

# V I E W I N G   G U I D E

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# Strategic Thinking

*Reading and Responding, Grades 4–8*



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Also available at www.stenhouse.com by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis: *Nonfiction Matters: Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3–8* (Harvey 1998); *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* (Harvey and Goudvis 2000); *Strategy Instruction in Action* [videotapes] (Harvey and Goudvis 2002); and *Think Nonfiction!* [videotape] (Harvey and Goudvis 2003)

## Using the Videotapes in Workshop Settings

1. *Check out the equipment and sound in advance.*  
Make sure the videotape segments are cued to the correct spot on each tape. After you begin running any segment, walk to the back of the room and listen to the tape. The goal is to have the sound as low as possible but still loud enough so participants in the back can hear.
2. *Have participants keep notes as they view each segment.* Any note-taking format can be effective if you link the notes to specific goals you have for viewing the tapes.
3. *Ask questions before viewing to help participants focus on specific aspects of the classroom.* If you don't ask a focus question before viewing, you're likely to get awkward silence when you try to begin discussion later. Consider writing a guiding question on a whiteboard or chart paper and posting it next to the video player so that participants are reminded of the guiding question throughout their viewing.

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# Introduction

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Nothing matters more than kids' thinking. As teachers, we want to honor kids' thinking and teach them to become critical, thoughtful, independent readers. To help them turn thinking into meaning and to understand what they read, students need an arsenal of strategies to navigate and synthesize text. And they need to know when, where, and how to use these strategies.

*Strategic Thinking* builds on the comprehension instruction in the book, *Strategies That Work*, and the videotape series, *Strategy Instruction in Action*. In this four-tape video series, Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis spend a week with Jessica Lawrence and her middle school language arts students in their reading workshop at Horace Mann Middle School in central San Diego, California. Horace Mann Middle School has approximately 1,300 culturally and linguistically diverse students. Horace Mann students come from five continents and speak over thirty languages.

Steph, Anne, and Jessica spend time planning, teaching, and reflecting on comprehension instruction in a concentrated three-day lesson sequence. This offers the opportunity to view a more in-depth course of strategy study over time in response to students' learning needs. Working within the ninety-minute language arts block, they focus their instruction on the strategies of inferring themes in fiction and determining importance in nonfiction. At the end of each day, they meet to reflect on the lesson, assess their students' understanding and plan for the following day.

## Strategy Focus: Inferring and Determining Importance

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Jessica, Anne, and Steph explore inferential thinking and determining importance because these two strategies are particularly crucial for intermediate and middle-grade readers to understand text. Often when kids in intermediate and middle grades have trouble making sense of what they read, they struggle with making reasonable inferences or picking out important information.

Readers infer and determine important information in all types and genres of text. Inferential thinking readily lends itself to reading and understanding fiction. One way we can discover themes, for example, is through inferring. And we are most likely to call on the strategy of determining important information when reading nonfiction. We frequently need to circle the key ideas and trace the line of thinking in informational text. So we launch the inferential thinking course of study with fiction and the determining importance lesson sequence with nonfiction.

Modeling and practicing these two strategies gives readers the tools they need to crack open difficult, unfamiliar text. In addition, thinking inferentially and zeroing in on essential information engages the reader and focuses thinking.

# Gradual Release of Responsibility

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On each tape, Steph, Anne, and Jessica plan instruction, lead mini-lessons, confer and share with the kids, and reflect on their teaching and the students' learning. They follow a framework for instruction called the "gradual release of responsibility." Gradual release involves four components: *modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and application*. (See Figure 1: Explicit Instruction in Reading Comprehension Strategies.)

On both sets of tapes—Inferring Themes in Fiction, Parts One and Two, and Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Parts One and Two—the viewer sees these gradual release components in action. While our lessons almost always include modeling, guided practice, and independent practice, gradual release does not apply only to individual lessons. We practice gradual release over time as well. The first day that we launch a strategy, we spend a long time on the teacher-modeling component. This provides the best possible scaffold for instruction. More time is spent on guided practice and less time on modeling on the second day of the lesson sequence. By the third day of the lesson sequence, much of the time is spent in independent practice with the teacher conferring with individual kids or meeting with small groups for added support. Launch lessons always involve more time for teacher modeling while subsequent lessons dedicate more time to student involvement in the form of guided and independent practice.

## Considerations for English Language Learners

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Many of the students in Jessica's classroom are English language learners. They come from a variety of countries, including many from Mexico. We support linguistically diverse students by:

- providing explicit instruction;
- using picture books and accessible text;
- encouraging students to turn and talk to each other frequently;
- making sure students have adequate time to collect their thoughts and respond;
- co-constructing anchor charts that record teaching, learning, and student thinking;
- giving students opportunities to rehearse their thoughts and comments before asking them to share out with the rest of the class;
- finding text that kids can connect to;
- teaching a common language for talking about thinking;
- helping kids distill information into their own words;
- anticipating unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts and addressing these through discussion;
- restating and expanding on kids' ideas in standard English.

# Reading and Responding

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The most effective way to enhance comprehension is simply to talk about what we read. Throughout the reading workshop, students turn to each other and talk. This response method gives kids a better crack at understanding what they read rather than merely reading and answering a list of comprehension questions. Jessica's students also write extensively about their thinking. When readers interact with the text by responding both orally and in writing, they engage more completely and expand their understanding. Throughout the lesson sequences on these tapes, students grapple with information, themes, issues, and ideas as they read literature and content-related text. As the kids read and respond orally and in writing, they merge their thinking with the text, adding to their knowledge and discovering the power of their own thinking.

## Viewing Guidelines

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As you watch the tapes, stop at the end of each segment and talk about what strikes you and what you wonder about. The following suggestions may help you as you delve into the strategy instruction and student learning in Jessica's reading workshop:

- At Horace Mann, reading workshop is a daily ninety-minute block of time. For classrooms with shorter language arts blocks, consider using the segments as potential stopping and starting points, setting the stage and modeling on the first day and guided and independent practice on subsequent days.
- Note the language that Steph, Anne, and Jessica use in modeling, practice, and guided discussion. Also note how they respond to the students' comments and questions as they guide the discussion. Consider scripting the teachers' instructional language and the kids' learning language.
- Listen carefully to the student's questions and comments and notice how their thinking guides instruction and how Jessica, Anne, and Steph lead discussions that develop a line of thinking.
- A double-entry observation form may be helpful for jotting down what you notice and listing questions you may want to bring up during discussion. (See Figure 2: Double-Entry Observation Form.)

## Overview

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### Inferring Themes in Fiction, Parts One and Two

**Purpose** Writers do not spill information onto the page. They leak it slowly to keep readers on their toes and thinking. Readers have to read between the lines

to get at the deeper meaning of text. They have to infer the bigger ideas and themes in the story. Kids in intermediate and middle grades often stumble because they aren't practiced in making inferences. We teach readers how to infer themes. Proficient readers understand how to take their background knowledge and merge it with clues in the text to make a reasonable inference about character motivation, the events in the story, the bigger ideas, and so on. When we teach readers to tie their inferences to evidence in the text, they begin to draw reasonable conclusions, predict likely outcomes, and infer plausible themes rather than wildly guessing at myriad possibilities.

## Lesson Sequence Summary

In Tapes 1 and 2 we show how readers in reading workshop use the strategy of inferential thinking to better understand themes in fiction.

### Day 1

Steph launches the three-day course of study on inferential thinking with an interactive read-aloud of Eve Bunting's picture book *Gleam and Glow*. She begins by modeling the inner conversation she has with the text as she reads the book to the class. She shares the voice in her head as she reads so that the students become increasingly aware of their own inner conversations to better monitor their comprehension.

### Day 2

On the second day, the students respond to the book as Steph teaches them how to use evidence in the text to infer the themes and bigger ideas. Students work in pairs and small groups to practice inferring themes in *Gleam and Glow*.

### Day 3

During independent reading the kids choose their own books and practice what they've learned about inferring. The lesson sequence culminates with a debrief of the three-day course of study.

## Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Parts One and Two

**Purpose** Nonfiction reading presents students with rich and powerful opportunities for thinking. To really understand information we need to think about it. Active readers who access background knowledge, determine what's important, ask questions, and respond to new information are more likely to remember what they learn. Integrating comprehension instruction with curriculum topics—in this case a study of the Civil War—gives learners, and English language learners in particular, the tools to understand information.

With a heavy load of content reading in social studies and science classes, upper-elementary and middle school students need a variety of strategies for reading from textbooks and other forms of nonfiction. In this three-day sequence, the emphasis is less on remembering the content and

more on explicitly teaching reading and note-taking tools to access information. Launching this process is time intensive. But with practice, kids are able to use the Facts/Questions/Response (FQR) note-taking strategy on their own with a variety of text, giving them a more effective way to access information across the curriculum.

### Lesson Sequence Summary

In Tapes 3 and 4 Anne and Jessica team together to show students how to determine important information as they read nonfiction.

#### Day 1

Anne and Jessica read through a complex piece of text on the Civil War, modeling their thinking and taking notes with a Facts/Questions/Response form. They demonstrate how to work together and respond on the FQR. Students use the FQR to merge their thinking with the information.

#### Day 2

Students work in pairs and small groups to think through the information together. Jessica and Anne frequently ask the kids to share their thinking, giving them ample opportunity to construct meaning.

#### Day 3

Anne and Jessica gather the students to discuss their lingering questions and bigger ideas. Then the kids use the FQR forms as they respond to a collection of Civil War vignettes. The lesson sequence culminates with a debrief of the three-day course of study.



## Tape 1:

# Inferring Themes in Fiction, Part One

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### Segment: Planning the Lesson

#### Day 1

Jessica, Anne, and Steph meet to plan and talk about the inferential thinking course of study. They prebrief the lesson sequence and make plans to check in with each other between lessons to assess and plan further instruction.

### Considerations and Invitations

- There's never enough time in the day! But we really need to make time to plan instruction with colleagues. Planning is crucial to quality instruction. Notice how Anne's questions and Jessica's comments push Steph's thinking.
- Think about how you can build in time with your colleagues to plan and reflect on instruction. So often our team meetings are chock full of procedural plans: calling the art museum for field trip details, making flyers for the science fair, ordering pizza for the holiday party, and so on. These are all noble gestures, but as teachers we really need to make time to talk to each other about teaching and learning.

## **Segment: Setting the Stage by Activating Background Knowledge**

Our first responsibility is to engage kids in teaching and learning. If our kids are not engaged, we may as well not be teaching them at all. When we activate and build their background knowledge, we engage them and make the new information comprehensible at the same time.

### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Room arrangement. Notice the comfortable meeting space Jessica has provided for instruction. Steph teaches the lesson with the kids crowded in front of her, sitting on couches or on the area rug. The closer they are, the more they listen. The room arrangement looks more like a primary classroom than a typical middle school classroom and the kids love it! Consider how you can arrange your room in a way that engages kids and supports their learning.
- Text selection. When we launch a strategy, we choose text that we believe kids can connect to. Steph chooses the picture book *Gleam and Glow* for this lesson because she knows some of the kids might have had similar experiences. To engage them and to build background knowledge, she prompts them to talk about any connections they may have to the story.

Steph also selects a text that is challenging and charged with themes that kids can sink their teeth into. We want to share books that fire kids up, books kids can't help but talk about!

Before launching this inferential thinking course of study, Steph read several books with similar themes, including Eve Bunting's *How Many Days to America?* She makes a point of connecting *Gleam and Glow* to *How Many Days to America?* so the kids can better understand the new book. Notice how they refer back to *How Many Days to America?*, linking characters and themes to enhance their understanding.

Consider using more picture books with your intermediate and middle school students. They are full of juicy material that kids want to read. They are short and work well for thinking aloud and modeling strategy instruction. Find and read several with similar themes to whet their appetites before launching a strategy lesson sequence.

## **Segment: Modeling the Inner Conversation**

Reading comprehension stems from the inner conversation readers have with the text while they read. Readers monitor their comprehension by listening to their inner voices as they read. Steph models her inner conversation so the kids can see what she is thinking about.

### **Considerations and Invitations**

- An interactive read-aloud is an instructional approach that allows the teacher to model thinking and engage kids in the process. As kids turn to each other and talk or jot down their thoughts, they have a better chance of understanding what they read and expanding their thinking.

We need to remember, however, that we can't reserve reading aloud just for the purpose of instruction or we run the risk of ruining reading aloud. We also need to read aloud just to share great literature and to nurture kids' souls. We need to read aloud every day just for the sheer joy of it.

- Notice Steph's language as she thinks aloud and models her inner conversation. After you model your thinking, you might invite the kids to reflect on what they noticed you doing and then create a chart of their observations for them to refer back to throughout the strategy course of study.
- Invite your kids to turn to each other and talk frequently during whole-group instruction. When we instruct the whole group, we need to give kids plenty of opportunity to talk and respond to the text. Otherwise we run the risk that only the most vocal kids will construct meaning. Ask them to simply talk about whatever they are thinking or specifically prompt their discussion. Consider varying these options and notice if this regular discussion promotes engagement and enhances their understanding.
- Steph reminds students that nothing is more important than their thinking when they read. Kids need to hear this frequently for it to sink in. Reinforce the notion that the "reader writes the story" and that all readers will have different thoughts while they read; their inner conversation may sometimes be similar or different.

### **Segment: Engaging Students in Guided Practice**

After Steph models her own inner conversation, the think-aloud becomes more interactive. She engages the kids in the process of jotting down their thinking while she continues reading. They remain seated close to her so that she can easily survey their involvement, listen to them talk, and quickly read what they have written before she sends them off to try this with each other.

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- The interactive read-aloud provides a great opportunity to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary and gives kids the chance to infer the meaning of an unfamiliar word or concept. The discussion of the word *wondrous* is typical of how talking about vocabulary and using inferential thinking to crack the meaning of a word helps with understanding. We use the inferring strategy to figure out unfamiliar words in context.
- Before sending kids off to practice on their own, provide some time for them to practice as a whole group as Steph does here. Have clipboards, Post-its, and pencils available so students can easily write down their thinking. In this way, you can conveniently read what they are writing and assess their understanding.
- Notice how Steph continues reading the text slowly during the guided practice portion of the mini-lesson, stopping at the end of each page to

give kids time to jot down their thinking. As she gradually releases responsibility for thinking to the kids, she shares less of her thinking. The interactive read-aloud gives kids a chance to practice note-taking, an increasingly required task as they move through middle and high school. Take time to explain this, as it is helpful for them to see the future note-taking application of this strategy.

- Why Post-its? Why not notebooks for note-taking? Notebooks are a perfectly reasonable alternative for writing down thinking. But when we launch a strategy, we often choose Post-its and clipboards because we have found that kids are less intimidated by the small size of Post-its and typically write more than they do on a blank notebook page. After some practice with this, we give kids opportunities to try this with their notebooks, a more cost-effective alternative.

### **Segment: Responding in Small Groups**

After completing the interactive read-aloud, Steph invites the kids to gather in groups and talk about the story, using their Post-its to fuel their conversations. As kids talk, she moves about the room conferring with individual groups.

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Notice how the group of five girls talks to each other. Jessica begins the year modeling with the whole group and reinforcing in small groups how to talk about books and listen to each other. She models the kinds of questions they should ask each other: What do you think the story was mainly about? What struck you? What do you wonder about? What connections do you have? How did the story make you feel? Try modeling ways to have conversations with your own students.
- Steph assigns the role of recorder to one member of the group and gives each group a larger 3 x 5-inch Post-it to jot down the bigger ideas and themes of the story. This gives the kids a focus and encourages them to listen to one another and then synthesize their thoughts into one or two bigger ideas. Invite your kids to try this.

### **Segment: Reflecting on the Lesson and Preparing for the Next Day**

Steph, Jessica, and Anne meet briefly to reflect on the lesson and plan for the next day.

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Not all planning sessions need to be lengthy. Make an effort to catch a teammate or colleague on the fly to talk about instruction and the kids' engagement and learning or to share some of their work. If we want our instruction to make a difference for our students, we need to spend more time reflecting on how things are going and planning where to go next.

**Day 2****Segment: Sharing Student Responses to Assess Understanding**

Steph begins the lesson by going over the written Post-it responses from the previous day's lesson. Reading and thinking about the kids' responses guides our future instruction and informs us about their understanding. (See Figure 3: Angela's *Gleam and Glow* Post-its, and Figure 4: Yessica's *Gleam and Glow* Post-its.)

**Considerations and Invitations**

- Sharing kids' written responses with the whole class honors their thinking and spurs discussion. Collect their Post-its after a lesson and review them to notice their thinking. Place them on a sheet of paper, writing your own notes next to them to share with the class the next day. When Steph reads them, she sometimes elaborates on the comments to make sure the ideas are crystal clear to the rest of the class. Kids really respond to having their comments shared as prompts for expanding thinking.
- We read written responses, in this case Post-its, to inform us about our kids' understanding and to guide our instruction. Notice how Steph shares questions, connections, inferences, reactions, and possible misconceptions that she has noticed in the responses. If she has noticed an obvious misconception and it pops up in several responses, she makes sure to clear it up for the entire class as she did when she read the Post-it that asked if the family was returning to their country or going to another. Since this was central to the story plot and themes, she wanted to make sure that everyone was clear that this family was returning to their own country. We are always on the lookout for misconceptions and the opportunity to address them.

**Segment: Inferring Themes Using Text Evidence**

Steph explains and models how we merge our background knowledge with evidence from the text to infer the bigger ideas in the story, to "surface" the themes.

**Considerations and Invitations**

- Steph makes a point of showing kids that we can surface themes in two ways. Sometimes we have a theme in mind, and we need to search for evidence to confirm it. Other times we see some evidence—a picture, a quote, an idea from the text—and that evidence surfaces a theme. Try modeling both ways to infer themes for your students. (See Figure 5: Searching for Evidence.)

**Segment: Conferring and Working in Pairs**

Steph confers with kids as they work in pairs inferring themes and supporting them with text evidence.

## Considerations and Invitations

- Notice Steph’s language when she confers. Consider the questions Steph asks when she talks with Rebecca and Angela. Notice how she honors their thinking.

### Day 3

#### **Segment: Inferring Themes in Self-Selected Text**

Steph reviews the previous day’s lesson, sends kids off to try inferring themes in their own independent reading, and brings them back to share their thinking.

## Considerations and Invitations

- Intermediate and middle grade kids need time to read books they can and want to read every day. Think about how you can build in time for daily independent reading.
- Steph invites kids to share themes with one another even though they are reading different books. Kids need opportunities to talk about different books as well as a common book. They will notice similar themes. Invite your kids to talk to each other about different books as well as those that they are reading as a whole class.

#### **Segment: Wrapping Up the Three-Day Study**

Jessica, Steph, and Anne meet at the conclusion of the three-day lesson sequence to reflect on and debrief the teaching and learning.

## Considerations and Invitations

- Meeting with colleagues to reflect on teaching and learning before, during, and after a course of study is crucial to planning, implementing, and assessing quality instruction. Sit down with your teammates and colleagues and talk about how you can build in regular time for planning and reflecting.
- Notice how Steph, Anne, and Jessica reflect on kids’ work during this conversation. Bring in a variety of kids’ work samples to assess their understanding and inform future instruction. (See Figure 6: Two-Column Form for *It’s Your Move*.)

## Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Part One



#### **Segment: Planning the Lesson**

### Day 1

The students have just begun studying the Civil War in their history classes, so Jessica and Anne choose an article about two young soldiers’ experiences at the notorious Andersonville prison to help build students’

background knowledge about this time period. Jessica, Anne, and Steph discuss the purpose of the three-day lesson sequence: launching a practice that will teach students to pull out important information from, ask questions about, and respond to nonfiction. The larger purpose of the lesson sequence is to introduce this note-taking strategy to the kids so that they can apply it in their social studies and science classes.

This is the students' first experience reading and responding with the Facts/Questions/Response (FQR) form. The discussion focuses on how Anne and Jessica explicitly model how they think through the text and merge their thinking with the new information, gradually turning responsibility over to the kids to read and respond independently.

### Considerations and Invitations

- Talking together about the content of a series of lessons helps us clarify our purpose for instruction and allows us to rehearse the language of instruction we will use in our lessons. When planning your next set of lessons, meet with a teammate or two to design and think through your instruction. Colleagues' comments and questions are invaluable when planning instruction.

### **Segment:** Setting the Stage by Activating Background Knowledge

As a language arts teacher, Jessica often integrates her instruction with topics the students are studying in content-area classes. For this reason Anne and Jessica choose a nonfiction account of two young Union soldiers and their harrowing imprisonment at Andersonville. The issues of justice and injustice in this nonfiction text engage the students as they read about the difficulties and obstacles the soldiers—Billy Bates and Dick King—encounter.

The previous week Jessica read aloud *Pink and Say*, a picture book about the Civil War by Patricia Polacco. Jessica sets the stage for this next lesson by asking the kids to think about what they already know about Andersonville based on their background knowledge.

### Considerations and Invitations

- When beginning a new topic of study, picture books can be invaluable resources for building kids' background knowledge. For upcoming science and social studies topics, seek out picture books as a way of initiating a study of important ideas and issues in a given topic. See suggestions for picture books in a variety of subject areas and topics in Appendix B of *Strategies That Work* (Harvey and Goudvis 2000).

### **Segment:** Launching the FQR Chart by Thinking Out Loud

Anne introduces the FQR form for taking notes. She demonstrates how she carefully thinks through, paraphrases, and records important information from the text. As she encounters new information, she responds to it with

questions, responses, reactions, connections, or feelings prompted by the information. She wants students to understand that responding on the FQR is a scaffold for merging thinking with new information.

### Considerations and Invitations

- Notice how Anne introduces the FQR form by explaining how questions and responses add to students' understanding of the facts they are learning. What language does she use as she thinks through and paraphrases the information? Asks questions? Responds with reactions, connections, and opinions?
- As Anne models, Jessica directs the kids to write down the same information on their own FQR forms. How might practicing note-taking engage the kids and help them understand the process of reading and responding on the FQR?
- After modeling for a few minutes, Anne asks kids to turn and talk to make sure they are engaged with the information and not simply watching her do all the work. What do you notice the students saying as they turn and talk? What do you notice about the kids' comments as the group stops to share their thinking?

### **Segment: Modeling and Practicing Working with a Partner**

Jessica and Anne model how they read and think through the text. We often ask kids to talk to each other about their reading, but we don't always show them how. Jessica and Anne talk about the content of the article and demonstrate the conversational behaviors that encourage thoughtful discussion.

### Considerations and Invitations

- Before modeling, Anne and Jessica direct the students to carefully observe what they do and say. Why does it make sense to give kids specific directions for watching how Anne and Jessica think through the text together? What do the kids learn from observing Jessica and Anne's discussion?
- Teaching together provides Jessica and Anne with the opportunity to create an anchor chart of what the kids noticed as they observed them reading, talking, and recording their thinking. Jessica leads the discussion while Anne charts the kids' thinking as they share their observations. How does Jessica summarize and extend the kids' observations as she leads the discussion? How might an anchor chart like the one Anne, Jessica, and the kids create guide future learning? (See Figure 7: Chart of Thinking Behaviors.)
- Notice how Anne and Jessica discuss some of the bigger ideas in the text, not just the facts and events. How might this help students focus on bigger ideas in their own conversations about the text?
- Two heads are better than one! "Never teach alone if you can teach together" is our motto. Invite another teacher or the librarian to plan and

teach a lesson with you. Teachers we know merge their classes and teach larger groups in an effort to team teach. Read through the text you plan to use together, think through your goals and purposes for the lesson, and rehearse the language you will use to demonstrate your thinking.

- Anchor charts are a record of kids' thinking and learning as well as our instruction. We want to capture our lesson language and the kids' comments and thinking so we can refer to it again and again. When we teach "solo," we often jot down notes about our language and the kids' thinking during instruction and create the chart after class or with the kids the following day. With your students, co-construct an anchor chart for a lesson that will guide future learning.

### **Segment: Engaging Kids in Paired Reading**

Anne and Jessica circulate around the room, conferring with kids as they read and respond with partners. This is an opportunity to clarify the FQR note-taking process. We emphasize that we want more than just the facts and reiterate the importance of writing down questions, confusions, and reactions. Kids then share their responses and discuss what they found difficult about the task.

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Notice how Jessica confers with several pairs of students about the task. Identifying questions or misunderstandings about the task helps us decide what to re-teach in a conference or what to focus on in subsequent small- or large-group lessons.
- Jessica asks the kids to share what they found challenging or difficult about the task. Asking the kids to reflect on and be honest about what's hard for them sends the message that it's okay to ask questions and clarify confusion. Notice the language Jessica uses to encourage kids to share their thinking and questions.

### **Segment: Reflecting on the Lesson and Preparing for the Next Day**

When Steph, Anne, and Jessica review and reflect on the lesson, they talk about how the kids react to the lesson and how well they accomplish the task. They also discuss how the lesson relates to larger goals and purposes for instruction.



#### **Tape 4:**

## **Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Part Two**

### **Day 2**

### **Segment: Small-Group Instruction for Guided Practice**

Jessica begins the lesson by noting how well the kids have sorted and sifted through difficult information during the previous day's lesson. Anne

shares some of the great thinking she and Jessica noticed when reviewing their FQR forms. Then Anne meets with a small group that needs additional support to read and respond to the information while Jessica oversees the large group and confers with pairs.

### Considerations and Invitations

- Notice the content of Jessica’s conferences and consider possible areas of focus for your own students as they read and respond to content-laden nonfiction.
- Jessica and Anne keep kids engaged by sharing their thinking for a few minutes at various points during the lesson. This honors kids’ thinking, and it allows Jessica and Anne to highlight important thinking behaviors such as citing evidence from the text and asking thoughtful questions. Think about behaviors that you want to encourage in your students as they read challenging text. (See the discussion of small groups, Day 3, Considerations and Invitations.)

### Day 3

#### **Segment: Moving Toward Independent Practice with the FQR**

Anne and Jessica ask the students to finish reading the article and think about lingering questions or ideas they will take away from this piece. Using some of the kids’ thoughts, they briefly discuss examples of these big ideas or lingering questions.

#### **Segment: The Small Group Reconvenes**

Anne reconvenes the small group that was interrupted the previous day when the language arts period ended.

### Considerations and Invitations

- No matter what the class size, it’s almost impossible for everyone to understand the task the first time around. Anne works with a small group of four English language learners to help them reread, paraphrase, and respond to the information in the article. Using small-group instruction, how might you support students in your classroom who need additional support with reading and understanding?
- Consider ways to differentiate instruction in your classroom. When we are explicit about modeling the task and how to do it, we find that many kids work on their own or with a partner while we convene a small, needs-based group. We direct kids into partnerships with one reader who can easily read the material. Kids are more likely to complete the task, leaving the teacher free to meet with small groups and confer. Experiment with different ways of differentiating instruction with partner and small-group practice.
- As you confer with students, jot down notes to capture and record their thinking. Conference conversations are an opportunity to informally

assess how students are reading and thinking about the text. This is one format that assesses how students understand content information and how to complete the task. (See Figure 8: Conference Evaluation Form.)

### **Segment: From Facts to Big Ideas**

The whole group convenes to share big ideas and issues, and Jessica and Anne guide the students to discuss their lingering questions and talk about what they will take away from this piece.

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Notice how students begin to focus on the bigger ideas and issues rather than getting lost in a sea of details and ideas. How did the instruction over the three days help students do this?
- Students, and English language learners in particular, need plenty of time to rehearse and share their ideas. Keep track of how often you ask students to stop and share their thinking during a lesson. Sharing isn't just for the end of the lesson: sometimes when we leave it to the end, we run out of time and never get to it.

### **Segment: Independent Reading**

Kids read and respond independently to an article in *National Geographic Explorer* called "Eyewitness on the Underground Railroad" by Peter Winkler. The article contains three short narratives about people who escaped on the Underground Railroad. The kids choose one of these pieces to read and respond to using the FQR form. Jessica and Anne continue conferring with students, responding to students' individual needs, questions, and misunderstandings. (See Figure 9: FQR Form for *Escape from Andersonville*.)

#### **Considerations and Invitations**

- Collect students' FQR forms and examine them to see if and how they are paraphrasing the information, asking questions about it, and responding with their own thoughts, connections, and opinions. Here are things you might look for as you assess the FQR forms:
  - how well students have paraphrased the information;
  - if they are including questions and responses as well as factual information;
  - whether questions are thoughtful and about significant information and ideas rather than less important details;
  - if and how students work through confusions or misunderstandings;
  - if students responses and reactions were thoughtful and tied to the information they recorded;
  - if and how students move towards bigger ideas and issues in their responses as they complete the article.

- Before we evaluate and grade students on their nonfiction responses, we give them plenty of practice with the FQR form. Provide several different texts for students to practice merging their thinking with the information on the FQR form. Only after they are thoroughly grounded in both the topic and their responses does it make sense to formally evaluate their work.

**Segment: Wrapping Up the Three-Day Study**

Anne, Jessica, and Steph debrief their observations of kids’ thinking and responses and the relevance of the three-day nonfiction lesson sequence across the curriculum.

**Considerations and Invitations**

- Begin a conversation with your colleagues that focuses on reading and responding in the content areas. Think about how nonfiction strategies such as determining importance and questioning can be practiced and applied in different subject areas. Try to talk together frequently about a common language for nonfiction literacy instruction.

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# Time Codes for *Strategic Thinking*

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## **Tape 1: Inferring Themes in Fiction, Part One** 31:28

00:00–02:26 Planning the Lesson

Day 1

09:10–12:18 Setting the Stage by Activating Background Knowledge

12:18–21:54 Modeling the Inner Conversation

21:54–24:30 Engaging Students in Guided Practice

24:30–30:35 Responding in Small Groups

30:35–31:33 Reflecting on the Lesson and Preparing for the Next Day

## **Tape 2: Inferring Themes in Fiction, Part Two** 32:54

Day 2

01:41–07:43 Sharing Student Responses to Assess Understanding

07:43–14:40 Inferring Themes Using Text Evidence

14:40–17:50 Conferring and Working in Pairs

Day 3

17:50–24:40 Inferring Themes in Self-Selected Text

24:40–31:54 Wrapping up the Three-Day Study

## **Tape 3: Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Part One** 28:44

00:00–01:55 Planning the Lesson

Day 1

07:35–09:10 Setting the Stage by Activating Background Knowledge

09:10–19:05 Launching the FQR by Thinking Out Loud

19:05–24:34 Modeling and Practicing Working with a Partner

24:34–27:45 Engaging Kids in Paired Reading

27:45–28:51 Reflecting on the Lesson and Preparing for the Next Day

## **Tape 4: Determining Importance in Nonfiction, Part Two** 28:36

01:11–08:33 Day 2

08:33–10:52 Small-Group Instruction for Guided Practice

Day 3

10:52–12:40 Moving Towards Independent Practice with the FQR

12:40–17:33 The Small Group Reconvenes

17:33–19:14 From Facts to Big Ideas

19:14–21:44 Independent Reading

21:44–27:40 Wrapping Up the Three-Day Study

## Figure 1: Explicit Instruction in Reading Comprehension Strategies

The Gradual Release of Responsibility (Pearson and Gallagher 1983)

### **Teacher Modeling**

- Teacher explains strategy.
- Teacher models strategy.
- Teacher thinks aloud when reading to show thinking and strategy use.

### **Guided Practice**

- After explicit modeling, teacher gradually gives students more responsibility for task engagement and completion.
- Teacher and students practice the strategy together in shared reading contexts, reasoning through the text and co-constructing meaning through discussion and text lifting.
- Students hear from each other about one another's thinking process.
- Students work in small groups and pairs and reason through text together.

### **Independent Practice**

- After working with teacher and other students, student tries practicing the strategy on own.
- Student receives regular feedback from teacher and other students.

### **Application of the Strategy**

- The student uses the strategy in authentic reading situations.
- The student uses the strategy in a variety of different genres, settings, contexts, and disciplines.

*(Harvey and Goudvis 2000. Adapted from Fielding and Pearson 1995)*

**Figure 2: Double-Entry Observation Form**

<b>Observations</b>	<b>Questions/Comments</b>

**Figure 3: Angela's *Gleam and Glow* Post-its**

Angela

IF THE KIDS WERE SCARED ENOUGH TO WAT THE BOAT WITH JUST THE STORIES imagine if they REALLY had to go through it.

↗ -Angela -  
Expanding Thinking - "Imagine" -  
NAMES OF THE FISHES  
Gleam and glow  
THAT MAN IS SAYING THAT ALL LIFE IS PRECIOUS.  
• THE LITTLE GIRL IS STARTING TO FEEL LIKE THE LITTLE FISHES.

"All life is precious" A big idea - theme

Poor children, they must be so scared of leaving. Wow! they finally found their father. How is it that the 2 fish connect to all this?

Wonders how the fish connect to the story -

I wonder how far he has to go if they had to walk. Where would they walk to? Its so cute the way the little girl grew close to them.

What are they going to do now? they are homeless.

The fish lived even though there was a war taking place. Just like them. = see how that the fish were symbolizing them

Parallel theme ↑  
gleam + glow represent the family

**Figure 4: Jessica's *Gleam and Glow* Post-its**

Jessica

Evidence for the theme of protection & safety

\*I think that not only the two kids having a hard time, their mom also because she has to worry about protecting the kids and making sure they are safe.

the boy feels bad because what about if it's far and they have to walk all the way.

\*"who is that man?"

\*"what do the fishes do?" why are the wanderers?

strong person because she is always helping the little kids.

hope that they find their dad

they found their dad!

They are must be REALLY HAPPY.

was ok to go back home. How is their time going to be.

What ever happened to the two fishes Gleam and glow?

"old life waiting for us" Maria thinks that everything was going to be like before.

Are the fishes going to be there?

I think they are they had babies (the fishes), they lived like them. they were

all happy they are home even though everything at home changed the good thing was that they survived and so did gleam and glow and they

Text to Text How Many Days

This response is evidence for the theme of hope

**Figure 5: Searching for Evidence**  
Two-Column Notes from *Gleam and Glow*

<b>Evidence from the Text</b> (Words, pictures and ideas)	<b>Theme</b>
<p>"When papa left to join the underground, Marina cried. To be truthful, Mama and I cried, too."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FEAR</li> </ul>
<p>"But this is our country. I will fight with the liberation Army to stop them from pushing us out of our own land."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strength</li> <li>• strong beliefs</li> </ul>
<p>"I'll be back," he'd said. But I worried what if he came back, and we weren't here?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear</li> </ul>
<p>Mama held me close. "It's all right, Viktor, there is no harm done."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comfort</li> </ul>
<p>"My father is in the underground," I told him and I felt proud.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support</li> </ul>
<p>"We don't have a tractor. I knew that when we left, we would have to walk."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding</li> </ul>
<p>"An extra day or two of life is as important to a fish as it is to us."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "All Life is Precious"</li> </ul>
<p>"I love Gleam and Glow"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOVE</li> </ul>
<p>"It is far... But we will get there."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith</li> </ul>

**Figure 6: Two-Column Form for *It's Your Move***

It's Your Move - Eve Ranting <span style="float: right;">Michael</span>	
Evidence from the Text <small>(Words, pictures and ideas)</small>	Theme
"I take a deep breath. "You mean tagging?" "	• FEAR
When they made James go up to the sign and tagg.	• PEER PRESSURE
Now that Dad is gone he thinks I'm smarter than anybody	• Admiration
Isaac went out late with his brother when his mom isn't home	• COURAGE

## Figure 7: Chart of Thinking Behaviors

What did Ms. Lawrence and Ms. Goudvis say and do as they read together?

- \* We were interested in what each other had to say: we listened and asked questions.
- \* We responded to each other.
- \* We clarified our thinking, sometimes we agreed, sometimes we didn't.
- \* We took turns.
- \* We made eye contact.
- \* We collaborated and participated in the discussion.
- \* We learned that talking can change thinking.
- \* We stayed on task.
- \* We put the ideas and information from the text into our own words.
- \* We synthesized our thoughts and came up with new ideas and insights.

**Figure 8: Conference Evaluation Form**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Content Understanding</b>	<b>Process Understanding</b>

**Figure 9: FQR Form for *Escape from Andersonville***

FACTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
<p>Billy Bates and Dick King Escape from Andersonville</p> <p>Billy Bates - 14 years old Dick King - 17 years old • Captured and imprisoned • Sent to Andersonville • Worst prison - 1 out of 3 people died</p> <p>• Dick refused to give up his clothes • Get caught trying to escape • B.D put in a chain gang • Billy hung by thumbs by Wirz</p> <p>• As leaders, B+D gave encouragement to the other prisoners who had given up</p> <p>• Dug another tunnel to escape • After the war, Wirz hung for war crimes.</p>	<p>Found Why were kids this young for the allowed to fight? Union Did they lie about their age?</p> <p>Wasn't it dangerous for Dick to be so defiant? Will they try again?</p> <p>Why did Billy infuriate Wirz so much?</p> <p>Are other prisoners going with them?</p>	<p>Wow! This is too young to go to war. Andersonville - I know that is the worst prison because of disease and starvation</p> <p>I think Wirz wants Billy to learn a lesson for trying to escape. Wirz doesn't want the prisoners to go against him. I feel bad for them because they were treated so badly</p> <p>Billy did justice because Wirz was the only American ever executed for war crimes</p>