**Coaching Objective:**

* **Teachers will understand the importance of:**
  + **Activating prior knowledge**
* **Teachers will know how to introduce lessons in a way that links the information to the students’ backgrounds, and engages and focuses students on the lesson**

The teachers in Middletown NY are already focusing on the implementation of the lesson planning and delivery framework outlined by Jane Pollock in *Improving Student Learning One Teacher at a Time*. Coaching sessions are designed to explore and introduce classroom strategies and activities that will *make each step more accessible to English language learners*. The SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) provided guidance for best practice.

**Activating Prior Knowledge**

In order to make the classroom environment best suit learners’ needs, Pollock explains:

“The learning environment needs to provide a setting that incorporates stability and familiarity. It should be able to satisfy the mind’s enormous curiosity and hunger for discovery, challenge and novelty. Creating an opportunity to challenge our students to call on their collective experiences is essential. Through this process we move students from memorizing information to meaningful learning and begin the journey of connecting learning events rather than remembering bits and pieces. Prior knowledge is an essential element in this quest for making meaning.”

Research has shown how important APK is in increasing comprehension. There are numerous simple strategies that teachers can use to prompt prior knowledge and introduce new concepts for students.

**Some suggested activities for APK:**

* **Pictures or objects**
* **Stories or analogies**
* **Summary or review**
* **Questions and hypotheses**
* **Partner-based work**

At Maple Hill, some teachers would like more on how to "create curiosity and hunger" in their students. Chorley and MHS are discussing possible student mentoring pairs, we will know more about this next time we meet.

**Resources:**

**Sample (free) SIOP lesson plans: http://www.cal.org/siop/resources/lessonplans.html**