



***That's A Great Answer!
Teaching Literature Response to
K-3, ELL, and Struggling Readers***

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That's a Great Answer guides teachers who want to introduce their students to response to text in a way that empowers them right from the start. This book provides a foundation for learning. It helps teachers know how to teach students to art of crafting a great answer to a variety of open-ended questions.

That's a Great Answer is a powerful resource to assist students how to comprehend what they read and be able to respond in a meaningful way. The book provides research-based strategies for use not only for improving scores on state assessments, but in day-to-day learning as well.

About the Study Guide

This guide is designed to facilitate professional development in a collegial book study atmosphere. Five professional development sessions include discussion points, guiding questions, workshop activities, and classroom applications. To create a successful professional development experience, consider the following tips:

- Before you begin, seek input about teacher schedules and preferences. Try to arrange your professional development so that participants will be able to attend every session.
- Provide copies of *That's a Great Answer* for all participants. Meaningful application of the skills and activities discussed at each meeting depends upon access to the resource between meetings.
- Provide discussion questions ahead of time and encourage participants to become familiar with the material covered in each session prior to the meeting.
- Provide time between each meeting session to allow teachers the opportunity to apply the skills and be prepared to share their successes and challenges in implementation.
- At each meeting, allow for discussion before beginning the planned workshop activities. Teachers will gain understanding by articulating their successes and challenges faced when implementing the skills.

Session One

Getting To Great Answers

- Introduction, Great Objectives, and Great Books (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2)

Guiding Quote:

“Learning to respond meaningfully to text is a skill that students use every day, not just on test day.” (page ix)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the NAEP? Why is it important?
2. What is the difference between strands, objectives, and questions?
3. How can teachers use rubrics to improve instruction?
4. How does a teacher decide what objectives to teach at each grade level?

Workshop Activity:

Prior to the lesson: Instruct teachers to bring several different picture books used with primary students and read alouds commonly used with a multicultural focus. The facilitator should also have several books available as well.

1. Refer to the rubrics on pages 14-17. As a whole group, review the structure and criteria listed for each rubric. Be sure that all participants understand how to use the chart.
2. Divide the participants into four or five groups. Be sure that each group has several picture books and multicultural books available for this activity.
3. In their small groups, have teachers share the picture books at their table and use the rubric to determine which books are most effective and receive the highest scores.
4. Encourage the groups to create a chart of books that are considered great according to the rubric.

Classroom Implementation:

Encourage teachers to use the books from the list in their classrooms. Teachers should review their classroom libraries to find additional titles to be able to share with colleagues at the next session.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of using a rubric like those provided in the text. Encourage teachers to bring book samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Two

Getting To Great Answers

- Great Instruction (Chapter 3)

Guiding Quote:

“Great instruction increases the likelihood that *all* children will succeed. They may not achieve some arbitrary standard on a state assessment, but they will move forward, improving on their own past performance.” (page 18)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the components to introducing comprehension during whole class instruction? How does it change when reinforcing a comprehension objective?
2. Why is explicit instruction important?
3. How is providing an explanation and modeling different? How is it the same?
4. When does a teacher use bridging? What happens during the bridging portion of a lesson?

Workshop Activity:

Prior to the lesson: Make photocopies of page 27 for teacher use. Encourage teachers to bring their current lesson plans or curriculum objectives.

1. As a whole group, discuss the chart on page 19. Be sure that all participants understand each portion of the lesson and the roles of the teachers and the students during each portion.
2. Divide the participants into pairs. Encourage participants to identify an objective that they will be teaching to students. Instruct each pair to develop a lesson using the template from page 27.
3. Encourage participants to share their lessons with the whole group. Identify the strengths and challenges of using a template and address any concerns they might have over the implementation of this model for instruction.

Classroom Implementation:

Plan for further needs assessment and progress monitoring. Identify objectives appropriate for selected grade level and student development. Facilitate the use of the lesson plan created or develop a new one for use in future lessons.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing the activities or lessons. Encourage teachers to bring lesson samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Three

Getting To Great Answers

- Great Discussions and Great Answers (Chapters 4 and 5)

Guiding Quote:

“With everything else in place—the objectives, the books, the instructional design, and even the discussion—students should have the expertise to produce quality written responses to open-ended comprehension questions.” (page 35)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does a good book discussion look like in a classroom?
2. How does the teacher facilitate a book discussion? What is the students' role?
3. What makes a student answer a great one?
4. Why is it important to reference the text in an answer?

Workshop Activity:

Prior to the lesson: Photocopy page 39-40 for each participant. Encourage teachers to bring a picture book or text that they are planning to use for an upcoming lesson.

1. Review the chapters with the whole group. Encourage all participants to contribute to the discussion and to share ideas about the rubrics and tools in these chapters.
2. Have participants complete the self reflection on page 39. Ask participants to share how using this tool could benefit students.
3. Divide the participants into grade level groups. Ask teachers to identify an objective for a lesson that they will be teaching in the near future. Allow the grade level teams to complete the discussion planner on page 40.
4. Facilitate discussion about the challenges and benefits to using the tools and strategies from these two chapters.

Classroom Implementation:

Review the various templates and tools provided in these chapters. Encourage teachers to use the discussion planner, the self reflection, or one of the rubrics in their classroom.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing the activities or lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Four

Tips, Texts, and Templates for Approaching Reading-Comprehension Objectives

- Forming a General Understanding, Developing an Interpretation (Chapters 6 and 7)

Guiding Quote:

“In order to determine the lesson, theme, main idea, or a new title, students have to synthesize or put together the details from the text and decide what these story elements *mean* beyond the story itself.” (page 49)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the benefit of making predictions in a story?
2. Why did the author target the objectives used in the lessons provided?
3. How do you define inferential thinking? Why is important?
4. Why is determining the main idea so difficult for students?

Workshop Activity:

1. Divide participants into grade level groups. Have each group read and discuss the lessons in the chapters that are appropriate for their students. Have teachers identify objectives and lessons that they can implement.
2. Allow each group to present a brief overview of their lessons and identify specific tips for implementation and any known resources available.
3. Identify any challenges or barriers that need to be overcome in order to successfully implement a lesson or objective.

Classroom Implementation:

Choose a lesson or objective and implement that strategy in the classroom. Utilize the organizers if applicable. Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing the activities or lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Looking Ahead:

Identify desired resources and literature models that are not available at your site and explore funding sources your can use to acquire these resources.

Session Five

Tips, Texts, and Templates for Approaching Reading-Comprehension Objectives

- Connecting and Reacting to Text, Examining the Structure and Content of Text (Chapters 8 and 9)

Guiding Quote:

“Think of author’s craft as those little tricks writers employ to make their writing lively. If you enjoy reading a piece of writing, it is probably not because the topic itself is fascinating but because of the way the author wrote about the topic.”
(page 141)

Discussion Questions:

1. How do students make connections to the text? What challenges do they face in determining those connections?
2. Why is it important for students to articulate opinions about books?
3. What are some of the objectives necessary in order to interpret a text?
4. What are some of the objectives necessary in order to examine the structure of a text?

Workshop Activity:

4. Divide participants into grade level groups. Have each group read and discuss the lessons in the chapters that are appropriate for their students. Have teachers identify objectives and lessons that they can implement.
5. Allow each group to present a brief overview of their lessons and identify specific tips for implementation and any known resources available.
6. Identify any challenges or barriers that need to be overcome in order to successfully implement a lesson or objective.

Classroom Implementation:

Choose a lesson or objective and implement that strategy in the classroom. Utilize the organizers if applicable. Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing the activities or lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Looking Ahead:

Identify desired resources and literature models that are not available at your site and explore funding sources you can use to acquire these resources. Encourage teachers to take time to use the CD in order to access the materials easily.