

Understanding

What it is

Understanding occurs when new information and ideas are incorporated into a student's existing knowledge framework. Students link new ideas and information to prior knowledge and apply these in specific circumstances, appreciating underlying principles. Understanding is developed within particular contexts and allows students to elaborate on, make connections and ask questions about their new knowledge. Students are gradually able to generalise upon this knowledge and transfer it to new contexts.

Why it is important

Understanding is prerequisite for learning. Its flexibility allows students to engage critically and creatively with knowledge by making connections, explaining, inferring, predicting, speculating and problem solving. When a student understands, information is retained longer and can be built upon to acquire further understanding. Understanding also includes the realisation of what needs to be learned and allows students to be active in constructing their own course of learning.

Engaging personally

What it is

Students engage personally when they experience interest, pleasure and personal significance in texts and the ways they are constructed.

Engaging personally may include:

- personal identification with the characters, situations or ideas in a text
- the expression of personal voice
- pleasure in the text
- enjoyment of aesthetic qualities
- valuing texts
- recognition and appreciation of the power of language to express human experiences and communicate ideas.

Why it is important

Engaging personally with a text can facilitate a deeper critical and imaginative response to its representation of their wider world. Personal engagement with texts encourages students to express with discernment, confidence and with an authentic voice, ideas, opinions and values in their own compositions.

Connecting

What it is

Connecting is recognising relationships between texts and between texts and our own lives. Every text we encounter is considered against our previous textual experiences as we build up a breadth of knowledge and understanding about the world from texts. We connect the text to our own worlds and to the world of other texts in order to create meaning. As our encounters with texts extend we have more texts with which to read our world.

Texts can be connected in many different ways:

- through identifiable links to our own personal worlds
- through exploring common experiences
- through sharing the same context
- through sharing the same generic codes and conventions.

Why it is important

Making connections between texts forms a basis for comparing them and provides a different context in which to make judgements about each. Making connections also enriches students' understanding of each text, the worlds it inhabits and the way it is composed and responded to. Seeing connections is a source of delight and understanding how texts may connect forms the basis for students' own composing as they perceive possibilities through experimenting.

S5	Students use a range of strategies to discriminate nuanced meaning. In their responding and composing they transfer their knowledge of texts to new contexts.	Students' responses to and composition of texts demonstrate a personal understanding of the world based on their own ideas, their experience of texts and their experience of life. They project an authentic voice through different types of texts.	Students appreciate the impact of texts on each other. In their responding and composing they use the connections between texts to come to new understandings about how ideas are reinterpreted in different contexts.
S4	Students analyse texts and in their responding and composing explain information and ideas for particular audiences and purposes. They use their knowledge of texts to make generalisations about how texts work.	Students respond to and compose texts reflecting their widening world. They identify ways in which their own experiences, perspectives and contexts influence their responses.	Through responding and composing students make connections between information, ideas and texts. They compare texts to understand the effects of different choices of language, form, mode and medium for various audiences and purposes.
S3	In responding and composing students draw from a range of strategies to interpret information and ideas in texts. They recognise and explain how language and structures communicate ideas.	Students explore more formal and informal ways to express their personal responses, showing an awareness of the impact of their own and others' language choices.	Through responding and composing students closely compare aspects of language in and between texts to explore how texts may be connected.
S2	In responding and composing students use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meanings to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas.	Students identify particular elements of texts that are engaging and use these in their own composing. In their interpretations of texts they explore literal and inferred meanings. They distinguish aspects of their own perspective that shape their responses to and composition of texts.	Students discuss similarities and differences in texts from a range of cultures, considering ideas, characters and events drawn from their world and the world of texts. In their responding and composing they use and compare the language of written and spoken texts in different contexts.
S1	Through responding and composing students identify and interpret ideas and patterns in texts and make predictions about content and structure.	Students become aware that their choices and preferences for texts and authors are shaped by their own experience and interests. They share different views, infer meaning, express and justify their own opinions and extend their experiences of texts.	Students make responses to texts based on personal experiences. In their responding and composing they start to compare the purposes of texts and explore how the relationship of the visual to the written affects meaning.
ES1	Through their responding and composing students identify and interpret ideas and information in texts.	Students engage with texts for enjoyment and pleasure, expressing preferences and opinions. In their responding and composing they draw on their own feelings, experiences and culture.	Students make connections between a text and their own life. They identify the elements of a text and the relationship between words and images.

Engaging critically

What it is

Students engage critically with a text when they make judgements about a text based on systematic analysis. The kinds of judgements they make will depend on their approach to the text which brings with it assumptions about the nature of texts and ways of reading them. For example, if texts are seen as reflecting reality, evaluations about it will address issues of its truth in doing so and the way the text helps us understand human nature and our world. If texts are seen as products of power relationships, analysis of a text may be in terms of what lies at its centre and what is marginalised, evaluating the text in terms of how it suppresses certain interests and promotes others. Critical engagement involves making judgements and recognising the critical framework through which these judgements are made.

Why it is important

Students' critical skills will help them evaluate the multiplicity of texts that they encounter in their lives. This will allow them to understand what is valued in society and their culture, so providing certain kinds of access and rewards, to themselves and to society as a whole. To steer through the sometimes diverse values they encounter and the speed of change of today's world they also need to understand how we make value judgements and how values change over time.

Experimenting

What it is

Experimenting is the process of applying knowledge and skills creatively and critically in order to develop deep understanding. Students manipulate language, form, mode and medium to express ideas, values and opinions in innovative and meaningful ways.

Students need to experiment imaginatively with language in playful ways. Through the exploration of language and ideas they develop an appreciation for aesthetic qualities of texts and understand the power of language to transform and re-interpret experiences. Experimenting enables students to stimulate and express their imagination and natural curiosity to make connections in their world.

Why it is important

Imagination is used to predict, speculate and hypothesise to create new understandings about the wider world that is complex and changing. A sense of personal style and the confidence to create new texts will develop through the processes of experimenting. Students become the creators of meaning, not just the recipients of information.

Reflecting

What it is

In reflecting, students think about what they have learned, how they have learned, what they feel about the learning. They draw conclusions about their own learning processes and the value of their learning.

Reflecting can involve understanding the demands of a task and its learning context, strategies for completing that task in its context and the way one's own personal capacities are best used for a successful outcome. In English, there is the added dimension of articulating one's own processes of responding to and composing texts.

Why it is important

Reflecting on one's own learning process develops a student's capacity of learning how to learn, a foundation for living and working. Knowing how one responds to verbal and visual texts and why one does so in particular ways is an important skill for an engaged and critical citizenry.

Through reflecting a student can develop knowledge of their own learning style and the development of a range of learning skills such as collaborative skills, independent investigation, monitoring one's own progress or evaluating one's own learning.

S5	Through responding and composing students critically analyse and evaluate the ways in which texts represent different ideas and perspectives. They recognise the effect of context on meaning.	Students compose critical and imaginative responses to texts. They adopt, combine and adapt conventions of genre and style to experiment with textual concepts and with ideas drawn from texts to come to deeper understandings.	Students broaden their understanding and use of metacognitive processes to choose and develop certain strategies appropriate for particular situations. They extend their range of reflective practices to consider how their own context influences the ways they respond, compose and learn.
S4	Through responding and composing students explore the different ways texts can be interpreted. They identify ways in which composers position the audience to accept particular views and perspectives and make judgements about these.	Students use, adapt or subvert particular textual conventions across modes and media to experiment with a range of meanings and textual concepts.	Students begin to personalise their metacognitive processes, identifying their own pleasures and difficulties in responding, composing and learning. They are able to plan and monitor their work, articulate their own learning processes and begin to assess which learning processes may suit them and will suit particular tasks and why.
S3	Through responding and composing students recognise that texts can influence and position responders. They analyse and evaluate different ideas and values in texts.	Students experiment with text structures, language features and textual concepts to adapt texts and ideas for different purposes and in a range of modes and media.	Students identify, use and discuss text processing strategies and assess the development of their own skills against agreed criteria. They consider strategies for collaborating with their peers and reflect on their learning achievements.
S2	Through responding and composing students interpret texts and justify opinions.	Through working with textual concepts students identify aspects of texts that engage an audience and use them to experiment in their own compositions in different modes and media.	Students are aware of processes of composition and can use this understanding to develop criteria for judgement of their own texts and those of their peers. They appraise their own work in order to refine its effectiveness and correct errors. They also consider their preferences in reading and learning.
S1	Through responding and composing students distinguish between fact and opinion.	Students create and recreate texts imaginatively in a range of modes and media using their understanding of textual concepts.	Students become aware that their own experiences and preferences shape their compositions and their responses to text. They articulate some approaches to responding, composing and assessing texts and ways to learn.
ES1		Students use their imagination and understanding of textual concepts to represent aspects of their experience, experimenting with different modes and media.	As students are learning to read, write and interact with adults and their peers, they are made aware of their learning processes. How to learn is made as important to them as what to learn as they develop strategies for reading, writing, speaking and listening individually and in groups.