

Program Overview

The *Making Meaning*[®] program is a reading comprehension curriculum for kindergarten through grade 6.* It is the first program of its kind to combine research-based best practices in reading comprehension with support for fostering your students' growth as caring, collaborative, and principled people.

We are well aware of the demands that elementary school teachers face in teaching reading today. Among those demands are the many activities that must be squeezed into the school day, the pressure of increased standardized testing, and a student population with increasingly diverse needs. The *Making Meaning* program offers maximum support for teaching reading comprehension in this environment. It is not another loosely defined program that adds hours of preparation to an already crammed to-do list. Rather, it is a fully fleshed-out curriculum that integrates easily into what you already do, incorporates an understanding of how real classrooms function, and teaches the specific strategies that students need to become effective readers, at a level and pace that is accessible to everyone.

New to the Third Edition

In this third edition of the *Making Meaning* program, we have added content, assessments, and technology features designed to support your teaching and your students' reading comprehension and social development. These include:

- Additional weeks of instruction for a total of 30 weeks at all grades
- New read-aloud titles
- Additional informational texts at all grades
- A new Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) strand at kindergarten, expanded support for IDR at grades 1–5, and new IDR mini-lessons at all grades
- New and revised Writing About Reading activities in which the students write in various ways in response to texts
- New and updated lessons and activities that address the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- A new *Student Response Book* at grade 1 and a revised and expanded *Student Response Book* at grades 2–5

* The *Making Meaning Third Edition* grade 6 program will be available in spring of 2016.

- Print and digital teacher’s manuals with links to professional development media and lesson resources
- A new *Assessment Resource Book* at kindergarten and new and expanded reading comprehension assessments at grades 1–5
- An online assessment tool, the DSC ClassView™ assessment app, for capturing and synthesizing assessment data
- A *Reading Assessment Preparation Guide* that prepares students for CCSS-based reading comprehension assessments at grades 3–5
- Online, interactive whiteboard activities
- Additional support for incorporating technology through tips, tutorials, mini-lessons, and extension activities
- An updated and expanded vocabulary supplement at all grades, the *Vocabulary Teaching Guide*

You will find more information about new content, assessments, and technology features in the pages that follow.

Unique Pedagogy

The unique pedagogy of the *Making Meaning* program has grown out of years of research on reading comprehension and child development. The lessons integrate instruction and practice in reading comprehension strategies with activities that foster the students’ social, emotional, and ethical development.

RESEARCH BASED/CLASSROOM TESTED

Research documents what many teachers have always known: the fact that a child can read a page aloud does not mean that he or she can understand it. Teaching children to make sense of what they read has been an enduring challenge. To address this challenge, the creators of the *Making Meaning* program have drawn on decades of research by people like P. David Pearson and Michael Pressley, who describe the strategies that proficient readers use naturally and the conditions that foster those strategies in children. The *Making Meaning* program also draws on portraits from many classrooms in which reading comprehension is successfully taught, such as those described by Lucy Calkins in her work with the Reader’s Workshop and by Ellin Keene and Susan Zimmerman in their book *Mosaic of Thought*. The *Making Meaning* program brings this research together in a unique, yearlong curriculum of easy-to-implement daily lessons. Reading comprehension strategies are taught directly through read-aloud experiences, and the students learn to use these strategies to make sense of their own reading, through guided and independent strategy practice.

In addition to a solid research base, *Making Meaning* has been shaped by pilot testing and discussions with a wide range of classroom teachers to assure that it is effective and that it fits into a typical classroom day. The *Making Meaning* program can replace an existing reading comprehension program or supplement basal instruction. It is designed to be accessible to all students, whatever their reading levels, and includes support for English Language Learners.

DUAL FOCUS: ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL/ETHICAL LEARNING

The *Making Meaning* program is also unique in its focus on teaching the whole child. Child development research tells us that children learn and grow best in environments where their basic psychological needs are met. Children need to feel physically and emotionally safe. They need to feel that they belong. They need to have a sense of themselves as autonomous and capable. Studies indicate that when these basic needs are met at school by helping students experience a sense of community, the students do better academically (as measured over time by grades and test scores), exhibit more pro-social tendencies, and show greater resistance to problem behaviors, such as drug use and violence (Durlack et al. 2011).

To this end, the *Making Meaning* program helps you create a classroom community in which your students feel a strong sense of belonging, psychological safety, autonomy, and responsibility to themselves and to the group. Teachers know that such an environment does not just happen; it must be deliberately created through setting up purposeful interactions among students, teaching them social and problem-solving skills, and helping them to integrate pro-social values into their lives. As you teach the *Making Meaning* lessons, you will see that the children’s ability to learn reading comprehension strategies is inextricably linked to their ability to work together and bring democratic values like responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, and helpfulness to bear on their behavior and interactions.*

TEACHER SUPPORT

The program is designed to help you develop and practice valuable teaching skills as you support your students’ growth as readers. Detailed, easy-to-follow lesson plans include suggestions for introducing and practicing cooperative structures, conducting read-alouds, facilitating discussions, assessing the class, and conferring with individual students. Teacher Notes and references to professional development media throughout the lessons explain the underlying pedagogy of various activities and provide examples of what might happen in the classroom. A regular “You might say” feature provides you with language you might draw on as you model your thinking about a strategy.

* To read more about the theoretical and research basis for the *Making Meaning* program, please refer to the Bibliography on page 555.

Program at a Glance

The pages that follow provide a detailed scope and sequence for teaching reading comprehension at your grade level. The daily lessons revolve around clearly defined teaching objectives and build in complexity as students move through the program.

A week of lessons typically begins with a read-aloud of an engaging text, followed by a class discussion of what the text is about. This same read-aloud text is used on subsequent days to teach the students a comprehension strategy and to give them guided practice with the strategy. The week usually ends with the students practicing the strategy independently by using classroom library books and discussing their thinking. Each lesson typically requires 20–40 minutes of classroom time, depending on the grade level. In addition to the lessons, the students participate in Individualized Daily Reading (IDR), during which they read texts at their appropriate reading levels independently for up to 30 minutes each day, depending on the grade level. For more information about IDR, see “Individualized Daily Reading (IDR)” on page xxxv.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The following comprehension strategies are taught in the *Making Meaning* program:

- Using schema/Making connections
- Retelling
- Visualizing
- Wondering/Questioning
- Using text features
- Making inferences
- Determining important ideas
- Analyzing text structure
- Summarizing
- Synthesizing

Not all strategies appear at each grade level. The program begins with the most developmentally appropriate strategies in the primary grades, and additional strategies are introduced in later grades. The table on the next page shows the development of the strategies across grades K–5.