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**Bridging Exercises for Our Weaker Students on, “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers and “Thank You M’am” by Langston Hughes**

The Bridging Exercise is an essential element of any literature program.  We  are asking our students to do five essential steps which involve; reading comprehension, the higher order thinking skill of making connections between new information and material already covered and writing a coherent paragraph or two. For our weaker EFL students we must often bring in new information connected to the text which is more concrete and less abstract. For example,  biographical information about the author or the time in which he/she lived is often used in a bridging exercise.  For our weaker students we may need to give them a formula for how to build a bridging answer.  Remember,  the following steps will help students to answer the bridging question:

1. Read the new information and using your dictionary look up any words you don’t know  and make sure you understand what the new information says.

2. Begin writing the first sentence  or two of your answer by explaining what the new information means.

3.  In the next sentence or two explain how the new information connects to the story or poem that we read in class.

4. Bring an example,**from the story/poem,** which supports your answer for number three (how the new information connects to  the poem/story).

5.  Write a concluding sentence,  ” In conclusion we can see how this new information connects to our story/poem because ….”

Below are some ideas for Bridging Questions and possible answers on two stories which appear in the 4 point Literature Module books. It is also enjoyable to create your own bridging questions and I  encourage you to write possible answers  for the questions before giving them to your students. Remember you can always change the language to make it more applicable to your students.

**“The Treasure of Lemon Brown”  By Walter Dean Myers**

1) “Sometimes, something hurts you real bad and you get used to it, like being hurt becomes part of who you are.”  
― [Walter Dean Myers](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/13291.Walter_Dean_Myers)

How does this quotation connect to the story?

Possible answer:

The above quotation from Walter Dean Myers means that, sometimes something hurts you so much and  you get so used to it that it can become who you are as a person. This connects to our story, “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” because Lemon Brown was so hurt by the death of his son that he could not be anything but a homeless person holding onto the newspaper stories that he gave his son who was killed in the War. For example, we learn why he doesn’t have work and he is homeless because he says that when his son died in the War” it broke his heart”. In conclusion, we see the connection between this quotation and this story because Lemon Brown is so hurt by  the loss of his son that he is ” used to it”.  A big part of his life is now guarding the newspaper articles, about his life, which are the last things he has from his son, his “treasure”.

2)  “Reading has changed in my lifetime. When I was a child, my father could not read, but he was strong.  With poor reading skills you could still find employment; you could work in a factory. Today you can’t do that. Today reading is like air. You have to be able to read to find a job. You have to read more and more in your day-to-day life. “

Walter Dean Myers

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/myersw/transcript>

How does this quotation connect to our story?

Possible answer:

The new information tells us that Walter Dean Myers feels that it is very important to learn how to read if you want to have a job today. It used to be, in his father’s day that you could still work if you had poor reading skills, but today you can’t do that. This quotation  connects to our story, “The Treasure of Lemon Brown”, because in the story, Greg, the boy who becomes Lemon Brown’s friend, is not allowed to play basketball if he gets a bad grade on his report card. His father explains to him how important it is to do well in school.  At the end of the story he learns from Lemon Brown that everyone has a treasure that they want to pass down to their children. The “treasure” his Father wants to pass on to him is the importance of learning so he will have a future. For example, his father tells him how he had to leave school at 13 and he wants him to take the chances he never had and do well in school. In conclusion, this quotation connects to our story because Walter Dean Myers and Greg’s father believe in the importance of learning to have a good job and a good life.