

Experience Text Relationship

What is ETR and why is it important?

Experience Text Relationship (ETR) (Au, 1979) is a strategy that helps students connect their own experiences with those presented in a reading passage.

How can I use ETR with my students?

Ask students a question that prompts them to think about a personal experience similar to the one they will encounter in the reading. Encourage them to talk about their experiences, with a partner, in small groups, or as a class. Explain that they will be reading a story or informational text that pertains to those experiences.

The following is an example of ETR for the story *Sing Down the Moon*.

Teacher: Were you ever forced to do something that you didn't think was fair? What was it?

Student 1: I had to change schools because we moved. I didn't want to leave my friends.

Student 2: Yes, we had to stay in our room last year and miss a movie because our class was not behaving and doing work.

Student 3: I've had to stay in and take care of my brother when my mom had to work and no one was around to watch him.

Teacher: How we react to a situation can make it easier or harder to handle. For example, if we think to ourselves and say, "I'll make the best of the situation until I can change it," instead of becoming angry about it, we often are able to handle it better and think of alternative plans for the future. We're going to begin reading a book called *Sing Down the Moon* in which a Navajo girl, Bright Morning, finds herself in some terrible situations that she has no control over. How she reacts makes all the difference in the outcomes. Think about how you reacted to the experiences you just described as you read about Bright Morning.