

## **Suggestions for a Book Study on *The Next Step in Guided Reading***

I have received countless requests for advice on to lead a book study on *The Next Step in Guided Reading*. In my opinion, the best approach is for teachers to discuss each chapter separately, focusing on how the ideas in each chapter might work in their own classrooms.

Cathy Toll, a leading expert on literacy coaching, comments on leading book studies: “The challenge is to create meaningful discussions that prompt reflection and sharing and enrich participants’ experiences of what they read. The desire is to avoid creating discussions merely for the sake of discussions, simple question-and-answer sessions, or painful gatherings of group members in which attempts to share what they liked about the book are interspersed with long spells of silence” (Toll, *The Literacy Coach’s Survival Guide*, 2005, Newark, DE: IRA, p. 99).

As you plan your study session, consider the needs and desires of your teachers. Invite them to help you plan the discussion framework and create an atmosphere of trust, inquiry, and mutual respect. Below are a few options for discussion sessions. Some come from Toll’s book, others from my own personal experience with leading book studies.

### **Options for Discussion Frameworks:**

- **Share 2** - Teachers share two things they learned and two questions they have.
- **Observe a lesson** – Ask one teacher each month to videotape a portion of a guided reading lesson and play it during the discussion. Teachers can use the corresponding rubric in the chapter to record their observations and questions.
- **Case study** - Ask each teacher to select a struggling reader from his or her classroom for a yearlong case study. At the beginning of each study session, teachers share their student’s progress and discuss ideas for the next step in intervention.
- **Sticky note share** – As teachers read a chapter, they mark interesting places with a sticky note and record their thinking. At the book study, teachers share their thoughts, explore ideas, and discuss possible solutions to problems.
- **Question/Discussion** – Each teacher prepares a question to pose to the group.
- **Minute to Write It** – (I sometimes use this at the end of a guided reading session.) For the first three to five minutes of the meeting, each teacher writes a reflection on the chapter. Use the reflections as springboards for discussion.

- **Start the Discussion** - Ask teachers to take turns providing a discussion-starter for the session.
- **DVD** - View a portion of one of my DVDs (available from this website). This works best if you preview the lesson first and select places to stop the DVD and ask teachers to share their thoughts. When using a DVD, I often ask teachers to observe both the teacher and the students, and think of specific questions/issues to discuss. For example:

Observations on the Teacher	Observations on the Students	Issues/Questions
- She helped student #2 construct a “green question” by using the scaffolding card.	- Student #3 was copying from his neighbor.	- Why do children copy? How can we encourage independence?

- **Share an Artifact** - Ask teachers to bring an artifact from their classroom that relates to the chapter.

**Chapter 1** - Teachers come prepared to share an independent literacy activity that is working well with their students. Discuss challenges and how they were solved. You might videotape a book talk and a reading conference for the group to observe and discuss, or share ideas for high-interest/low level books for independent reading. This is especially important for grades 2-5. Another option for this chapter discussion is to share ideas for the reading notebook.

**Chapter 2** - Teachers bring student assessments from their classroom and complete the appropriate assessment summary sheet. Show a video clip of a student reading a passage, and have teachers analyze it to according to the guidelines in chapter 2. Then select the next teaching focus for this student. This activity works for any grade level. **You might also want to videotape the comprehension interview with an intermediate student – THIS DOESN’T SEEM TO FIT.**

**Chapter 3** - Teachers bring a lesson plan and the book for a Pre-A or emergent lesson they have done. Discuss the options for word study and how the high-frequency chart can be used to guide book choice and create a dictated sentence. Prior to the study session, videotape an emergent or pre-A lesson to show to the group (or show a video clip from one of my DVDs).

**Chapter 4** – Teachers bring a lesson plan and the book for an early lesson they have taught. They should have the assessment summary chart for

that group so they can discuss their students' strengths and needs. Spend time practicing the different word study activities, and discuss how each activity has a specific purpose. Direct teachers to use the appendix for word study examples. Emphasize the importance of rereading familiar books at the beginning of day 2 after students finish the book from day 1. The guided writing booklets offer great discussion opportunities. Prior to the session, videotape an early lesson to show and discuss (or show a video clip from one of my DVDs).

**Chapter 5** - Teachers bring a lesson plan and the book for a transitional lesson they have taught. They should have the assessment summary chart for that group so they can discuss their students' strengths and needs. Ask teachers to do the word study inventory (p. 48) for their struggling transitional readers. Show how to select a word study activity to match students' needs. For the videotaped lessons, it is powerful to tape two groups at different grades reading at the same level. Discuss the students' behaviors and strategies. Before playing the tape, share the assessment summary chart for the group and have teachers discuss the appropriate teaching focus for each student. At the transitional level, you will likely spend three days on a book, with Day 3 being guided writing. There are transitional lessons on my DVDS.

**Chapter 6** usually takes more than one month to discuss. Although teachers in K-1 will rarely have fluent readers, share how they can use chapter 6 to help them plan their minilessons and interactive read alouds. They can select a comprehension strategy and model some of the scaffolds. Again, teachers should bring a lesson plan with the book they have taught and discuss how they gradually released their support as students spent several days on the comprehension strategy. Give teachers an opportunity to practice some of the comprehension strategies using a professional article or a book from your bookroom. Videotape a fluent lesson or share one from my DVDs.

**Chapter 7** - This is the opportunity to bring assessments from struggling readers and use the problem-solving charts to identify a focus for instruction. It is also the time to plan the intervention. The problem-solving charts can be downloaded from the website. Videotape a 10-minute lesson with a struggling reader. There are 10-minute lesson plans at the end of chapters 3 through 5 to use with students who need one-on-one instruction.

If you have questions, check the "Ask Jan!" link on my website to see if others have asked the same question. You are also more than welcome to

email questions directly to me at [Janrich2@gmail.com](mailto:Janrich2@gmail.com). I hope the book studies prompt teachers to think, question, discuss and problem-solve. Like you, I yearn to see every student become a better reader!