Building the Concepts of Cause-and-Effect Relationships

Engagement, rather than compliance, leads to lasting learning. However, true engagement requires teachers to shift paradigms and create the conditions for students to actively engage in the learning process. Teachers can implement certain structures and activities in which students not only engage in learning, but also build executive function skills. For some existing activities, a few modifications will enable students to engage with the content more actively. Alternatively, teachers may need to design new activities addressing targeted skills and/or content.

"Everyday life is filled with *cause-and-effect* relationships. Mastering this concept and using it strategically can lead to great success in life and career, as it is an important foundational skill for engagement with content and, relatedly, solving real-world problems. In order to grapple with content to gain understanding, students need to understand *cause-and-effect relationships*. The good news is that they exist practically everywhere; and they're not limited to academic content."

— Dr. Nancy Sulla, *Building Executive Function: The Missing Link to Student Achievement*

Purpose: To support students in identifying cause-and-effect relationships within academic content

Directions for Teachers:

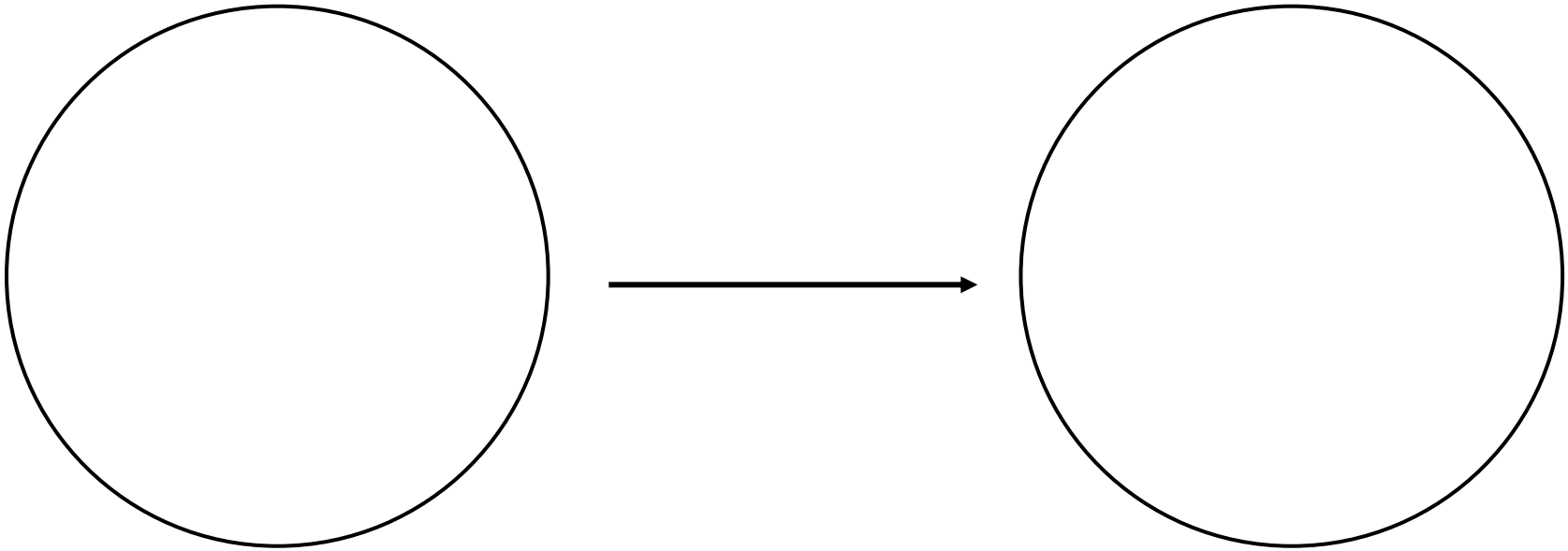
1. Think through the academic content you are teaching. (You may also choose to complete this activity based on behavior expectations.)
2. Identify causes and effects within the content you are teaching.
3. Write the causes and effects that you identified on cards or slips of paper. If your students are non-readers, use pictures to communicate the causes and effects.
    - Depending on the grade level you teach as well as the executive function abilities of your students, you may choose to color-code the causes one color and the effects another.
    - Separate the causes and effects into small bags or envelopes. Label the bags or envelopes **causes** and **effects**.
4. Create a direction sheet or video for the students, instructing them to place a cause in the left circle with the matching effect in the right circle.
5. Once students understand the concept of cause and effect, they may begin generating their own ideas using subject-area content, books, events, behaviors, etc.
6. Students may log their ideas in a cause-and-effect journal or a digital portfolio, such as Seesaw.
7. Once students have mastered basic cause-and-effect relationships, they can advance to a more complex application using the three circles (located on page 3) and/or generating predictions and "what if" scenarios.

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Cause and Effect

Cause

Effect

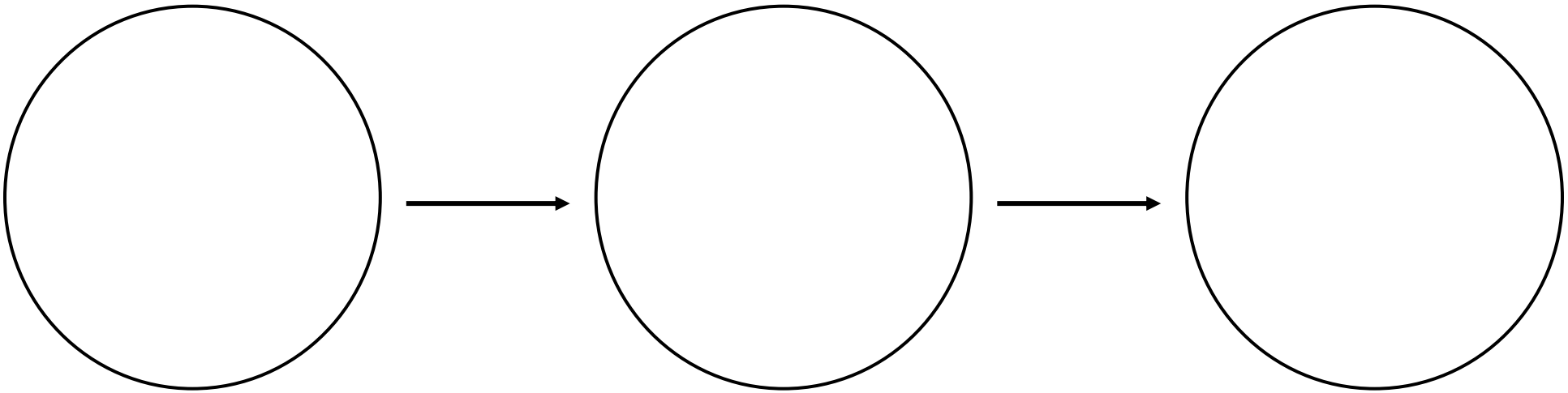


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Cause and Effect

Cause **Effect**



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