Minilesson: Inner Conversations with the Author

Materials:
- Pair of texts for modeling (Dear Mr. Winston, p.227 and Ecology for Kids, p. 379 in Journeys)
- Making Connections across Genres anchor chart

Purpose: Thoughtful readers carry on inner conversations with the author as they compare and contrast a variety of attributes across a variety of texts.

TEKS: Fig. 19 F

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students for their ongoing work with a variety of genres, and praise them for their readiness to advance as readers. Remind students that strong readers have inner conversations with the author while reading, and that these inner conversations help to deepen their understanding of a text. Tell students that as readers of a variety of genres, they can build on those inner conversations by making connections between texts and between genres.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Remind students that today they will be learning how carry on inner conversations with the author in order to make connections between texts. Share a personal story that relates to the idea of making connections between two seemingly different texts.

Sometimes when I meet someone new, they will say or do something, and I will have this sudden thought. It sounds something like this, “Hey! This person reminds me of…” And I will know that my new friend is actually a lot like someone else I know. Or sometimes it goes the opposite way and I’ll think “Hmmm… This person really is very different from…” I have to be really listening and thinking carefully to notice these connections, but when I do, I really start to feel that I understand the person better. It’s very similar to reading across genres. Sometimes I’ll be reading something, and I will realize that it reminds me of something else I’ve read, even if it’s from a different genre. That’s making a connection.

Share the Making Connections across Genres anchor chart with the following sentence stems:

Readers Make Connections across Genres
- We pause to carry on an inner conversation with the author, noticing similarities and differences
  - The texts are similar because both…
  - The texts are different because…

Show students the familiar texts they will be working with today, and share with them how strong readers often begin with a plan or a purpose for reading. The purpose of reviewing the article Ecology for Kids is to remember some of its attributes, or special features, so that we can compare and contrast it with the letter Dear Mr. Winston. Review the article, pausing to note or summarize key points, such as the, setting, and important ideas. Next, show students the story, Dear Mr. Winston. Tell students that before you begin reading, you will adjust your purpose for reading; your new purpose is to connect the texts by having an inner conversation about the similarities and differences between the two. Begin rereading, pausing after the first page to think aloud about how you could connect this part of the text to the article.

Every so often, I stop to wonder how the texts are alike or different. I can see that both texts seem to take place in the current time, and not in the past or the future. So this is a connection. I’m also noticing a difference between the texts, because the article was sharing information about many different ecosystems, but Cara is writing to apologize.

Continue reading the following two paragraphs, and then pause to think aloud…

Now I’m wondering again if the story is similar to or different from the article. It seems to me that the narrator is telling a story about something that happened. This is different from the article, which includes lots of details about nature and ecosystems, but doesn’t tell a story. Even though this is a difference, it is a connection between the books.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Continue reading, pausing every so often and asking students to consider the possible connections between the article and the story. Invite them to turn and talk with a neighbor about the connections they see. Support conversations by encouraging the use of the sentence starters provided on the anchor chart.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that by carrying on these inner conversations to connect texts, they are going to create a deeper understanding of what they read. Encourage students to continue this work in their independent reading, by connecting their book to one of the texts used during today’s lesson.

Sticky Note/Reader’s Notebook Option:

The texts are similar because both…

The texts are different in the following ways...

Possible Conference Questions:
- How can you connect your independent reading book to the story or article we read together?
- How is your book similar to one of the texts we read together?
- How is your book different than one of the texts we read together in class?