Strategies Lesson 1

Inferring Meaning

**Kansas Content Standards addressed:**

Standard 1 Benchmark 4: The student reads and comprehends texts across the curriculum. Indicator 5: the student uses information from text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

**USD 501 Content Standard addressed:**

Construct meaning from the text and prior knowledge to make, revise and confirm predictions, inferences, and draw conclusions. (L.A. 08.1.06)

**Resources:**

Poem entitled “Ellis Island” by Joseph Bruchac

Book entitled Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

**Response:** The students will learn to make inferences and draw conclusions while they read/view various works. The materials I have chosen for this lesson are: a photograph of a migrant mother, a short poem entitled Ellis Island and a chapter from the novel Esperanza Rising. Students have previously built background knowledge for these works by viewing a Prezi presentation about the period of immigration through Ellis Island from 1898-1952.

**Lesson Details:** I will begin by reminding students that inferences are made up of what you already know about a topic, what you read, and what you infer (educated guess) based on your background knowledge and what you’ve read.

**Explicit Instruction:** Today we will be learning more about making inferences as we read. Who can tell me what an inference is? (I will guide/correct the answers of students as needed.) That’s right, inferences are made up of your background knowledge, what you’ve read, and the educated guess you make based on that evidence. We make inferences every day in all kinds of situations. Making inferences when you read helps you engage with what you’re reading and understand it more deeply.

**Modeling:** I will ask students to turn in their textbooks to the poem entitled “Ellis Island” by Joseph Bruchac. I will begin by reading the poem aloud, and modeling the process of making inferences by making notes in a chart that I will project onto the screen from my document camera. “When I read the line ‘waited the long days of quarantine, after leaving the illness’ (I will write this line in the text column of the chart) I think about what I know already about quarantines. I know that it used to be pretty common for people to be isolated when they had
diseases that could be contagious, such as polio or tuberculosis. The author suggests that his grandparents were in quarantine when coming through Ellis Island. I know that it was common practice to isolate immigrants coming through Ellis Island if they were sick in any way, so that disease didn’t spread through the country. What I infer from this line, because he says ‘after leaving the illness,’ is that his grandparents were sick after getting off the boat, but had to wait in quarantine even after they were well. They must have told him stories about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I know (background knowledge)</th>
<th>What I read (text)</th>
<th>What I infer (what I know+text=)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quarantine—isolation during an illness for the purpose of not spreading disease</td>
<td>“waited the long days of quarantine, after leaving the illness”</td>
<td>His grandparents were in quarantine for a long time even after they were well. It must’ve been a time of fear and uncertainty for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All immigrants between 1898 and 1952 were required to pass through an immigration station at Ellis Island</td>
<td>“the ship passed on its way to the tall woman, as green as dreams of forests and meadows”</td>
<td>The tall woman is the statue of Liberty, just across the harbor from Ellis Island. When immigrants saw her, they must have been filled with hope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millions of people immigrated to this country through Ellis island</td>
<td>“Like millions of others, I too come to this island, nine decades the answerer of dreams”</td>
<td>The author must’ve come through Ellis Island, too. People came to America to have their dreams fulfilled, and many people succeeded in this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans were living in the United States before any immigrants traveled to the new land.</td>
<td>“Yet only part of my blood loves that memory. Another voice speaks of native lands within this nation.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Native American tribes were nomadic, traveling to follow seasons, herds, or other food sources.</td>
<td>“Lands of those who followed the changing moon, knowledge of the seasons in their blood.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guided Practice:** The last two entries in this chart are not completed. Students, I would like to you to now turn to your shoulder partners and discuss inferences based on the knowledge we have already about native Americans in the U.S. and Bruchac’s line “only part of his blood loves that memory.” After giving students 5 minutes to discuss, I will ask several students what
inferences they made. I anticipate answers such as ‘the author is glad his grandparents made the sacrifices to come to this country, but he can only be partially glad, because he knows Native Americans suffered with loss of land when more people immigrated to this country.’ I will guide their thinking, and make sure that students are using their prior knowledge and the text to make educated guesses. We will then complete the last entry in the chart in this same manner—turning to shoulder partners and discussing inferences, then sharing with the class as a whole as I guide their understanding.

**Collaborative Practice:** I will then hand students a partially completed inference chart for the novel *Esperanza Rising*. Students will work together with their partners to discuss and complete the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What I know (background knowledge or schema)</strong></th>
<th><strong>What I read (text)</strong></th>
<th><strong>What I infer (educated guess based on the text and background knowledge.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1920 in Mexico, there was a revolution carried out by workers against wealthy landowners for unfair conditions.</td>
<td>“Change has not come fast enough, Esperanza. The wealthy still own most of the land while some of the poor have not even a garden plot.” (page 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Must we always crochet to take our minds off worry?” Esperanza complained. (page 13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Finally, the lawyer came to settle their estate.” What can you infer about their money situation? (page 29)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Independent Practice:** I will ask students to continue reading on their own the next chapter entitled Los Higos (Figs). Students will need to stop after every two pages and fill out the schema, text, inference chart. Students should write a paragraph at the bottom of the page about how stopping to make inferences helped them understand what they’ve read.

**Real-world application:** I will remind students that they make inferences daily in a variety of real world situations. They read body language to make inferences on whether or not it’s a good idea to ask a parent/teacher a question, they make inferences when watching movies with ambiguous endings, and they make inferences while viewing photographs, as well as a
variety of other situations. When reading, making inferences helps students understand characters motivations, engage with what they are reading, and understand the stories’ details in a deeper way.

**Assessment:** I will know students understand the strategy by reading their worksheets and paragraph about inferences. I will carefully monitor their conversations during collaborative practice, correcting thinking as needed. I will observe how students use their background knowledge and the text to make educated guess. I will pay careful attention to how they activate their background knowledge and use the text as evidence when making inferences.

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**Strategies Lesson 2**

**Generating Questions While Reading**

*Kansas Content Standards addressed:*

Standard 1: Students read and comprehend texts across the curriculum

Benchmark 4: Students comprehend a variety of texts (narrative, expository, technical, persuasive)

Indicator 4: Students generate and respond logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, synthesizing, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading text.

**USD 501 standards addressed:**

LA.08.1.07 Generate and respond logically to a variety of questions to improve comprehension and enhance critical thinking skills.

**Resources:**


**Response:** Students will read a persuasive essay written by Alice Walker that described the impact Martin Luther King Jr. had on the south, the civil rights movement, and the author’s personal life. Students will generate “I wonder” and “why” questions as they read. Students will then compare their questions with others in collaborative groups.

**Explicit Instruction:** Good readers ask questions while they read. Sometimes, readers find the answers to the questions as they read. Sometimes, asking the questions raises curiosity enough
to look elsewhere for the answers. And sometimes, answers cannot be found directly—that’s when we use our skills of inferencing. Today, I’m going to model for you the questions I ask myself as I read Choice: A tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. You will have an opportunity to write and share your own questions later on, so pay careful attention to how I generate questions.

**Modeling:** In the very first sentence of this essay, I wonder a lot of things. She says her great great great grandmother walked as a slave from Virginia to Eatonton, Georgia. I wonder how far that is? I wonder why her great great great grandmother walked that direction, because I know parts of Virginia were free, but none of Georgia was. I wonder if she was escaping to freedom or being forced to make that trek? I would write each of these I wonder questions on a sticky note as I read. As I continue to read, I will see if any of my questions are answered. If they are, I will go back and mark that on my sticky notes. If they aren’t, I will see if I can infer the answer after I’ve read the whole essay. That works since it’s a short piece. If I was reading a novel, I would go back to see if I could answer/infer after each chapter.

Let’s look at the second paragraph. That’s all pretty right-there. I have enough prior knowledge to understand when she says all her relatives are buried in a cemetery of the family church, and that poor people often didn’t have money for permanent markers—usually graves were marked with a white-painted cross made of wood.

In the third paragraph, I wonder where the saying came from that “land doesn’t belong to anyone until they have buried a body in it.” I wonder why black southerners continued to love the land and work the land even though they could never fully own it. As I finish reading, I will organize my sticky notes into a chart like this one. I will put my questions in the first column. If I find the answers in the text, I will write them in the middle column. If I can’t find them, I’ll make an inference about the questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Wonder/Why</th>
<th>Answer: Right There?</th>
<th>Answer: Inferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How far is it from Eatonton, GA to VA?</td>
<td>Not found</td>
<td>If you’re walking like the text said, I think it would take months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wonder if she was escaping or being forced to make that trek</td>
<td>Not found</td>
<td>I think she was escaping to freedom because the text said that GA contained their “ancestral home”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Guided Practice:** I have sticky notes and a chart like the one on the board for all of you. I would like you to continue reading the first page and write “I wonder” or “why” questions as you read. We will discuss questions as a class and put them into the chart in the correct places.

**Collaborative Practice:** Now, with your shoulder partner, I’d like you to read on through the next page, generating questions as you read. Then, chart the questions on your paper and decide whether they are right-there questions or whether you’ll have to make an inference. If needed, make inferences together using the text as evidence.

**Independent Practice:** For the remainder of the essay, I’d like you to read on your own. You’ll need to generate at least 5 more questions, then chart them as we have done together on your own.

**Real-World application:** I will explain to students that asking questions while they read helps them engage with the text, fosters curiosity, and makes them creative thinkers as well as problem solvers—attractive qualities in nearly every profession.

**Assessment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student generated at least 5 questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions were meaningful and original</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student correctly charted questions as right there or inferential</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students found answers and/or completed inferences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategies Lesson 3**

**Monitoring Comprehension:**

How to know when you don’t know

**Kansas Content Standards addressed:**

**Standard 1**-The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum

**Benchmark 4:** The student comprehends a variety of text (narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive)
Indicator 4: Generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

**USD 501 standards addressed:**

LA.08.1.07 Generate and respond logically to a variety of questions to improve comprehension and enhance critical thinking skills.

**Resources:**


**Lesson Details:**

I will use the textbook selection entitled “Achieving the American Dream”, (persuasive text) an essay by Mario Cuomo that seeks to persuade the reader that America really is the land of promise, where dreams are fulfilled. Students will code text with the words IDK when they are confused by something, and with a lightbulb when they realize or construct meaning. Students will leave tracks of their thinking by adding to the sticky note the method with which they became “unstuck”

**Explicit Instruction:**

All readers experience reading a text and not knowing what they’ve read. Even bibliophiles find their minds wandering while reading, or reading a passage that doesn’t make sense to them. Because of this, we need strategies to fix-up meaning when it’s broken down. Before we can fix it, though, we have to know it’s broken. For this lesson, I will teach you to pay attention to the inner conversation that occurs when reading so that you will notice when meaning has broken down, and can fix it.

**Modeling:**

When I read, I use all the tools available to me. For instance, I pay attention to footnotes to find meaning of words and phrases I don’t know, I pay attention to words in italics, subheadings, captions, and use context clues to figure out meaning. Sometimes those things are not enough, and I become confused while reading a piece of text. I have taught myself to stop after every few sentences and check to see if I understand what I’ve read. I call these “mini-summaries.” I mentally review what I’ve read. I also ask myself questions like I wonder or why questions. When I don’t understand, I say that to myself, and try to figure out why. Sometimes I will go back and re-read. When I re-read, I pay attention to context clues. I listen to how the sentence(s) sounds to my inner voice to see if I can make sense of it. In the essay “Achieving the
American Dream,” the first sentences have so many words that are unfamiliar to me that I found myself stopping the reading and saying “Wait a minute.” Then I asked myself questions to see if I could figure out what I’d read. It’s a little like talking to yourself, but if you don’t do it out loud, no one will think you’re weird 😊 I asked myself “Who is Andrea Cuomo, because to me Andrea is a girl’s name. In this essay, Andrea asks Immaculata to marry (him or her?) I’ve never heard the name Immaculata, but because it ends in “a” which is feminine in Spanish, maybe she is the woman and Andrea is the man. If I couldn’t figure this out by going back, re-reading, and asking myself questions, I would mark the passage with a sticky note coded “IDK”, and come back to it later. Sometimes when I read on, meaning becomes clear. The only time I’ve really got a problem is if I don’t understand something, and keep right on reading anyway. That’s when I can find I’ve read several pages and still have no idea what I’ve read. It’s important to pay attention to your understanding as you read. We call that monitoring comprehension.

Guided Practice:
I will read part of the essay out loud, and continue the “think aloud” about my inner conversation as I read. Then, I will ask students to use their sticky notes and pay attention to and write notes on their own thinking as they read. what they read and the questions that they may have had. Application of strategy in authentic reading situations- I will discuss with the students that this is a very good strategy to use when they are reading their social studies and science textbooks and I will encourage them to use the strategy while they are reading those types of texts.

Collaborative Practice:
I will continue reading the essay, stopping periodically for students to turn to their shoulder partners and discuss their thinking and notes. I will ask several partners to discuss their thinking/notes with the whole group, and we will discuss how paying attention to this inner conversation while reading helps them understand what they’ve read and stay on track with the reading.

Independent Practice: Students will finish the article on their own and continue leaving tracks of their thinking on sticky notes. Students will then write a reflective piece on how using this strategy helped them comprehend what they’ve read.

Assessment-
I will collect the students’ sticky notes and reflective piece to ascertain their ability to use the strategy. I will use a rubric to grade the responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Points Possible**

- Students left tracks of their thinking including: questions, connections, inferences
  - **5**
- Students reflected on process and articulated what fix-up strategies they used, such as context clues or re-reading
  - **5**

**Real-world application:**

All readers get stuck sometimes. It’s important to pay attention when you get stuck by asking questions, and then using repair strategies such as re-reading to fix meaning, so that you understand what you have read.

**Strategies Lesson 4**

**Background Knowledge**

**Kansas Content Standards addressed:**

- **Standard 1:** The student reads and comprehends text across the curriculum
- **Benchmark 4:** The student comprehends a variety of text (narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive)
- **Indicator 3:** uses prior knowledge and content to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

**Resources:**


**Lesson Details:**

Before we begin reading the memoir, students will have viewed film clips and a PowerPoint about the holocaust. Students will be asked to write down questions about what they’ve seen
or the holocaust in general. The will then write what knowledge they have already about the questions they wrote, and leave a space to add new learning while they are reading the memoir.

**Explicit Instruction:**

How many of you know something about the holocaust? Many times when we read, we already have some knowledge about the topic we’re reading about. It’s important to continue asking questions before, after and during reading, so that we can correct any errors in what we thought we knew, and learn new information about what we’ve read. In this strategy you will learn how to ask questions before reading the text and then finding the answers to those questions. Before reading, you will write down questions you have about the holocaust. Then, you’ll write what you already know about the topic. During and after reading, you will write down any new learning you developed about the topic.

**Modeling:**

I will begin by writing down some questions I had before I read Night for the first time. I will also write questions I still have about the holocaust, such as: why didn’t the Jews fight back? Why didn’t the international community stop the Nazis sooner? And why did all the Nazi soldiers follow Hitler’s commands? Next, I will write down some information I think I might know in the next column. I know that Hitler carried out his plan slowly, starting by taking away Jews rights. I know that Germany lost WWI and Hitler used that to encourage the Nazis that it was their right to take more land and territory. And I know that Hitler used the Jews as a scapegoat for all Germany’s problems. Then I will begin reading the first 5 pages of the memoir. As I am reading, I will look for and point out answers to my questions. On page 3 I see that the Jews thought the war was almost at an end. They also didn’t think Hitler could accomplish what he said in the 20th century. They didn’t believe Moshe the Beadle’s warnings, and they didn’t want to leave their home to go to Palestine where they could have had sanctuary.

**Guided Practice:**

Before I read the memoir, I will ask them if they have any questions about the holocaust and I will add them to my chart projected from the document camera. As we are reading I will show them how I found the answers to some of my questions and then we will find the answers to their questions together.

**Collaborative Practice**

We will read the first chapter together and look for answers to our questions. Then as a class we will discuss the information we found.
Independent Practice:

We will fold a paper into thirds and write a question mark for questions they have, a lightbulb for information they already know, and a magnifying glass for things they want to find out.

Real-world application:

I will encourage students to use this strategy in literature circles when they have the role of investigator. I will tell them that investigators in all types of professions use this type of strategy to find information and solve problems.

Assessment:

I will use the three column sheet to assess students. I will use a 5, 3, 1 rubric to determine the quality of questions, the application of their prior knowledge, and their new learning.

Strategies Lesson 5
Summarizing Information

Kansas Content Standards addressed:

Standard 1: student reads and comprehends a variety of texts

Benchmark 4: The student comprehends a variety of text (narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive)

Indicator 9: paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts in logical order.

Resources:


Lesson Details:

The students will summarize the assigned reading and write a response.

Explicit Instruction:

You know it’s important to summarize what you’ve read periodically, so that you remember what you’ve read and your brain has time to process all the information. When you respond to what you’ve read in addition to summarizing, you are synthesizing. Synthesizing is
when your thinking changes and is added to. This is how readers construct meaning as they read.

**Modeling:**

I’m going to read a section from Night to you. I will then summarize it. Remember, summaries are the main ideas—not a lot of details, just the most important things that happened. Then, I will write my response to it. My response may include things I wonder about, things I pictured while reading, connections I made, and/or my opinions or feelings about what I’ve read.

**Guided Practice:**

Now let’s fold a piece of paper horizontally, and write summary at the top, and response at the bottom. I will read another section of Night, then we will summarize as a class. Once our class summary is done, you will then write a response. After the responses are written, we will share with a partner for discussion.

**Collaborative Practice:**

Partners will read, work together on summaries, and then write their own responses and compare.

**Independent Practice:**

Students will write their own summary/responses to the next section of reading.

**Real-world application:**

Synthesizing information adds to and changes your thinking. This is a skill necessary in most professions, and in every day life as new knowledge is acquired, old thinking patterns must give way.

**Assessment:**

I will read students’ summary/responses and grade them based on a rubric that assesses the quality of their summaries, and whether or not they included other strategies (visualizing, connections, I wonder questions, etc) in their responses.

**Strategies Lesson 6**

**What’s Really Important?**

**Kansas Content Standards addressed:**
**Standard 1:** Students read and comprehend a variety of texts

**Benchmark 4:** The student comprehends a variety of text (narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive)

**Indicator 2:** understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.

**Resources:**

Strategies for Constructing Meaning article in Prentice Hall Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes Silver Level textbook.

**Response:**

Students will read a non-fiction article. Students will understand the purpose of text features and how to use them to increase comprehension.

**Explicit Instruction:** Reading non-fiction requires a different set of skills than reading fiction. Non-fiction is arranged with features that help you determine what’s important while you read. Using these features can increase your comprehension, your note-taking skills, and your study skills.

**Modeling:**

When I read non-fiction, I first look at the text features. I read the subheadings, preview any vocabulary words that are underlined or footnoted, read the first sentence of paragraphs (called the topic sentence) and pay attention to any figures, diagrams, or captions. This helps me determine what the important information is. If I didn’t use these features, I could become overwhelmed by the amount of information, get frustrated, and give up. When I preview these text features, I will highlight them if I have a highlighter available, or write notes on sticky pages or in the margins.

**Guided Practice:**

Students will read the rest of the article and chart the text features in the chart provided. We will then discuss the text features as a class and fill in the chart with the reasons they are important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Subheadings</th>
<th>Captions,</th>
<th>Topic Sentences</th>
<th>Footnotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


**Diagrams and figures**

**Collaborative Practice:**
Students will work together to fill in chart and give explanations as to each features use/importance, way that it helps understand the text.

**Independent Practice:**
Students will complete a chart on their own and explain their thinking for choosing each feature.

**Real-world application:**
Text features help organize large amounts of information. Without text features, we can become overwhelmed by information. Text features help us pay attention to what’s important.

**Assessment:**
Rubric to assess students identification of text features and their paraphrases of their importance.

**Strategies Lesson 7**

**Visualizing**

**Kansas Content Standards addressed:**

Standard 1: Students will read and comprehend a variety of texts.

Benchmark 4:
Indicator:
understands the purpose of text features (e.g., title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.

**Lesson Details:**

I will read a section in the memoir Night and students will practice visualization.

**Explicit Instruction:**

I will begin reading from chapter 5 in our book. As I read I will stop and share with students what I visualize while I am reading. I finish reading the chapter about the conditions in the concentration camps. I tell students what I visualized the emaciated prisoners looked like, what it was like to sleep in the bunks, and how I picture the trenches they had to dig. I will use these visualizations to draw inferences and show students how to do this.

**Guided Practice:** I will then ask students to read the next chapter with me. I will ask them so stop and visualize what is being read. After we have made some visualizations I will have them infer why these things happen or why they are visualizing what they are. We will write these in the inference column. I will also ask them to write any facts that are important in this section of text. We will write these facts down in the facts column.

**Collaborative Practice:** Students will read the next section with a partner, stopping after every third paragraph to discuss visualizations and make inferences.

**Independent Practice:** Students will complete a two column worksheet on their own describing their visualizations on one side and the inferences they can draw from them on the other side. They will also need to pick the facts out of the text that they think are important to the text and write those in the facts at the bottom of the page.

**Real World Application:** Visualizing as you read creates pictures in your mind that help you engage in the text and make reading an enjoyable and memorable experience. When you get good at visualizing, you’ll become one of those people who say “the book was better than the movie.” 😊

**Assessments:**

In addition to their two column worksheets, I will ask students to make a detailed drawing of what they visualized. I have modeled this for them before, so they are familiar with creating drawings from visualizations.