

USING GUIDED READING TO TEACH FOR COMPREHENDING AND FLUENCY

The ultimate goal in guided reading is to teach the students to use reading strategies independently so that they can read texts and discuss them critically.

—NEW ZEALAND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Guided reading plays a particular and very important role in reading workshop. Its purpose is to help readers develop systems of strategic actions for processing increasingly challenging texts. Extensive reading, even in connection with individual conferences, as important as it is, will not necessarily produce systematic and continuous reading progress. Reading minilessons, while also important, are not sufficient. Most students require systematic small-group reading instruction. They need to learn how to read, with comprehension and fluency, across a gradient of texts that makes ever increasing demands. In our view, this means they need teaching.

The discussion here does not go into detail about the “nuts and bolts” of guided reading instruction: our books *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Students* and *Guiding Readers and Writers: Teaching Comprehension, Fluency, and Content Literacy* provide a great deal of detailed information about this instructional approach. We will start with some brief descriptions but move to the central goal of small-group instruction: teaching for comprehending and fluency.

THE ROLE OF GUIDED READING IN READING WORKSHOP

Guided reading is an instructional approach in which you bring together a small group of students who are similar enough in their reading development that they can be taught together for a period of time. You select a particular text that provides opportunities for them to expand their processing powers.

Within reading workshop, you can provide this small-group instruction while the other students engage in silent, independent reading or writing in a reader’s notebook. For children in kindergarten and first grade, you may want to

provide a variety of meaningful literacy experiences at centers while you meet with the guided reading groups. Alternatively, you can give them two or three specific literacy tasks to complete while you are providing guided reading instruction. They can work at these activities at their own pace.

A guided reading lesson has the following characteristics:

- You work with readers who are alike enough in their reading development and can be taught in a small, temporary group.
- The group is not static; its composition will change periodically according to student growth. You move students into or out of this group as a result of your observations and systematic assessments.
- Students read the same text, selected by you, and receive explicit instruction that will help them expand their reading processing systems.
- The text is “just right” in that students can read it successfully with the support of your teaching. It offers a small bit of challenge to allow the processing system to expand.
- You select the text using a gradient of difficulty (see Chapter 12) that matches the readers’ development. You gradually increase text difficulty to provide more varied demands as appropriate.

When students are focusing on the same text in a small group, you can provide very specific instruction directed toward all aspects of the reading process. You can help students engage with a text that is at an appropriate level and provides opportunity for them to learn more about the reading process. Your goal is for students to do a great deal of reading accompanied by instruction that supports suc-

cessful processing and expands systems of strategic actions. The more successful readers are and the more text they read, the better readers they become (Stanovich 1986).

THE STRUCTURE OF A GUIDED READING LESSON

Guided reading lessons have the same basic structure from kindergarten through grade eight. Each component of the guided reading lesson has implications for students' learning. If you plan your teaching based on the twelve systems of strategic actions and take advantage of students' responses as they arise, you can teach for effective processing throughout the guided reading lesson. Remember, your goal is to teach the reader, not just to get them through the book. This means you are helping readers learn how to do something with this text that they will be able to do while processing other texts.

Overall, the guided reading lesson is *all* about helping individual readers build their systems for processing texts. Although the framework is structured and supportive, the conversations you have with children will vary according to their responses. In fact, no two guided reading lessons—even if they involve the same text—are alike, because the lesson is interactive. In any lesson, there are numerous opportunities to teach for comprehending and fluency (see Figure 24-1). Here we focus specifically on teaching with a “lens” for comprehending across the lesson. Notice that even word work supports the reader's ability to comprehend successfully.

Selecting the Text

Select a text that readers will enjoy and find entertaining and that will also present opportunities to learn more. Though you will sometimes need to choose books that are above a student's grade level, don't reach too far. Texts that are more than one or two years above age and grade level can be uninteresting or hard to understand in depth. You can challenge students thinking about texts and broaden their genre knowledge without simply climbing up levels. Also choose a text that allows the readers to use what they know about reading and learn a little bit more, one that provides the right level of support and challenge for the reader's processing abilities. Think about particular factors such as:

- Print layout and spacing.
- Familiarity and sophistication of content.

- Known and new high frequency words.
- Support provided by illustrations and other art.
- Length.
- Familiarity of language or syntax.
- Amount of new vocabulary.
- Graphic or other text features.
- Organization of information.

Introducing the Text

The text introduction is critical: you need to provide just enough information to ensure that the students will be able to problem-solve or process this slightly challenging text successfully. Your job is to unlock the text, make it more accessible, and then to allow the readers to use their processing systems to think about and problem-solve their way through the text. There are numerous opportunities for you to help readers use effective reading strategies.

The introduction should be conversational. The way you shape the conversation can help you attend to anything your students need to know how to do relative to this text. You want to provide scaffolds that will enable readers to access the full meaning, the language, and the print. As you plan your brief introductions, think about the reading process, the demands of the text, and the readers' strengths and needs. You might:

- Call attention to a few difficult words in context.
- Explain a few concepts or vocabulary.
- Foreshadow a problem.
- Build interest in the text.
- Activate background knowledge (about a topic, theme, genre, setting, characters).
- Get students wondering about something in the text.
- Invite students to make predictions, raise questions, and anticipate the text.
- Point out something unusual in the print or layout.
- Show the organization of the text or how it works.
- Point out unusual language structures—have them hear them and sometimes say them.
- Show how to recognize—break apart—two or three new words.
- Point out unfamiliar text features such as bold type, italics, ellipses.

Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency Across a Guided Reading Lesson**LESSON ELEMENT****TEACHING MOVES TO SUPPORT COMPREHENDING AND FLUENCY****Introducing the Text**

You provide the readers with an understanding of the overall meaning of the text, pointing out aspects that may be new, involving them in a conversation that gets them thinking about the meaning, language, and print, and encouraging their interest in the book.

- Explore important concepts and ideas.
- Guide the readers to think about important aspects of the text.
- Help readers understand how the text works.
- Activate the content and literary knowledge readers bring to the reading experience.
- Encourage personal connections and help readers make them.
- Help readers make connections.
- Provide essential new information that readers need to understand the text.
- Help the readers understand the organization of the information.
- Enable readers to hear (and sometimes repeat) new language structures or new words.
- Point out text or print features and tools that parallel or add to the meaning of the text.
- Help readers discover information in the art or illustrations or other graphics such as maps, charts, graphic cutaways.
- Draw attention to accuracy or authenticity of the text, writer's credentials, references, presentation of evidence as appropriate.
- Help readers think about ways to solve a few new words if appropriate.
- Get readers to think about qualities of the writer's craft.

Reading the Text

The readers engage in a variety of strategic actions to process the whole text or a unified part of it.

You may listen to one individual at a time process part of the text, or listen in on all of them if they are whisper reading (emergent readers). You may also engage in brief teaching interactions to support effective reading actions.

- Prompt readers to initiate problem-solving actions.
- Demonstrate effective ways to search for and use the information in the text.
- Demonstrate effective reading.
- Reinforce effective problem solving of words using the meaning, language, and print.
- Confirm the reader's attempts at problem solving on their own.
- Demonstrate, reinforce, or prompt using self-monitoring or checking strategies to ensure meaning making.
- Demonstrate, reinforce, or prompt self-correcting errors that interfere with meaning making.
- Observe effective reading behaviors.
- Interact with individual readers very briefly around the text meaning.
- Demonstrate, reinforce, or prompt using punctuation to aid meaning, reading with phrasing, pausing appropriately, stressing the correct words, or using expression.

Figure 24-1. Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency Across a Guided Reading Lesson

Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency Across a Guided Reading Lesson (CONTINUED)**LESSON ELEMENT****TEACHING MOVES TO SUPPORT COMPREHENDING AND FLUENCY****Discussing and Revisiting the Text**

You and your students participate in a brief, meaningful conversation about the text. Students may also revisit the text to clarify or locate information or to provide evidence for their thinking.

- Invite personal response and sharing of understanding.
- Model and promote response to the meaning and language of the text.
- Encourage readers to search for new information.
- Probe readers to support thinking with personal experience or evidence from the text.
- Demonstrate or prompt students to explore the writer's deeper message.
- Encourage readers to make predictions and inferences.
- Encourage readers to express their opinions and clarify their thinking.
- Prompt readers to make connections with their own lives and with other texts.
- Demonstrate and prompt students to analyze and critique the writer's craft.
- Encourage readers to listen to and build on one another's thinking.

Teaching for Processing Strategies

You provide a brief, explicit teaching point focused on any aspect of the reading process. Teaching is grounded in the text students have just read, but readers go beyond it to understand something important and useful.

- Revisit the text to demonstrate any aspect of reading, including all systems of strategic actions:
 - Solving words
 - Monitoring and checking
 - Searching for and using information
 - Remembering information—summarizing
 - Maintaining fluency
 - Adjusting reading—purpose and genre
 - Predicting
 - Making connections
 - Inferring
 - Synthesizing
 - Analyzing
 - Critiquing
- Explicitly reinforce or demonstrate strategic actions using any part of the text that has just been read.

Working with Words (optional)

You provide one or two minutes of work with words. Teaching may focus on any aspect of word solving and is not related to words in the text that has just been read.

- Teach any aspect of taking words apart—letter/sound relationships, using analogy, using word parts.
- Students work with words in a “hands-on” way
- Students develop flexibility and fluency in using word solving strategies.
- Have students sort letters according to specific features.

Extending the Understanding of the Text (optional)

You invite students to extend understanding of the text through further talk, drawing, or writing. Often, you will work with students to demonstrate ways of writing about texts.

- Use writing, drawing, or extended talk to explore any aspect of understanding about the text, (structure or literary elements).
- Use writing or drawing as a basis for further talk about texts.

Figure 24-1. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency Across a Guided Reading Lesson (cont.)*

Introducing Texts Through a variety of models you will want to introduce the whole text when students can read it in one session. Short texts are very useful because you can teach students how to process a new text and they can take what they learn to a longer text. Figure 24-2 summarizes a variety of ways to introduce whole short texts and parts of longer texts. You will notice that when you use a longer text for instruction you will want to foreground the entire text but introduce each section. The exception is when the students have developed the background from most of the text and you feel they can now process the last section independently.

Reading the Text

Following your introduction, the readers will independently process the whole text or a unified part of it. Students in grade two and above will usually read silently; students in

kindergarten and grade one will usually read out loud, very softly, so you will get immediate feedback on the effectiveness of your introduction! (If they are too loud, tell them to “whisper read.”) Because they are reading at their own pace, they probably will not finish at exactly the same time. Give them some writing to do in their reader’s notebooks or have them read their independent books. If you teach young children, have them reread the text or choose a book to read from a browsing box of similar-level books during the brief time they wait for the discussion to begin. If one student consistently finishes much more slowly than the rest, the level of the text may be too difficult. (An alternative explanation is that the student is reading accurately but has a habit of reading slowly, in which case, you will need to teach intensively for fluency.)

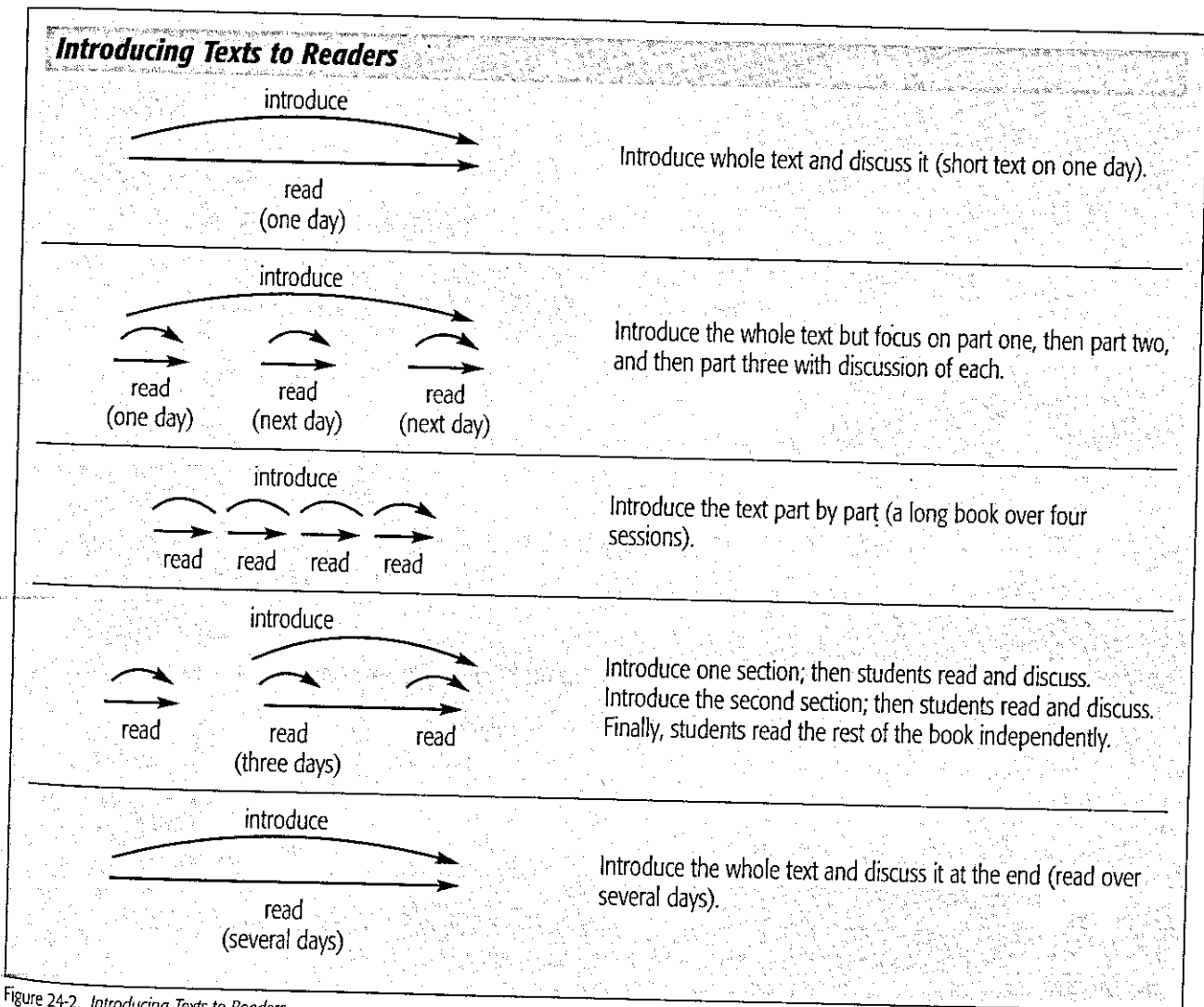


Figure 24-2. *Introducing Texts to Readers*

As students read the text silently to themselves, you may want to listen to one or more read aloud for a brief time. Just tap the reader's shoulder, or say his name, as a signal to read aloud. Listen as long as you need to to get a feel for how the student is reading the text. This information will inform your teaching after the reading.

As the students read, collect evidence on the effectiveness of the text you selected and your introduction. Observe students' precise reading behaviors so you can think about what aspects of the processing systems they control, almost control, or do not yet control. The level-by-level continuum (*A Continuum of Literacy Progress, K-8: A Guide to Teaching*) can serve as a guide to goals for each text level A-Z. Make notes in a notebook or on a clipboard so you will have the information for assessment and planning. To help you take notes on individuals, you can use the form Systems for Strategic Actions Observation Chart in Figure 24-3 on the DVD that accompanies this book.

Teaching During the Reading of the Text You may want to engage in some brief teaching interactions on the spot that will demonstrate, prompt for, or reinforce effective processing (see Figure 24-4), or to talk very briefly with the children about their thinking.

Demonstrating or Teaching When you demonstrate, you teach in an explicit way, "showing how" to process or problem-solve the text. You say things like the following: "Listen to how this reading sounds" (to demonstrate fluency). "The picture can help you think about the words" (to demonstrate using illustrations). "When you come to a tricky part, start the sentence again, think about what would make sense, and say the first sound of the word" (then demonstrate the action).

Prompting for Effective Actions When you use language to remind readers to do something they already know how to do, you are prompting them to initiate problem-solving actions for themselves. It is important that they really do know what you mean by the prompt and can perform the action. We suggest that you use the same language in your demonstration that you will use in your prompt. Figure 24-5 lists useful prompts to support readers' effective processing.

Reinforcing Effective Actions When you see that readers are beginning to initiate effective problem-solving actions on

their own, you will want to reinforce or confirm those actions. The reinforcement will foster further use of effective reading behaviors. For example, instead of saying, "Good reading," say something very specific, like "You put your words together," or "You took a short pause at the commas," or "You made your voice go up at the end of the sentence to show that was a question."

Observing Effective Processing If your teaching is effective, you will be able to observe the reader's ability to problem-solve their way through the text independently. You will also want to observe how easily and smoothly problem solving operates. You want your readers to engage in these actions "on the run" while sustaining attention to meaning.

Discussing the Meaning and Revisiting the Text It is important for students to have a chance to discuss the meaning of the text with one another as well as with you. Sometimes you may want to ask questions, of course, but students should know that they are expected to share their own comments or questions. They can ask questions about what they do not understand and build on one another's comments. This authentic exploration of the text is what readers do. As you listen to their comments, you will also gain a great deal of information about the degree to which they understood what they read.

Teaching for Processing Strategies After the discussion, you may need to focus explicitly on one or more aspects of the processing system, for example, making predictions, thinking about what the writer has implied (inferences), analyzing the text, or taking apart words. You can attend to any of the systems of strategic actions. Of course, you need to be selective rather than try to teach everything at once. If students learn (or learn more about) one or two new ways of thinking every time they read a text, their knowledge will grow continuously over time. If they are effectively processing the text, the entire system is getting a massive workout. Base your selection of teaching points on your observations of the students' processing of the text. You may also need to demonstrate fluent reading and have students revisit a section of the text to consciously reflect the meaning through pausing, phrasing, intonation, and stress on words.

Working with Words (Optional)

An optional part of the guided reading lesson is one or two minutes of "word work," a preplanned exploration of the

Systems of Strategic Actions for Processing Written Texts: Observational Notes

Student Name: _____

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES

Dates Recorded: _____

SYSTEMS OF STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR PROCESSING WRITTEN TEXTS

Context: LD _____ SR _____ GR _____ IR _____

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES

Strategic Actions for Sustaining Reading		Strategic Actions for Expanding Thinking	
Solving Words	Using a range of strategies to take words apart and understand what words mean.	Predicting	Using what is known to think about what will follow while reading continuous text.
Monitoring and Correcting	Checking on whether reading sounds right, looks right, and makes sense and working to solve problems.	Making Connections	Searching for and using connections to knowledge gained through their personal experiences, learning about the world, and reading other texts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Personal ▫ World ▫ Text
Searching for and Using Information	Searching for and using all kinds of information in a text.	Inferring	Going beyond the literal meaning of a text to think about what is not stated but is implied by the writer.
Summarizing	Putting together and remembering important information and disregarding irrelevant information while reading.	Synthesizing	Putting together information from the text and from the reader's own background knowledge in order to create new understandings.
Maintaining Fluency	Integrating sources of information in a smoothly operating process that results in expressive, phrased reading.	Analyzing	Examining elements of a text to know more about how it is constructed and noticing aspects of the writer's craft.
Adjusting	Reading in different ways as appropriate to purpose for reading and type of text.	Critiquing	Evaluating a text based on the readers' personal, world, or text knowledge and thinking critically about the ideas in it.

Figure 24-3. Systems of Strategic Actions for Processing Written Texts: Observational Notes

Levels of Teaching Interactions in a Guided Reading Lesson

Demonstrate	Show the reader how to take a specific action using simple clear language and providing an explicit demonstration.
Prompt	Use language that calls for the reader to take an action to problem-solve.
Reinforce	Confirm an effective strategic action.
Observe	Notice how the reader processes effectively.

Figure 24-4. Levels of Teaching Interactions in a Guided Reading Lesson

Prompting Readers to Monitor, Correct, and Construct Meaning During Reading

READER IS LEARNING HOW TO	TEACHER DEMONSTRATES OR SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Self-Monitoring	
Check for understanding or a mismatch in meaning, language, or print	Were you right? Does that make sense? Would that make sense? Does that make sense and sound right? Check it. Does that make sense and sound right to you? You said _____. Does that make sense? Check it. Does that look right and make sense to you? Read that again to see if you were right. Check that again. Check it. Does it sound right and look right to you?
Confirm language structure and check for meaning	That looks right, but does it make sense?
Check one source of information with another	That makes sense, but does it sound right? That makes sense, but does it look right? That looks right, but does it make sense?
Self-Correcting	
Predict what makes sense	Try that again and think what would make sense.
Predict what sounds right	Try that again and think what would sound right.
Reread to check and confirm understanding	Try that again. I like the way you worked that out.
Self-correct using multiple sources of information	Something wasn't quite right. You almost got that. See if you can find what is wrong. You're nearly right. Try that again.
Work to make all sources fit together	You figured that out. You're very good at figuring it out. You worked hard at that.
Reread to check and search for print information	Check it. That makes sense, but does it look right?

Figure 24-5. Prompting Readers to Monitor, Correct, and Construct Meaning During Reading

Prompting Readers to Monitor, Correct, and Construct Meaning During Reading (CONTINUED)

READER IS LEARNING HOW TO

TEACHER DEMONSTRATES OR SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Self-Correcting (continued)

Reread to check and search for language structure

Check it. That makes sense, but does it sound right?

Reread to check and search for meaning

Check it. That looks right, but does it make sense?

Notice and correct error at the point it is made

You fixed that fast.
You worked that out quickly.

Searching for and Using Information

Use information from pictures

Check the picture.
Look at the picture.
Can the picture help you?

Use story information to solve unknown words

Think about the story.
Try that again and think what would make sense?

Predict what would make sense

Are you thinking about the story?
Think about what would make sense.
Try that again and think what would make sense.
Try _____. Would that make sense?

Use language structure as a source of information

Try _____. Would that sound right?
What would sound right?
Think of what would sound right.

Use pictures to predict meaning

Can the picture help you think about the story?
Does that fit the picture?
Try that again and look at the picture.

Notice mismatches in meaning and print information

Try _____. Would that make sense and look right?
You said _____. Were you right?

Use all sources of information simultaneously

Check it. Does it make sense, sound right, and look right to you?
You found [two, three] ways to check whether you were right.

Predict what will come next

What do you think will happen next? (Or, What do you think _____ will do?)
Based on what you know, what do you think will happen?

Figure 24-5. Prompting Readers to Monitor, Correct, and Construct Meaning During Reading (cont.)

features of letters or how words are taken apart. For young readers, this is usually a necessary component. You might use magnetic letters or a whiteboard to demonstrate how to use word parts and help the students become better word solvers. Students can manipulate the letters or write words on a whiteboard or piece of paper. Your goal is to develop fast, fluent recognition of letters or words or the ability to

take words apart with ease while reading continuous text.

Extending Understanding of the Text (Optional)

Finally, another option is to extend the students' understanding of the text by talking, drawing, or writing about what they have read. This activity speaks directly to the kinds of responses that students are expected to make on tests, but it has value beyond that. Extending the meaning

of a text involves representing or reflecting on the text in some way, which, in turn, extends thinking. Students will just have processed a more challenging text, which means they are in an optimal position to extend their understanding. Some possible extensions are listed in Figure 24-6.

Because you are always working with different texts, these suggestions have endless variations. Extending the meaning may also depend on whether the text is fiction or nonfiction (see Figure 24-7). You will not want to engage your students in tasks after reading unless you have evidence that they need to explore the meaning further or can benefit from the activity as they apply strategies to further reading.

ANALYZING GUIDED READING LESSONS

The guided reading lesson is a context you can use to help your students think within, beyond, and about a text. The most important goal is to help each reader build an effective processing system. Within this broader goal is fluent and accurate reading with literal comprehension; without

Ten Suggestions for Extending the Meaning of Texts

- 1 Discuss the book in pairs or threesomes.
- 2 Diagram the internal organizational structures in texts—comparison/contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect, sequence, question/answer, story map.
- 3 Prepare graphic organizers (a character web or a timeline, for example) to reveal the author's craft.
- 4 Comment on the text in interactive or shared writing.
- 5 Describe characters, summarize sections of the text, or make a list of key ideas in interactive or shared writing.
- 6 Respond with "quick writes" that can be shared later.
- 7 Respond with "quick sketches" that support thinking and can be used as a basis for more talk or writing.
- 8 Present a readers' theater piece using portions of the text.
- 9 Write a poem about the book.
- 10 Collect favorite quotes from the text and tell why they chose them.

Figure 24-6. Ten Suggestions for Extending the Meaning of Texts

Extending the Meaning of Fictional and Factual Texts

Extending the meaning of a text means going beyond the literal meaning to perform some kind of analytical thinking and to represent it in a way that helps others understand it.

FICTIONAL

- Making hypotheses as to characters' motivations and thoughts.
- Predicting actions and events based on past events.
- Identifying the organizing structure of a text.
- Identifying evidence that points to conclusions about the meaning of the text.
- Describing relationships among elements of the text—for example, setting (time, place) and the attitudes and motivations of characters or the events of the plot.
- Identifying the overarching theme of a story—for example, friendship or love, triumphing over fear, loneliness, family, and pets.
- Identifying how events in a narrative happen in a sequence and how one is connected with another.
- Identifying the problem of a narrative and generating alternative possibilities for solving it.
- Drawing conclusions about a character and evaluating his or her actions.

FACTUAL

- Identifying and using the organizing structure or structures of the text.
- Using information in the text to interpret subsequent information as it is given.
- Understanding how ideas, events, or steps in a process are organized in a sequence—how one leads logically to another.
- Identifying comparisons that reveal the properties or characteristics of matter or human events.
- Identifying causes for phenomena—why physical or social events happen.
- Identifying and interpreting language that describes important characteristics of natural or social phenomena.
- Identifying main and subordinate categories of information (and linking to headings, subheadings, and sub-subheadings when necessary).
- Identifying and interpreting natural or social problems and their solution.

Figure 24-7. Extending the Meaning of Fictional and Factual Texts

that, the processing is not successful. But the second and even more important goal is thinking beyond and about the text. You plan your introduction to ensure readers will be able to engage with all aspects of processing that the text demands, and you select teaching points following the reading based on the aspects of the processing system that you want your students to develop.

Sometimes you may want students to think about how authors present information in expository texts:

- Describe ideas and events.
- Tell the sequence or order of events.
- Compare and contrast ideas or events, showing how they are the same or different.
- Give explanations or reasons for events (causes and effects).
- Identify problems and their solutions (or questions and their answers).

Any of these ways might be highlighted in the introduction to the text, discussed after reading the text, or be the focus of a teaching point after reading. Each is an opportunity to help readers think about the organization of an informational text. Sometime you can consider the elements of fiction texts in the same way; for example, you can map the time sequence or identify problem and solution.

Vocabulary and language are important to unlocking understanding. Don't be afraid of "telling too much" in the introduction. Readers need to have a good understanding, or at least familiarity, with the vocabulary and language structures in a text, as well as the content and organization, or even the overall theme. When you attend to new words and language patterns, you may want to have students locate them in the text and perhaps read or say some of them. In addition, informational texts may require using "signal words," such as *first* or *next*, *in addition to*, *because of*, *whenever*; that signal the reader to use cognitive actions to anticipate how information in the text will be provided.

Often, the structure of the text is a critical factor in reading comprehension. The way the writer has organized the text is a kind of internal structure that supports understanding. For example, over time readers will learn to detect:

- How events are sequenced.
- How the passage of time is shown.

- When information is presented in categories and how the categories are identified.
 - Who is telling the story—narrator as person in the story (first person) or narrator as anonymous third person.
 - When there are literary devices, such as flashbacks or stories, within stories.
 - When important concepts are explained within the text.
- Writers organize texts in infinitely varying ways, which helps readers develop flexibility in the way they approach, process, and understand texts.

EXAMPLES OF GUIDED READING LESSONS

To illustrate the framework of a guided reading lesson and how your teaching actions can contribute to students' development of comprehending strategies and fluency, below are three examples of guided reading lessons.



A GUIDED READING LESSON USING ROSIE'S POOL (LEVEL G)

Introducing the Text

In her introduction (see Figure 24-9), the teacher (Ms. N.) shared the title, author, and illustrator of this easy fantasy and related *Rosie's Pool* (Riley) to a previous text the children had read—*Rosie's Tea Party*. As she built interest in the story, she invited predictions about the character and plot, enabled the children to hear the language of the story,

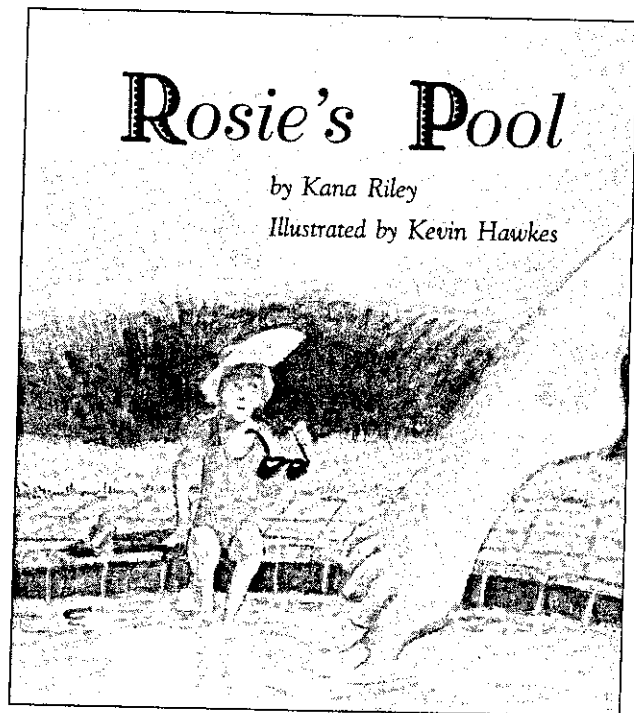


Figure 24-8. Rosie's Pool

and used new structures or vocabulary such as "You're welcome." As she guided the children to look at information in some of the illustrations, she helped them understand how the story works: Rosie's neighbors (two giants) come to visit, make several requests, behave poorly, and then leave to go home. The problem in the story is evident in the pictures: each time Rosie offers the giants something, it causes a problem. Ms. N. also calls the children's attention to one or two words in the print, so when they meet them they will be familiar with how they work.

Reading the Text

As the children read the whole text, Ms. N. observed the processing and interacted with individual readers, showing them how to problem-solve, prompting them to do something they knew how to do, and reinforcing the good reading work. Here are samples of the facilitative language she used as the children read the story:

- Find the tricky part.
- I like the way you fixed that.
- It starts like *sweating*, but look at (pointing to beginning of *sitting*).
- Go back and see if that all makes sense.
- Cover the ending and see if that helps you.
- Are you stuck there?
- Does that make sense?
- It sounds like si-, *sit*, but what would make sense?
- Does that make sense? Try again.
- Do you need help?
- You sure worked hard on that.
- Does that work?
- Could that be _____?
- Does that look right and make sense?
- Put your words together.
- I like the way you fixed that.

This kind of very specific language supports each reader's independent problem solving by revealing the action that is required.

Discussing and Revisiting the Text

After the reading, the children discussed the text. Some of the children's comments were:

- "They splashed all the water!"

- "They need to learn a good lesson."
- "I'd teach them to drink tea."

The students' discussion focused on what they had learned about these characters by reading both of the books about Rosie. They had internalized the idea that even though they say words like "please" and "thank you," the giants are very rude people. Several suggested that another book should be written about teaching the giants manners! Ms. N. did not use the word "character," but through conversation, she helped these children to express a beginning understanding of characters' attributes.

The conversation later turned to the story structure when Ms. N. asked the children which Rosie story they liked better. They unanimously chose *Rosie's Pool*, saying that their favorite part was when the giants jumped into the pool and splashed out all of the water (the climax of the story). They also identified the giants' large burp as their favorite part of *Rosie's Tea Party*, again, the climax of the story. This conversation reveals an implicit understanding of plot structure.

Teaching for Problem Solving

After the short discussion, Ms. N. makes a specific teaching point based on her observation of the group. During reading, several of the children made this error:

sweating
Rosie was at her pool sitting in the sun.

They read the word *sweating* instead of *sitting*. It was clear they were using the syntax and some of the visual information in a two-syllable word.

Using a whiteboard, the teacher showed them how to solve words ending in *-ing* by looking at the first part of the word, *sit*. All children in the group then located the word *sitting*, noticed the ending and the first part of the word and read it in a sentence.

Working with Words

Ms. N. had noticed in the past several lessons that the children needed to become more fluent and flexible in solving contractions as they read. In the final minute of the lesson, she used the whiteboard to do some quick work with contractions.

A GUIDED READING LESSON USING CAM JANSEN AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CIRCUS CLOWN (LEVEL M)

Erik, the teacher, used a simple chapter book (part of the Cam Jansen detective series) with a group of transitional

GUIDED READING LESSON:

Introduction to Rosie's Pool

Ms. N.: *[Prompts memory of another text.]* I'm going to give you the cover of the book, and I just want you to look at the cover right now. Do you remember Rosie?

JOANNE: There's a giant.

Ms. N.: Do you remember Rosie and *Rosie's Tea Party*? This is *Rosie's Pool*.

CAMILLA: It's like *Rosie's Tea Party*.

Ms. N.: *[Draws attention to author.]* It's just like *Rosie's Tea Party*. Do you think it's going to be the same author?

ALL STUDENTS: Yes.

Ms. N.: Let's check. Kana Riley. Is it Kana Riley again? *[Draws attention to illustrator.]* Do you think the illustrator's going to be the same?

SHARLA AND CAMILLA: Illustrated by Kana Riley.

Ms. N.: Is it the same? Do the pictures look similar?

JANELLE: Yes.

JANELLE: No.

CAMILLA: Illustrated by Kana.

Ms. N.: Kana Riley and illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. Let's look just at the cover for now. Guess who comes to visit Rosie at her pool.

ALL STUDENTS: Giants.

Ms. N.: *[Draws attention to characters.]* The giants. How many giants were there? Let's just look at the cover.

ISAAC: Three.

Ms. N.: *[Invited discussion of character traits.]* There were three. Do you remember something about the giants last time?

JANELLE: They're greedy.

CAMILLA: And the food was for all of them. But one ate the sandwich, one ate the cookies.

JANELLE: And one ate the cheese.

Ms. N.: What about at the end of the tea party? How did they behave?

SHARLA: They were bad.

Ms. N.: And how was that kind of behaving?

CAMILLA: They didn't say "excuse me." And they didn't say "please."

Ms. N.: Was that polite?

ALL STUDENTS: No.

Ms. N.: *[Invites prediction based on character traits.]* You know what? In this book, do you think they're going to be polite? Or do you think they're going to be not polite again?

ISAAC AND CAMILLE: *[Explains the problem of the story.]* Not polite.

Ms. N.: You're right. This time the giants come over. Rosie does not invite them. They come over and surprise her at her pool. They barge right in.

CAMILLA: Oh, my God!

Ms. N.: Is that polite, to barge right in without being invited?

ALL STUDENTS: No, it sure isn't.

Ms. N.: *[Invites further prediction and discussion of the problem.]* And they come over in their bathing suits, expecting to go swimming. Now wait a minute. Think about that. Think about the giants getting in the pool that's Rosie's size.

Figure 24-9. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Rosie's Pool

GUIDED READING LESSON:

Introduction to Rosie's Pool (CONTINUED)

CAMILLA: Oh, my God!

SHARLA: They'll splash it.

Ms. N.: Oh, my gosh.

ISAAC: Squish it. They'll squish Rosie.

Ms. N.: Yeah.

CAMILLA: They'll drink all of the water.

Ms. N.: Oh, my gosh, they might do that. That would be something not very polite, wouldn't it? And splashing Rosie would be not very polite, would it?

ISAAC: Squishing Rosie.

Ms. N.: Or squishing Rosie.

JANELLE: He might wear her shoes.

Ms. N.: [*Invites attention to language.*] Now, boys and girls, remember from last time, Rosie is very polite in the way she talks to the giants. Do you remember some of the words she used last time?

ISAAC: "You're welcome."

CAMILLA: "Thank you."

Ms. N.: She does say, "you're welcome." Last time she said, "please have some sandwiches." What do you think she might say this time? Please . . .

SHARLA: "Come in."

Ms. N.: "Please come in?" Let's turn the page and look.

Ms. N.: [*Invites attention to information in pictures.*] Let's not read right now; let's look at the pictures. Turn the page again. Let's see what she might be offering them. What might she offer them first?

JANELLE: Some tea.

Ms. N.: And what would they say?

Ms. N.: [*Invites prediction based on character attributes.*] Ah, turn the page again. Now, Rosie offers this first giant a chair. Turn the page again. Oh, there might be a problem with that. Don't turn the page past that page, okay? One of the things she offers is her chair. Now, do you think he's going to be very polite about it?

CAMILLA: No.

Ms. N.: [*Invites attention to language and print.*] Hmm. He takes the chair and he says thank you, and what is she going to say?

ALL STUDENTS: "You're welcome."

Ms. N.: Find the words "you're welcome" on that page, and get a good look.

ISAAC: "You're welcome."

Ms. N.: [*Connects language and print.*] Would you run your finger under those words? Now don't turn the page, but I'm going to tell you something else she offers them. Iced tea. Now, knowing you know about the giants, do you think they're going to do the right thing with the iced tea?

CAMILLA: No, they're going to just drink it all.

Ms. N.: [*Foreshadows ending.*] Maybe they'll drink it all without sharing or something. And something else she offers them. Because they're by the pool, she offers them some suntan lotion to put on their bodies. And guess what. They do something kind of silly with it. And at the end, they do something again that doesn't make me think they're very polite. I won't tell you. It's now time to start, and I'm going to start with Isaac reading.

JANELLE: They're going to break the bottle.

Ms. N.: Go ahead and read about Rosie.

Figure 24-9. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Rosie's Pool (cont.)

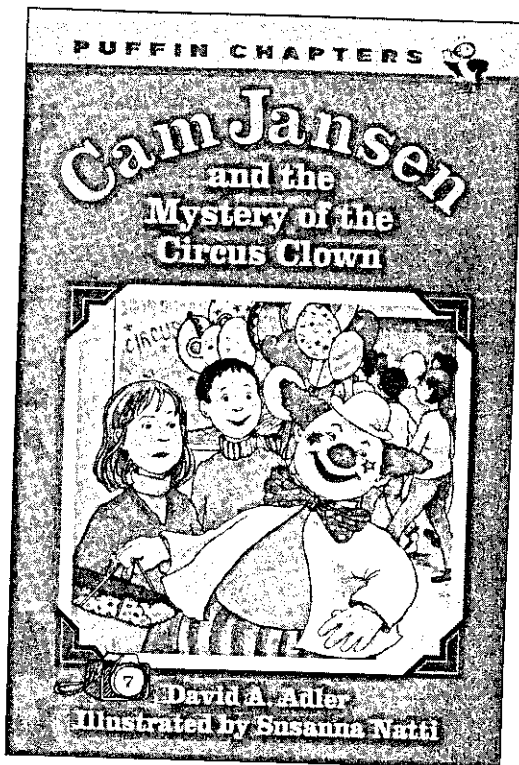


Figure 24-10. Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

readers. One of the benefits of the book is to be able to help students better understand the mystery genre and how to approach it. The clues are clearly highlighted: the central character, Cam, takes a “mental picture” of an event by saying “click” and is then able to recall explicitly every detail of the action. There are repeating characters who play certain parts. None of the characters really change over the series. The plots are quite predictable, but the setting and the exact nature of the problems vary.

In *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown*, the setting is important for several reasons:

- Many technical terms are associated with the setting, creating a challenge to decoding and vocabulary.
- Readers need to understand how crowds, such as those found in this setting, can make it easier to steal.
- The ability to use disguise helps the culprits commit the crime.
- Close observation (such as a detective might be capable of) is the only way to solve the crime.

Introducing the Text

Mr. B. began his introduction (see Figure 24-11) by prompting the children to remember other texts in the Cam

Jansen series, and they shared their background knowledge. He then zeroed in on the character of Cam Jansen and her ability to remember clues, a concept that is key to following the plot. Notice that he summarized and restated the important background information. A lesson of this introduction can be viewed on *Guided Reading: The Primary Literacy Video Collection* by Fountas and Pinnell.

One student, Barbara, noticed the cover of the book, and that gave Mr. B. another opportunity to repeat background information and foreshadow the plot. He drew attention to the setting as well, since there are important new words related to it. He mentioned *acrobats* early in the introduction but went on to have children locate the word in the text, where he again explained it. He also points out some proper nouns (*Mexico*, *Milwaukee*, and *Minnesota*) that he thought might be tricky. Another word he highlighted was *troupe*; the children may have understood the word in another context but not as the proper noun, *Elkans Troupe*, a group of circus performers. The underlying concept here is that words can have multiple meanings and that context is important in thinking about the meaning of a word. Mr. B. ended the introduction by foreshadowing the first part of the story, summarizing some of the background information about the setting, and reminding students that they are supposed to find out what the mystery is. He also gave them a simple writing assignment (“After chapter three, I think . . .”) to help them think ahead.

Reading the Text

After the students began to read, the teacher listened to some oral reading and interacted briefly with each reader. The other students continued to read silently at their own pace. Figure 24-12 is a transcript of Mr. B.’s brief and highly focused interaction with Raquel. He listened to her oral reading, noting that her reading was accurate but that she largely ignored the punctuation, running one sentence right into another without stopping and letting the voice fall at the period.

Mr. B.’s decision to intervene was based on the strong connection between phrasing and comprehension. His first prompt (“start again and look carefully at all the commas and periods”) did not have the intended result. Raquel seemed a little confused and hesitated slightly at the period, but she did not change her intonation pattern and contin-

A GUIDED READING LESSON:

An Introduction to Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown**Introducing the text**

MR. B.: *[Prompts memory of another text in the series. Checks the group.]* Today we are going to read another Cam Jansen book. Have you all read a Cam Jansen book already?

SAMANTHA: I haven't.

MR. B.: *[Asks students to share background information.]* You never have? Who can tell Samantha about Cam Jansen?

JOSEPH: She's a detective.

ELVIS: Like Nate the Great.

MR. B.: *[Probes to make connections explicit.]* Oh, she is a little like Nate the Great. In what way is she like Nate the Great?

ELVIS: A detective.

MR. B.: *[Probes for more background information.]* And what do detectives do usually?

ELVIS: She solves mysteries.

BARBARA: Cam Jansen has a mental camera.

MR. B.: *[Asks for clarification.]* Ah—what do you mean by a mental camera?

STUDENTS: She can remember things by saying "click."

She can remember a picture . . .

She can just look at your face and go "click," and she remembers a picture like in ten hours.

MR. B.: *[Summarizes and restates important background information.]* So she has what they call a photographic memory. When she says "click," it's like she's taking a picture of whatever is in front of her, and she can always remember it, right?

JOSEPH: Right!

MR. B.: *[Repeats deduction.]* And that's why they call her Cam. Remember that?

BARBARA: When she's looking at the clowns, she's taking a picture and she can remember [pointing to the cover of the book].

MR. B.: *[Reinforces Barbara's noticing of the front cover and repeats important background information.]* So, you're already thinking about the title and what might be happening in this book. So Cam Jansen is a girl who solves a lot of mysteries.

ELVIS: With her friend Eric.

MR. B.: *[Reinforces Elvis's memory of another character in the series and foreshadows what to expect.]* Yes, with her friend Eric. And in this book there are going to be some other characters, at least one I think you've read about, Aunt Molly.

JOSEPH: Aunt Molly . . . where there was a flight.

MR. B.: *[Draws attention to the setting.]* Yes, Aunt Molly, in *The Mystery of Flight 54*. And where do you think this story is going to be taking place? I think Barbara already . . .

SEVERAL: At the circus.

MR. B.: *[Checks for background information about the setting.]* Has anybody ever been to the circus? [CHILDREN NOD, RAISE HANDS.]

MR. B.: *[Checks for background information about the setting.]* What's it like at the circus? What happens at the circus?

BARBARA: Oh, I hate the clowns, they're like [MIMES JUGGLING].

JOSEPH: They think they're funny.

ELVIS: They go on the trapeze.

JOSEPH: Juggling things.

MR. B.: *[Provides information about the setting and checks further for background knowledge.]* But basically at the circus, it's very crowded. And people do tricks. Do you know what a trapeze is?

MARCUS: They carry things [MIMES WALKING A TIGHTROPE].

Figure 24-11. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

A GUIDED READING LESSON:

An Introduction to Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown (CONTINUED)

Mr. B.: *[Provides background knowledge.]* Well that's a tightrope, where they use a very high rope and they try and balance. And a trapeze is where they swing on something and they try to do tricks. Can you please open to page 3, because there are a few tricky parts that I want to get you ready to read. *[Says and explains tricky proper nouns; has children say and locate.]* On this page Aunt Molly is saying something reminds her of a circus she saw in Montana. And then she says, "Well maybe it was Mexico or Milwaukee." She gets all these M places mixed up. These are all names of countries or cities or states—Mexico, Montana, Milwaukee. Can you put your finger on the word *Milwaukee* on this page? Say it.

CHILDREN: Milwaukee.

Mr. B.: *[Checks for understanding of vocabulary.]* Now up above, you'll see Mexico. Point to *Mexico*. That's a word I think you've probably seen before. Now turn the page to page 6. On this page you'll see the word *acrobats*. Do you know what acrobats are?

CHILDREN: No.

Mr. B.: *[Explains vocabulary by using in conversation and draws attention to words in the text.]* Acrobats are people who go on the flying trapeze and spin in the air and do lots of flips and turns and things like that. And these acrobats are in a troupe. A troupe is a group of people who perform in the circus and this is the Elkans Troupe. Can you point to those two words—the Elkans Troupe? Sometimes circus troupes are from families and this group is called the Elkans family. *[Foreshadows first part of the story, summarizes information about the setting, and reminds readers of the purpose.]* In the first three chapters you find out what the mystery is. I'm not going to tell you. But you will find out what the mystery that Cam Jansen needs to solve is. They go to the circus with Aunt Molly. Eric is going to buy some popcorn.

JOSEPH: And he disappears!

Mr. B.: *[Reinforces the prediction, explicitly describes the writing extension task, and checks for understanding.]* Well, maybe he disappears. But you will see what the mystery is. When you are done, take a pencil and paper [HOLDS UP THE PENCIL CONTAINER AND A PIECE OF PAPER]. I want you to write your name. I want you to write, *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown*. And then write, "After chapter three, I think . . .," and you are going to write who you think did it—how Cam is going to solve the mystery. Does everyone know what you are going to do?

Figure 24-11. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown (cont.)

ued to ignore the punctuation. Mr. B. became more explicit, directing her attention to the period, telling her to stop, and telling her why it is important (that it will help her understand it better). This time, Raquel read with appropriate phrasing and intonation. The teacher asked her whether her reading sounded better and was easier to understand. Then he listened to a little more oral reading and encouraged her for stopping at periods. He made a brief note before moving on to another student.

Discussing the Text, Teaching for Processing Strategies, and Working with Words

After about fifteen minutes, during which the children read the three chapters and completed the brief piece of assigned writing (those who finished early also read from the browsing box in the middle of the table), Mr. B. drew them into a

discussion of the story (see Figure 24-13). It is obvious that these students understood they were expected to provide their opinions about the story. In the introduction, the teacher had primed them to find out what the mystery was, and that led naturally to trying to solve it, as evidenced by Elvis's theory "that the clown bumped people and stole the wallet."

Mr. B. asked clarifying questions (which are different from questions designed to find out how much students remember of the story) to determine what students were really thinking. At one point, he "corrected" students' assumptions about the setting but accepted their comments when he realized they were recalling Aunt Molly's story of another time. This understanding was important to learning about the character. He listened intently to see what students brought to the reading.

A GUIDED READING LESSON:

An Interaction with Raquel While Reading Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

Mr. B. begins by listening to Raquel read.

RAQUEL: [Ignores the punctuation.] [READING] Aunt Molly said, "I do seem to lose things. Once, while I was reading in the library, I took my shoes off."

Mr. B.: [Prompts to reread, noticing and using the punctuation.] Okay. Start again with "Aunt Molly said," and I want you to look carefully at all the commas and periods. And when you come to a comma, pause, and when you come to a period, stop a little bit longer. Start again with "Aunt Molly said."

RAQUEL: [Some improvement but still largely ignoring the punctuation.] [READING] Aunt Molly said, "I do seem to lose things. Once, while I was reading in the library, I took my shoes off. I didn't remember them until I stepped in a puddle on the way home."

Mr. B.: [Provides feedback to the reader and explicitly directs attention to the period.] Okay. You said, "Aunt Molly said, 'I do seem to lose things once. . .'" But what is there after things?

RAQUEL: A period.

Mr. B.: [Provides explicit instructions and tells why it is important.] Yes, will you stop there? And that's going to help you understand it better. Start again with "Aunt Molly said."

RAQUEL: [READING] Aunt Molly said, "I do seem to lose things. Once, while I was reading in the library, I took my shoes off."

Mr. B.: [Prompts reader to self-monitor.] Does that sound better? Did you understand that better?

RAQUEL: [Nods.]

Mr. B.: [Reinforces reading behavior.] Good. Keep reading. [Listens to Raquel read several more paragraphs. Reading shows use of the punctuation.] Great job stopping for every period.

Figure 24-12. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Interaction with Raquel While Reading Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

DISCUSSION AND TEACHING POINTS IN GUIDED READING LESSON:

Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

Mr. B.: [Provides direction and opens the discussion of the meaning of the story.] Okay, I'd like you to close your books. Put the browsing box books away. Put your paper flat in front of you. What did you think of that?

BARBARA: The clowns stole the jacket.

JOSEPH: And the money.

Mr. B.: [Asks a clarifying question.] Wait a minute. What's the mystery?

ANDREA: The clowns—

JOSEPH: Everything's disappearing!

Mr. B.: [Summarizes thinking and asks for other opinions.] And it seems that everybody thinks the clowns did it. Is that what you think? Did anyone think something else?

ELVIS: Yes.

JOSEPH: Or the woman that passed.

Mr. B.: [Encourages clarification.] Or the woman that passed?

ROBERTO: What woman?

ANDREA: At the zoo.

ELVIS: Cam Jansen said she lost her sweater at the zoo.

Figure 24-13. Discussion and Teaching Points in Guided Reading Lesson: Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown

Mr. B.: *[Asks for clarification.]* At the what?

SEVERAL: At the zoo?

Mr. B.: *[Corrects children's assumptions.]* At the circus.

ANDREA: *[Characters referred to another time.]* In the zoo. She and Aunt Molly.

Mr. B.: *[Realizes children were right and clarifies their comments, then moves on.]* Oh, she was talking about another time. Next time we are going to find out.

ELVIS: I think I know how it happened.

Mr. B.: *[Encourages thinking.]* All right, what do you think?

ELVIS: Well, when he bumped, his hand went into the pocket and he steals the wallet.

Mr. B.: *[Reinforces thinking.]* You know, you should be a detective. You have it all figured out—right, Elvis? *[Provides a demonstration of reading over punctuation and then points out the period.]* I want you to turn to page 16, please, because there was a really good example of why it's so important to stop at every period. Page 16—everybody should be on page 16. Look at the bottom of the last paragraph starting with "Aunt Molly said." Do you remember this, Raquel? Everybody reading with me? *[READS THE SENTENCE WITHOUT STOPPING AT THE PARAGRAPH.]* But what is there after *things*?

STUDENTS: A period.

Mr. B.: *[Invites student demonstration.]* A period, so it's really different—right? *[TURNS TO RAQUEL.]* You want to read it this time?

RAQUEL: *[READING WITH APPROPRIATE INTONATION AND PAUSING]* *Aunt Molly said, "I do seem to lose things. Once, while I was reading in the library, I took my shoes off. I didn't remember them until I stepped in a puddle on the way home."*

Mr. B.: *[Prompts children to consider syntax.]* Now, didn't that sound better? *[Demonstrates reading again.]* It's a very different thing.

ELVIS: She's silly.

CHILDREN: *[LAUGHING AT AUNT MOLLY.]*

ANDREA: She lost her shoes like that.

Mr. B.: *[Responds to children's comments by encouraging thinking.]* What do you think about Aunt Molly? I mean what kind of person loses her shoes in the library and doesn't notice until she steps in a puddle?

ROBERTO: She lost her sweater.

Mr. B.: *[Summarizes information about character traits.]* So she lost her sweater at the zoo. She lost her shoes at the library.

JOSEPH: She lost her wallet at the—

ANDREA: Circus.

Mr. B.: *[Asks for opinion and draw attention to character traits.]* What do you think about Aunt Molly?

ELVIS: She's very silly.

Mr. B.: *[Describes character.]* But the important thing is that we know Aunt Molly is a little bit silly. She loses things. She sometimes doesn't have it all together. Sometimes we could say, "Her elevator doesn't go all the way to the top floor."

CHILDREN: *[LAUGHING.]*

The discussion and teaching were followed by two minutes of word work on homophones.

Figure 24-13. Discussion and Teaching Points in Guided Reading Lesson: Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown (cont.)

After the brief discussion of the mystery, Mr. B. focused on an aspect of processing that appeared to have benefit for the group as a whole. He took them back to the page that Raquel had read aloud and demonstrated reading without noticing punctuation. He pointed out the period, and then asked Raquel to provide a demonstration for the group, which she did very

competently. He was explaining that using punctuation made your reading sound better and you understand it in a different way when the students expressed their amusement about Aunt Molly. Finally, Mr. B. summarized Aunt Molly's character traits. After he worked for a couple of minutes on homophones (word work that was preplanned), the session ended.

Analyzing the Lesson

In this guided reading lesson, the teacher and students were able to:

- Bring background knowledge of texts and content to their reading.
- Follow a series of events and gather important information.
- Make predictions based on information.
- Infer the solution to a mystery.
- Notice and report important traits of two characters and relate those traits to the plot.
- Notice and use punctuation to read with phrasing.

Mr. B. was focused, explicit, and intentional. He used this text as an instrument for helping students play out their growing reading strategies. They read almost half of *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Circus Clown*, and they finished it the next day, using what they already knew to gain momentum.

A GUIDED READING LESSON USING *SEEDFOLKS* (LEVEL W)

Seedfolks is a complex text. In it Paul Fleischman presents

SG a series of stories, each one told in a different character's voice, set in a lower-economic Cleveland neighborhood where many groups of immigrants live. The chapters are quite short, demanding that readers infer a great deal of information from brief pieces of text. Characters represent many different social and ethnic groups and range from about eleven years old to elderly. They come from completely different backgrounds, and their ways of talking, their vocabularies, even their use of sentence structure is different from each other. What these people have in common is that they live in the same depressed neighborhood and all, each in his or her own way, are reaching for a better life. They begin to come together around a vacant lot full of unsightly trash when a little girl plants some beans and is observed by two older neighbors. The overall theme is that diverse people who have formerly been in conflict can work together and take small steps to make the world better and more beautiful.

This carefully crafted novel raises a few challenges for upper elementary and middle school readers. The reader must switch perspectives every few pages. The narrator shifts with each chapter and tells a different story, but it

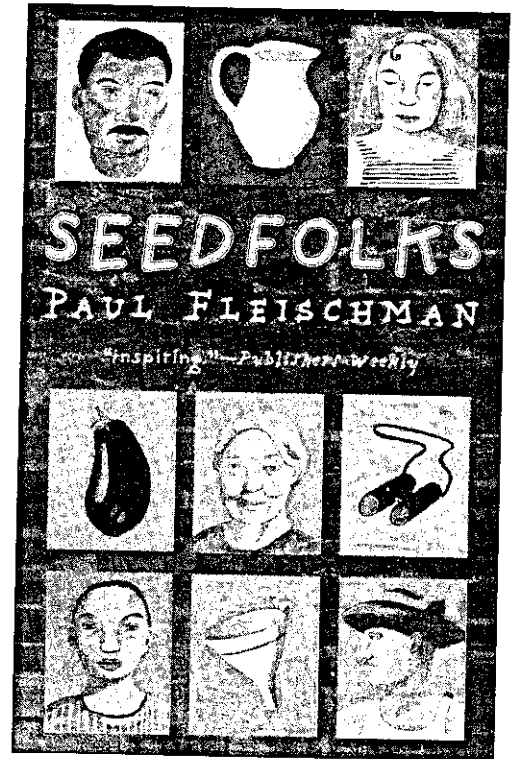


Figure 24-14. *Seedfolks*

would be a mistake simply to see *Seedfolks* as a series of stories. To understand the author's message, the reader must keep tying the threads together, making predictions about the outcomes and inferring characters' feelings and motivations, as well as the way people and events affect them. Some of the themes are mature; for example, one character is an unwed mother who is giving away her baby.

Introducing the Text

Ms. W., the teacher, introduced the book (see Figure 24-15) by telling the title and author and then provided a very explicit explanation of the structure of the text. It was critical that students understood this concept, because the entire plot hung on it. Understanding the structure of *Seedfolks* is a good example of what cannot be left to "see if students get it." This complex structure must be foregrounded. Otherwise, students might flounder through a big part of it with only superficial understanding at best. Notice that Ms. W. had them turn to three chapters in their own copies of the book. She taught them how to use the pictures and chapter titles as cues to the needed switch in perspective and voice. This lesson (*Seedfolks*) may be viewed on the DVD that accompanies this book.

A GUIDED READING LESSON:

An Introduction to Seedfolks

Ms. W.: *[Introduces title and author.]* We're going to read a new book together today, and I'm actually going to go ahead and give it to you. It's called *Seedfolks*, and it's by Paul Fleischman. *[Connects to content area study.]* Now, we've been studying immigration and moving in social studies, and this book is actually nice because it relates that topic with what we are going to be reading. Look at the cover. *[Draws attention to the cover as a basis for prediction.]* Look at the pictures on the cover. What are some things you are thinking about this book based on the pictures on the cover?

MADDIE: All the pictures on the cover are different races.

Ms. W.: *[Confirms prediction.]* Okay, so we are going to be seeing that they are from different races.

JASON: Maybe the items, like the binoculars and whatever else is shown in the pictures—maybe they are like their possessions, so I'm thinking that they all have different possessions.

Ms. W.: *[Reveals and demonstrates text structure.]* Okay. In this book at the beginning of every chapter there is actually a picture of a different person. Turn to page 1. The first chapter is told by one of the characters, and her name is Kim. And there is a picture of her. And as we read this chapter, you can hear Kim's voice as you are reading it. She's telling the story. These are her words. So look at the second chapter. Turn to page 4. Who is telling the story now?

MADDIE: Anna.

Ms. W.: *[Elaborates on text structure and checks for understanding.]* Anna. And do you see the picture of Anna? That's what she looks like. And this chapter is told by Anna. She's telling this chapter. She is telling the story of her life in this chapter. And what do you think you will find next?

MADDIE: Another person.

Ms. W.: *[Checks for understanding.]* Okay, and who do we find?

JASMINE: Wendell.

Ms. W.: *[Elaborates on text structure and summarizes.]* And do you see a picture of him? So that's what he looks like and he's telling the story in this chapter. Each chapter starts off with a picture and the name of the person who is telling the story in that chapter. *[Provides background information.]* And what's really neat about this book is that they are all related in some way. Now, they are not family members, but they are related in some ways. *[Provides background information.]* They have all come from different places. Some of them are from Puerto Rico. There's a woman in here from Vietnam. Actually, Kim, the one that started this book is from Vietnam. There's someone from North Korea. There is someone from Haiti, Mexico—all these different places. *[Checks for understanding.]* Look at the first chapter and we see the picture of Kim. So what do we know?

TONY: She's telling the story.

Ms. W.: So let's look at the first chapter. Who is telling the story? *[Checks for understanding.]*

STUDENTS: Kim.

Ms. W.: *[Prompts to listen for voice—attention to the writer's craft.]* Kim. So let's try to listen for her voice as we read this. Maddie, read the first paragraph for us.

MADDIE: [READING THE FIRST PARAGRAPH] "I stood before the family altar. It was dark. . . . I was nine years old and still hoped that perhaps his eyes might move, might notice me."

Ms. W.: *[Checks for understanding of a vocabulary word.]* Okay, so that's Kim speaking. What's a family altar? What does that mean?

JASMINE: I think it's where people get married.

Ms. W.: *[Prompts readers to figure out meaning from context.]* Okay, that's one kind of altar, a wedding altar where people get married. Now, what do you think this kind of altar is, from the description here? Have you ever heard of this before?

Figure 24-15. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Seedfolks

A GUIDED READING LESSON:

An Introduction to Seedfolks (CONTINUED)

Ms. W.: *[Clarifies meaning of a vocabulary word within the context and draws attention to cultural factors.]* Okay. Actually, this altar is a family altar. It can be just like a table where they put some things. So what's on this altar? There's a picture of her father—her father's photograph—and if you continue reading, there are some other things on this table like some candles and some other things. Her father has passed away. Actually, when she was very young, he passed away. So this is kind of just remembering him, giving him respect. Does everyone understand that? So that's one kind of altar. She's from Vietnam and in this culture that's how they might pay respect to someone who has passed away. Any questions about that?

STUDENTS: [SHAKE HEADS.]

Ms. W.: *[Reminds readers to use background knowledge.]* As you read, you are going to learn more about Kim and what she has to do with all the other people in this book. And they all come from different places so don't forget that as well. As you are reading, think about what we've talked about in social studies about moving and the kinds of difficulties people face. *[Provides directions and reminds readers of two purposes—how the writer shows characters' voices and how their stories are connected (plot).]* You are actually just going to read the first three chapters, Kim, Anna, and Wendell. As you are reading it, think about each person and try to listen to their voice, listen to how they are telling their story, and listen for how they are connected to each other in some way. *[Gives directions for response in writing.]* After you read the first three chapters, you are going to write in your reader's notebook about the characters and how they are connected to each other. Does everyone understand? So start reading, and when you are done with your writing, you can just read your independent reading book.

Figure 24-15. A Guided Reading Lesson: An Introduction to Seedfolks (cont.)

Ms. W. then had Maddie read a paragraph aloud from the first chapter. This turned out to be an important move, because it gave them the opportunity to talk about how important culture is in each story, to find out a little about Kim's (the character who plants beans), and to get a good start on the reading.

Ms. W. also provided some background information about the word *altar*, which most students had heard or seen before in a different context. Ms. W. simply told them the meaning of the word in this context and in doing so, helped them begin to understand Kim's story better. Notice that she reminded them of the text structure several times. Her expectations were clear—students should:

- Notice how the writer shows the characters' different voices.
- Think about how the characters' stories are connected.

Reading the Text

Ms. W. then left the table to have some individual reading conferences with other students. Students finished reading three chapters, wrote a short response, and then read their self-selected books independently until Ms. W. came back to discuss the text with them.

Discussing the Text

After about fifteen minutes, Ms. W. returned to the table and began the discussion (see Figure 24-16). The students were active participants, doing most of the talking as Ms. W. invited and confirmed their responses, probed, summarized, restated to move the discussion along, redirected the conversation, and questioned. Based on the information from the first three chapters, she asked them to make predictions about what would happen, and she drew attention to the title as important information.

Jason's comment that "they are so short and they always leave me thinking about something" is important. After Ms. W.'s probe, he explained that the chapter is short and gives so little information that he found himself wanting more. Jason was reflecting the kind of tension that a text like this one can bring—a tension that demands that the reader seek the satisfaction of closure.

The students often answered one another's questions rather than waiting for the teacher. They had learned how to discuss texts with one another following reading. Jasmine explained to Jason her understanding of why Kim wanted to be like her father. Both Maddie and Jason responded to Jasmine's question about why all the white

DISCUSSION OF *Seedfolks*

Ms. W.: *[Checks progress and invites response.]* Did everyone get a chance to finish the first three chapters? Did everyone write? *[Checks quickly.]* Do you want to just talk a little bit about what you were writing about?

JASON: Sure.

Ms. W.: *[Invites response in the form of talk.]* Let's just talk about the characters and how they are connected to each other.

JASON: Well, should I read it?

Ms. W.: *[Invites response in the form of talk.]* No, don't read it. Just talk about your thinking.

JASON: I was thinking . . . well first of all how each chapter had a different person telling it and how the story takes place in Cleveland. All the people who lived nearby lived near each other, but they don't all know each other.

MADDIE: Anna says that they all live really close to her, and in a way they kind of know each other. They've all seen each other. Anna, she saw Kim planting the seeds. And Wendell is friends with Anna and they both see Kim planting seeds. They all—

Ms. W.: *[Probes for deeper response.]* So how are they connected with each other?

TONY: They all live in the same apartment.

Ms. W.: *[Summarizes responses.]* So they all lived in the same neighborhood, and what Maddie was saying about the planting.

TONY: Kim never saw Anna. She only—

MADDIE: She might have, but—

TONY: Anna thinks Kim might have seen her, but she doesn't know for sure.

Ms. W.: *[Invites predictions.]* So based on the first three chapters, and as we read more chapters, what do you think is going to continue to happen? What do you think? What are some predictions you could make?

JASON: I think if there are twelve chapters, one of these pictures will be about each one of them. If there are less than twelve chapters, then maybe one or two of them will be in one of the chapters. And if there's more than twelve, they will probably use some of the pictures.

Ms. W.: *[Confirms student response and then turns the discussion to invite predictions.]* What do you think will happen in the story? Any predictions about what will happen? You're probably right, and we can continue looking at the pictures and thinking of how they are related to the story, but based on the first three chapters, what do you think will continue to happen as we hear from different characters? Jasmine?

JASMINE: I think they will meet each other. Like, someone will be planting something or taking out the trash, or whatever, and meet another person, and then the list will go on and on and the person will introduce one person to another.

Ms. W.: *[Draws the title to their attention as a basis for prediction.]* Do you have many more ideas about the title?

MADDIE: I think that maybe they'll all—that's happened so far, because Anna and Wendell watched Kim planted her beans—maybe all of them are going to meet each other.

TONY: I agree with Maddie, because I think they are going to get to know each other—like someone is planting seeds and the person comes over to him, and they don't really know each other. They just saw each other.

MADDIE: I think that maybe these things on the back . . . I think all of those things will be the reasons that show that they all need each other, and maybe sooner or later they will all become friends because of each object.

JASON: I want to come back to what Maddie said just now and to what I had said before that. I think that all the things on the back—a branch on a tree with leaves on it, beans and flower and things—are what Kim was talking about. I think that all the people in the book will meet each other and they will turn the vacant lot into a big garden.

Ms. W.: *[Invites another student into the discussion.]* Do you agree?

JASMINE: *[Nods.]* I do.

Ms. W.: *[Asks for discussion on another topic.]* And did these first three chapters make you think about anything else unrelated to the garden?

Figure 24-16. Discussion of *Seedfolks*

DISCUSSION OF *Seedfolks* (CONTINUED)

JASON: Yes, how they are so short and they always leave me thinking about something.

Ms. W.: [*Probes further for clarification.*] What?

JASON: For example, in this first chapter, the last paragraph of Kim.

Ms. W.: [*Asks for page number so all students can closely examine the section.*] Can you tell us what page it is on?

JASON: I'm on page 3, last paragraph, where it talks about how Kim planted lima beans in paper cups and how she placed the beans in the hole now and she covers them up and she opened her thermos of water. I was wondering what was the point of it. The two paragraphs before that came off. It's on page 3 at the end of the second paragraph. I didn't know what was going to happen next. It says, "I would show him I was his daughter." That was the end of this chapter. At this point I wondered what was going to happen next. Why would she want to show him she was his daughter? I was thinking that this chapter should be longer because it hardly gives any information.

Ms. W.: [*Recognizes another student*] [*RESPONDING TO JASMINE*] Go ahead.

JASMINE: Jason, when you said you didn't understand why she wanted him to know that she was his daughter it was because she was born eight months after he died. And when other people like her mother and her older sisters cried about him, they knew who he was, but she didn't, so she couldn't cry about him or anyone she didn't know. The only thing she knew was that he liked to plant and all of that, so I guess she just wanted to show him that she had his ability and she could do what he did.

JASON: When it was talking about . . . when she was at the family altar, maybe after that she decided she wanted to do what he did when he was alive and maybe his spirit would rise and watch her or something.

MADDIE: She never met her father so she wanted her father to know that she was his daughter because they never met each other and he didn't really know her that well. She wanted him to know that she was his daughter.

Ms. W.: [*Recognizes student comments and summarizes the discussion.*] I'm really glad you brought that up, because even though we are thinking about how all these characters from different backgrounds and places around the world are connected to each other, they are also stories in each chapter about each character, separate from all the other characters, and what's going on in each person's life. It's good you are focusing on that.

JASON: So, it sounds like even though they are all connected in some way, they are also very different in other ways.

Ms. W.: [*Encourages further discussion.*] Did you have anything to add about that?

JASMINE: I have a comment on a different topic.

Ms. W.: [*Recognizes another student. Invites student to student conversation.*] Okay, go ahead.

JASMINE: Like Anna, in the part that Wendell said that him and Anna are the only two white people left, I didn't get in Anna's story where it said how all of her family and all of the white people left as soon as the other countries and places started coming in. I didn't get why.

MADDIE: I think I may be able . . . because when the other countries came into that kind of apartment thing, her family and friends might have felt uncomfortable around other races. Maybe they wanted to leave because most of that apartment was—most of the people there—other races were living there now and they might have not liked the other races and maybe they just wanted to leave because they didn't want to be around them.

JASON: I disagree with Maddie. I think that during Anna's story it said how that neighborhood was just a place like a hotel until they had enough money and they were able to move somewhere else and get a decent job. It probably just happened to be coincidence that about the time those people got enough money and they were able to leave and find better jobs and stuff, other cultures and races came in.

Ms. W.: [*Affirms student comments.*] It's interesting to think about differences. You are bringing up this issue of differences and how people might feel uncomfortable about the differences. [*Ends with reference to the plot.*] As we continue reading about the people in this neighborhood, there are some things, again, that bring them together and connect them in some way.

Figure 24-16. Discussion of *Seedfolks* (cont.)

people left the neighborhood when other cultures and races came in. Each had a viable theory: Maddie's, that maybe they were uncomfortable around other races, and Jason's, that the neighborhood was like a hotel and every group left as soon as they could get a better job. Jason refers to a specific place in the text as his evidence. At the end, Ms. W. recognized children's comments and set the scene for further reading.

Analyzing the Lesson

Let's stop and analyze this guided reading lesson through the lens of thinking within, beyond, and about the text (see Figure 24-17). There is plenty of evidence that these students were engaging in a wide range of thinking, some prompted or modeled by the teacher and some spontaneous. Some of their discussion simply helped them sort out and remember the details of the text, so that they would have enough information to understand the literal meaning (within the text). The discussion was also rich in inference and hypothesis; with Carol's support they connected background information with the story and synthesized

new information (beyond the text). They also paid attention to the writer's craft—how the text was organized and how the writer used point of view to tell a larger story (about the text).

This lesson is a good example of students' helping one another expand their thinking. They answered one another's questions; they understood there might be more than one answer to a question; they built on one another's understandings. They often used language like:

- "I agree with Maddie because. . ."
- "I disagree because. . ."
- "I'd like to go back to what Maddie was talking about."
- "When Jason said. . ."

Students achieve this level of sophistication, not because they had a few lessons focused on comprehending strategies or because they can name strategies, but because they are actively engaged in processing and discussing texts every day over the years of elementary and middle school. Deep thinking cannot be generated through exercises, but it can be supported through authentic conversations surrounding

A GUIDED READING LESSON—SEEDFOLKS:

An Evidence of Thinking Across the Lesson

Within the Text

- Clarified whether two people knew each other.
- Looked at the relationships among characters.
- Understood vocabulary—the meaning of the word *altar* in this context.
- Understood the use of *hotel* in this context.
- Provided evidence for their thinking by using evidence from the text.
- Brought up confusions for clarification—noticing when something didn't make sense and they didn't have all the information.

Beyond the Text

- Hypothesized what the story would be about—predicting.
- Connected with their own experiences and knowledge about immigration and moving and how this story relates to that knowledge.
- Took on the point of view of a character.
- Synthesized information—the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Answered the question, What is the greater meaning and implications?
- Questioned events in the text—asking why.
- Inferred characters' internal motivations.

About the Text

- Thought about why the author chose a certain title to communicate to readers.
- Analyzed point of view the way the author used it.
- Noticed the voice of individual characters.
- Noticed features of the text such as short chapters and change of perspective.
- Noticed how the author structured the text—different perspectives for different people.

Figure 24-17. A Guided Reading Lesson of *Seedfolks*: An Evidence of Thinking Across the Lesson