

# The Outcomes of Understanding

## Cognitive evidence (children think aloud) of understanding and engagement *in narrative text*

- 1 Readers experience empathy.** We sense that we are somehow in the book. Empathy can include:
  - **character empathy** in which we feel we know the characters, experience the same emotions, stand by them in their trials
  - **setting empathy** in which we feel a part of the setting
  - **conflict empathy** in which we experience the internal and external conflict as if firsthand.
- 2 Readers experience a memorable emotional response.** We sense that what we feel may be part of our emotional life for a long time, and we may feel moved to take action to mitigate a conflict in the world.
- 3 Readers experience the aesthetic.** We find particular aspects of a book very compelling. We feel a desire to linger with or reread portions of the text we find beautiful, well written, surprising, humorous, or moving.
- 4 Readers ponder.** We feel a desire to pause and dwell in new facets and twists in the text. We may want to reread to think more about certain ideas.
- 5 Readers find themselves thinking about the book when they're not reading.** We generate new ideas and imagine new possibilities in characters' lives; our ideas are original, but related to the text.
- 6 Readers advocate and evaluate.** We may follow one character or plot element more intensively and may have the sense of being "behind" the character(s) or narrator. We want events to evolve in a particular way.
- 7 Readers recognize patterns and symbols.** We may experience a moment of insight or begin to use our knowledge of literary tools to recognize themes, motifs, as well as symbols and metaphors in stories.
- 8 Readers extrapolate from details in the text.** We arrive at global conclusions from focal points in the text. These conclusions may reach beyond the scope of the text to other people, events, settings. We may feel an urge to take action to solve a problem or act on an issue in our community.
- 9 Readers evaluate** the author's intentions, values, and claims. We actively study the author's style and may choose to replicate it in our writing. We are aware of how the author manipulates our thinking with tools such as diction, foreshadowing, and metaphor. We sometimes argue with the author. We discern and evaluate the author's success in making the book credible, and we are attuned to ways in which the author affirms or changes our beliefs, values, and opinions.
- 10 Readers remember.** We develop a sense of permanence that comes with deeply understanding something. We know that we'll be able to use a concept we understand in a new situation.

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# The Outcomes of Understanding

## Cognitive evidence (children think aloud) of understanding and engagement in conceptual learning (content areas) and expository text

- 1 Learners imagine themselves in real-world situations, immersed in ideas.** We have compelling questions. We take on the role of scientist, social scientist, mathematician.
  - We begin to understand thought leadership. We explore and seek to understand the lives of those who have made significant contributions to a field and begin to imagine how we might make contributions.
  - We understand the problems that led to discoveries and new solutions in the scientific, technological, or social scientific world. We have a sense of the elements that make a situation problematic and some sense of the steps to be taken to solve the problem.
- 2 Learners experience a memorable emotional response.** We feel a passion to learn more or compassion for others who may be affected by a problem, and we may be moved to take action to mitigate a conflict in the world.
- 3 Learners experience the aesthetic.** We feel a sense of wonder about the complexities and nuances related to a concept we are learning. We may feel compelled to reread portions and dig more deeply into the topic.
- 4 Learners revisit and rethink.** We choose to reread or explore other texts to learn more about a concept. We feel that we want to review and rethink a concept.
- 5 Learners generate their own hypotheses and theories about why and how things happen in the natural and social world.** We check those hypotheses against those that have been tested.
- 6 Learners direct their energy to comprehending to a few ideas of great import.** We develop a sense of what matters most, what is worth remembering, and we have the confidence to focus on important ideas rather than details that are unimportant to the larger text. We evaluate the information and make decisions about credibility or bias in what we read.
- 7 Learners recognize patterns and text structures including:**
  - **Cause/effect.** We use our background knowledge to discern how events affect each other.
  - **Comparisons and contrasts.** We develop a sense of how concepts are similar and different.
  - **Chronology.** We sense the general order of development or the progression of a series of ideas.
  - **Problem/solution.** When a problem is introduced, we begin to consider solutions and/or to anticipate solutions that may be presented in the text. We anticipate new problems and solutions related to earlier ones.
- 8 Learners create schema.** We realize how newly learned concepts “fit” into existing background knowledge. We know that we can make sense in relation to what is already known—that our existing knowledge is accurate or inaccurate (and needs to be revised). We look to a variety of sources to complete schema when we recognize that it is missing.
- 9 Learners recognize the influence of beliefs/values/opinions.** We may experience a sense of affirmation of existing beliefs/values/opinions and/or sense newly developing beliefs/values/opinions related to the text. We can give evidence to support them.
- 10 Learners remember.** We develop a sense of permanence that comes with deeply understanding something. We know that we’ll be able to use a concept we understand in a new situation.

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This “Outcomes of Understanding” chart is an auxiliary resource referenced in Ellin’s article entitled “Going Beyond Motivation to Engagement: Small Distinctions Make All the Difference” featured at [www.heinemann.com/pd/journal](http://www.heinemann.com/pd/journal).