



★ It's in the Bag ★

Book Study Groups have long been one of the least expensive and most enjoyable ways for educators to grow professionally. Study groups provide structured time for reflection on student work and classroom practice. A book study group can be formed in your school, your district, or even online. The study group method is invaluable in bringing together groups of colleagues who can use the classroom as an arena for studies, discussions and experience exchange and turn it into a “laboratory” for trying out new teaching methods skills and practices gleaned from the books studied. The hallmarks of a successful book study group are teacher engagement, superior use of time, and sustainable changes in student achievement.

Facilitator's Guide

Resources available for Checkout: *Super Six Comprehension Strategies: 35 Lessons and More for Reading Success.* (2004). Lori Oczkus, Norwood, Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publisher, Inc.

Resources available on the Web:

Book Description: This book is an excellent resource that could be used by K-6 regular and special educators who are looking for practical ways to build comprehension in students' reading. Lori Oczkus offers a research-based hands-on resource that helps you achieve reading success with all students in your classroom through motivating lessons that can use with any materials. The strategies, which Oczkus refers to as the “Super Six,” include: Building Background and Making Connections, Predicting/Inferring, Questioning, Monitoring, Summarizing/Synthesizing and Evaluating.

Framing the Context of a Book Study: Powerful Tools for Learning:

Two powerful venues for deepening understanding, impacting student outcomes and contributing to the growth of learning organizations are professional learning communities and communities of practice. One of the most effective ways to

make your school a learning organization is to create a professional learning community or a community of practice. The concept of a professional learning community (PLC) is a powerful influence around the work of restructuring schools. According to Rick Dufour in *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, the fundamental role of schools is "learning, not teaching." While Dufour acknowledges that this is "an enormous distinction," he notes that the emphasis on learning leads those within the school to place their focus and energy on three important questions:

1. What is it we want all students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when students experience difficulty?

Another option for helping schools and districts is to create a community of practice. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A community of practice (CoP) makes connections from person to person for mutual inquiry and learning about a practice or issue. Everyone's voice is needed. Participants develop a shared identity and share a repertoire of knowledge and experiences (Wenger, 2003). Both professional learning communities and communities of practice move system stakeholders from knowing to doing.

A Book study becomes a powerful tool that these communities can use to engage in powerful, professional discourse. A building or existing PLC or CoP may want to add a book study as another tool to aid in professional development. When your school or team begins planning their book study, keep the above questions in mind as a way to frame all discussions around student learning and school improvement.

Facilitating Successfully:

In order to facilitate the study groups most effectively, a district, school or team may want to consider the following:

- Treat study groups as a school-wide teacher professional development model.
- State the purpose for the book study groups in terms of specific student needs (these needs should be based on an analysis of student data).
- Study groups can be job-embedded, with principals freeing up time during the school day, or during superintendent conference days, faculty meetings, etc.
- Groups should be small and manageable, their work "published."
- Study groups need support from administrators.

- Work within study groups is built around the participants' search for knowledge according to their own needs and the needs of their students.
- Members meet regularly and work according to a study plan that they often develop themselves (the plan will include how often to meet, for how long, how many chapters will be discussed per meeting, where to meet, etc.).
- Everyone in a study group is responsible for getting the work done and for achieving the jointly agreed upon goals.
- The goals of a study group can be:
 - To offer a good method for teachers to cooperate more actively in order "to awaken their students' minds" about sustainable development.
 - To integrate sustainable development into all curriculum subjects.
 - To provide teachers with the opportunity to share both good and bad teaching experiences and to get support from colleagues and professional books.
 - To encourage teachers to work together to solve a problem.
 - To get teachers motivated to pursue education for sustainable development—to make a difference.
- The facilitator should engage in the following behaviors:
 - Be diplomatic – suggest, but don't subscribe.
 - Act as an advisor.
 - Be respectful.
 - Be professional, relaxed and be present in the situation.
 - Don't intervene too much – let the group work on what they feel is important.
 - Encourage, inspire and support.
- During the last meeting, ask these questions:
 - What positive outcomes did we achieve?
 - What problems did we encounter?
 - What lessons have we learned that could be useful to other groups?
 - What do we do next?

The following section contains reflection and dialogue suggestions and questions broken out by chapter. These are designed to facilitate thinking and discussion around ***Super Six Comprehension Strategies: 35 Lessons and More for Reading Success.***

Chapter 1: Comprehending with the Super Six

Overview

This chapter is a general overview of all the Super Six comprehension strategies. It contains engaging lessons that can be taught throughout the school year. Lessons include creating metaphors for each strategy, decorating anchor posters and a poem about the Super Six. The focus is seeing all the strategies in action.

Helpful Hints

It might be beneficial for each participant to read the introduction as an overview of how the book is set up and the research behind the six strategies. An idea for the first day of the book study might be to jigsaw each of the strategies found on pages 2-3 individually or with partners. Then go back to the whole group and share the main points of each strategy. It may also be beneficial to frame the discussion around the following questions:

Based on what you learned in Chapter One, think of how reading comprehension is currently being addressed in your school. How has teaching comprehension changed over the past several years? What looks the same?

Reflection and Dialogue

1. After sharing each of the Super Six comprehension strategies in whole group, discuss how these align with your district's current language arts core curriculum.
2. How can the chart on pages 4-5 be used to help reinforce the Super Six strategies in tier 2 or tier 3 settings?
3. Look at the chart on page 7. Discuss different ways of using this information with support staff, volunteers and parents who support reading in your school.

Chapter 2: Building Background and Making Connections

Overview

In this chapter, teachers will learn how to hook students through building background and making connections with prior knowledge. The lessons assist students in making connections to their lives, other texts and the world around them.

Helpful Hints

While reading this chapter, think of the different ways to incorporate the following activities to help students make connections with the text they are reading: a people search, a one-minute book look and a connection workshop.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Discuss how using the one-minute book look can make a KWL lesson more powerful.
2. Using a fiction and non-fiction guided reading book, practice using the question prompts found on page 34.
3. Bring a favorite read aloud and work with a grade level colleague to fill out the Find Someone Who sheet on page 39. Try this in your classroom as an introduction to the next read aloud to help students build background and make connections.
4. Which activity out of this chapter could best be used in a Tier 2 group to reinforce the “making connections” strategy that has been taught in the core curriculum?

Chapter 3: Predicting

Overview

Chapter 3 gives explicit ways of teaching students to predict. Students will learn to Partner Predict, Whisper Skim and Scan in a text that has no or few illustrations. They also learn to Stop and Draw Predictions, and predict words they think will be in the text.

Helpful Hint

Before the book study session for this chapter make multiple copies of a journal or magazine article and the whisper skim and scan form to complete with partners.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Discuss with peers the importance of predicting before, during and after reading and how predicting helps students comprehend.
2. Create a simple chart with partners or small groups showing the differences in predicting with narrative and expository text.
3. For students in Tier 2 and 3 intervention groups how does the author suggest shaping struggling readers to become more logical with their predictions? What strategies can teachers use to get struggling students to monitor and check their own predictions?
4. With partners or small groups design a lesson plan using the One Word activity found on pages 70-75. How could this strategy be used in Tier 2 to preview an upcoming selection taught in the core?

Chapter 4: Inferring

Overview

In this chapter you will learn how inferring is a difficult strategy and can separate good from the poor readers. Hunting for inferences in a book or studying characters' feelings provides students with guided experiences to learn how to infer. Questioning before reading and then answering questions after reading by inferring provides students with meaningful context.

Helpful Hints

While reading the first section of this chapter be thinking about the similarities and differences of predicting and inferring. Also, have large chart paper ready for the whole group titled, Inferring – What it is, what it isn't.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Use the large chart paper described in helpful hints as a springboard to discuss and define this very important and sometimes difficult strategy. Provide examples and non-examples.
2. As a group evaluate how inferring is taught in the core curriculum. Use the evaluation tool in the appendix on page 225 to estimate how well students can infer. What changes or additions need to be made to the core?
3. Discuss how using the Dinner Party lesson on pages 106-107 would help students in a Tier 2 or Tier 3 group be successful.

Chapter 5: Questioning

Overview

Chapter 5 deals with helping students figure out how to ask thoughtful questions throughout the reading process. Students learn the value of wondering before reading a fiction or nonfiction text. Learning questions to ask before, during and after reading aides in comprehending the text.

Helpful Hints

Before reading this chapter, have group members self-evaluate their question asking techniques used during guided reading. For example: 90% of the questions are asked by the teacher, most of the questions are right there questions, etc.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Discuss how moving from teacher lead questions to student lead questions could improve comprehension.
2. Discuss how changing the verbiage from, "Are there any questions?" to "What are you wondering about the text?" can change the amount and types of questions students generate.
3. In a Tier 2 setting, discuss how using the chart on page 116 can help struggling readers become more proficient with asking questions at all levels.

Chapter 6: Monitoring Comprehension

Overview

In this chapter, students use a variety of tools to help them repair or “fix up” comprehension along the way. A mark-the-spot bookmark helps students pay attention to their thoughts and keeps them engaged during reading. Teachers will learn activities to help students become successful at monitoring the text.

Helpful Hints

Have participants begin by reviewing the Teaching Monitoring box on page 142. Discuss which of these strategies are used during their own reading.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. How can teachers get students, especially struggling readers, to know if they are understanding the text or not? Refer to page 140 for this discussion.
2. Struggling readers may have a difficult time with monitoring their understanding. What words or phrases can be used when modeling confusion with text in a Tier 2 setting?
3. Reflecting on the two strategies, “Famous Last Words” and “Right on Track Bookmarks”, discuss which would be best for Tier 2 and core instruction. Why?

Chapter 7: Summarizing and Synthesizing

Overview

Chapter 7 discusses how to teach the difficult and complex strategy of summarizing. Sequencing the text by separating the important and unimportant details helps aid in comprehension. Learning how to teach students to synthesize the text to understand the big picture or author's message will also be discussed.

Helpful Hints

Have each person in the group choose one of the summarizing and synthesizing activities from this chapter. Have group members come prepared to lead that part of the chapter. Assign the following: Small Summaries, Summary Hand, Choose a Quick One, Strip Poem and Synthesis Starters.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Discuss how group members summarize and synthesize when recommending a book to a friend.
2. How would students' summarizing differ when reading narrative and expository text?
3. Have small groups share their assigned activity from the Helpful Hints section to help students become more efficient at summarizing and synthesizing. How can each of these ideas be used in a Tier 2 setting?

Chapter 8: Evaluating

Overview

Chapter 8 encompasses how students can evaluate before, during and after reading. Students will learn to argue important and controversial issues from the text and rate the stories read.

Helpful Hints

If possible, have the reading data available from state testing for main idea, details and text structures. Discuss the need to specifically teach evaluating as a strategy.

Reflection and Dialogue

1. Discuss the following statement found on page 197. *Determining important ideas from unimportant ones is a critical reading strategy that is part of a bigger strategy: evaluation.*
2. What are the main components involved with the concept of evaluating reading? Discuss each component found on pages 198-199.
3. Jigsaw the different activities for teaching evaluating. Discuss how these activities could be taught as core and Tier 2.
4. Take time to explore the Appendix and the CD Rom. Discuss how the Assessment Tools and the Assessment Rubrics help to form Tier 2 groups and monitor progress.



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NYSRRC Book Study Guide Program

Feedback Form

Please provide feedback upon completion of the book study. Return this form in the facilitator guide folder.

1. Was the facilitator's guide useful in leading your discussion of *Super Six*? Why or why not?
2. How can we improve this experience?
3. Would you recommend this to other groups?

