

# STUDY GUIDE

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## ON THE SAME PAGE



shared reading beyond the primary grades

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# *On the Same Page*

## *Shared Reading Beyond the Primary Grades*

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**Janet Allen**

In a *Language Arts* article by Mem Fox, she reminds us of the importance of reflection and action in making instructional choices: “Although we haven’t lost our way, I do fear that we are diverted all too often from the main road of literacy teaching onto detours which lead, from time to time, to less challenge, less struggle, less delight, less reality, less learning, and ultimately, less literacy. I believe we lose our way and have lost our way every time a new orthodoxy hits the school system” (2001, 105–113). As you read and discuss this book, it is my hope that you see this as a catalyst for reflection and exploration, and not another orthodoxy.

In keeping with that hope, I have provided prompts in three broad categories: reflection, exploration, and action. The reflection prompts ask you to think about your own background as a learner and as a teacher. Exploration prompts then support connections between and among your backgrounds and the words and experiences in the chapter being highlighted. The action prompts support the transfer of your discussion back into the classroom and anticipate the content of the next chapter of the text. In this way, we share an opportunity to create the texts of our own teaching lives while enjoying the benefits of being on the same page.

### **Chapter 1: On the Same Page: Shared Reading Beyond the Primary Grades**

#### **Reflection**

Think back to your early memories of the joy of someone reading to you. Do you remember how anxious you were to see the pages of the book? Can you remember asking your reader, “What word says \_\_\_\_\_?”

#### **Exploration**

Janet talks about books she read with students when they begged her not to stop reading. With other members of your study group, generate a list

of books students beg you to read (include title, author, and genre). On page 7, there is a list of reading attitudes and skills that result from the impact of shared reading. Using this list, explore titles and authors that could be read in order to increase literacy in each of these areas.

### **Action**

Find examples of texts where the first experience with reading them would be diminished if interrupted for teaching or discussion.

## **Chapter 2: “Pleeze, Just One More Chapter”: Expanding Reading Fluency with Connected Shared Reading**

### **Reflection**

Think about study guides you have used in the past during a whole-class reading of a novel or play. How effective were those guides at increasing student literacy when compared to the six features of effective instruction Langer highlights in *Beating the Odds: Teaching Middle and High School Students to Read and Write Well*?

- Texts deconstructed to inform curriculum and instruction
- Connections made across content and structure
- Strategies for thinking and doing emphasized
- Skills and knowledge taught in multiple types of lessons
- Classrooms organized to foster collaboration and shared cognition
- Generative learning encouraged

### **Exploration**

As a group, examine the guides for *Imitate the Tiger* in this chapter, as well as those for *Freak the Mighty* and *Holes* in Appendix I. What instructional patterns are present in all three guides? How else could these guides be created to meet the needs of students in your classrooms without getting in the way of engagement with the text?

### **Action**

Choose a common text for the study group and divide the text into appropriate sections. Each person should develop instructional supports for

their assigned section by creating thinking/learning tools and discovering supplemental texts (print or nonprint) as teaching possibilities during shared reading, such as:

- Word study
- Writer's craft
- Thinking/questioning
- Strategic reading
- Reader response/connections
- World connections

## Chapter 3: Learning to Read and Reading to Learn: Understanding Strategic Shared Reading

### Reflection

Think about how you would describe a strategy and a skill. What do the terms have in common? What instructional differences do you see between the two terms?

### Exploration

As teachers, we are often given lists of strategies, or scope and sequence charts, that we should cover with all students. As you read this chapter, think about a different model for deciding what kinds of strategy instruction your students need. Develop your own list of ways you can tell students need a specific strategy lesson. What are students doing, or not able to do, that indicates additional instruction and support is needed to move them toward greater independence?

### Action

For any of the strategic behaviors you identified in your exploration, create a series of lessons that introduce and support learning the strategy while moving toward using the strategy independently. Decide on the texts and supports that will form the basis of instruction at each of the following stages:

- Introduction to the strategy
- Critical thinking/problem solving for collaborative thinking about using the strategy
- Modeled lesson to explore the strategy in action

- Guided learning to extend support for strategy use
- Independent use of the strategy

## Chapter 4: “When Do I Teach Vocabulary?” Shared Reading and Word Study

### Reflection

Think back to your experiences as a student and remember how vocabulary was taught in those classes. Which vocabulary study methods you experienced as a student remain unchanged in your teaching today? What do you do to help students learn new words that your teachers did not do with you? What evidence do you have that these methods improve students’ independent reading comprehension, speaking, or writing?

### Exploration

As you read this chapter and think about the instructional implications, highlight the roles of the teacher and students at each of the following levels of word study: incidental, mediated, and explicit. Explore ways you could weave these levels of word study into your teaching each day. Brainstorm possibilities for extending your word study in authentic homework or independent experiences.

### Action

Gather samples of texts you would use that offer the opportunity for rich language exploration. How will you highlight language at the incidental level and support learning that language at the mediated and explicit levels?

## Chapter 5: Building on Common Ground: Shared Paths to Content Literacy

### Reflection

Talk with your students about the reading they do in their content classes (textbooks, primary source documents, news articles, informational texts, and so on). Ask students to identify what gets in the way of successful reading when given assignments in these content classes. Look for pat-

terns in their responses that would indicate places where teachers could offer reading support.

### **Exploration**

Building on the information you learned from students, ask them to bring textbooks to class to support their comments. Take one chapter from one textbook and analyze the chapter using the four categories for evaluating text: readability, interest level, coherence, and structural supports.

### **Action**

Using the same textbook chapter in the exploration, design instructional materials that would support reading it, such as:

- Create a TAG that would guide students in using text supports to help them read the chapter.
- Find supplemental texts to build background knowledge, create interest and engagement, and prompt questions students might have about the content.
- Create a list of additional reading that students could explore if they have developed an interest in the topic.

## **Chapter 6: Writing Roads: Shared Reading as the Foundation for Integrated Language Arts**

### **Reflection**

Think about ways you have scaffolded the writing experience for your students in the past. Which experiences have been internalized by students and used independently in their writing? What trouble spots in student writing still occur regardless of how often they are covered in lessons and assignments?

### **Exploration**

Combine each group member's list into a master list of writing lessons that need to be taught. Group the lessons into four writing categories, as outlined in this chapter:

- Task reviewer (audience and task awareness)
- Meaning maker (organization, sequence, coherence)
- Code user (conventions of text, print, genre)
- Text crafter (revision and editing)

Collect texts and use them to create a sample instructional lesson that has the following five-step design:

- Share text to introduce the element of writing to be taught
- Collaborate/problem solve to explore the element
- Gather text(s) for a model lesson where writers deconstruct text to find the purpose and characteristics of the element
- Create a template or chart to support guided practice using this element of writing
- Create an authentic opportunity for students to use the element of writing

### **Action**

Assess the current writing needs of students in your class. Find an element of writing that either a whole group or small group of students needs additional support. Create an instructional lesson as described above, and ask students to compare/contrast writing before and after this lesson.

## **Chapter 7: Shared Reading as a Bridge to Independence**

### **Reflection**

Think of times in your own reading life when shared texts have influenced your independent reading. What percentage of the reading you do today is influenced by texts shared with you by others?

### **Exploration**

Read the transcript of Janet's class (pp. 155–156 of *On the Same Page*) and document ways she could have supported her students' independent reading. Discuss your experiences with increasing the amount of independent reading choices your students are offered. What challenges have you encountered and how have you overcome those challenges? Brainstorm ideas for using shared reading as a bridge to reading independence.

## Action

Using an anchor book (one that could be a whole-class shared text), create a Concept Ladder (Figure 1). Concept ladders follow a theme with increasingly challenging texts for continued reading within the theme/concept. The first rung of the ladder might have the title of a picture book and the final rung might have an adult novel. Invite students to help create these reading ladders and post them around the room. Document the impact on students' independent reading choices.

## Chapter 8: “But What About Grades?” Assessing the “Value” of Shared Reading

### Reflection

Think about the shared reading you do with students and generate a list of all the ways you assess the value of that time. Which of those assessments become grades and which remain as evidence of the successful use of this time?

### Exploration

Survey students in your classes and ask them to generate a list of ways they would like to show they have been changed because of a shared text. Ask them to help create a way these assessments could be translated into grades.

When your study group meets, bring these student suggestions to the table for discussion. Combine these with your ideas for ways to assess and evaluate the impact of shared reading in the categories highlighted in this chapter:

- Fluency and foundations of reading
- Language acquisition
- Increased content literacy
- Changed attitudes toward reading
- Strategic transfer to other reading tasks (including testing)

### Action

Create a notebook that documents alternatives and options for students to demonstrate the value of shared texts. Each option should have outlines or

directions for its purpose, and an example of student work that demonstrates the option.

## References

- Cheripko, Jan. 1996. *Imitate the Tiger*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.
- Fox, Mem. 2001. "Have We Lost Our Way?" *Language Arts* 79: 105–113.
- Langer, Judith. 2000. *Beating the Odds: Teaching Middle and High School Students to Read and Write Well*. CELA Research Report Number 12014. 2d ed. Albany: National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement.
- Philbrick, Rodman. 1993. *Freak the Mighty*. New York: Scholastic.
- Sachar, Louis. 1998. *Holes*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

# Figure 1 Concept Ladder

