

BOX 4.7

Using a Metacognitive Bookmark

PURPOSE

When teachers first model metacognitive conversation with a Think Aloud, many give students a bookmark for keeping track of the common kinds of thinking processes the teacher will be demonstrating.

Students can use this same bookmark as a scaffold for their own metacognitive conversations when practicing with a partner.

As a scaffold, its use should fade as students become more comfortable with metacognitive conversation routines.

PROCEDURE

- Give each student a copy of the bookmark and briefly review students' understanding of the various categories and examples.
- Explain that as you Think Aloud, you will model many of these. Ask students to listen for examples.
- Think Aloud, modeling metacognitive conversation.
- Invite students to describe some of the thinking processes you used.

Let students know that they can use the bookmark whenever they practice metacognitive conversation on their own and with classmates.

Sample Metacognitive Bookmark

Predicting

I predict . . .
In the next part I think . . .
I think this is . . .

Visualizing

I picture . . .
I can see . . .

Questioning

A question I have is . . .
I wonder about . . .
Could this mean . . .

Making connections

This is like . . .
This reminds me of . . .

Identifying a problem

I got confused when . . .
I'm not sure of . . .
I didn't expect . . .

Using fix-ups

I'll reread this part . . .
I'll read on and check back . . .

Summarizing

The big idea is . . .
I think the point is . . .
So what it's saying is . . .

Note: The bookmark is a sample only. Please adapt and revise it according to your subject area and student needs.

English teacher Doug Green³ reverted to literature instruction instead of thinking aloud—more than he is happy remembering:

I found myself falling into explaining the short story to them rather than talking about my thinking as I read the short story. It was really hard for me to discipline myself to do that because one of the thinking strategies is making connections to other things. And as soon as I start making connections to other things, I lead myself very quickly into explaining the short story instead of talking about my thinking techniques. That was hard to resist.

The idea of modeling a Think Aloud for her adult GED students gave technical college instructor Michele Lesmeister the jitters. As she explains in