

# Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to  
Accelerate Student  
Learning

## Companion Guide

Chapter 6: Learning Connections  
Introduction



## Chapter 6

### Learning Connections

Making connections between new information and pre-existing knowledge is the foundation of student learning. Within the science of learning, this process is known as "elaboration" (Weinstein, 2018). Students intentionally associate new content with other memories or interests to help them learn and remember that content. Making strong connections to the content also paves the way for deeper levels of thinking. As students integrate their learning with existing knowledge, they become more interested in the content and find more meaning and value in it. This sense of utility then allows them to progress more successfully through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Learning connections also help improve student outcomes and long-term success. Students who make powerful connections to the content will recognize how that content can benefit them and will seek to continue learning for their own development (Crockett & Churches, 2016). Conversely, students who aren't able to connect to what they're learning will struggle to see the relevance of it. According to recent findings, 60% of middle and high school students believe their classes aren't helping them understand what's happening in their everyday lives. That's why learning connections in the classroom are so important. Learning becomes more purposeful when students can recognize how it aligns with their needs or goals. And when students see the purpose of their learning, they're more likely to be motivated to learn the knowledge and skills they will need for future success.