

Book Study

Prepared by the
Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) Project

Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension Grades 6-12

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(Stenhouse Publishers, 2004)

Book Description

As the title indicates, this book is useful to teachers of grades 6-12. The book seeks to answer the why and how of teaching reading comprehension strategies in content areas other than language arts.

Target Audience

Content area teachers in grades 6-12 who are looking at comprehension needs within Tier 1 are an ideal book study group for this text.

Helpful Hint

From Chapter 2 on, the author identifies “What Works” strategies at the end of each chapter. Readers may find it helpful to preview these prior to reading each chapter as a sort of building background and/or accessing prior knowledge activity. This activity could be combined with a discussion between book study members of how the strategies shared either challenge or support what is already happening in their classroom(s) prior to the group reading the chapter and answering the discussion questions below.

Also, page numbers have been included to the left of each question. The reader should be able to find the answer to the question on the pages listed. Other than the obvious benefit of knowing where to find the answer, this could also be useful if the book study group wanted to divide the workload and do a Jigsaw activity with each chapter of the book.

Chapter 1 Introduction: “I’m the Stupid Lady from Denver...”

(Page 2-3) 1. How has not knowing the content well assisted the author in performing her role as consultant/professional developer? How might viewing your practice from her viewpoint or the viewpoint of your students assist you in helping your students comprehend the content?

(Page 3) 2. How does the author use the strategy of questioning to help students move through the text?

(Page 4) 3. What lesson to content teachers is embedded in the discussion between the author and a science teacher at the top of page 4?

(Page 5) 4. What does the author mean when she says learning to read does not end in the elementary grades?

(Page 5) 5. What strategies does the author indicate good readers use when they construct meaning and what does she advocate in teaching these strategies?

(Page 7) 6. How does the author view the teaching of reading in middle/secondary schools?

(Page 7-8) 7. Using the example(s) given in the text, brainstorm ideas to successfully incorporate “defining key terms” and/or “visualizing as a fix up strategy” in your content area and grade level.

(Page 9) 8. What is the author’s perception of how readers make meaning and what implications does this have on your practice as a teacher?

Chapter 2: The “So What?” of Reading Comprehension

(Page 11-13) 1. How does the author’s story of her struggle in reaching her class relate to your situation in your classroom?

(Page 12-16) 2. Identify ways in which you could use the Double-Entry Diary approach in your classroom.

(Page 14-17) 3. Looking at Figure 2.4 on page 17, and thinking of the author’s dialogue with JoAnna, what aspects of the diagram are accomplished through the use of the double entry diary and which will need to be developed further in other ways? Also, how did the author help JoAnna develop meaning?

(Page 17-18) 4. What are the four essential elements of Comprehension Instruction? Identify ways you incorporate these four elements in your instruction and ways to incorporate any of the four you are not currently.

(Page 19-20) 5. What does the author mean when she says we, “cannot have our cake and eat it too”? How does this relate to her quote, “school should not be a place where young people go to watch old people work”?

(Page 20-21) 6. Identify how you employ or could employ the four “What Works” teaching strategies when planning your instruction.

Chapter 3: Parallel Experiences: Tapping the Mother Lode

(Page 23-24) 1. In relationship to the author's description of her encounter with a teacher on page 24, assess yourself and/or your team on what barriers may exist in implementing the strategies discussed thus far in the book. (Are there philosophical differences needing to be addressed? Is time an issue? What other issues are you struggling with?)

(Follow-up to #1) 2. For each of the issues identified from question 1, brainstorm some possible solutions.

(Page 23-25) 3. What message for teachers of content areas is imbedded in the dialogue between the author and the industrial technology teacher?

(Page 26) 4. How does the author compare coaches to great teachers and why?

(Page 26-27) 5. Explain the process and importance of mental modeling for your grade level/content area to a partner.

(Page 29-31) 6. How does the author use mental modeling to assist students in their understanding of math?

(Page 30-31) 7. What message does the example of mental modeling hold for teachers of content areas?

(Page 33) 8. How does the author establish a rapport with students and a purpose for learning *Frankenstein*? Try to recall at least two other examples of how she has accomplished these two feats in Chapters 1 and 2.

(Page 33-35) 9. How does the author attempt to motivate students to work through the difficult part of the novel? How might this approach work for your own instruction?

(Page 35) 10. Identify ways you use or will use the strategies discussed in the "What Works" section.

Chapter 4 Real Rigor: Connecting Students with Accessible Text

(Page 37-39) 1. What lesson(s) can content teachers take from the experiences of the author on these pages?

(Page 39) 2. Define Accessible Text. How do you or could you incorporate Accessible Text into your instruction?

(Page 40-42) 3. What is the author advocating for on these pages? What is her response to claims she is decreasing rigor in the classroom based on her advocacy on these pages?

(Page 41) 4. How might the 3 examples of ways exemplary teachers avoid the textbook problem assist your students in comprehending content in your classroom? List ways you will use these methods to improve student comprehension.

(Page 43-45) 5. What are text sets and how could they be used in your grade level/content area?

(Page 46) 6. How have the author and her colleagues used text sets to improve student comprehension/content knowledge in U.S. history?

(Page 47-top right hand corner) 7. Identify the ways in which text sets can be evaluated and how you could use this evaluation system to assist you in teaching your students.

(Page 49) 8. Explain to a partner the one way you use or will use at least one of the “What Works” strategies.

Chapter 5: “Why Am I Reading This?”

(Page 52) 1. What is purpose setting and what significance does it hold for your practice as a teacher?

(Page 53-54) 2. What lesson for educators is imbedded in the dialogue between the author and Molly (the teacher) on these pages?

(Page 55) 3. How could the Instructional Purposes worksheet assist you in your role as teacher?

(Page 60) 4. How does the author respond to critics who say setting the purpose dumbs down the work?

(Page 60-61) 5. What do you think about the principal’s question and the author’s viewpoint regarding engaging students in reading boring/difficult text versus interesting and well-written text? Share your thoughts with a partner or group.

(Page 62-63) 6. How could helping students understand the difference between their reciting and conversation voices assist in your instruction?

(Page 65) 7. Share how you have incorporated or will incorporate the 3 “What Works” strategies.

Chapter 6: Holding Thinking to Remember and Reuse

(Page 68) 1. In the middle of this page, the author shares this, “It takes time to teach kids how to share their thinking about a piece of text, and it can be frustrating at first.” Share your thoughts about this quote with a partner. Please include the impact this statement has on instruction at your grade level and in your content area.

(Page 69) 2. When looking at the six strategies of getting students started with marking text listed in the upper right hand corner of this page, identify the strategies you have used or would like to use in your classroom. Indicate how you have used or will use the strategy or strategies.

(Page 70) 3. What does the author say about using peer examples in instruction? How does/could this apply to your instructional situation?

(Page 71-74) 4. What lesson could/should a teacher take from the classroom example shared about Aaron?

(Page 72-74) 5. In the margins of these pages, the author has given several tips. In what ways could you use these tips at your grade level or in your content area?

(Page 75) 6. How do you or could you use Whole Group Thinking in your instruction?

(Page 76-78) 7. Define Comprehension Constructors and explain how they could be useful to teachers.

(Page 76-86) 8. Looking at Figures 6.2 through 6.11, which models are you finding might be helpful to you as a teacher and how might you use them?

Chapter 7: Group Work That Grows Understanding

(Page 90-93) 1. How does the author respond to questions from those who say they have too many diverse readers in class to teach content and reading? How does the author make small group instruction work?

(Page 94-97) 2. What ideas do Figures 7.1-7.4 give you to assist with small group instruction? Share your ideas with a partner or group.

(Page 98-99) 3. Explain to a partner how you are using or will use the “What Works” strategies.

Chapter 8: What Do I Do With All These Sticky Notes?

(Page 101-102) 1. What kind of classroom environment do you think the author creates with her statement to students on page 101? Do you think this approach would contribute to or detract from what you wish to accomplish in your classroom?

(Page 103) 2. What are your thoughts on the quote, “The aim of assessment is primarily to educate and improve student performance, not merely to audit it.”? Is this viewpoint represented in your classroom? If so, how, if not, why not? How is this philosophy reflected in an MTSS?

(Page 102-104) 3. How do the author’s thoughts about assessment support or diminish her points about teaching reading in the content areas? What implications does this have on your teaching practice?

(Page 104) 4. Explain how the author uses goal setting in her classroom.

(Page 105) 5. What is the significance of Figure 8.1 for teachers?

(Page 106-108) 6. Define Conversation Calendars. How might you use them in your instruction?

(Page 110-112) 7. Identify the three parts of the reading response log. What use could they serve in your classroom?

(Page 113) 8. How do you or could you use work samples and quick conferences to help assess your students?

(Page 115) 9. What are your thoughts about the author’s statement in the first paragraph on this page regarding assessment?

(Page 115) 10. What similarities/differences exist between assessment in your classroom and what is presented in the “What Works” section?

Chapter 9: “Did I Miss Anything? Did I Miss Everything?” Last Thoughts

(Page 121) 1. If you were to write a review of this book as is discussed on this page, what would you write? Explain the rationale for your review to a partner or group.