**Connecting the known to the unknown**

When we hear, read, see, or experience new information, we search our brains to see if we know anything that would confirm or reject it. If we don’t find anything, we look for something similar; then we connect this new information to it and revise our knowledge as our understanding develops.

As you read (or listen or watch) the material for each class, think about what you already know, whether from previous classes, your own reading or research, or from life experience. Think about the material in the context of one or more of the following:

* An example from your life or from the life of someone you know that illustrates the concept.
* Something from the news or other media that relates to something in the material.
* An experience you or a friend has had that might help others in the class understand a concept.
* Related to the material, something that you don’t yet understand or that you need help with and about which others in the class might have some wisdom to share with you.
* Based on your life experience, some indication that a concept might not apply to you and your family or group in the same way it is presented as applying to the majority of people.
* A specific way in which your previous learning or experience directly agrees with or conflicts with the material.
* Based on your previous knowledge and acquired skill, an alternate way you could approach a problem or issue.
* How might this information help you solve a problem or address an issue in another class or at work, or in your life in general?
* What might be another way to explain something, different from the explanation in the textbook?

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