

## Learning Project 2 Reading Drama

### Inquiry Activity 2-1: Passage Reading Strategy – Predicting

Predicting is a reading strategy learners can use to better understand and engage with what they read. It is a metacognitive skill that can be used with any type of reading material. It is introduced here with drama, as a drama presents a more natural opportunity to predict what will happen, like we do with our favorite television show. Throughout the Reading Learning Projects, the reading strategy is always in bold italics. You can model the strategy for your learners by using the Think Alouds found in Appendix B.

*(Note: Italicized portions should be directed to students.)*

#### 1. Identifying the Problem (Reading Passage only for Practice Test Items #s 17, 18, 19, and 20 PA.)

*Look over the passage and the title. From the title, what do you think the passage is about and what are you being asked to do? (Don't read word for word.)*

*What are you being asked to read? What will you have to do to be successful in this Activity?*

*Have you seen passages like this before? Where? When? Why?*

Reading drama is unique, in that some of what is read is directed towards one audience, those who are attending the play. These words are meant to be heard, rather than read. The other material is written to the actors and production staff, directions that they subsequently incorporate into the performance through their actions and interpretations. Reading a play removes it from its ideal presentation, which is performance.

*Jot down your thoughts or share them with your partner.*

#### **DOES CORIE'S MOTHER LIKE THIS APARTMENT?**

[Corie's mother, Mrs. Banks, staggers in the door, bouncing off it and coming to rest paralyzed against the railing. While she is regaining her breath, Corie brings her a glass of water and leads her to a suitcase so that she can sit.]

**MOTHER:** I really had no intention of coming up, but I had a luncheon in Westchester and I thought, since it's on my way home, I might as well drop in for a few minutes...

**CORIE:** On your way to New Jersey?

**MOTHER:** Yes, I came over the Whitestone Bridge and down the Major Deegan Highway and now I'll cut across town and onto the Henry Hudson Parkway and up to the George Washington Bridge. It's no extra trouble.

[Corie tells her they want her to come visit them on Friday after the furniture is there. Mrs. Banks makes light of the lack of furniture and stands up with the intention of praising the apartment. However, its bleakness stops her cold and all she can do is force out a lie through gritted teeth.]

**MOTHER:** *(Stunned)* Oh, Corie... it's... beautiful.

**CORIE:** You hate it...



**MOTHER:** (*Moves up toward windows*) No, no... It's a charming apartment. (*trips over platform*) I love it.

**CORIE:** (*Rushes to her*) You can't really tell like this.

**MOTHER:** I'm crazy about it. I love it...

**CORIE:** Do you really, Mother? I mean are you absolutely crazy in love with it?

**MOTHER:** Oh, yes. It's very cute... (*Choking on her words*) And there is so much you can do with it.

**CORIE:** I told you she hated it.

**MOTHER:** (*Moves toward bedroom landing*) Corie, you don't give a person a chance. At least let me see the whole apartment.

**PAUL:** This is the whole apartment.

[Mrs. Banks asks to see the bedroom, and Corie shows her a tiny room at one side of the apartment. Her mother's spirit fails, but she tries to keep a smile on her face as Corie explains how she is going to use it.]

**MOTHER:** (*At bedroom door*) That's a wonderful idea. And you can just put a bed in there.

**CORIE:** That's right.

**MOTHER:** How?

[Corie explains that an oversize single will fit in the room, and Mrs. Banks is appalled at the thought of Paul and Corie sleeping in such cramped conditions. Still she tries not to show her despair.]

**MOTHER:** It's a wonderful idea. Very clever...

**CORIE:** Thank you.

**MOTHER:** Except you can't get to the closet.

**CORIE:** Yes you can.

**MOTHER:** Without climbing over the bed?

**CORIE:** No, you have to climb over the bed.

**MOTHER:** That's a good idea.

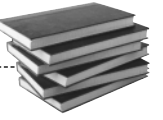
**CORIE:** (*Leaves the bedroom, crosses to ladder and climbs up*) Everything's just temporary. As they say in McCall's, it won't really take shape until the bride's own personality becomes more clearly defined.

Copyright © 1963 by Neil Simon. Reprinted by permission of William Morris Agency, Inc., on behalf of the author.

## **2. Becoming Familiar with the Passage**

Pre-reading strategies: Becoming familiar with the passage. Four pre-reading strategies are introduced and used consistently to help the learner develop the pre-reading skills for use with any reading they might do. The pre-reading strategies are:

- **Preview the Passage**
- **Activate Prior Knowledge**
- **Consider/Build Interest**
- **Set a Purpose**



Resist over-explaining the strategies. Encourage learners to answer the questions for each passage and allow them to come to their own insights about pre-reading.

**Scan the passage and ask yourself questions like the following as the first step to understanding the passage.**

**Preview the Passage:** *What do you see? How is the passage organized? What kind of type do you see? What kind of punctuation is used? What is in bold, and what is not? What do these things tell you about how you are supposed to read this passage?*

The inclusion of stage directions provides the opportunity to recognize that some areas are read in different ways; dialogue is at one level and directions or summaries are at another. This awareness can help some students see reasons for differing strategies. Students should also understand that stage directions are in parentheses, and summaries of the action or dialogue are within the brackets.

**Activate/Build from Prior Knowledge:** *From reading the title, what do you already know about the topic of the passage? Have you ever read a play before?*

This particular passage does not identify the play as *Barefoot in the Park*. Some people may have seen the movie, which plays on television relatively frequently. Author Neil Simon is identified briefly only in the copyright line. Many may be familiar with other work he has written.

**Consider/Build Interest:** *Are you interested in the topic of this play? How do you like reading plays?*

**Set a Purpose:** *The purpose is to read the passage, **predict** what will happen next, and answer the question, “Does Corie’s mother like this apartment?”*

### 3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

**Planning:** *Determine whether you want to work individually, with a partner, or in a small group.*

When learners choose to work alone and then share with a group, they are engaging with cooperative learning. When learners choose to do the work and the thinking together, they are engaging in collaborative learning.

**Assigning:** *Plays are meant to be performed. Look at how many parts there are, and how many people would be needed to read aloud the individual roles. Will you read aloud in pairs or in groups? Determine who will start reading, how you will make predictions during the reading, and how you will keep track of whether the predictions were accurate.*

**Doing the Work:** *As you read the passage, do the following:*

**Clarify:**

**Clarifying** is a reading strategy used with every passage. Other strategies are introduced with each new passage.

*Read the passage. Find and mark any words you do not know. See if the passage gives you enough information to **clarify** the meaning of those words. If not, find the meaning by asking someone or looking it up.*

*Were there any places in the passage where you did not understand what was going on?*

**Predict:**

*From the title, **predict** what you think this will be about. Read a portion of the text and decide where to stop. Did the things you **predicted** from the title happen? If not, what happened instead?*

*Before reading more, make further **predictions** about what will happen next. Pick a place to stop. Did the things you **predicted** happen? If not, what happened instead?*

*Continue doing this until you have completed reading the selection.*



#### **4. Sharing with Others**

*Telling other people what you know helps you to understand the material better. So take this opportunity not only to share the knowledge, but also to learn it more completely.*

***Small Groups:** Compare your **predictions** with others in the group. Think about each **prediction** you made. What information in the text caused you to make that **prediction**? How did it work out?*

*Discuss as a group how keeping in mind the purpose for reading the passage (**predicting**) helped you to read and understand the passage better.*

***Whole Class:** Report to the class the answer to the title question and all the different **predictions** of the group and the group's suggestions for a plan to **predict** as you read a passage.*

*Take notes on any different answers and comments the other groups had.*

#### **5. Reflecting, Extending, and Evaluating**

***Reflecting:** Think about how well you understood the work you did. (A group or instructor-led activity)*

*Here are some questions to start you thinking about the experience you just had. Thinking about what you have experienced is part of the learning process. When the focus is only on the answer, you don't get much time to think about what you learned.*

*How did the steps of becoming familiar and then doing the work help you to better understand the passage when you read it? Explain.*

*If you were not interested in the passage, what did you do? How does being interested or not interested in the passage affect your reading?*

*Look back at Step 3. If you were telling someone else how you **predict** as you read, what words would you use to describe what you do?*

*How did **predicting** help you with your reading?*

*When your **predictions** did not happen, what did you do?*

*How often do you think good readers see their **predictions** occur?*

***Predicting** becomes the map by which readers can try to anticipate what is going to happen. Good readers often find that their **predictions** are not accurate, but they continue to anticipate what might happen as they incorporate the new information into their reading. Readers may find that there is not always enough detail, and the details might change, but **prediction** will provide a flexible plan that can be a guide.*

*In this case, from the first view of the character, we know that Mrs. Banks is distressed by the apartment. Nothing is said in the passage about the fact that the apartment is a fifth-floor walk-up, but we can see that getting there is a challenge.*

*From her first speech, we know she is curious about her daughter's new life. What the passage does not make clear is that the play is much more about Corie and Paul than Corie and her mother.*

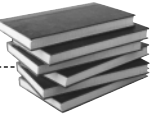
***Extending:** Extend what you learned to new situations.*

*In extending, you are being asked to transfer the information presented in the Practice Test passage to other information or situations.*

*Do you read any plays? If yes, what kind?*

*How are television shows like plays?*

*Write some questions the GED test might ask about this passage.*



Financial analysts, writers, fortune tellers, TV commentators, and weather forecasters all practice professions where people make a living by making **predictions**. Would you like to do that? Why?

Your facilitator will supply some more excerpts from a play. Select another passage and try **predicting** what will happen in that passage. Share your **predictions** with someone else.

Report back how **predicting** with a new passage was similar to or different from the previous passage.

**Evaluating:** Assess what you learned and how you learned it.

**In this last step, you get a chance to review the methods used to learn. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions; it is your chance to look more closely at your learning style and the opportunity to state how you benefited or didn't benefit from the content and/or the methods presented in this IA.**

What did you learn from this Inquiry Activity?

What parts of the activity worked best for you? Explain.

What parts did not work well for you? Explain.

What parts of this Inquiry Activity will you use when taking the GED test? Why?

How did reading this way make you feel?

