

Grappling with Two Making Meaning Questions from the Field

By Jackie Jacobs | Categories: Making Meaning, From the Field, Implementation

Recently, the below two questions were posed by teachers using the *Making Meaning* program:

1. How did Collaborative Classroom come up with the questions asked in the *Making Meaning* lessons?
2. How do the questions correlate to all levels of the Bloom's Taxonomy questions?

My colleagues and I from our program development team would like to share some of the purposes behind the *Making Meaning* questions, the considerations the program development team uses for developing questions, and ways the questions support students with accessing analytic or text type questions.



The variable in *Making Meaning* lessons is the complexity of the texts that students engage with through discussions during the whole-class lessons and the texts the students are reading independently during Individualized Daily Reading (IDR). So while some questions may be similar from one unit or grade to another, the demand on the students' thinking increases as the complexity of the text increases.

The Purpose of the Making Meaning Questions

- The questions are intended to get students to actively think about texts and what they are learning from or about them.
- The questions are designed to be a model of the type of questions students should ask themselves as they are reading a given genre and the strategies being developed.
 - In the whole-class *Making Meaning* lessons, the questions support students with having communal discussions about texts and developing the comprehension strategy(ies) so that they can apply the learning to their independent reading.
 - During the whole-class discussions, the questions allow students to expand on one another's thinking and to use the text to confirm their thinking. This includes the students' use of the discussion prompts and the teacher's use of follow-

up probing questions.

Collaborative Classroom Development Considerations

When developing questions for *Making Meaning*, we:

- Ask questions that support, and are dependent on, the content and the lesson purpose.
 - Additional considerations:
 - The grade level and placement of the unit within the scope of that instructional year
 - The developmental appropriateness of the task within each grade level
 - The complexity of questions can vary based on where the lesson is within the instructional sequence of the day, week, and/or unit.
 - The text and task demand on student thinking
- Use open-ended questions:
 - To promote student thinking and to provide opportunities for a variety of responses
 - So that students at all ability levels have equal opportunities to answer the questions and share their thinking

Supporting Students with Accessing Analytic or Text Type Questions

The instruction in *Making Meaning* lessons introduces students to strategies they can use to more deeply comprehend the texts they read. By continually exposing students to questions they can ask themselves before, during, and after reading and by teaching them to self-monitor their comprehension as they read, we foster the skills that independent readers use when thinking about texts and when responding to text/analytic type questions they are likely to encounter as they advance in school.

In addition to the work done in the *Making Meaning* lessons, the *Reading Assessment Preparation Guide* in grades 3–6 is designed so that students can learn how to apply those strategies when answering the text and analytic types of questions that appear in assessments.

My learning

Grappling with these questions taught me something new about the *Making Meaning* lessons. The lessons are designed to support students in developing the act of making meaning of the text they are reading by overtly engaging them in the actions they would do in their own independent reading SO THAT they are prepared to answer the analytic or text type questions.

How are you planning and enacting the *Making Meaning* lessons so that the students are ready to answer analytic/text type questions?