewise, there are a variety of “reflect-and-connect” techniques that can be used at the end of the lesson to help students make personal connections to the new information or relate it to the real world. You can use the techniques noted above, as well as **CROWN, RELATE, Before/After, Real-World Connection Webs, What if?, Content Learning Logs,** and **Strategy Learning Logs.**

HOME – End of lesson tactics

MAKES SENSE HOME