

Reading With Meaning/Happy Reading Professional Study Group

Tape 1: Getting Started/Prologue, Ch. 1&2

Discussion/Reflection Questions

"Gradually releasing responsibility to children as they gain expertise, teaching a few strategies of great consequence in depth over time, and giving children the gifts of time, choice, response, community, and structure guide my work and allow me to make thoughtful decisions based on principles I believe in." (Pg. 6)

Structure

1. What structures do I have in place to allow for gradual release of responsibility?
2. What structures do I have in place to allow for time for practice and sharing?
3. Are the structures and routines in my classroom predictable?

Environment

1. What things do I display in my room and what purpose do they serve?
2. How do I organize materials so they are accessible to students?
3. What are the procedures and organization of my classroom library?
4. How does the setup/organization of my room support individual/pairs/small group work?
5. What does the way my room is set up/organized and the things displayed tell a visitor about what is important to our community of learners?

Personal Professional Development

"When we know the theory behind our work, when our practices match what we believe, and when we clearly articulate what we do and why we do it, people listen."

". . . spend time defining your beliefs and aligning your practices."

". . . be confident and clear about why you believe as you do."

1. I see the above comments as a continuum of learning, experience and confidence. I see myself, depending on the day and what I'm trying to accomplish and how successful I feel I've been at it, somewhere in the middle of this continuum. Where would you place yourself, on average? What things can we do as a group to help each other define and articulate our beliefs and then align practices?

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Tape 1: Readers' Workshop/Chapters 3&4

Discussion/Reflection Questions

Setting the Tone

1. What things do you notice in the video or in the reading about the tone and expectations for behavior during the various parts of Debbie's readers' workshop?
2. What things does Debbie do or talk about that help create a workshop in which students demonstrate a joy for reading, respect for each other as learners, and a willingness to take risks as learners?
3. What things do I do in my own classroom that contribute to this same type of learning climate?

Scaffolding of Learning/Gradual Release of Responsibility

1. As I watched this portion of the video I was impressed with how many different ways Debbie supports and gradually extends student learning. What things did you notice she does to scaffold student learning?
2. In what ways do I support and gradually extend my students' learning?

Record Keeping/Assessment/Instructional Planning

1. What things did you notice about how Debbie assesses and records her students' learning?
2. How does she use this information to inform and plan her instruction?
3. What means of assessing students do I use?
4. What types of record keeping do I use?
5. How do I use my assessment/record keeping to inform and plan my instruction?

Reading/Writing Connections

1. In what way do the things observed in this portion of the video and reading support student writing?

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Tape 2: Explicit Instruction: Portraits from Readers' Workshop

Discussion/Reflection Questions

1. Again, I was taken by the various ways in which Debbie scaffolds her students' learning. What things did you notice that she did during her study of identifying themes and supporting them with evidence from the text that made students feel successful and at the same time extended their level of expertise?
2. What information do I use to guide my instructional planning so as to help my students feel successful and extend their levels of expertise?
3. How do I balance surface structure and comprehension instruction in my classroom?
4. How does Debbie's small group instruction compare and contrast with small group instruction in my classroom? How do I pull small needs based groups? What structures do I have in place to allow for uninterrupted individual or small group instruction?
5. In what ways do I encourage my students to self-evaluate and reflect on their learning? What "windows into children's thinking" are present in my instruction and assessment?
6. I was struck by the little girl at the end of the video who emulated Debbie's use of a notebook. It just reminded me, again, that we are models, always, to our students. What things do I do each day in my classroom that I would most like my students to emulate?