

Building Adolescent Readers

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Introduction

Building Adolescent Readers is a series of three video programs from Kelly Gallagher's high school classroom at Magnolia High School in Anaheim, California. Kelly teaches both ninth and twelfth grade English classes, working with college-bound as well as remedial students. Some of the students featured in the video are also featured in the book *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12*. Kelly also models strategies from his first book, *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School*.

Building Adolescent Readers features a wide range of teaching and learning strategies, including whole class, small group, and individual instruction. In these settings Kelly models a number of strategies to help students make sense of difficult text.

This guide is designed to help you use *Building Adolescent Readers* in workshop settings. The plans are flexible and make it possible to tailor viewing to group needs. Suggestions for viewing the programs are divided into five sections:

1. *Introduction*. A brief overview of the concepts and strategies to be found in each program.
2. *Writing While Viewing*. Suggestions and sample forms for taking notes while viewing to help focus group discussion.
3. *Questions for Discussion*. Options for facilitating conversations before and after viewing.
4. *Workshop and Classroom Extensions*. Activities designed to help teachers use the concepts from the video in their own classrooms.
5. *Further Reading*. Connections to specific chapters in the companion texts *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12* and *Reading*

Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School.

Kelly and his students delve deeply into both *Lord of the Flies* and *1984*, though the strategies modeled throughout this series have been proven effective with all difficult works.

Program 1: The Six Building Blocks

The first program in the series introduces viewers to Kelly Gallagher, a high school teacher in Anaheim, California, who successfully motivates adolescents to read. Kelly shares six foundational building blocks which have proven effective in building readers:

Building Block #1: The Importance of Access to Text

Building Block #2: Providing Students With a Time and Place to Read

Building Block #3: The Importance of the Teacher as a Reading Model

Building Block #4: How Grading Often De-motivates Readers

Building Block #5: Providing Students With Structure and Reading
Goals

Building Block #6: Answering the question: “Why Should I Read?”

Each of the building blocks is outlined in this tape, and viewers will see how each block is implemented in Kelly’s classroom.

Writing While Viewing

Distribute copies of the Six Building Blocks Note Chart (Figure 1) to each participant. As they watch the tape, have them note ideas they like and questions that arise for each of the building blocks.

Questions For Discussion

1. Do your students have access to high interest reading materials, including magazines, newspapers, and Internet reading?
2. Is your school committed to building classroom libraries?
3. One study found that, on the average, secondary students are only reading 7.1 minutes a day. How many minutes a day are your students reading?
4. What are the daily reading expectations for your students? Is this expectation school-wide? Do you have specific reading goals for your students? How are these goals measured? What structure is in place to create accountability in reaching these goals?
5. In the tape, Kelly models the “Reading Minute” as a way of demonstrating each day that reading is interesting. In what ways do you model the importance of reading? In what ways does your school site model that reading is crucial?
6. Do your students understand why they should be readers? Are their reasons for reading intrinsic or extrinsic? What can you do as a teacher (or as a staff member) to build an intrinsic desire to read?
7. How do schools play a role in reducing our students’ love for reading?
8. What is your greatest challenge in motivating your students to read?
9. How can we help teachers in all content areas to begin to see themselves not only as content teachers, but as literacy teachers as well?

Workshop and Classroom

Extensions

1. Have participants review the six building blocks to determine which blocks are given adequate attention at their site(s) and which blocks deserve more attention.
2. Have teachers discuss ways to bring more books into their classrooms. What can teachers do to build classroom libraries? What funding sources can be tapped? How can we get the students and the community involved in creating classroom book floods?
3. Have teachers and students brainstorm the reasons why reading is important to them. Compare their list with the list Kelly outlines in his book, *Reading Reasons*:
 - Reading is Rewarding
 - Reading Builds a Strong Vocabulary
 - Reading Makes You a Better Writer
 - Reading Makes You Smarter
 - Reading Is Hard and Hard is Necessary
 - Reading Prepares You For the World of Work
 - Reading Well is Financially Rewarding
 - Reading Helps Prepare You For College
 - Reading Well Helps You Fight Oppression
 - Reading Helps Develop a Moral Compass
4. What can teachers do to help students internalize these reasons to read?

Further Reading

Chapter 1, “The Six Building Blocks of Reading” and Chapter 2, “Ten Reasons To Read” from *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School* by Kelly Gallagher.

Program 2: First-Draft Reading

Strong readers, when reading difficult material, share three characteristics: 1) they have the capacity to live with ambiguity, often embracing their initial confusion; 2) they consciously monitor their comprehension as they read, recognizing exactly where their understanding begins to falter, and (3) they employ active, fix-it strategies when the reading gets hard. In Program 2, Kelly models a number of strategies to help students internalize these characteristics when attempting to make sense of first draft reading.

Writing While Watching

As participants watch this tape, have them take notes on the Question/Comment Chart (Figure 2). On the left hand side have students jot down questions that arise. On the right hand side have viewers record comments. Upon completion of the tape, snake around the room, asking every participant to share either a question or a comment.

Questions For Discussion

1. Do you agree with Kelly when he says that confusion is a necessary component to learning? Why? Why not?
2. Why is it important to teach students to embrace confusion?
3. Often, when students are asked what part of last night's chapter they didn't understand, they will respond by saying, "All of it." Why is it important to help students recognize the exact spot(s) where their comprehension falters? How can teachers help students to monitor their trouble spots?
4. How do we best make visible to students those effective strategies good readers use when the reading gets hard?

Workshop and Classroom

Extensions

1. Give teachers (or students) a difficult passage to read. As they read, have the participants highlight the exact spots where their comprehension breaks down. Working in small groups, have them help each other clear up their confusion without the help of the presenter (or teacher).
2. Give the teachers (or students) a second difficult reading passage. As they read, have them notice what they do as readers when it gets hard. As they read, have them make bullet notes of the strategies they employ to make sense of the text. Upon completion, conduct a group brainstorm, listing all the strategies utilized to make sense of the reading.
3. Discuss why it is important for adolescent readers to see all the strategies listed in the previous suggestion. Discuss how teachers can help students to recognize and internalize these reading strategies.
4. Show the first five minutes of a film the students have probably seen (choose a film that starts with some confusion). As the students view the first five minutes, have them jot down everything they did not understand the first time they saw it. Brainstorm a list of things they did not understand. Upon completion of the list, ask them if they walked out of the theater after the first five minutes. When they reply, “No,” commend them for embracing the confusion even though there were ___ things they did not understand. Tell them that this ability to live with ambiguity will come in handy when they read the first chapter of _____.

Further Reading

Chapter 4, “First-Draft Reading” from *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4–12* by Kelly Gallagher

Program 3: Second-Draft Reading

When challenged by difficult reading, students often spend much of their first draft reading in survival mode, in essence trying to understand the text at a literal level. It is not until this foundation is set and the text is thus revisited that a deeper, below-the-surface level of comprehension becomes achievable. In Program 3, Kelly models a number of strategies that help students dig deeper in second-draft reading. Kelly emphasizes the importance of collaboration, and concludes by modeling the importance that assessments play in driving students' deeper reading.

Writing While Viewing

Distribute copies of the T-Chart (Figure 3). As participants watch Program 3, have them use this form to note similarities and differences to their own classrooms.

Questions For Discussion

1. How do we help students overcome their “I read it once; I’m done” mentality?
2. Why is it important that students not only be able to read what the text says, but what the text doesn’t say as well?
3. Which of the strategies modeled in this tape do you think were most effective in helping students generate deeper meaning in a second draft reading?
4. Why is collaboration crucial in helping students achieve the deepest meaning possible? How can teachers foster meaningful conversation in their classrooms?
5. Discuss how a deeper assessment might drive a deeper reading. Do you agree with Kelly when he says it is important that both the teacher and the students know what the assessment is before the reading commences?

Workshop and Classroom

Extensions

1. Give students a challenging passage to read. Have students score their level of comprehension after reading it one time only (“1” signifying little or no comprehension; 10 indicating thorough comprehension). Have them read it a second time and score their level of comprehension again. Repeat this process until the students have three or four scores. Most students’ scores will rise with each reading, reinforcing the notion that deeper reading occurs after the passage has been revisited.
2. Before discussing the comprehension scores in the previous activity, give students seven minutes to discuss in groups what they think the passage is “really about.” At the end of their discussions, have students rate their comprehension again. Many students’ scores will rise, reinforcing the importance collaboration plays in achieving deeper reading comprehension.

Further Reading

Chapter 5, “Second-Draft Reading” and Chapter 6, “Collaboration” from *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12* by Kelly Gallagher.

Discussion Questions for DVD Bonus Footage

One Question, One

Comment

1. In this bonus segment, students share either a comment or question about their reading of *Lord of the Flies*. Choose one response from a student that you thought was interesting. Why did it grab your attention?
2. How does this exercise help students embrace their confusion?
3. How would this strategy work in small groups?

Faculty Book Club

1. How does talking about a book with others help students increase their comprehension?
2. Would creating a faculty book club be a possibility at your school?

Interviews

In each of these interview segments, Kelly talks further about aspects of teaching reading, as well as his philosophy of teaching in general. Individual teachers who want to hear more about these topics will find them useful. The segments may also be useful for facilitators who want to explore these specific topics in more depth.

The Importance of Access to Text	Time and Place to Read	The Importance of Modeling	How Grading De-Motivates Readers	Structure and Reading Goals	“Why Should I Read?”
<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>	<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>	<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>	<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>	<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>	<i>Ideas from Program 1</i>
<i>Questions for Discussion</i>	<i>Questions for Discussion</i>	<i>Questions for Discussion</i>	<i>Questions for Discussion</i>	<i>Questions for Discussion</i>	<i>Questions for Discussion</i>

Figure 1: Six Building Blocks Note Chart

Questions Generated from Viewing Program 2	Comments Generated while Viewing Program 2

Figure 3: T-Chart

Similarities to My Classroom	Differences

Figure 2: Question/Comment Chart

Time Codes for *Building Adolescent Readers*

Program 1: The Six Building Blocks	25:03
1-1 Introduction	00:00 – 00:29 (00:29)
1-2 Access to Text	00:29 – 03:17 (02:48)
1-3 A Time and Place for Reading	03:17 – 06:20 (03:03)
1-4 Teacher Modeling	06:20 – 12:08 (05:48)
1-5 Stop Grading Everything	12:08 – 14:28 (02:20)
1-6 Provide Structure and Goals	14:28 – 16:39 (02:11)
1-7 Reasons to be a Reader	16:39 – 24:18 (07:39)
Program 2: First-Draft Reading	23:50
2-1 Introduction	00:00 – 01:04 (01:04)
2-2 Modeling Reader Confusion Through a Think-Aloud	01:04 – 05:36 (04:32)
2-3 Trouble Slips: Lord of the Flies Small Group Discussion	05:36 – 08:17 (02:41)
2-4 “I Don’t Understand” Statements: 1984 Small Group Discussion	08:17 – 12:15 (03:58)
2-5 Monitoring Comprehension	12:15 – 17:56 (05:41)
2-6 Working with Fix-it Strategies	17:56 – 23:05 (04:09)
Program 3: Second-Draft Reading	29:37
3-1 Introduction	00:00- 01:15 (01:15)
3-2 Say/Doesn’t Say: 1984 Small Group Discussion	01:15 – 07:45 (06:30)
3-3 Say/Doesn’t Say: 1984 Whole Class Discussion	07:45 – 13:28 (04:43)
3-4 Mystery Envelopes:1984	13:28 - 23:09 (09:39)
3-5 The Importance of Backwards Planning	23:09 – 28:53 (05:44)
DVD Extras	18:23
One Question, One Comment	00:00 – 05:47 (05:47)
Faculty Book Club	05:47 – 09:30 (03:43)
Interviews	09:30 – 18:21 (08:51)
(The Critical Role of the Teacher; Deeper Meaning; Difficult Text; Good and Bad Readers; A Shift in Education; Quick Assessments; Reading Channels)	

