

# READING WELLNESS

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*Lessons in Independence  
and Proficiency*



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Foreword by Christopher Lehman

Dear Readers,

Writing *Reading Wellness* was a combination of love, passion, and, at times, angst. We wrestled with every word and idea, so we are very honored that you have committed to reading and studying *Reading Wellness* together.

When we sat down to write this study guide, we began by imagining possibilities.

We imagined you laughing together and participating in deep conversations. We imagined you active and engaged. We wanted to create the kind of questions and prompts that would embody the spirit and philosophy of this book, so we worked to offer you something interactive.

As you will see, this guide includes activities and questions to consider before, during, and after reading each chapter. We included enough options for you to choose the exercises that best suit your group. You will find some traditional choices—such as discussion prompts and quotes to ponder—and some nontraditional options—such as magnetic poetry and a *Mad Libs*-style word game. Because “wellness” is a central theme in *Reading Wellness*, and because we believe that we are all better teachers when we take care of ourselves, this study guide also includes a few wellness opportunities, such as reminders to stretch, breathe, and appreciate.

We hope you will take some risks, push one another, and have a lot of fun learning together. When we picture you in this sort of dedicated study with your colleagues, we imagine you feeling really connected, engaged, and joyous, and it makes us very happy. We sincerely hope that your study of *Reading Wellness* feeds your mind, body, and spirit.

Be well. Teach well,  
*Jan and Kim*

## Launching Your Book Study: Foreword and Introduction

Do one or more of the following to launch your work together.

### Anticipation Guide

Before you begin reading *Reading Wellness*, indicate whether you think each of the following statements is true or false by placing a T or an F in the space that precedes it. In the lines below each question, share your thoughts about the statements. Discuss your responses with your colleagues.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The most important goal of reading instruction is raising test scores.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ Students should have opportunities to read books that interest them.

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ Students should enjoy reading lessons.

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4. \_\_\_\_\_ Students generally don't find it enjoyable to figure out things that are difficult.

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5. \_\_\_\_\_ Word recognition accuracy is the most important part of reading.

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reading “just right” books is the most important part of independent reading.

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7. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important for me to scaffold students by preteaching vocabulary.

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8. \_\_\_\_\_ Students can use reading and writing to pursue their interests.

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9. \_\_\_\_\_ Students should read only one book at a time.

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10. \_\_\_\_\_ Reading a text several times helps students comprehend it better.

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11. \_\_\_\_\_ My students love reading.

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12. \_\_\_\_\_ I am a better teacher when I take care of myself.

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## Foreword by Chris Lehman

Have someone read aloud the foreword to *Reading Wellness* to the group. While you are listening, jot down words, phrases, or sentences that resonate with you. Discuss your jottings with your colleagues. Why did they resonate with you?

## Quick-Writes

Write a response to one of the following questions. Share your writing with a partner or the group.

- What is your favorite part of teaching reading? Why?
- What makes a reading lesson or experience wonderful for your students? For you?
- What is your vision for students as lifelong learners?
- How well are you personally? As a teacher?

## Collecting Questions

As you read the foreword and/or the introduction, jot down questions that you want to answer as you read *Reading Wellness*. Share with the whole group the questions you collect. Notice which questions are similar or related. What common learning is the group pursuing? Compile the group's questions onto an anchor chart and refer to it throughout the book study.

## Discussion Prompts

After reading the introduction, use the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Describe a successful lesson that you recently taught. In what ways did this lesson align with the four intentions?
- What intention resonates with you in particular? Say more about that.

## Chapter 1: Love—Authentic Reasons to Read Informational Texts Closely

### BEFORE READING: Acts of Appreciation

Give three people a hug and/or tell them what you appreciate about them. If there aren't three people around, give one person three hugs.

### BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: Word Splash

Write a paragraph that uses five of the ten words listed here and that is related to teaching reading. Share your paragraph with a partner or the whole group.

- authentic
- imagine
- passion
- transformative
- love
- motivation
- inspiration
- exploration
- excitement
- agency

### BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 1, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*It is possible, and critical, to weave moments of balance between intention and necessity into our instruction, giving the term alignment new meaning. (p. 15)*

*When children read to fulfill their own purposes, they not only read closely and carefully, but naturally seek to read informational texts and feel the need to read more—all factors that move them along the continuum of independence and proficiency. (p. 34)*

## DURING READING: Favorite Things

As you are reading, identify three favorite sentences to share with the group. Be prepared to share why you selected them.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion or writing about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading Chapter 1, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Revisit the paragraph you wrote before reading Chapter 1. How does your paragraph connect to the ideas in the chapter?
- Do you have a story that parallels the vignette at the opening of the chapter?
- How does the vignette at the opening of the chapter relate to the larger goal/purpose of this chapter?
- Have you ever read a book that helped you imagine your future or influenced an action that changed your life? If yes, what was it?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 1 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 1?

## AFTER READING: Favorite Things

Sitting in a circle, take turns reading aloud a favorite sentence from the introduction. Don't stop for discussion. Instead, sit with the words a bit, perhaps punctuating each sentence by taking a deep breath together. If someone else reads your sentence before it is your turn, don't switch sentences. Read the sentence again. Notice which sentences resonated with the group as a whole.

## APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 1.

- Share picture book biography titles that you have discovered work well to support this lesson.
- Bring and compare *Heart, Head, Hands, and Feet* charts.
- Discuss what you have learned about your children as readers and how this information informed your teaching practices.
- Bring examples of informational books that relate to an interest of one of your students. For example, if you have a student interested in fingernail art, you might bring books about art, human anatomy, cosmetology, and so on.
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 1 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

## Chapter 2: Posture—Mindset, Agency, and Hard Work

### BEFORE READING: Happies

Write down three specific things you are happy about today. Share them with a friend.

BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: Telling a Story

Look at this picture. How does it make you feel? What story do you tell yourself?



(Image in public domain; from Wikimedia Commons: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dirty\\_dishes.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dirty_dishes.jpg))

## BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 2, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*Agency begins with believing things are changeable . . . (p. 39)*

*“[G]etting” students to persevere often has everything to do with mindset (theirs and ours) and giving them language and habits of thought that help them persist even when the learning becomes very difficult. (p. 39)*

*[I]t is typically incumbent upon the teacher to “motivate” students, whereas agency, which can be fostered (or suppressed) by teachers, comes from within students. (p. 41)*

*Without a sense of agency, a leaning-in posture, even the best teachers teaching the best lessons will experience difficulty moving students along the proficiency continuum. (p. 63)*

## DURING READING: Favorite Things

As you are reading, identify your favorite story. Be prepared to share your story with the group and explain *why* you selected it.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion or writing about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading Chapter 2, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Revisit the photograph at the beginning of this section. What positive story can you tell yourself about a sink full of dirty dishes? How can you help yourself lean into work you don't find appealing? Share your ideas with your group.
- What kinds of language have you heard your students use that communicate a fixed mind-set? What circumstances surrounded this language? What kinds of language have you heard students use that communicate a growth mind-set? Were the circumstances similar or different? How?

- In what ways do you foster (or suppress) student agency?
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 2?

## AFTER READING: Favorite Things

Sitting in a circle, take turns sharing your favorite story and explaining why it resonates with you.

## APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 2.

- Take note of the language you are using to prompt and respond to students. Categorize the language as “fixed” or “growth” mind-set. Consider ways of adjusting language in the fixed mind-set category to foster growth mind-sets.
- Share titles that you have discovered that demonstrate characters who “lean in” or “lean away.”
- What happened when students started reading through the lens of mind-set? What ideas, if any, revealed themselves? How has this changed the culture of your classroom?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 2 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

## Chapter 3: Alignment—Working to Make Sense of the Words

### BEFORE READING: Stretch

Stand up and stretch for five whole minutes. How does that feel? You might try the following:

- Touch your toes.
- Reach for the sky.
- Stretch your arms as wide as you can.
- Give yourself a hug.

### BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: Know–~~Want to Know~~–Learned (KWL)

Complete the following revised KWL chart (this one doesn't include "What I Want to Know") with what you KNOW about the reading process. Share your thoughts with a partner or the whole group.

What I KNOW	What I LEARNED

## BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 3, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*So, substituting echolocation for elocution is problematic both because it reinforces an inefficient habit and because it exacts an opportunity cost on his vocabulary development. (p. 69)*

*Our prompts offer students less and less information that doesn't make sense, basically telling them how to solve the problem rather than supporting them in solving the problem themselves. (p. 71)*

## DURING READING: Favorite Things

As you are reading, identify five favorite words to share with the group. Be prepared to read them aloud to the group in context and to share *why* you selected them.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

- Revisit your KWL chart and complete the right-hand column with what you learned about students' reading processes. Discuss your learning.
- What habits and behaviors do you observe in your classroom that suggest that students expect teachers to do the work of problem solving for them?
- How well are your students self-monitoring as they read? How do you know?
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 3?

## AFTER READING: Favorite Things

Sitting in a circle, take turns reading aloud one favorite word at a time from the favorite words you selected. Go around the circle five times until everyone has shared all their words. Keep the sharing moving so that the reading of the words

almost sounds like spoken poetry. Notice which words are chosen/spoken several times.

### APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 3.

- Analyze your prompts during small-group and guided reading. How well do your prompts develop student independence and agency around problem solving while reading?
- What texts/text excerpts did you use for the *Alignment* lesson?
- What did you notice about students' reading processes when they did this activity?
- How will this information inform your instructional decision making?
- Try doing *Does That Match?* in another instructional context. How was this different from your first presentation of the *Alignment* lesson? What new information did it reveal about students' reading processes?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 3 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

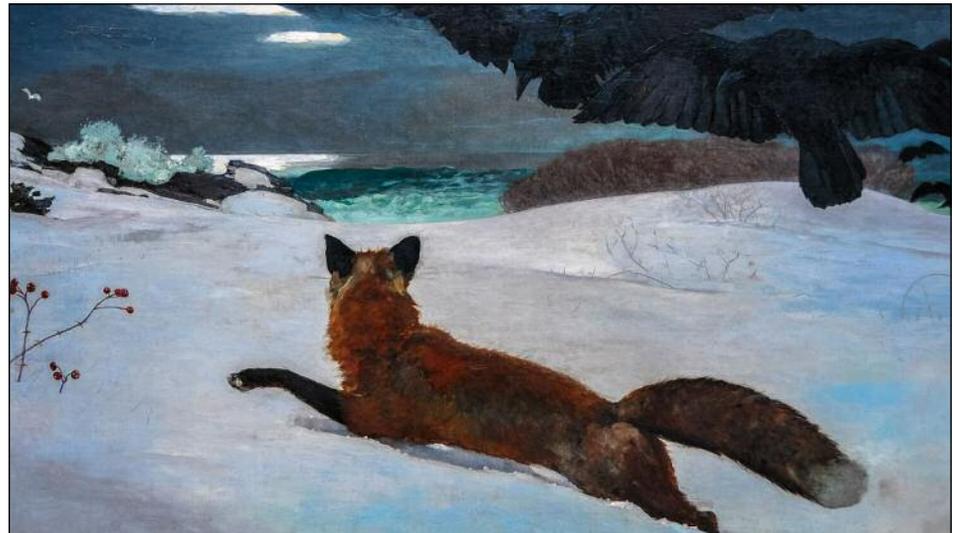
## Chapter 4: Mindfulness—Reading Closely, Comprehending Deeply

### BEFORE READING: Breathing Lessons

Take one breath that lasts one second. Take a longer breath that lasts three seconds. Take a longest breath that lasts five seconds.

### BEFORE READING: “Reading” Strategies

“Read” this picture closely. Write down what you notice and/or what “reading” strategies you use.



(*Fox Hunt* by Winslow Homer. Image in public domain; from Wikimedia Commons: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fox\\_Hunt\\_1893\\_Winslow\\_Homer.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fox_Hunt_1893_Winslow_Homer.jpg))

### BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 4, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*[W]e are most concerned with students’ superficial readings of texts, which seem to be on the rise, as readers struggle through texts selected to meet demands for increased complexity. (p. 94)*

*Rereading is very much like taking a deep breath. Your breath is essential and always with you, just as finding meaning is the essen-*

*tial and ongoing purpose of reading. (p. 97)*

*There is no reading without meaning, just as there is no life without breath. (p. 97)*

*Integrated comprehension strategies are yoga for the brain, practices that pull us further and further into the moment that is on the other side of the words. (p. 98)*

*Deep understandings of text require intention, which is a step beyond simply figuring out the words and gathering the gist of the passage. (p. 114)*

## DURING READING: Favorite Things

As you are reading, identify three favorite sentences to share with the group. Be prepared to share *why* you selected them.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion or writing about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading Chapter 4, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Revisit the image of *Fox Hunt* by Winslow Homer. “Breathe” deeper. What else do you notice? What other understandings can you reach by looking even more closely? Reflect on this process with the group.
- How do you discern whether students have superficial or deep understandings of text?
- What other strategies have you devised to help engage students in the work of reading closely and carefully?
- How are you communicating to students that noticing the layers of subtle meaning in a text is important in your classroom? What else can you do to support “mindful” reading?
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 4?

## AFTER READING: Favorite Things

Sitting in a circle, take turns reading aloud one of the favorite sentences you selected. Don't stop for discussion. Instead, sit with the words a bit, perhaps punctuating each sentence by taking a deep breath together. If someone else reads your sentence before it is your turn, don't switch sentences. Read the sentence again. Notice which sentences resonated with the group as a whole.

## APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 4.

- What text excerpt and/or image did you use for the *Deep Breathing* lesson? Why did you choose them?
- Did students comprehend the subtleties of the text? How do you know?
- How does the *Deep Breathing* lesson influence the way you think about comprehension and how students make meaning as they read?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 4 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

## Chapter 5: Strength—Productive Effort and Building Reading Muscle

### BEFORE READING: Book Talks

Make a list of what you typically read (novels, professional texts, research, magazines, newspapers, etc.). How do these texts make different demands of you as a reader? In what ways is each “just right” for you?

BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: “Magnetic” Poetry

Arrange the following words to create a poem. Feel free to add additional words or not to use all of the words. To make this activity hands-on, print out the table and cut apart the words to manipulate them. Read your poem aloud to the group.

strategies	revised	strength	book
frustration	weight	hard	easy
challenge	effort	try	morning
coffee	relish	fresh	breathe
possibilities	finger	plunging	independent
satisfied	passage	laughter	wonder
understanding	choice	beliefs	discovering
grow	speaks	milk	form

### BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 5, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*Once students understand that the types of problems they encounter*

*as they read—as well as the productive effort they put forth to solve them—improves their ability to face increasingly challenging texts, then many problems become opportunities to get stronger rather than reasons to choose a different book. (pp. 121–122)*

*Recasting decoding or comprehension “problems”—tricky parts—as possibilities can change the work and bring new energy to reading tasks, whether they are shared, guided, or independent. (p. 122)*

*[F]iguring out tricky words and clarifying misunderstandings makes it easier for readers to take on even bigger challenges in the next text—i.e., to lift heavier and heavier weights. (p. 123)*

## DURING READING: Favorite Things

As you are reading, identify your favorite story. Be prepared to share your story with the group and explain *why* you selected it.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion or writing about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading Chapter 5, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Return to the “Magnetic” Poetry words. Read through them and decide which ones you think are most relevant and how they were used in the chapter.
- How are you teaching students to select “just right” books? How have you done so in the past? What has worked? What would you like to change?
- In your own reading life, what represents three-, five-, eight-, and ten-pound texts?
- How will reframing conversations about “just right” books to include a range of texts change the way you speak to students about shopping for books?
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 5?

## AFTER READING: Favorite Things

Sitting in a circle, take turns sharing your favorite story and explaining why it resonates with you.

## APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 5.

- What texts might you use to demonstrate each of the different “weights”: three, five, eight, and ten pounds?
- Select three different readers to study carefully. Have their book selections changed since you taught the *Lifting Weights* lesson? How are they spending a typical independent reading period? How productive are their efforts when reading these texts? How do you know?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 5 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

## Chapter 6: Joy—Reading More for the Love of It

### BEFORE READING: Laugh

Watch a funny video, tell a funny story, or read something funny aloud. Laugh a lot.

### BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: Do a *Mad Libs*–Style Word Game

Fill in the blanks with words of your choosing. Transfer the words to the paragraph in the appendix. Read the new paragraph aloud. This activity can be done as a whole group, in pairs, or individually.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (emotion)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (character trait)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (event)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (favorite food)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (action word)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (verb/gerund)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (verb)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (verb/something fun)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ (noun)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective)
11. \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective)
12. \_\_\_\_\_ (noun)

### BEFORE READING: Quotes to Ponder

Before you begin reading Chapter 6, read some or all of the following quotes aloud. Discuss your responses to the quotes with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*These influencers are largely well intentioned, but their efforts can actually interfere with learning, and even rob classrooms of joy. (p. 153)*

*In many classrooms around the country, it seems that we are practicing reverse alchemy, turning gold into lead. (p. 154)*

*[W]orking less and enjoying more is a viable path to progress. (p. 173)*

## DURING READING: Feelings

As you are reading, notice the way the text makes you feel. In the margins or on sticky notes, write the feeling word that represents your feelings while reading each passage—e.g., excited, curious, resistant, frustrated, happy, eager, confused, and so on.

## DURING READING: Quotes to Ponder

As you are reading, look for the quotes we listed in “Before Reading.” When you find them, think about the context that surrounds them. Connect this context to your discussion about the quotes prior to reading.

## AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading Chapter 6, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- What are some of the things that numbers or scores can't reveal about the readers in your classroom?
- Think about a time when reading felt really good to you. What made it so good?
- How do you know when reading feels really good for your students? Describe their behavior and posture.
- Look at the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction. What answers did you find in Chapter 6?

## AFTER READING: Feelings

Select a feeling word to share with the group. Read aloud the portion of text that evoked the particular feeling and share why it made you feel that way.

## APPLICATION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions/prompts to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in Chapter 6.

- After completing a *Reading Makes Us Feel Good When . . .* chart with your students, compare it to charts made by teachers and students in other classrooms. What similarities and differences do you notice?
- Choose at least one lesson extension from Chapter 6 to try with students. Reflect on the lesson with your colleagues.
- How are you integrating the four intentions into your instruction? What are you learning?

## Epilogue: Matters of Consequence

### BEFORE READING: Mission/Vision Statements

Read aloud your school or district mission and/or vision statement.

### BEFORE READING: Take three long, deep breaths.

### BEFORE READING: Quote to Ponder

Before you begin reading the epilogue, read the following quote aloud. Discuss your responses to the quote with your group or write about your thoughts and feelings.

*So we have to figure out how to marry both worthwhile endeavors: teaching the instructional standards and teaching everything else. (p. 178)*

### DURING READING: Read-Aloud

Read the epilogue aloud to the group.

### AFTER READING: Discussion Prompts

After reading the epilogue, use some or all of the following questions to prompt discussion.

- Reread your school or district mission and/or vision statement. Discuss how it connects to the epilogue.
- Describe how you imagine nurturing “students who *want* to read, *seek* to read, *need* to read” (p. 178).
- Revisit the chart of questions you wrote when you read the introduction to *Reading Wellness*. Which questions were answered during the book study? Which questions remain unanswered? How will you pursue the remaining answers?

### EXTENSION: From Theory to Practice

Use the following questions to help you plan for and/or reflect on your implementations of the ideas in *Reading Wellness*.

- What does reading wellness look like for you and your students? What will you do to help students become “more well” as readers?
- How have you integrated the four intentions into your instruction? What have you learned during the process?
- What is the most important thing you learned during this book study? What will you do with it?

### AFTER READING: Gratitude

Thank your colleagues for their time and support. Give someone a hug. Congratulate yourself for taking the risk of learning something new and interrogating your practices. You are remarkable.

## Appendix: Mad Libs–Style Word Game

(From Chapter 6, “Closing Thoughts,” p. 173)

Helping readers discover the ways reading makes them feel 1\_\_\_\_\_—whether laughing out loud, seeing their 2\_\_\_\_\_ in stories, or envisioning their futures—can powerfully influence the quality of life in a classroom. These emotional 3\_\_\_\_\_ with books serve as a secret 4\_\_\_\_\_ to increasing students’ independence and proficiency as they 5\_\_\_\_\_ hard work with joy. The resulting energy and passion, and the inevitable social connections, remind readers that 6\_\_\_\_\_ is pleasurable and that it serves *their* purposes. This benefit 7\_\_\_\_\_ us that sometimes, working less and 8\_\_\_\_\_ more is a viable path to progress. Giving children (and ourselves) permission to feel good often, and showing them that 9\_\_\_\_\_ are a reliable source for these 10\_\_\_\_\_ feelings, creates an environment in which students are more likely to discover the texts that are 11\_\_\_\_\_ for them, a 12\_\_\_\_\_ that holds promise for a lifetime of joy.