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Think Nonfiction!



Modeling Reading and Research

ONE VHS VIDEOTAPE & STUDY GUIDE

S T U D Y G U I D E

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Nonfiction Matters (Harvey 1998), *Strategies That Work* (Harvey and Goudvis 2000), and *Strategy Instruction in Action* videotapes (Harvey and Goudvis 2001) are available at www.stenhouse.com.

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Introduction

When kids read nonfiction they are captivated by great pictures, engaging features, and compelling text. Nonfiction is the information genre, but merely getting the facts isn't enough. Understanding nonfiction text is about much more than answering literal questions at the end of a passage or chapter. Nonfiction readers must notice new information before they can learn and remember it. They need to merge their thinking with the information to understand it. Comprehension strategies such as asking questions and determining importance are staples of nonfiction literacy instruction.

In *Think Nonfiction!* second-grade teacher Barb Smith begins a nonfiction course of study that will culminate in kids doing their own self-selected research projects. This process involves a number of steps. To initiate the course of study, Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis join Barb as she teaches a nonfiction reading comprehension strategy. Barb uses the gradual release of responsibility framework to organize her literacy instruction, incorporating modeling and guided practice with the goal of moving readers toward independence. Subsequently, Barb models a variety of nonfiction reading strategies as she shows kids how to do their own research. Over time, the kids apply these strategies independently as they investigate and respond to a variety of topics.

Overview

Think Nonfiction! begins with Steph, Anne, and Barb meeting to plan an introductory, nonfiction reading lesson for Barb's second-grade class. The lesson is composed of three parts: Modeling Thinking and Noticing New Learning, Modeling Partner Reading, and Guided Practice: Reading and Thinking with a Partner. Steph launches the lesson. As she thinks aloud and notices new information while reading a picture book about sharks, she jots her thoughts on sticky notes. When she meets new information, she codes the text with an "L" for learn. To show kids how readers talk with a partner about what they are reading and learning, Anne and Barb read a *Time for Kids* article as they model working together. They discuss and record their thinking and new learning. During the guided practice portion of the lesson, the kids try this process with a partner.

Several weeks later, Steph, Anne, and Barb meet to talk about how the nonfiction study is progressing. Since launching the lesson, Barb has followed up with a number of mini-lessons that support kids as they ask questions and determine importance in their reading. At this point, Barb has begun to model her own inquiry project on Ernest Shackleton to demonstrate how to do research. Modeling the steps in the research process through her own inquiry provides a guide to her instruction.

Viewing Guidelines

- As you watch the tape, stop at the end of each segment and talk about what strikes you. The following sections of this guide may help as you delve into the teaching and learning in Barb's classroom.
- Note the language Steph, Anne, and Barb use in their teaching, as well as the kids' comments during discussion.
- A Double-Entry Observation Form (see Figure 1) may be helpful for jotting down what you notice, as well as any questions you may want to bring up during discussion.

SEGMENT 1: Planning the Lesson

- *Noticing new learning is one of the first and most important nonfiction reading strategies we teach kids.* Before the lesson, Steph peruses a shark book to make sure that it contains information that is genuinely new to her so that her modeling is authentic. Consider trying out nonfiction picture books and articles that are rife with interesting, new information. Listen to your own thinking as you read them and notice the voice you hear in your head when you meet new information. Then try sharing that inner conversation with your kids.
- *Flooding the room with nonfiction.* Collect a variety of nonfiction picture books and magazines. Consider the features, text elements, writing quality, and content when you choose these books. Point out these elements to your kids.
- *Working with a partner to plan and model a nonfiction lesson for your own class.* We always say, "Two heads are better than one." Consider the purpose of the lesson and how it relates to your choice of text, the lan-

guage you will use to model your thinking, and your specific teaching objectives.

SEGMENT 2: Modeling Thinking and Noticing New Learning

- Notice how Steph talks explicitly about her own thinking and how she asks questions and reflects on her background knowledge as she reads.
- Think about how Steph engages the kids and incorporates their comments into her lesson.
- To give kids a common experience as they practice the strategy, noticing new learning, Steph selects a like-kind piece of text about sharks from *Time for Kids*. Whenever we use a common text for practice, we need to make sure that kids are paired with a partner who can read it so they are able to discuss the content. When kids practice on their own, they must be reading text they can and want to read.

SEGMENT 3: Modeling Partner Reading

- We often ask kids to talk to each other about their reading, but we don't always show them how to do it. Anne and Barb take time to model partner reading with the *Time for Kids* shark article. How do they invite the kids to notice what they were doing? What do the kids learn from observing their discussion? Why is it important to ask kids to do this?
- Who might you enlist to model partner reading with you? The librarian, another teacher, a volunteer parent, or the principal are all possibilities. Be creative! It's well worth the effort to find a partner.

SEGMENT 4: Guided Practice: Reading and Conferring with a Partner

- *Noticing the high level of engagement in the task at hand.* As Steph, Anne, and Barb confer with individual kids, the others continue to read, talk

to each other about the article, and jot down their new learning on sticky notes (see Figure 2). Consider how and why the rest of the class stays engaged as they work with a partner while the teachers confer.

- *Talking is essential.* There's no better way to understand what we are learning than to talk about it. During guided practice Steph, Anne, and Barb confer with the kids about their thinking. As the kids talk and reflect on their own reading and thinking, the teachers listen and try to draw out what the kids understand. Confering is at the heart of the reading workshop. When we listen carefully and respond to children's thinking, we know what to do next.
- *Listening in without interacting gives a particularly authentic way to assess kids' strategy use and understanding.* Steph, Anne, and Barb spend some of their time moving around the room simply eavesdropping on kids' conversations as they talk to each other. Jot down what you observe about their learning as you listen into their conversations.

SEGMENT 5: Reflecting on the Lesson

- *Constructing anchor charts to support thinking.* Barb describes the nonfiction lesson with the shark article as an anchor lesson. She mentions making a list of things "that people do when they are reading nonfiction and learning new information." With the kids, she co-constructs a chart to guide children's nonfiction reading. She incorporates some of the kids' comments into the anchor chart:

What do we do when we read nonfiction and learn new things?

We use all the schema we have.

We share our thoughts together.

We write down what we are thinking.

We're excited to read the words, write down new thoughts, and learn new things.

As the kids continue working with nonfiction, they add additional tips to their chart. Think about involving the kids in co-constructing an anchor chart to record, remember, and return to their thinking.

- *Reading sticky notes to assess understanding.* Barb notices that the kids are doing a good job of noticing new learning and responding to it with questions and comments. She talks about how the lesson becomes an anchor lesson for kids, using the sticky notes independently to record their own thinking and learning. Barb reads the sticky notes to assess the kids' understanding. Collect and read your students' sticky notes to see how they are comprehending. After all, the sticky notes are a record of their thinking.

SEGMENT 6: The Teacher as Learner

- *Engaging in the inquiry process.* Barb models her own learning with a nonfiction topic. She demonstrates how to read and research nonfiction, sharing each step of the research process with the kids. Try modeling the steps of the research process by doing your own inquiry project the next time you do a class research project.
- *Questioning and noticing what's important.* Barb focuses mainly on the strategies of questioning, determining importance, and activating background knowledge through her own research project. She uses an overhead of the *Time for Kids* article on Ernest Shackleton to illustrate how she stops frequently to ask questions and note important information (see Figure 3). Read a piece of text and notice the authentic questions you have as you read. Notice what you hear yourself saying in your head when you encounter important information. Share this thinking with your kids.
- *Revising research questions.* Barb models how she reworks a detail-oriented question into a bigger, more inclusive question. She asks questions while reading and then shows her students how she evaluates which questions are more important. The more important questions guide her research. Barb's chart has two columns:

My first thoughts

What was the lowest temperature they had to endure?

My revised questions

Where were they and what was it like when they experienced the coldest temperatures?

With like-kind text, model reading for key information and coming up with bigger, more important questions that relate to this key information. Kids often find it easier to ask questions about details or interesting information than about the big ideas in the text. Finding the most significant questions takes practice.

- *Highlighting important information.* Noticing new learning is central to reading and understanding nonfiction. After students practice noticing new information, they need to sift out what is important. Barb recognizes that her kids have trouble picking out the most important information as they read for research. To help them do this, she models how to highlight. Choose an interesting piece of text. As you work through it on the overhead, have students read along with you, highlighting the important ideas and information. As you do this, keep these guidelines in mind:

Highlighting Guidelines

Look carefully at the first and last line of each paragraph. Important information is often contained there.

Highlight only necessary words and phrases, not entire sentences.

Don't get thrown off by interesting details. Although they are fascinating, they often obscure important information.

Make notes in the margin to emphasize a pertinent highlighted word or phrase.

Note cue words such as *most important*, *but* or *in conclusion*. They are almost always followed by important information.

Pay attention to the vast array of nonfiction features that signal importance (i.e., bold print, headings, subheadings, charts, graphs, etc.).

When finished, check to see that no more than half the paragraph is highlighted. As readers become more adept, one third of the paragraph is a good measure for highlighting.

SEGMENT 7: Organizing Thinking

- *Organizing information around subtopics.* Barb notices that kids are collecting interesting information on their topics, but they don't have a

clear idea of how to organize it. Using her questions about Ernest Shackleton, she groups them together on the chart headed, “As I gather information, I’m trying to organize my thoughts” and models how to move away from a simple list of questions to questions that might be organized into paragraphs or sections of her report.

- *Asking significant questions.* Barb confers with Olivia about ways to move from detail-oriented questions to questions that are more important. Olivia is investigating blue birds and asks, “How long can they live?” Aware that Olivia’s question has the potential to become a more interesting one, Barb prompts her to extend her thinking. As a result, Olivia expands her question, asking, “What affects how long they live?” This is a more important question to ask. Model this for your kids to help them see the possibilities in their questions.
- *Sifting more important questions from detail-oriented questions.* Anne returns to the classroom another day to work with Barb and her kids on rethinking questions. Anne confers with John, who has come up with two questions, “How many fish are caught a day in Florida?” and “How deep do different kinds of fish live in the ocean?” After rereading his questions, John realizes that the question about fish living in the deep ocean is a more interesting research question than the one about the number of fish caught daily in Florida. Try conferring with kids to help them sift out the most significant questions. These questions are much better for guiding research. Take time to model how you move from detail questions to more important ones.
- *Expanding on a significant question.* As John begins reading a book about deep ocean fish, Anne asks him what he is wondering. From his original question, “How deep do different kinds of fish live in the ocean?” he comes up with several sub-questions that guide his research: What kinds of fish? What kinds of water? Do they breathe differently? Is their food different? Do they have different bodies? (see Figure 4). When Anne and Barb check back with John later that week, he has begun to gather information to answer his questions about the characteristics of deep-sea fish (see Figure 5). John is able to organize his thinking by developing sub-questions based on his original question and then taking notes to answer them. Help your kids to look

closely at their significant questions in an effort to develop sub-questions that can guide their research. Encourage them to search for the answers.

- *Assessing student learning.* Throughout the nonfiction course of study, Barb constantly assesses her students' learning. John and Olivia's responses inform Barb's teaching and let her know how they are coming along. Barb comments that reading the "tracks of their thinking" allows her to assess their learning. Read and review your kids' "tracks" and longer responses to plan the next steps of your instruction.
- *Conducting mini-research projects.* Research projects don't need to take six weeks. Work with a colleague to plan a mini-research project with your kids. Discuss what makes a good research question and encourage kids to choose a question and pursue the answer to it. This can be easily accomplished in four or five days. (For more information on mini-research projects see pp. 29–31 in *Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3–8*.)
- *Taking time to talk to colleagues.* There never seems to be enough time in the day, but we can't stress enough the importance of taking time to meet with colleagues to discuss instruction and review kids' work as Steph, Anne, and Barb illustrate. Fifteen or twenty minutes is all you need! Carefully examining kids' work provides a terrific guide to instruction, and it is simply the best tool for assessment. There is no better way for us to find out how effective our instruction is and to decide where we need to go next.

Additional Lessons for a Nonfiction Course of Study

The following lessons are particularly effective for understanding content as students move through a nonfiction course of study.

- *Sharing and summarizing content learning.* Another way kids can share their learning is to construct a different form of anchor chart. Try a chart with the headers What We Learned/What We Wondered and have kids place their sticky notes under the headings. Kids love explaining their newfound knowledge and teachers can assess their understanding of the content. Later, if they are interested, kids can

search for answers to their lingering questions. Here is a sample content anchor chart:

What We Learned

Sharks can see when it is dim.
At least 370 different kinds of sharks.

They don't really like to bite people.

It is much easier to be struck by lightning than to be attacked by a shark.

What We Wondered

Are their eyes similar to cats' eyes?
How could they have lived so long ago?

How small do they get? How big?

- *Moving from noticing new learning to determining importance.* Noticing new learning is the first step in determining importance in text. But kids need practice noticing new information *before* they begin to separate important information from fascinating facts. For example, one of the most important ideas in the *Time for Kids* article is discovering why sharks attack humans and how infrequent these attacks really are. To help kids focus on important information, show them how to begin to sift out the most important ideas from the interesting details. You might say something like, "These details about the shark are really interesting to me—what they look like, the size of their teeth and how big they can get—but I think the purpose of the article isn't just to give us these facts. The author wants us to understand the bigger ideas—like the idea that shark attacks are far less common than we think. Shark attacks are so sensational that we think they happen all the time. But as I read this, I am learning that they are very rare." As you reread the article, create an anchor chart sorting interesting facts in one column and more important ideas into another. It might look something like this:

Interesting Details

Scales like tiny pointed teeth.
Big ones weigh 46,300 pounds.
Small ones are 6 inches long.
Big ones are 40 feet long.

Important Ideas

Sharks don't really like to eat people.
Shark attacks are very rare.
More likely to be hit by lightning.

Essentials for Nonfiction Reading Instruction

As you do a variety of nonfiction lessons and studies with kids, try to keep the big picture in mind. Return to the following guiding principles again and again as you design nonfiction instruction:

Share your own passion and wonder about the real world.

Surround kids with nonfiction and give them time to read and explore it. Honor kids' interests and provide opportunities for them to choose texts and topics.

When launching a nonfiction reading strategy, model with compelling text about fascinating topics. After they have had some time to practice, kids are more likely to use the same strategy successfully with difficult textbooks or other expository material.

The strategies of questioning and determining importance are central to understanding expository text. If students are overwhelmed with too many facts, asking questions and discussing information that is really important can help them learn and remember.

Establish a purpose for reading. We are responsible for creating challenging, interesting, ways to engage kids so they will question, analyze, and synthesize the information.

Engage in the inquiry process yourself, modeling your own use of reading, writing, and research strategies.

For additional ideas on nonfiction literacy instruction, see Chapter 7, "Questioning: The Strategy That Propels Readers Forward" and Chapter 9, "Determining Importance in Text: The Nonfiction Connection" in *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*, and Chapter 7, "Reading Nonfiction: Learning and Understanding" in *Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3–8*.

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Figure 1: Double-Entry Observation Form

Segment	Observations	Questions/Comments
Planning the Lesson		
Modeling Thinking and Noticing New Learning		
Modeling Partner Reading		
Guided Practice: Reading and Thinking with a Partner		
Reflecting on the Lesson		
The Teacher as Learner		
Organizing Thinking		

Figure 2: Sticky Notes Coded with an "L" to Denote New Learning

COVER STORY
SUMMER OF THE SHARK

Sharks don't really like to bite people. A great white shark prefers to eat a seal. A bull shark loves fish and even another shark! Then why was this summer full of scary news about shark attacks? Scientists say that's a one good question. Last year sharks bit 84 people worldwide. This year

there have been 52 attacks so far. Most were in Florida. One reason for the high numbers is that more people are in the ocean than ever before. Many splash around in the morning and early evening. That's when sharks hunt. Sharks that attack humans are probably confused. They

Super-sharp senses let sharks see, hear and smell underwater

EYES Like cats, sharks can see well in dim light.

NOSE Sharks can smell a meal from a mile away. It's one of their most important senses.

EARS Holes on the shark's head lead to its ears. Sharks might hear a fish swimming 600 yards away.

SKIN A shark's skin is made of scales that look like tiny, pointed teeth. A row of special sensors in the shark's skin help it track down small fish.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SHARKS AT www.timeforkids.com/shark

THE WHO'S WHO OF THE PRODIGER
Sharks are big predators that hunt their prey. Great whites are the largest shark species in the world. They can be 30 feet long and weigh 10,000 pounds.

TOP 5 HEAVIEST SHARK
There are at least 370 different kinds of sharks. They can be 6 inches to 40 feet long. Here are the five heaviest:

4 GREENLAND	2,280 pounds
5 TIGER	2,070 pounds

SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

WAS AT WORK WITH BRITAIN. KEY WAS FLOO ON AN ENEMY BOAT. ALL NIGHT, KEY WATCHED THE BRITISH ATTACK SORT IN BALTIMORE.

IN THE MORNING, KEY SAW THE U.S. FLAG WAVING. THE BRITISH HAD NOT WON! KEY WROTE THE WORDS TO "THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER." LATER, THE POEM WAS SET TO MUSIC AND IT BECAME OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM!

THINGS I WANT TO KNOW TOO! (HOW TO GOOOO?)

2 first "state" ya a foreign ok office in

advers want to build a stronger friendship between it is not only a state dinner," said Fox at a White . honor. "It's like a family gathering."

I didnt know

that sharks

didint like to

Bite peepel L

I didnt know

there are at least 370

different kinds

of sharks. L

I didnt know

a sharks tooth was

as big as my

jaw! L

I didnt know

that sharks

didint like to

bite peepel L

"Shark Alert!" 2001. Reprinted with permission of Time for Kids.

Figure 3: Overhead Transparency Used to Model Determining Importance and Questioning

COVER STORY

Antarctic Shipwreck!

When Ernest Shackleton packed for his trip in 1914, he seemed ready for anything. He and his 27-man crew filled their ship, the *Endurance*, with food, tents, warm clothes, sled dogs, even soccer balls. They hoped to be the first people to travel across Antarctica.

But the men did not make it. Instead, they made history in an incredible survival story.

Now amazing photos of the trip are being published for the first time in two new books. One is Jennifer Armstrong's *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World* (Crown).

The *Endurance* was just 100 miles from Antarctica when ice suddenly closed around it. It would be months before the ice melted and the ship could sail. Ship trapped.

As the ship drifted with the ice, the sailors fought boredom and cold. They played cards. They built "dogloos" for their sled dogs. Crew member Frank Hurley took photos.

After 10 months, the ice began to crush the *Endurance*. Shackleton ordered the men to leave the ship. They took a few belongings. Hurley grabbed 150 of his photos.

The Rescue

The sailors were stranded on an island. So Shackleton set out to sea with five strong men, leaving the others behind. They sailed and rowed 800 miles in a tiny boat!


Four months later, Shackleton returned to rescue his crew. They laughed and hugged. All 28 men of the *Endurance* trip survived. How? Perhaps because Shackleton was a true hero. As the explorer said, "If you're a leader, you've got to keep going."

Playful sled dogs helped comfort the stranded crew.

On holidays, the men enjoyed special meals made by the ship's cook.

Photographs by Frank Hurley—The Scott Polar Research Institute—Royal Geographic Society

Handwritten notes:
 What they took
 why they went
 a big risk, but they had no choice but to try to find help
 what? disaster
 Had they known that would happen? How did they survive such a hostile environment?
 "Good luck!" yelled the men, as Shackleton went for help. See his boat?



"Antarctic Shipwreck!" 1998. Reprinted with permission of Time for Kids.

Figure 4: John's Sub-Questions to Guide His Research



Figure 5: John's Research Notes

