

## Coach Training Manual

Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

Tennessee Department of Education | 2018

# Table of Contents

<b>Module 1:</b> Reflect on Past Learning .....	4
<b>Module 2:</b> What Is Independent Reading and Why Is It Important? .....	10
<b>Module 3:</b> Classroom Libraries for Independent Reading .....	36
<b>Module 4:</b> Using Readers’ Notebooks During Independent Reading .....	54
<b>Module 5:</b> Reading Conferences .....	78
<b>Module 6:</b> An Environment that Supports Independence .....	105
<b>Module 7:</b> Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement .....	122
<b>Module 8:</b> Sustaining Professional Learning .....	131
<b>Appendix A (Module 2)</b> .....	158
• Tip Sheet: Using Teaching Videos in Professional Development	
<b>Appendix B (Module 3)</b> .....	159
• Adding Books to the Classroom Library	
• Say Something	
<b>Appendix C (Module 4)</b> .....	161
• Analyzing Written Response to Text Through Independent Writing	
<b>Appendix D (Module 5)</b> .....	162
• Reading Conference Forms	
• Reading Conference Record	
• Resource List	
<b>Appendix E (Module 7)</b> .....	165
• Classroom Analysis Tool	
<b>Appendix F (Module 8)</b> .....	168
• Assessments	
• Planning Template	
<b>References</b> .....	178

# Critical Attributes for Semester 6

## Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

- Integrate the standards
- Identify the purpose and objectives of independent reading and reading conferences
- Consider students' strengths and needs in relation to the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards in order to meet the needs of all learners during independent reading and reading conferences
- Organize the classroom library by selecting genres and texts that correspond to enduring understandings or essential concepts that are addressed in instruction, as well as texts that reflect students' interests and experiences, cultural diversity, and range of difficulty
- Provide time in the schedule so children choose books, apply reading strategies, develop content knowledge related to enduring understandings, build stamina, and enjoy reading
- Put classroom organization and routines in place to support independence
- Support self-selection of books by students based on their interests
- Confer with individual readers to facilitate differentiated instruction and provide opportunities for students to use the academic language of interactive speaking
- Strengthen strategic thinking and independent written responses to texts by participating in writing demonstrations (through shared and interactive writing) and by receiving regular feedback from teachers

# Module 1: Reflect on Past Learning

## Objectives

- Recognize the hard work and dedication of our Read to be Ready coaches
- Celebrate the success that has occurred, and identify causal factors that led to these successes

# **Read to be Ready Coach of the Month**

Each month, we will be accepting nominations from the TDOE coach consultants and from teachers across the state for the Read to be Ready Coach of the Month. Coaches who receive this honor will be spotlighted on the Read to be Ready website ([tn.gov/readtobeready](http://tn.gov/readtobeready)).

We are excited to announce the recipients of the Read to be Ready Coach of the Month award!

# Celebrate Success

Since teachers are the center of all efforts to improve education, effective professional learning sessions are defined by their ability to:

- *Combine content and process.* Address content areas to build understanding, but also think about the ways people engage in learning to build commitment and ownership.
- *Attend to the needs of both teachers and students.* Student learning is the ultimate goal, but teachers must be supported in their learning and personal needs.
- *Balance action and reflection.* Teachers engage in what they are learning, “try it out,” then reflect, analyze, and deepen their understanding.
- *Combine strong overall design with individual ownership.* Support success and long-term development by establishing some structures, but adjust to meet the individuals and the context.

(Lyons & Pinnell, 2001)

Integrating these qualities can be difficult, but in order to make changes to their practice, teachers require theoretically coherent professional learning that engages their values and beliefs about learning, while providing a clear vision for implementation that is flexible enough to meet the needs of all students.

## Reflect & Discuss

Take some time to reflect individually on areas of success related to the four constructs for effective professional learning, and then chart some successes you have in common.

Qualities	Things to Consider	Successes
<b>Combine content and process.</b>	How have teachers taken on the new learning and applied it in their classrooms? What do teachers do that is effective in teaching reading and writing?	
	How do teachers take charge of their own learning? How do teachers support one another as a group and build community and ownership?	
<b>Attend to the needs of both teachers and students.</b>	How have you utilized modeling, co-teaching, and observation to support teachers' learning and application in the classroom? How has your coaching supported teachers as they take on this new learning?	
	What instructional literacy practices are changing in the classrooms you support? What evidence of student learning have you seen as a result of these changes?	
<b>Balance action and reflection.</b>	How have you been able to engage teachers actively in their own learning, during professional learning sessions, in the classroom, and during coaching sessions?	
	How has your coaching allowed teachers to reflect on, analyze, and deepen their learning?	
<b>Combine strong overall design with individual ownership.</b>	How have you structured your professional learning to ensure maximum participation and engagement in a predictable and systematic way?	
	How have you taken into account the individuals you serve and the context in which you work, and made adjustments to allow participants to be involved in making decisions and solving problems?	

## Discuss

Build on the successes you recorded in the chart by discussing the questions below.

Based on the data you have been collecting, what are the elements of learning you want to continue to expand on through ongoing professional learning?

What area(s) of your own coaching would you like to refine?

What do you want to advocate for in order to increase engagement in learning and reflection by teachers?

How might you begin to think about the design for professional learning moving forward?



## Closing Words

Quality improvement calls educators toward a very different practice. It directs their attention to solving high-leverage problems using improvement methods and working through networked communities. It calls out for a new professional standard in which advancing quality improvement would become a central part of what it means to be a professional educator. In this new world, organizing improvement activity and being a leader in an improvement network would be recognized as high-status work. It would be at the core of what teacher leaders do.

(Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015, p. 189)

# Module 2: What is independent reading, and why is it important?

## Objectives

- Make connections to past learning with a specific focus on key similarities and differences between interactive read aloud, shared reading, small group reading instruction, and independent reading
- Investigate how independent reading fits into The Framework for Teaching Literacy in Tennessee and the Elements of the Literacy Block
- Understand the purpose and goals of independent reading and how it contributes to students' reading growth and achievement
- Examine how independent reading and conferring fit into the larger literacy block

## Link to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Independent reading focuses on **Reading** and **Foundational Literacy** standards, while incorporating additional **Writing** and **Speaking & Listening** Standards through responding, conferring, and tasks.

## TEAM Connection

- Standards and Objectives
- Motivating Students
- Teacher Knowledge of Students
- Thinking
- **Expectations**
- Managing Student Behavior
- **Environment**
- Respectful Culture

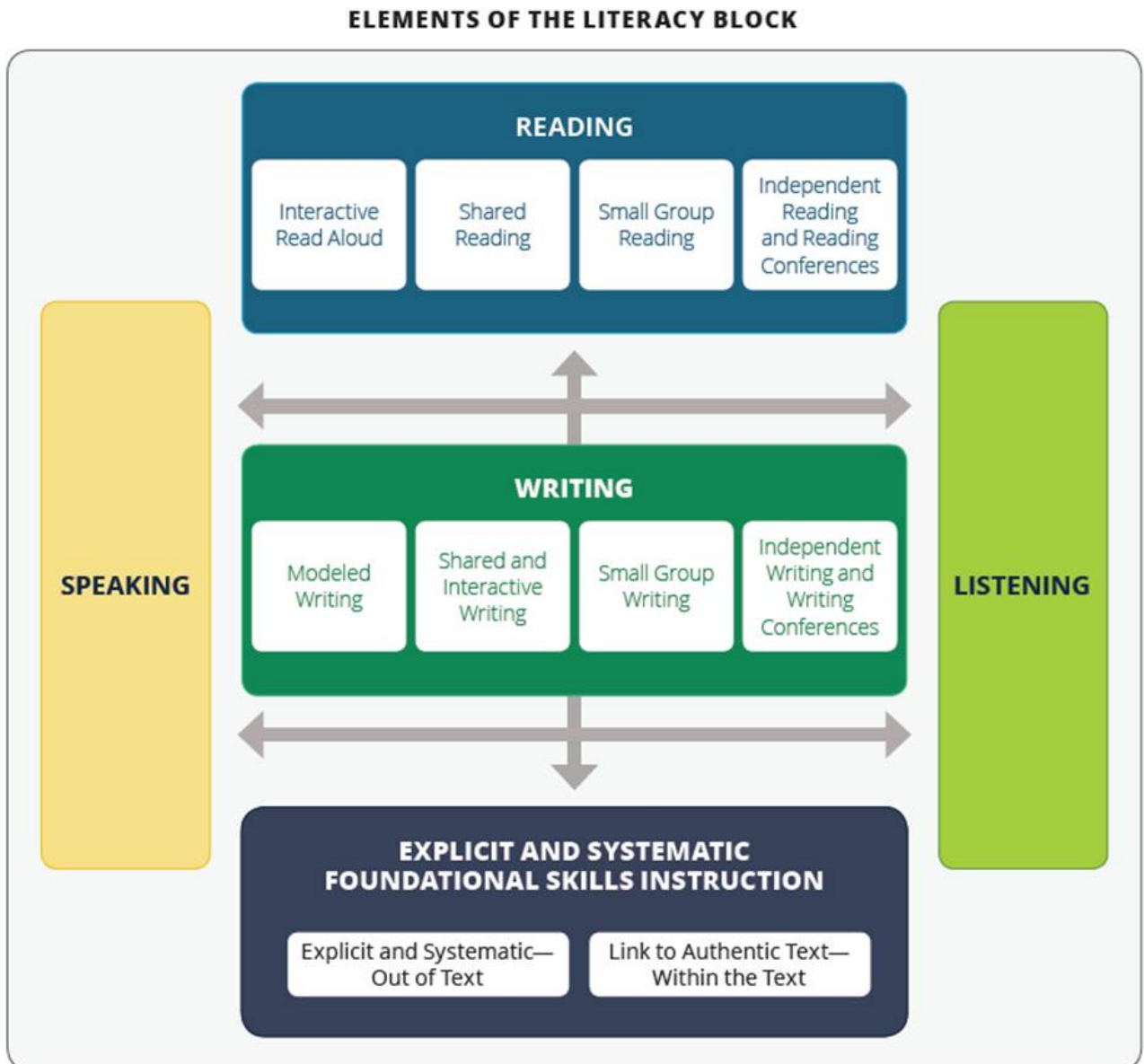
# Revisiting Our Resources

The resources listed below are tools for teachers and coaches to use when planning, assessing, and discussing Independent Reading and Reading Conferences.

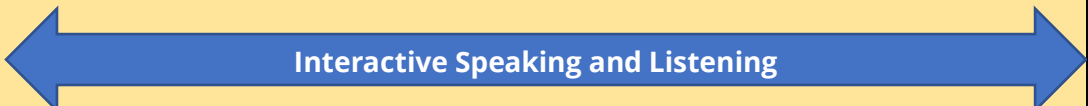
Resource	Successes in the Field	New Ideas
<i>The Fountas &amp; Pinnell Literacy Continuum</i>		
<i>Alignment of Tennessee's State Standards for English Language Arts &amp; Literacy and The Fountas &amp; Pinnell Literacy Continuum</i>		
<i>Prompting Guide 1</i>		
<i>Prompting Guide 2</i>		

# Elements of the Literacy Block

The instructional strategies in this graphic are used to provide varying levels of support to students as they become proficient and independent readers, writers, and thinkers. Each element of the literacy block sets the stage for the behaviors, understandings, skills, and habits that we want students to take on during independent reading.



(Tennessee Department of Education, *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, 2017, p. 13)

<b>Instructional Strategies to Support Readers</b>				
	<b>Interactive Read Aloud</b>	<b>Shared Reading</b>	<b>Small Group Reading Instruction</b>	<b>Shared and Interactive Writing</b>
				
<b>Teacher's Role</b>				
<b>Student's Role</b>				
<b>Selecting Texts</b>				

## Notes

What do you notice about the role of the teacher in each instructional strategy?

What do you notice about the role of the students in each instructional strategy?

What do you notice about the role of text selection in each instructional strategy?

What do you notice about the role of interactive speaking and listening in each instructional strategy?

How have each of these instructional strategies laid a foundation for independent reading?

# Reflect on Current Understandings

Reflect on your current understandings of independent reading and conferring by noting the following:

- ✓ Place a check mark next to statements that confirm your current understandings.
- ★ Place a star next to statements that you hope to learn more about.
- ? Place a question mark next to statements that challenge your current understandings.

<b>Independent Reading and Reading Conferences</b>	
Independent reading provides an opportunity for students to apply their learning to the reading of self-selected texts.	
Teachers instruct students during whole group and small group lessons and during individual conferences related to: choosing books; strategies readers use to make meaning from texts; the characteristics of specific genres; or any other instruction that will address the individual reader's strengths or needs.	
Independent reading provides students with time to build stamina for reading.	
A caring and inclusive classroom community supports all students as they develop as readers, writers, and global citizens.	
The classroom management structures that support independent literacy work during small group reading instruction also support independent reading and reading conferences.	
During reading conferences, teachers can assess students' oral reading and comprehension, volume of reading, book choice, and their ability to talk and write about what they are reading. Teachers engage in conversations with students about how they see themselves as readers and help students set goals for their reading.	
Teachers use clear and concise language during reading conferences to model, prompt for, and support thinking. Students learn how to use this language as they discuss and write about reading.	
Teachers can use the information they gather during reading conferences to inform their teaching in other parts of the literacy block.	
Readers' notebooks (or reading journals) provide a place for students to write what they are thinking as they are reading and to engage in a written dialogue about their reading with their teacher.	
Readers' notebooks help students keep track of their reading: how much they are reading; the genres; topics and concepts they are thinking about; and whether books are easy, appropriate, or too difficult for them to read.	
Teacher responses to student writing in the reader's notebook are another form of feedback that expands students' thinking about texts.	
Readers' notebooks provide valuable data that can inform instruction in interactive read aloud, shared reading, small group reading, and reading conferences.	
Book talks are a way to introduce students to different books, authors, topics, and genres and get them interested and excited about reading.	
Share time after independent reading provides another opportunity for students to talk about their reading and for reinforcing and extending thinking. It is also an opportunity for assessment through observation.	

# Defining Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

Independent reading as an instructional strategy does not simply involve setting aside time for students to read. Independent reading as an instructional strategy differs from other individual reading experiences, such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), in significant ways.

Independent reading is a context that allows students to see themselves as readers. It provides an opportunity for students to read large quantities of self-selected books and build habits as readers for life. Students apply the strategic actions that have been taught, prompted for, and reinforced during interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading instruction to the reading of self-selected texts. Students demonstrate their thinking through talking about their reading during conferences and writing about their reading.

Most importantly, the teacher's role is key to the effectiveness of independent reading. Teachers monitor, assess, and support students in setting personal goals for their reading. In order for independent reading to make the most impact on readers, there must be intentional teaching of skills, strategies, routines, and expectations.

The chart on the following page compares the experience of independent reading to other individual reading experiences.



<b>Characteristics of Independent Reading and Reading Conferences</b>	
<b>Independent reading is a time for students to . . .</b>	<b>Independent reading is <i>not</i> a time for a student to . . .</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an intrinsic motivation for reading, understanding, and enjoyment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read for extrinsic rewards (e.g., pizza, toys, stickers)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to keep records of their reading and thinking, as in various forms of a reader’s notebook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete skills activities such as worksheets that are designed for each book that is read independently</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self-regulation and independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with rigid procedures with close monitoring by teacher</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-select books after explicit teaching about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How the library is organized</li> <li>○ How to know if a book is appropriate for a reader</li> <li>○ How to read a range of genres and text types from a variety of authors in order to develop tastes and preferences as a reader</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-select books <i>without</i> explicit teaching (or with limited teaching) about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How the library is organized</li> <li>○ How to know if a book is appropriate for a reader</li> <li>○ How to read a range of genres and text types from a variety of authors in order to develop tastes and preferences as a reader</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the community of readers in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whole class lessons</li> <li>○ Book talks</li> <li>○ Written and oral conversations about what they are reading</li> <li>○ Small group instruction</li> <li>○ Reflection during share time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read silently without support from the community of readers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with their teacher by participating in regular conferences so the teacher can informally assess and respond to their needs as individual readers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe teachers modeling silent reading</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience a regular block of time each day with predictable routines, usually during small group reading instruction that is designed to build their reading stamina over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience an irregular and unpredictable block of time that may or may not occur each day</li> </ul>

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

# Why dedicate time to independent reading and reading conferences?

Students enjoy opportunities to self-select and explore texts. Beyond the enjoyment of books, readers benefit from daily dedicated time for independent reading and regular conferences with their teacher. Independent reading provides opportunities for students to work toward three important goals: applying new learning; building stamina for reading; and developing the habits and identities of readers. These three goals can be supported by teachers during independent reading if they are able to: help readers make links to prior teaching and learning; provide time for meaningful independent literacy work and for conferences; and facilitate opportunities for readers to share their learning with one another.

## **Authentic Transfer and Application of Knowledge and Skills**

The goal of independent reading is for students to apply all that they learn about reading to their own self-selected texts in order to understand and enjoy them. Independent reading is an opportunity to integrate skills and strategies that have been demonstrated and reinforced throughout the literacy block in an authentic way that demands independent application. “Intelligently and effectively drawing from your repertoire, independently, to handle particular contexts on your own” (McTighe, 2014, p. 1) is evidence that that you have transferred your learning from a school context to an authentic context:

Transfer is about independent performance in context. You can only be said to have fully understood if you can apply your learning without someone telling you what to do and when to do it. In the real world, no teacher is there to direct and remind you about which lesson to plug in here or there.

(McTighe, 2014, p. 1)

As readers transfer their learning, they are able to construct new understandings as they read across genres and text types. Teachers use conferences to get to know individual readers. With the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards and aligned literacy behaviors from *The Literacy Continuum* in mind, teachers observe how readers process texts by: talking with them about books they are reading; taking Running Records; and reading their written responses to text.

During independent reading, teachers are able to observe each reader’s journey toward proficiency. *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* defines reading proficiency as a meaning-making process in which readers:

- accurately, fluently, and independently read a wide range of content-rich, age-appropriate, and complex texts;
- construct interpretations and arguments through speaking and writing;
- strategically employ comprehension strategies to analyze key ideas and information;
- develop vocabulary; and
- build knowledge about the world.

(*Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, 2017, p. 9)

## Discuss

What factors impact the authenticity of independent reading?

How can teachers and coaches use *The Literacy Continuum* and the *Alignment Document* to observe readers?

## Building Stamina

Time spent reading widely improves reading in all areas: comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge, and writing. Readers need to spend time reading, so that they can apply the skills and strategies they have been taught in order to read increasingly demanding texts. All too often, readers, especially struggling readers, spend very little time actually reading continuous text and more time filling out worksheets, workbook pages, etc. If improving students' reading depends on students spending time reading each day, teachers need to prioritize time each day for independent reading.

Teachers set aside a designated block of time for independent reading. They begin with a shorter period of time that increases as students build stamina. If teachers find it difficult to identify chunks of time for independent reading, they may be surprised to find that there are various activities and places during the day that they can redirect to independent reading time. For example:

- Beginning-of-the-day activities, such as warm-ups, and “when you are done” enrichment activities can be replaced by independent reading, as can workbook/worksheet pages, sentence editing, and journal writing prompts.
- Waiting in line for school events, such as the bus, field trips, and assemblies, are all times when students could be reading.

Teachers might adjust their schedules to accommodate more independent reading by re-examining the following activities throughout the day:

- lengthy calendar discussions;
- morning announcements;
- transition times for lining up, packing up, readying materials;
- test preparation;
- worksheet packets;
- crossword puzzles and word searches;
- end-of-story questions;
- coloring, cutting, and pasting; and
- DEAR time.

### **Ways to Maximize Time for Independent Reading**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Developing the Identity and Habits of a Reader

As students experience success reading appropriately complex texts, they begin to develop and understand their identities as readers within a community.

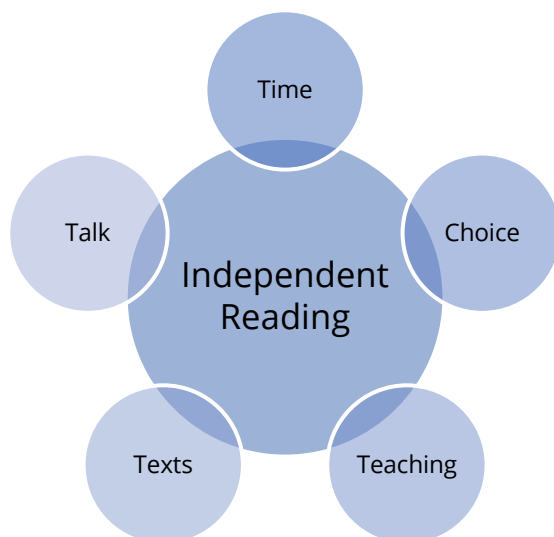
Aspects of a Reading Identity	How Independent Reading Supports this Aspect	How Reading Conferences Support this Aspect
<p>Readers make <b>choices</b> about what they read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers provide guidance about how to select books that fit the reader's purpose.</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to choose books (either from the library or from a set of texts).</li> <li>• Students share their thought processes for text selection with peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers help students notice what genres and text types they have been enjoying and support readers in finding different selections that might be engaging.</li> </ul>
<p>Readers consider their <b>purpose</b> for reading. They might read to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inquire about the world around them;</li> <li>• expand conceptual understandings;</li> <li>• learn about human experiences that are unique and universal;</li> <li>• enjoy beautiful language; and</li> <li>• be entertained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The library is organized by genre, author, topics, concepts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers use conferences to learn about students' interests and help them locate appropriate texts for pursuing them.</li> </ul>
<p>Readers develop <b>opinions</b> about authors, illustrators, topics, concepts, and genres. They develop <b>preferences</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers keep logs of texts they have read and become mindful of the kinds of texts that appeal to them most and least.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers support students in noticing trends and reflecting on their preferences.</li> </ul>
<p>Readers create the <b>habit</b> of reading and spend <b>time</b> reading every day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers look forward to a designated time to read self-selected books and reflect on them through writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers keep conferences short and meaningful.</li> </ul>

<b>Aspects of a Reading Identity</b>	<b>How Independent Reading Supports this Aspect</b>	<b>How Reading Conferences Support this Aspect</b>
Readers build an <b>agenda</b> for future reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and peers create “buzz” around new titles.</li> <li>• Readers pursue their interests by thinking about which books they plan on reading next.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers support students in setting an agenda by helping them locate specific text sets or by helping students maintain lists of interests, preferences, and books they wish to read next.</li> </ul>
Readers <b>reflect</b> on their identity as readers every time they read.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers help students develop the habit of mind for noticing the kinds of books they like.</li> <li>• Teachers help students use writing about reading as a way to get to know themselves as readers.</li> <li>• Students articulate what they are learning about themselves as readers during share time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers listen and learn about students’ identities as readers.</li> <li>• Teachers help connect students to concepts, topics, characters, genres, and authors based on their understanding of their reading identities.</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 329)

The reading life of each student develops as they establish their own preferences, interests, and purposes for reading. The classroom community is enriched as students begin to understand each other as readers and connect. Developing a reading identity is a critical component for helping students become lifelong learners. This goes beyond the expectations of “passing tests or becoming proficient as a reader or writer,” and serves the greater goal of “helping children grow into adults whose lives are enriched by the reading and writing they do every day, and whose futures offer every opportunity” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. xxv).

# Keys to Effective Independent Reading



In order for independent reading to be effective, some key practices must be in place. Many renowned authors have written about the importance of providing time for independent reading; student choice in selecting what they read and access to a large quantity and variety of texts; teachers' support of independent reading through intentional teaching; and multiple opportunities for students to talk about their independent reading.

## 1. Provide Time to Read

"Atwell (2010) concludes that reading books every day is the only activity that reliably relates to proficiency in reading and that it is frequent, wide book reading that creates avid readers. Furthermore, voluminous reading has been proven to be an effective intervention for struggling readers as well as the most effective test preparation for all students (Allington & Gabriel, 2012b). Access to books and time to read can even lessen the effects of poverty on literacy development (Krashen, 2011). If students are to become avid readers, teaching decoding skills and comprehension strategies are not enough (Craig & Guthrie, 2014; Gambrell, 2011). Time to apply this knowledge of comprehension strategies to authentic text is vital to their becoming motivated readers. Some teachers may believe that primary students are not capable of reading independently for an extended period of time each day. Mounla, Bahous, and Nabhani (2011) negate this concept, noting in their research that first graders on various reading levels were capable of reading independently for 30 minutes each day" (Hudson & Williams, 2015, p. 531).

## 2. Students Self-Select Reading Material

"The research says that independent reading is most effective when students choose their own reading materials. According to Allington and Gabriel (2012), 'The research base on student selected reading is robust and conclusive. Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what

they read'...Kids who read self- rather than teacher-selected books read more (Reynolds and Symons (2001), and self-selected reading is twice as powerful as teacher-selected reading in developing motivation and comprehension (Guthrie and Humenick 2004; Lindsay 2010). Letting kids choose what to read motivates them to read even when it is not required (Ainley, Hidi, and Berndorff 2002) and gives students practice in selecting their own books, which contributes to out-of-school reading (Ivey and Broaddus 2001; Reis et al. 2008). So, if we want students to read outside the classroom, then we need independent reading in the classroom to be centered around student-selected texts" (Miller & Moss, 2013, pp. 18-19).

### **3. Teachers Support Independent Reading Through Teaching**

Successful independent reading requires teaching. This may include, but not be limited to:

- lessons on how to choose appropriate books;
- instruction and modeling of strategies readers use to read and understand texts;
- feedback on reading, both oral and silent;
- reading conferences where teachers listen in while students are reading, talking about the reading, and setting goals for future reading;
- student accountability through written responses to reading in reader's notebooks and maintaining reading logs;
- book talks; and
- discussions (whole group and small group) around texts students read.

(Miller & Moss, 2013)

### **4. Students Need Access to a Large Quantity and Variety of Texts**

During independent reading, students "read books of their own choosing selected from a well-stocked classroom library" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 334).

*"Quantity matters.* How *much* students read makes a difference. They need to process thousands of words within continuous texts each year to accumulate the kind of experiences with texts they need. ...

*Variety matters.* People become readers by sampling a wide variety of genres, topics, and writing styles. Variety develops flexibility in processing many different types of texts. Variety is also necessary to stretch readers' powers of comprehension so that they apply systems of strategic actions in different ways and learn to adjust their reading. Variety also helps readers develop informed preferences that they will carry with them all their lives." (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 335).

### **5. Talk Surrounds and Supports Learning**

"Allington and Gabriel (2012a) assert that when students have time to talk about the books they are reading, their comprehension, motivation, and language development increase. This discussion creates a community of readers in which students become encouraged to read and share with their peers the reading and comprehension strategies that worked well for them (Mounla, Bahous, & Nabhani, 2011)" (Hudson & Williams, 2015, p. 531).



“Peer discussion is one way that students can demonstrate knowledge of their reading, which helps to make them accountable and improves comprehension...Text discussions can enhance critical thinking, metacognition, and the ability to structure arguments. ... Nystrand (2006) found that even as little as ten minutes of peer discussion around texts improved standardized test scores for students” (Miller & Moss, 2013, p. 35-36).

**Notes**

What are you learning about the keys to effective independent reading?

# Linking Instruction to Independent Reading

Independent reading is a powerful instructional strategy that can be integrated into the structure that is used to implement small group reading instruction. While it begins by briefly bringing the whole class together, this instructional framework incorporates independent literacy work time and concludes with a time for readers to share as a community.

## Whole Class Link

During a brief teaching time that opens independent reading each day, teachers provide a short, focused lesson related to procedures or to reading strategies and skills. At the beginning of the year, this teaching time is typically focused on procedural lessons about the routines and expectations for working independently within a community of readers. Lessons might address: how the library is organized; how to choose books that are appropriate for a reader; talking about books; writing about books; keeping notebooks organized; and other important information. This time might also be used for book talks, which are brief “book commercials” delivered by the teacher or by students to spark interest in texts students might choose for independent reading.

As students become familiar with the systems and procedures for independent reading and begin to meet the behavioral expectations of independent reading, the focus of these lessons changes. Later lessons aim to help students link and apply what they have learned during interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group instruction to students’ independent reading of texts. It is critical to note that these brief links or focus lessons prior to independent reading do not introduce new ways of thinking about texts. Rather, teachers use this time to recap or summarize prior learning in order to make the strategies generative and applicable to many different texts. Teachers make implicit teaching that students have experienced throughout the literacy block more explicit for the readers. This interaction is a call for students to apply strategic thinking and conceptual understandings along with skills-based and knowledge-based competencies to their self-selected texts and independent reading.

## Independent Literacy Work Time

After a brief, intentional, and explicit link has been made to prior instruction, teachers provide opportunities for students to read independently and to think, talk, and write about their reading. Teachers develop a system to ensure students can understand and access the meaningful literacy activities in which they are expected to engage without an adult closely monitoring behavior. All independent literacy activities are designed with links to prior learning at the forefront so that students can use and expand the knowledge-based and skills-based competencies that they are developing as readers.

## Individual Conferences

While students work independently, and when the teacher is not meeting with a small group, teachers meet with individual students for reading conferences. Having regular one-on-one

conferences with students is often a challenge in terms of scheduling. However, they are well worth the time for the support they provide students and for the information that can be gathered by the teacher about the readers.

Conferences with readers in the emergent and early phases of reading development are brief interactions around the independent text and an opportunity for teachers to listen in on their reading. Conferences with students in the transitional and self-extending phases of reading development may take a little longer as the teacher supports them in: thinking and talking about the text; discussing challenging language or words in the text; reflecting on reader's notebook lists of reading or written entries; setting reading goals; and listening in on reading for accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

Effective conferences are:

- one-to-one;
- conversational (i.e., students do most of the talking);
- happening at the student's desk or table (teacher and student sit side-by-side);
- dominated by student talk;
- text-focused;
- conducted in a way in which the teacher:
  - listens to the student read a section of the text orally;
  - affirms good thinking;
  - clarifies thinking as needed;
  - prompts the student to make connections, predictions, or to extend thinking;
  - sometimes applies labels to the student's thinking;
  - helps the student understand difficult language;
  - sometimes works on word-solving strategies;
  - sometimes reflects with a student on their reading list or their writing about reading in a reader's notebook;
  - sometimes sets reading goals;
  - gains valuable information about understanding and fluency; and
  - gains valuable information to inform instruction.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2006)

## **Whole Class Share**

Independent reading time concludes with an opportunity for the community of readers to gather together once again and discuss what they have learned as readers. Their reflections may relate back to the lesson of the day or previous whole group lessons. It may involve students sharing something in particular about their reading or their writing about reading in pairs or triads. This is an opportunity to reinforce students' reading and extend their thinking as they listen and learn from the thinking of others.

During effective whole group share time, students may:

- share ways that they are applying their learning throughout the day to their self-selected text;
- talk about their reactions to their books;

- read a part of the book related to a particular focus (i.e., strong leads, character descriptions, interesting information, etc.);
- read notes they took while reading their book;
- share lists or responses to reading in their notebooks;
- talk about places in their books they marked with sticky notes related to a focus: i.e., something new they learned about the topic;
- share titles and genres in book lists to reinforce the variety of reading that is happening in the class;
- read the first line or leads in their books to reinforce how authors get readers interested in the first few lines;
- talk about the connections they are making between the book they are reading and others they have read;
- share titles and discuss what makes a good title;
- talk about books they are reading that are sequels or prequels;
- share illustrations and discuss how they add meaning to the book they are reading.
- share information about characters; and
- talk about conflicts within the text and how they are resolved.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

During share time, students reflect on their own work as well as the collective work of the group. This can be a time to talk about what went well and what “we can do differently next time so that this time runs more smoothly for everyone.” The ultimate goals of share time are for the community of readers to support each other and for the teacher to summarize and extend students’ learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

## Notes

<b>Instructional Framework for Independent Reading</b>	<b>Notes from A/B Partner Talk</b>	<b>Which of the Five Keys to Effective Independent Reading underlies this component of the instructional framework?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide Time to Read</li> <li>2. Students Self-Select Reading Material</li> <li>3. Teachers Support Independent Reading Through Teaching</li> <li>4. Students Need Access to a Large Quantity and Variety of Texts</li> <li>5. Talk Surrounds and Supports Learning</li> </ol>
Whole Class Link		
Independent Literacy Work Time		
Individual Conferences		
Whole Class Share		

## A Closer Look at a Reading Conferences: Bella, Grade 2

What whole group teaching might have happened prior to this conference?

What was the teacher's role in this conference?

### Explicit Links to the Elements of the Literacy Block and the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards During Independent Reading

The charts on the following pages are examples of plans from a first grade unit starter on predictable patterns in the universe. They illustrate how a teacher might help students make a link from the literacy learning that they have already done as readers during interactive read aloud and shared reading to their own self-selected texts during independent reading. Note the intentional ways that the teacher has made each of these brief teaching opportunities meaningful by using specific teaching language and references to books that are *already* very familiar to the whole class.

Teachers can capitalize on opportunities to amplify learning by linking to an area of focus throughout independent reading, but they should not do this at the expense of:

- neglecting more pressing needs of individual readers; or
- missing opportunities to build and expand upon the enduring understandings and conceptual understanding of their students.

## Linking Independent Reading to Elements of the Literacy Block and to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

### Whole Class Link

**Standard(s):**

1.RI.KI.7

Use the illustrations to describe key ideas in a text.

Use illustrations in a text to describe its characters.

**Area of Focus:** Use illustrations to help you understand more about your book.

**Texts and Examples from Prior Learning:**

*If You Decide to Go to the Moon* by Faith McNulty

Use the illustrations and the text to describe how space looks.

*Moon Rooster* by David and Phillis Gershator

What does the illustrator show Moon Rooster doing in his dream?

**Linking Language That Connect to Prior Learning**

“As you read books with illustrations today, I want you to think about how illustrations help you to understand more.” (*Open book to a page with a rich illustration.*)

“Remember when we read *If You Decide to Go to the Moon* by Faith McNulty during interactive read aloud and we discussed how you can study the illustrations carefully to learn about space? What could we learn from this illustration?” (*Take a response.*)

(*Open Moon Rooster*)

“And remember how in the interactive read aloud text, *Moon Rooster*, we used the illustration to think about what Moon Rooster was doing in his dreams? What was he doing?” (*Take a response.*)

“Illustrations provide us with so much information, don’t they? If you are reading a book today that has illustrations, use them to help you understand more. I will check in with you during conferences and share time to find out how you are using illustrations to help you understand more.”

### Linking Language for Small Group Instruction or Conferences

**Teach:**

Look carefully at the illustration and think about what information it is giving you.

Look at the illustration to help you understand the setting.

Look at the illustration to help you understand this character’s feelings.

**Prompt:**

Was there a place today where an illustration really helped you understand more in this text? How?

What information does this illustration help you understand?

How did this illustration help you understand the setting?

How did this illustration help you understand the character’s feelings?

**Reinforce:**

I see that you are using the illustration to understand more about the book.

You used the illustration to help you understand more.

The illustration helped you understand the setting.

The illustration helped you understand the character’s feelings.

### Whole Class Share Links

**Share:** Turn and talk with a partner about how an illustration helped you understand more today. (Ask a few students to share what they discussed with their partner.)

**Summarize and Extend:** If there are illustrations in your book, use them to help you understand more.

## Linking Independent Reading to Elements of the Literacy Block and to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

### Whole Class Link

**Standard(s):**

- 1.RI.CS4  
Determine the meaning of words or phrases.  
Identify words or phrases that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

**Area of Focus:** Notice how the author makes a comparison in an interesting way to help you understand more.

**Texts and Examples from Prior Learning:**

Text and examples from interactive read aloud:

*Moon Rooster* by David and Phillis Gershator

What do they compare the moon to? Why do you think they use these words to describe the moon?

*My Stars* by Dina Anastasio

She calls the group of stars her friends and says that they come and go. What does that tell us about the stars?

**Linking Language That Connect to Prior Learning**

"Sometimes authors make comparisons to help us understand more. Let me remind you what I mean by looking at an example from an interactive read aloud that we loved, *Moon Rooster*." (*Open book to a page where the moon is compared to an egg.*)

"Remember when we read *Moon Rooster* and the author compared the moon to an egg. How did that help us understand more about the moon?" (*Take a response.*)

"And then we also noticed a comparison in our shared reading book, *My Stars*. On this page, the author calls the group of stars her friends and says that they come and go. How does that help us understand more about the stars and about how the girl feels about the stars?" (*Take a response.*)

"As you read your independent books today, notice if the authors make any interesting comparisons that help you understand more. I will be checking in with you in conferences and share time to find out what you're noticing about comparisons in your own books."

### Linking Language for Small Group Instruction or Conferences

**Teach:**

When an author uses a comparison, it helps you understand more about a new idea by showing you how it is like something you already know about.

**Prompt:**

How does that comparison help you understand more?

What do you know about \_\_\_? How does that comparison help you understand \_\_\_?

**Reinforce:**

The author helped you learn more about \_\_\_ by comparing it to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Whole Class Share Links

**Share:** "I had a chance to confer with \_\_\_\_\_ today. He/she found an interesting comparison in his/her book that he/she would like to share with all of you." (*\_\_\_ shares and explains thinking*)

**Summarize and extend:** "If you come across a comparison in a book, think about what the author wanted you to understand more about something by comparing it to something else."



## Notes

How will the links the teacher makes to elements of the literacy block make this teaching time powerful and brief?

How will the teacher's language before, during, and after independent reading time support students in strengthening their reading process?

## Synthesis

What are your most important takeaways from this module?

## Closing Words

When you give your students the chance to practice and strengthen their reading skills on high-quality, high-interest books that they can read with confidence and accuracy, they will make progress—in fact, studies have shown that independent reading is the best way to get students to make gains...Conferring with students, keeping their reading on track, setting goals, making ongoing assessments—when teachers do all of that, they can turn students who know how to read into readers.

(Serravallo, 2012, p. 29)

# Module 3: Classroom Libraries for Independent Reading

## Objectives

- Identify the qualities of a classroom library that support independent reading
- Understand how teaching students to choose books they can read with understanding and fluency leads to more effective independent reading

## Link to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Independent reading focuses on **Reading** and **Foundational Literacy** standards, while incorporating additional **Writing** and **Speaking & Listening** Standards through responding, conferring, and tasks.

## TEAM Connection

- Standards and Objectives
- **Motivating Students**
- **Activities and Materials**
- Feedback
- **Teacher Knowledge of Students**

# The Power of the Library

Libraries should be the hub of the effective literacy classroom. They are essential for young students to develop their reading identities and their knowledge-based and skills-based competencies. The following quotes describe public libraries but can easily be applied to well-stocked, organized, and inviting classroom libraries.

Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life.

—Sidney Sheldon, (Matthews, p. 207)

Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.

—Laura Welch Bush, (Harvey, p. 3.)

Here was one place where I could find out who I was and what I was going to become.

—Jerzy Kosinski, (Griliches, p. 129)

The love of libraries, like most loves, must be learned.

—Alberto Manguel, (Manguel, p. 4)

## Notes

# Creating a Classroom Library

People who love reading delight in the opportunity to browse their local bookstore. It is a cozy, inviting space that fosters exploration, discovery, and a love of books. A high-quality classroom library mirrors the bookstore experience in many ways.

## Quality and Variety

The classroom library becomes a classroom hub when the teacher helps to build excitement and joy for reading. The community of readers discusses favorite texts and beloved authors and illustrators. Students are given opportunities to participate in a culture where books (and other devices for reading) are valued and cherished. Some ways that teachers can develop this culture include:

- filling the shelves with beautiful, high-quality texts;
- incorporating recently published texts;
- providing a full range of genres in both hardcover, paperback, and digital formats;
- providing a range of text difficulty to meet the developmental phases of all readers in the class;
- highlighting topics of interest, series books students are reading, and characters they know from other books;
- creating special displays for favorite and recommended books; and
- incorporating ways to access multi-modal digital texts on tablets and computers.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Filling your library with high-quality, beautiful books is not enough. Collections must encompass the diverse experiences of people in the school community and around the world, including diverse representations of race, gender, and class.

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.

(Bishop, 1990, p. ix)

All students benefit when they have opportunities to learn more about themselves, their neighbors, and the global community through reading. Books have the power to open hearts and minds and to build empathy, self-esteem, and knowledge.

## **Text Complexity**

One of the most important characteristics of a library that supports independent reading is its inclusion of texts that are appropriately complex for the readers in that classroom.

Students need the opportunity to read complex texts. Complex texts are texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor aligned with grade level expectations. The complex texts selected should represent a range of narrative and informational genres to support students' development of knowledge and vocabulary. Providing students with access to complex texts generates opportunities to stretch students' literacy skills while simultaneously building their world knowledge and vocabulary.

*(Teaching Literacy in Tennessee, 2017, p. 7)*

Since complexity is a relative term, teachers must consider the range of reading abilities in the classroom. As the readers change over time, the texts in the classroom library are adjusted to make sure texts are both accessible and rigorous.

## **Connections to Standards and Curriculum**

Independent reading provides many opportunities for students to work toward meeting the Tennessee Academic Standards. During independent reading, students are able to apply the skills-based and knowledge-based competencies that are being developed during other elements of the literacy block to their self-selected texts.

In addition, having access to a library allows students to extend their learning as they explore different genres and concepts that interest them. For example, when a unit of study has ended but the teacher knows that students were hungry to dive deeper into the content, she may collect a range of related texts and make them available to students for a period of time. Teachers can make these opportunities for pursuing inquiry clear to students by displaying books that connect to areas of study in science, social studies, and math. Text sets used for work with small heterogeneous inquiry groups might be featured in the library as well.

## **Book Quantity**

In order to get the right books in the hands of students, teachers need **lots** of books in the classroom library. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) recommend between 300 and 600 titles while the International Reading Association (2000) recommends seven books per student.

Each year, books will need to be added to replace those that have become worn out and to keep the library stocked with current titles. If resources are available, tablets can store large quantities of electronic and multi-modal texts. Care must be taken in curating this collection so that students can independently locate the most current texts available.

There are many ways teachers can work to get new books for their libraries to replace or add to what they already have (see appendix). Creating, maintaining, and improving the classroom library is a long-term and continuous task.

## **Organization**

In order for students to read independently, they must be able to find the books they want to read in the library and then return books with ease. There is no perfect system for organizing books in a library, but it is critical that teachers develop a system that works for their own classroom community.

Within one classroom library, teachers might group books by author, illustrator, genre, series, concept, and topic. It is critical for students to understand through explanation or through inquiry how each of the books in a certain bin are connected to the others in that bin. Teachers can share this information with students or use inquiry to include students in noticing what is similar about a group of books in a specific bin. Each bin should be clearly labeled, using pictures or words or both, so that students can independently and purposefully search for texts.

Some teachers use a sticker system to keep books organized in their classroom libraries. A colored sticker is placed on each book in a bin with a corresponding sticker placed on the front of the bin. Students can simply match the stickers on the book and the bin to return books to their proper place with the cover facing outward, so the next person can find what they are looking for.

There is no need to group books by level of difficulty, as students will not select books for independent reading based on the level. Many younger children will enjoy reading books previously read during interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading. These children will also need support choosing books that they can read independently. Teachers may want to create “browsing boxes” filled with books previously read during small group reading instruction. If access to the texts that students have read during small group instruction is limited, teachers may want to create bins for each reading group with books that they know the readers will be able to read independently. Students are then taught that they can select books chosen for their small group from a specific bin. It will be important for these boxes to be frequently refreshed with new titles as each group of readers becomes more and more proficient over time.



## Classroom Libraries Across the Grades

### Kindergarten



### First Grade



### Second Grade



### Third Grade



**Notes**

What implementation challenges around classroom libraries do you anticipate in your school or district?

# How to Assess the Classroom Library

Classroom library inventories or checklists can be helpful for teachers to use when evaluating their classroom libraries and creating “wish lists” or for making plans for adding more books. Refer to “Assessing the Classroom Library” form below. How might this inventory help teachers in assessing their classroom libraries for quality, quantity, and variety?

Assessing the Classroom Library								
Grade Level:	Picture Books		Chapter Books		Poetry Books		Graphic Texts	
	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction
Formats								
Grade-Level-Appropriate Genres (List)								
Appropriately Complex Texts								
Content Related to TN Academic Standards (List)								
Diversity (broad range of representations of race, ethnicity, class, gender)								
Digital Media (e-books, tablets, computers)								

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2006)

## **Video Example: Teaching Second Graders How to Select a Text**

Watch a teacher introduce the class library with a group of second graders at the beginning of the school year.

### **Notes**

What makes this conversation effective?

What other ways might teachers help students begin to understand how to choose an appropriate book that they will enjoy reading?

# Choosing Books

The ability to select appropriate books for independent reading is something students will need to be taught. Once a classroom library is organized and prepared for use, brief, explicit lessons can support students in looking at and selecting books that are readable, interesting, and engaging.

Readers need to be explicitly taught how to find books that they will understand and enjoy either from the classroom library or elsewhere. It is not advised to organize a classroom library by any type of text leveling system (from A-Z or across Lexile levels for example). Leveling systems are designed to be professional tools for teachers and “when we restrict kids to reading on a specific level, we’re really restricting their opportunities... The truth is that children can read books on a wide variety of levels, and in fact, they experience many different levels of books across the day” (Fountas & Pinnell, quoted in Parrott, 2017).

Students can be taught to ask themselves four very simple questions when it comes to choosing books:

- Am I interested in the book?
- Can I read it with understanding?
- Does the book give me something to think and talk about?
- Might it give me opportunities to practice what I’ve been learning how to do as a reader?

(Miller & Moss, 2013)

It is the teacher’s responsibility to help students understand that a “balanced diet” of reading material is as important to the health and vitality of growing readers as a “balanced diet” of wholesome and delicious foods is for nourishing healthy bodies. While tubs of texts provide an important organizing structure for locating and returning texts, students need explicit guidance in order to self-select books that provide opportunities to amplify and expand their enjoyment of reading, their strategic thinking abilities, and their understanding of key concepts. Teachers can build on what they know about each student’s tastes and interests to help them discover new authors, topics, publishers, and series.

Over time, teachers will want to help expand their students’ abilities to find books they want to read by considering a variety of factors. Teachers might want to provide explicit guidance about how to help students consider:

- if the title, topic, or kind of story interests them;
- if the illustrations make them want to read the book;
- if they already know something about the book, have read it before, or heard about it from someone else (Is it a sequel to a book they have read, or has someone else recommended the book to them?);
- what they expect of the book based on the title and illustration on the front cover;
- what other people say about the book on the back cover to consider if they would they like it for the same reasons others do;

- how to read the inside front and back cover for any interesting information about the author and/or illustrator to notice if he or she has written other books that they have enjoyed;
- how to read a little from the beginning and the middle of the book, and how to ask themselves:
  - Can you read all the words?
  - Does it feel easy to read with just a few challenges?
  - Can you understand what you are reading?
  - Do you want to keep reading it?
- if the book is easy to read when they can read all or nearly all of the words and understand what they are reading;
- if the book is appropriate when they can read it smoothly with understanding, perhaps slowing down in a couple places to solve words or think about the meaning; and
- if the book is best saved for a later date when too many of the words or the content is too challenging to make the reading experience meaningful and enjoyable.

Along with explicit instruction, anchor charts support students in taking on these independent reading behaviors over time. As they learn to navigate their classroom library effectively, students develop the real-world skills that they will need to sustain a reading life outside of the classroom. Throughout the years, readers require continued teaching as they choose books, in order to help them bring attention “to their self-knowledge as readers, their interests, and the genres they are exploring” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 1).

When introducing the classroom library to students, teachers will want to include the policy for taking books home, whether it is used school-wide or designed specifically to meet the needs of the classroom community. Many students will not have an extensive home library, so the classroom library can be a primary source of books for their independent reading, both in school and out of school. It will be necessary to teach the routines for taking books home and bringing them back, to ensure that students will always have a supply of books available to read during independent reading time.

# How to Introduce Students to the Classroom Library

The library can be introduced gradually, especially to very young readers, with new bins of books intentionally added over time. Book reviews and author posters can be displayed around the classroom library to direct attention to various books and authors across the year. Book talks can help get students excited about reading books they may have otherwise missed.

<b>Introducing the Classroom Library and Supporting the Self-selection of Texts for Independent Reading</b>	
<b>Organizational Systems to Develop</b>	<b>Routines and Procedures to Teach to Students to Use the Library and How to Select Texts</b>

Create a brief whole group lesson (suggested time is 3 – 5 minutes in length) for teaching students how to choose books.

**Lesson Plan: How to Choose a Book from the Classroom Library**

Grade Level \_\_\_\_

What are some important points to remember when coaching teachers around this topic?



# Book Talks

Book talks are another way to introduce students to new texts, authors, illustrators, topics, or genres they might otherwise miss. They can be a great way of motivating reluctant readers. In the beginning, teachers model and provide book talks as brief “commercials” for a book. They can last one or two minutes, briefly highlighting big ideas of the book—enough to whet students’ appetites and make them want to read the book independently.

A good book talk might include:

- stating the title and author;
- showing the front cover and some illustrations (as applicable);
- reading aloud the lead or an exciting part of the book;
- providing a “cliffhanger;”
- connecting the book to students’ lives;
- asking questions;
- giving a brief summary of the book;
- connecting the book to other books the students are reading;
- telling a little about the plot or character(s); and
- sharing your own response to the book.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

## Book Talk Examples

### **Book Talk for *Magic Treehouse #1 Dinosaurs Before Dark***

Many of you have been reading chapter books during independent reading, so I wanted to tell you about this great series of books that we have in our classroom library. In this first book of the Magic Treehouse series, Jack and Annie go out into their backyard one day and find a treehouse has mysteriously appeared high up at the top of a tree. This treehouse is pretty magical, so when Annie heads up the long rope ladder, Jack follows after her. Before they know it, they are whisked away and find themselves in the days of the dinosaurs. You’ll want to read this book, *Dinosaurs Before Dark*, to find out if Jack and Annie figure out how to get home before they are discovered and hunted by dinosaurs. If you like reading about their adventures, you’re in luck, because there are many more books in the *Magic Treehouse* series that I think you will really enjoy.

### **Book Talk for *Richard Wright and the Library Card***

We have spent a lot of time thinking about biographies during social studies over the last few weeks. I wanted to tell you about a book today that I think you will be very interested in reading. It’s a story about a real person who actually lived here in the state of Tennessee. His name was Richard Wright and he loved to listen to the stories his mother and grandfather told him. He wanted to learn to read but wasn’t able to go to school because his family moved around a lot so his mother taught him. His family was too poor to buy books though, and because of the unfair rules that prevented black people from having a lot of the privileges that white people had, he was not able to go to the public library. As you read this book, you will find out how Richard was able to get books. You’ll also read about all the great works of literature that he loved and how they inspired him for the rest of his life.

## Notes on Book Talks

## Discuss

How does giving and listening to book talks help students form a community of readers and develop independence?

**Practice**

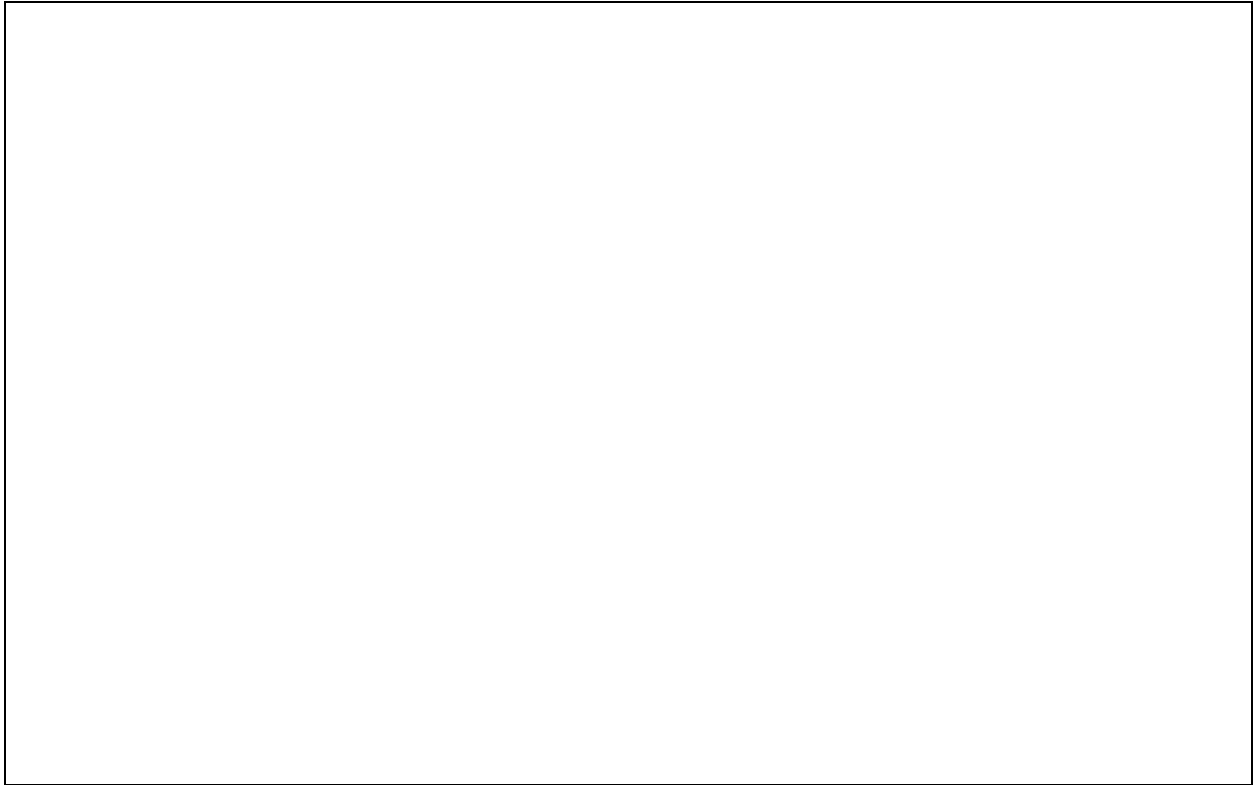
Create a book talk for a favorite book (for adults or children) to share with a partner.

What made these book talks effective?

# Synthesis

Independent readers without access to a high-quality classroom library are like \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_.

## Notes



# Closing Words

When it comes to independent reading, children need to make choices that reflect the way they see themselves as literate people, the way people do in real life.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 2)

# Module 4: Using Readers' Notebooks During Independent Reading

## Objectives

- Define the reader's notebook as a space to respond to texts and a tool that can foster students' identities as readers
- Identify the procedures and routines that support independent use of the reader's notebook
- Explore how the reader's notebook provides teachers access to valuable, ongoing assessment information and teaching opportunities

## Link to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Independent reading focuses on **Reading** and **Foundational Literacy** standards, while incorporating additional **Writing** and **Speaking & Listening** Standards through responding, conferring, and tasks.

## TEAM Connection

- Standards and Objectives
- **Motivating Students**
- Activities and Materials
- **Feedback**
- Teacher Knowledge of Students

# What is a reader's notebook?

## **A Record of a Reader's Thinking**

Reading is thinking. During interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading, students have opportunities to learn more about the ways readers think—within, beyond, and about texts. These instructional contexts allow readers to expand their processing systems and their oral language.

Readers' notebooks provide a place where students experiment with independently moving from thinking and talking about texts to making meaning through their own drawing and writing. As discussed extensively in previous semesters, writing about reading is much more than an accountability measure to check understanding. Readers talk and write about their reading in order to:

- reflect on the text in a focused way;
- reconstruct the meaning and present it in new ways;
- compose language or images to express thought;
- search the text for evidence to support their thinking; and
- explore new thinking or reflect on understanding.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2006)

Readers' notebooks become a cherished, dedicated space for students to record their new understandings and ideas about the texts they read each day. They serve a very different purpose than writers' notebooks. Writers' notebooks are used as a place for students to record and/or practice their ideas or "seeds" for writing, build their writing stamina, and help develop their identities as writers. Readers' notebooks are used to capture the thinking that a student does as a reader and help to foster students' identities as readers.

## **Essential Characteristics of a Reader's Notebook**

Readers' notebooks can be as simple as blank pages of paper that are stapled together with a cover, lined or unlined marble composition books, or more formal notebooks created for the purpose. The notebooks might be digital spaces students can access on a daily basis during the school day. Whatever the format, the readers' notebooks must be durable and accessible for daily use.

Students can be taught how to divide their notebooks into different sections to meet a variety of purposes and goals. They may create an "All About Me" section that helps them to connect their interests and experiences with book selections. A reading list might be introduced to ensure that readers are reading a variety of text types. The list may include the titles of books they have read with the author, genre, date finished, and indication if the book was easy, challenging, or too difficult to read. Teachers may want to reserve this kind of list for more fluent writers, as this type of work might be challenging for young writers. Teachers may want to provide younger students with a notebook that is already organized into sections.

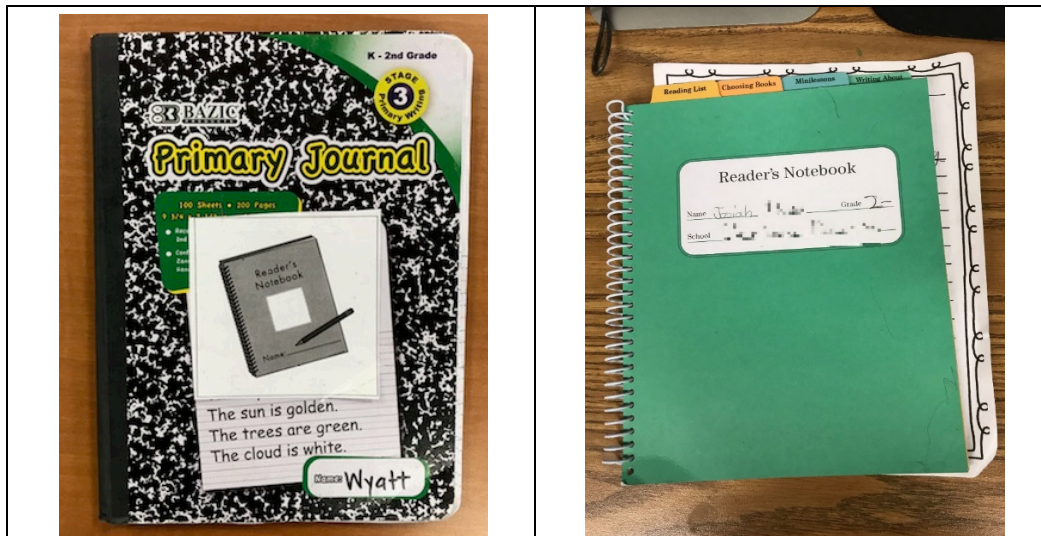
Other sections to put in the notebook include a place for students to record lesson links that they may reference as they write and another section to record new information and questions they have about topics and concepts of interest. The largest section of the notebook will be a devoted place for students to record their written responses to text and is typically labeled as the “writing about reading” section.

It’s important to note that even if the notebook comes with a “ready-to-use” organizational structure, all students require instruction and modeling in order to be able to use their notebooks effectively.

Over time, teachers can share a variety of resources with students that they can staple or glue into the notebooks to support independent reading. These resources might include the following:

- guidelines or rules for how to work independently;
- a list of genres and a description of each;
- tips for choosing books;
- directions for giving book talks;
- a place to record a list of books that the student wants to read;
- a list of high-frequency words;
- a letter chart (kindergarten and grade 1); and
- tabs to indicate the different sections of the notebook.

All readers’ notebooks contain multiple entries, assembled together, and created over time. They may look different from school to school or classroom to classroom, but these notebooks are an essential tool for independent reading.





# Why use a reader's notebook during independent reading?

## A Personal and Powerful Tool for Readers

A reader's notebook is a "powerful tool for supporting reading during the year, helping students organize their thinking and collect it in one place" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 340). These notebooks serve as a record of a student's thinking as a reader and how that thinking expands and changes over time. They are filled with written notes and feedback from teachers. They are a place for dialogue between the readers and themselves and between the reader and their teacher. Readers' notebooks can also serve as a resource when readers discuss their thinking with peers. This distinguishes them profoundly from throwaway worksheets that are completed and discarded.

## Supporting the Home-School Connection

Matching texts to readers can be a daunting task for parents. According to a survey of more than 2700 parents and children and families, 57% of "Infrequent readers" (kids ages 6-17 that read less than four times per week for enjoyment) report that they have trouble finding books they like, compared to 26% of frequent readers. (Scholastic, 2017). In the same survey, parents of infrequent readers were also more likely to report that they need help finding books their child will like (Scholastic, 2017). Many parents are not familiar with children's literature, and most parents do not understand how to analyze the demands of texts. This can make finding books that are appealing and appropriate very challenging.

Because the reader's notebook is such a personal tool for readers, it provides a window into the reading life of each student. Teachers can analyze notebooks to notice trends in tastes and preferences and share this useful information with parents. Although it is important that readers' notebooks remain in the classroom, they provide a rich source of data that can be used to support independent reading at home and during the summer.

## Genres and Forms

Students may respond to reading in their readers' notebooks using a variety of genres and forms. Of course, they must first learn about potential options before being expected to use them. As students respond to texts through modeled, shared, and interactive writing with the support of their teacher and peers, they develop a repertoire of ways to respond more effectively to the texts that they are reading independently. There is an expectation that over time they will use this growing menu of options to write about increasingly complex texts, in increasingly complex ways.

Recall the chart below from Semester 4. During independent writing, students may, on occasion, be assigned a specific way to respond to texts depending on requirements of the daily task. For example, after spending time co-constructing a new way of responding to a common text by using modeled, shared, or interactive writing, the teacher may ask students to use the modeled genre or form to independently respond to a different text in their notebook.

Other days, students may choose a familiar genre or form that suits their purpose for writing. The goal is that over time, and with effective modeling, students become familiar with many ways of responding and learn how to match their purpose for writing with an appropriate genre and form. Ultimately, students build a repertoire of ways to respond to text and self-select the genre and form based on their intended purpose.

Examples of Genres and Forms for Responding to Reading				
Tennessee Writing Standard	Kindergarten	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three
<p><b>1. Write opinion pieces</b> to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lists</b> of favorite: authors, books, characters, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Drawings</b> representing favorite: parts of a story, characters, books, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> giving an opinion about a text, topic, author, illustrator, character, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Simple letters</b> to other students, classes giving opinions about a text, author, character, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lists</b> of favorite: authors, books, characters, topics, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> stating an opinion about a text, topic, author, illustrator, or character, supplying reasons and a sense of closure</li> <li>• <b>Simple letters</b> to other students, classes or authors and illustrators stating an opinion about a text, topic, author, illustrator, or character, supplying reasons and a sense of closure</li> <li>• <b>Book recommendations</b> stating an opinion about a text, topic, author, illustrator, or character, supplying reasons for the opinion and providing a sense of closure</li> <li>• <b>Posters</b> about a text or topic that tell about it in a persuasive way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letters</b> to authors, illustrators, other students, teacher (including those in reader's notebooks) stating opinions about a topic/text, reasons to support the opinion and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Sentences</b> stating an opinion about a topic/text, reasons to support the opinion and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Book recommendations</b> that introduce the text, state an opinion, supply reasons to support the opinion and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Essays</b> stating an opinion about a topic or text, reasons to support the opinion, and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Posters</b> about a text or topic that illustrate (in pictures and words) an opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letters</b> to authors, illustrators, other students, teacher, stating opinions about a topic/text, reasons that support the opinion, and a concluding statement</li> <li>• <b>Book recommendations</b> stating opinions about a topic/text, reasons that support the opinion, and a concluding statement</li> <li>• <b>Essays</b> stating an opinion about a topic or text, reasons to support the opinion, and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Posters</b> about a text or topic reasons to support the opinion, and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Longer responses</b> in reader's notebooks that expand on an opinion from notes, short write, or graphic organizers</li> </ul>

Examples of Genres and Forms for Responding to Reading				
Tennessee Writing Standard	Kindergarten	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three
<p><b>2. Write informative/explanatory texts</b> to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawings with labels</b> related to information from text</li> <li>• <b>Lists</b> of facts from a text</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> of information from a text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawings with labels</b> that show information from text</li> <li>• <b>Lists</b> of facts from a text with illustrations</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> and/or drawings that name a topic, tell facts about the topic and provide closure</li> <li>• <b>Summaries</b> of what was learned from a text with headings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawings with labels</b> representing information from a text to serve as reminders for later use in discussion or writing</li> <li>• <b>Notes</b> recording information from a text on sticky notes or in readers' notebooks as reminders for later use in discussion on writing</li> <li>• <b>Webs or grids</b> showing connection of information within or across texts</li> <li>• <b>Short reports</b> of interesting information from a text that introduce a topic, provide facts and a conclusion</li> <li>• <b>Lists of facts</b> from a text with illustrations</li> <li>• <b>Summaries</b> of what was learned from a text with headings to organize facts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Notes</b> recording information from a text related to a topic(s) on sticky notes or in readers' notebooks as reminders for later use in discussion on writing</li> <li>• <b>List</b> of facts from a text supported with illustrations</li> <li>• <b>Reports</b> of information about a topic from a text (or texts) including illustrations, precise language, organizational tools, (table of contents, headings, subheadings, title) and glossary, index, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Outline</b> of main ideas and details of a text</li> </ul>

Examples of Genres and Forms for Responding to Reading				
Tennessee Writing Standard	Kindergarten	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three
<p><b>3. Write narratives</b> to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawings</b> that show an important event or events in a text</li> <li>• <b>Innovations on texts:</b> new ending, variation on aspects of the text</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> telling important events in a text</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> summarizing a text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawings</b> of events or characters of a text (with details to show actions, thoughts, and feelings) in sequential order</li> <li>• <b>Notes</b> about events, characters in a story for later use</li> <li>• <b>Charts</b> or drawings to show sequence of events (with details to show actions, thoughts, and feelings)</li> <li>• <b>Two column charts</b> to compare (characters, versions of story, settings, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Webs</b> with character traits attached</li> <li>• <b>Innovations on texts:</b> new ending, variation on aspects of the text</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> telling sequence of events in a text</li> <li>• <b>Short sentences</b> summarizing a text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Notes</b> about events, setting, characters, words, etc.) from a story on sticky notes or in readers' notebooks as reminders for later use in discussion on writing</li> <li>• <b>Story maps</b> including title, author, setting, plot (in time order), characters, problem, and solution</li> <li>• <b>Two column charts</b> to compare (characters, versions of story, settings, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Webs</b> with character traits, events, etc. attached</li> <li>• <b>Sentences</b> summarizing a text including topic, theme, or message</li> <li>• <b>Charts or drawings</b> to show sequence of events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Notes</b> about events, setting, characters, words, etc. on sticky notes or in readers' notebooks as reminders for later use in discussion on writing</li> <li>• <b>Two column charts</b> comparing elements of texts</li> <li>• <b>Plot summaries</b> with a statement of the central topic, theme, or message of a text</li> <li>• <b>Scripts</b> for readers' theatre</li> <li>• <b>Cartoons or comics</b> presenting a story or information</li> <li>• <b>Story maps</b> (with title, author, setting, etc.) or timelines illustrating event sequences</li> <li>• <b>Storyboards</b> that include the most important events of a text in sequential order</li> </ul>

**Discuss**

How do readers' notebooks support students in developing their reading identity?

What have you noticed about how modeled, shared, and interactive writing are already supporting writers in purposefully incorporating new genres and forms into their independent responses to texts in your school or district?

What further support do the teachers in your school or district need around using modeled, shared, and interactive writing to teach students how to respond to texts?

# How to Use a Reader's Notebook

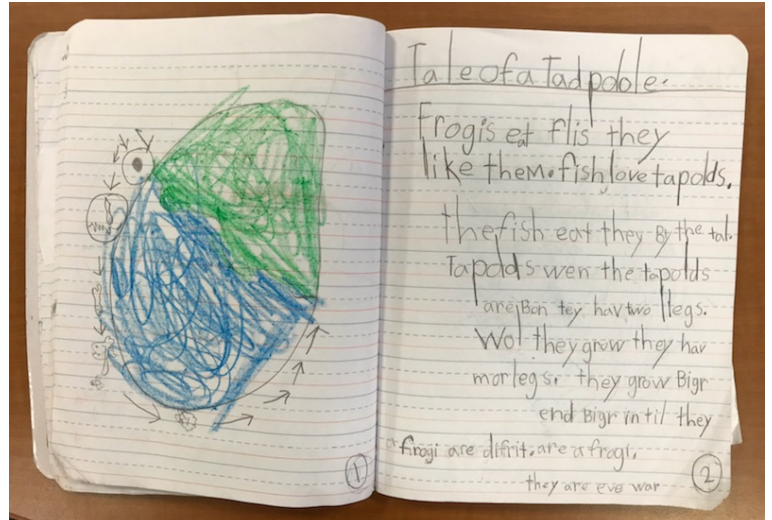
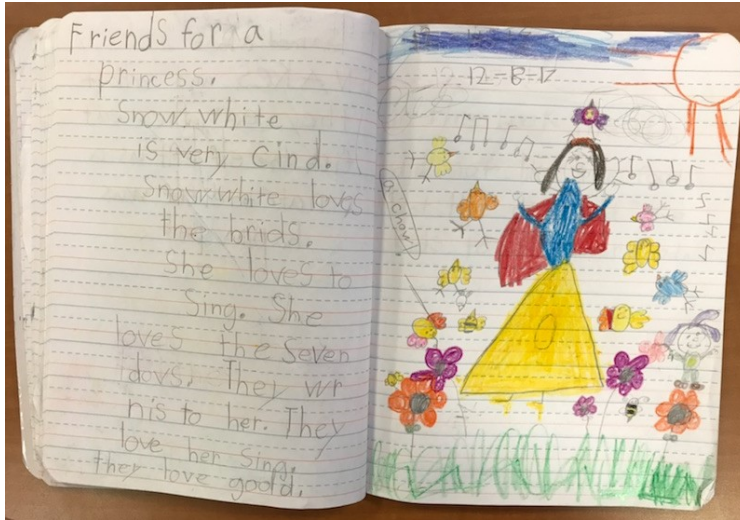
Studies of highly effective teachers who implemented independent reading revealed some common patterns of independent reading practice. These teachers created student accountability for reading through written responses in a variety of forms and genres related to the text (Miller and Moss, 2013).

## Ways of Responding

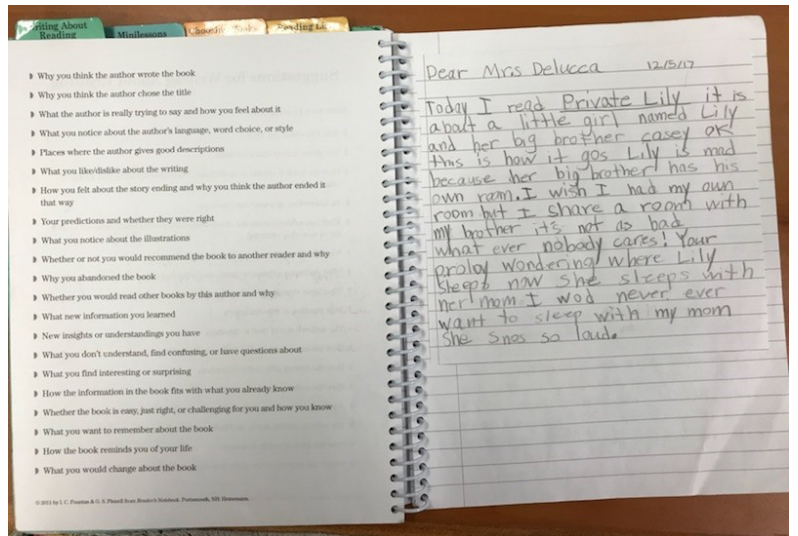
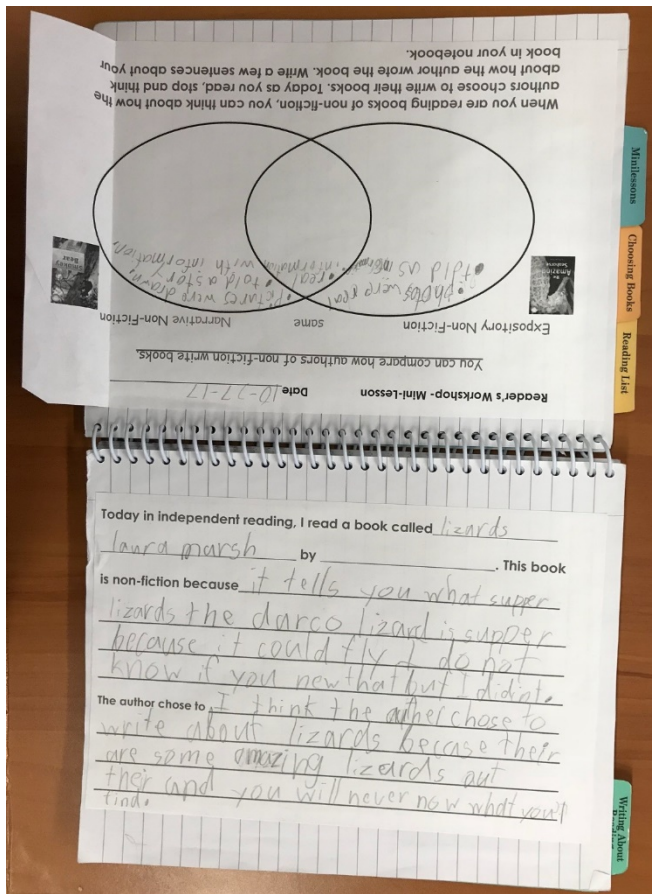
Kindergarten and first grade students often write or draw in response to independent texts or to texts they have heard read in interactive read aloud and shared reading in their notebooks. Teachers may want to consider using notebooks with blank pages. They communicate choice to students and provide plenty of room for students to write, or draw, or do both. Students can organize the response in a way that makes sense to them.

There are many ways for the youngest readers to respond to reading, including:

- comments inserted on sticky notes that are placed inside of the notebook;
- an illustration (with or without written comments);
- webs, lists, diagrams, or charts;
- a letter to the author, teacher, character, or another student;
- a paragraph or written summary; or
- a review or opinion of the text.



Samples from first grade students



Samples from second grade students

Second grade and third grade students may use notebooks with lined pages to respond in the ways listed above to any independent or shared text. By grades 2 and 3, letters between the teacher and the student comprise many entries in the reader's notebooks. Through letter writing, teachers and students create a written conversation that allows teachers to respond with authentic feedback, helping to confirm, challenge, and extend thinking. Students write for a specific audience, for a specific purpose, and must organize their thoughts and words for their audience. The first several letters that students attempt might be written about a common text that was read during interactive read aloud so there can be a whole group discussion about the variety and scope of acceptable responses to a text.

Whole class writing during modeled, shared, and interactive writing provides readers with a vision for the kind of writing they will be expected to include in their notebooks. Small duplicates of co-created anchor charts can also be glued into readers' notebooks as a model. Students need strong visual examples of high-quality responses, but they also need to understand that there is not one right answer or one way of responding to any given text.

### **Procedural and Notebook Management Lessons**

At the beginning of the school year (or as you are launching the use of readers' notebooks at any time during the year), students need explicit teaching about how to use their readers' notebooks. Teachers will need to instruct students on how to use the reader's notebook through a series of short, focused lessons that incorporate co-constructed writing (either modeled, shared, or interactive writing) to create a strong exemplar of what writing in a reader's notebook looks like. There will be several procedural lessons to teach before students write independently in their notebooks. You will find some listed on the chart below.

<b>Getting Started with Readers' Notebooks</b>		
<b>Goal of the Lesson</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
Readers use readers' notebooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can use a notebook to share your thinking about what you have read with teachers and friends.</li> <li>Responding to our reading helps us better understand what we have read.</li> <li>We keep track of what we have read and liked so we can find more books that they love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce sections of notebook (e.g., list of reading completed, tips for choosing books, or directions for giving book talks)</li> </ul>
Writing in your readers' notebooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We want our notebooks to last a long time, so we don't want to waste paper.</li> <li>We put our entries in order so that we can see how our thinking changes over the year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book title, date</li> <li>Using both sides of paper</li> <li>Beginning a new entry</li> </ul>
Where to find your notebooks and how to return them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to be able to find our notebooks quickly.</li> <li>We need to take care of our notebooks because they are important.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notebook storage and retrieval</li> </ul>



<b>Getting Started with Readers' Notebooks</b>		
<b>Goal of the Lesson</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Teaching</b>
Understanding and keeping track of your reading interests		
Keeping a record of your reading		
Using our modeled, shared, and interactive writing as models for your own writing		
Topics for writing		
Using sticky notes to prepare for writing		
Sharing entries with the whole group		
Sharing entries with friends		

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

## Takeaways

### **Lessons About How Readers Respond to Texts**

Initially, teachers must launch the use of readers' notebooks with lessons that support students with how to use and manage their notebooks effectively and independently. They might begin by demonstrating lessons and procedures included in the chart, "Getting Started with Readers' Notebooks." Later, brief whole group instructional time will ultimately focus on explicit links between the ways in which the students are thinking as readers across the elements of the literacy block and their individual responses to independent texts.

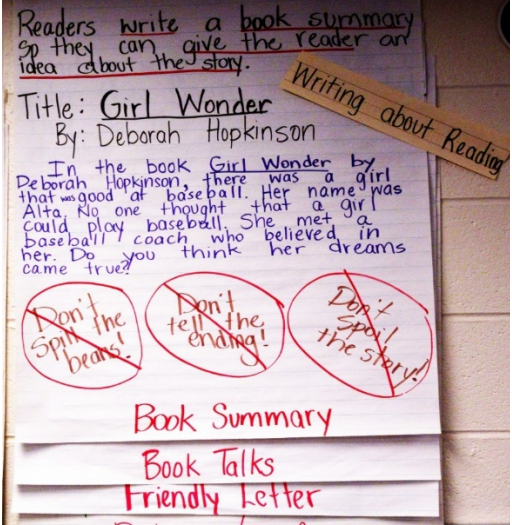
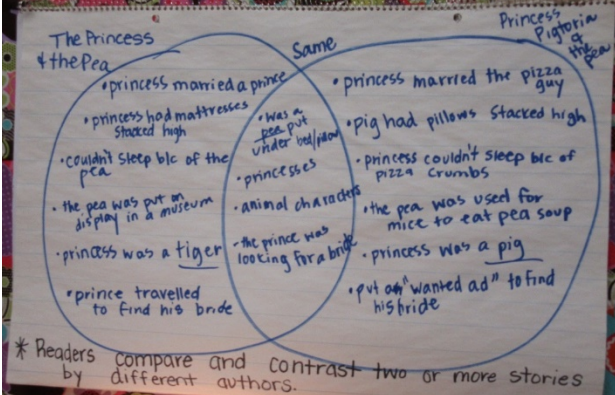
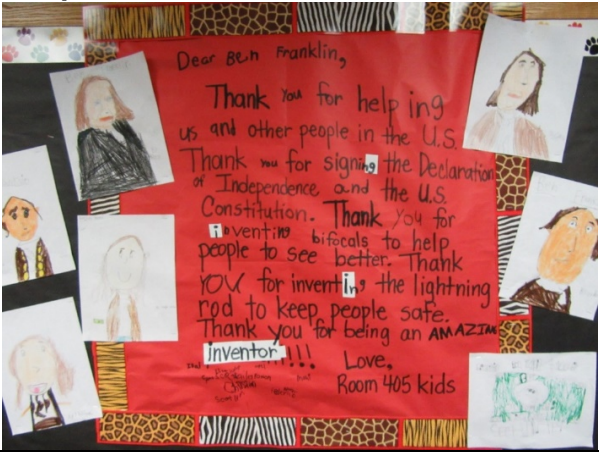
Once again, modeled, shared, and interactive writing lessons will provide examples of the kind of thinking that readers might choose to share in their notebooks. Teachers can create an enlarged whole class reader's notebook as a model. Eventually, they will co-create entries that might demonstrate the following ways to respond to text:

- summarize;
- discuss the characters' choices;
- discuss the characters' motivations;
- discuss how characters change;
- discuss or question the author's purpose;
- share an opinion with supporting reasons;
- show interest and enthusiasm for a topic;
- connect with characters and show empathy;
- celebrate beautiful language in books;
- notice how the text layout impacts the meaning;
- make predictions;
- ask for information or wonder about an author or illustrator;
- notice and comment on illustrations;
- refer back to previous entries;
- give examples from the text;
- quote the text;
- articulate the theme;

- compare books by the same author or illustrator;
- connect books to other books, movies, or TV shows;
- discuss the importance of the setting;
- discuss how the book fits or doesn't fit with genre expectations;
- recommend a book;
- explain why a book was abandoned;
- express opinions about facts or information learned;
- write about content from texts that reflects understandings of the key concepts from content area learning; or
- connect the information presented in informational texts to enduring understandings.

(adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, pp. 161–222)

The samples of co-created responses to common texts in the chart on the next page provide the visual anchors that readers need in order to apply their learning independently in their readers' notebooks. After a short lesson in which the anchor charts are created with the whole class (using modeled, shared, or interactive writing), they are displayed as exemplars for independent responses. They become part of a menu of ways to respond to texts in readers' notebooks that students can choose from based on the genre of the text they are reading and the thinking that they want to share. While most students will be able to take on these ways of responding with strong modeling, some students may require extra support from a teacher during an individual conference to try it out in their own writing.

Samples	TN ELA Standards Addressed	Behaviors and Understandings Evident
<p><b>Sample 1</b></p> 	<p>Reading: Informational Texts, Key Ideas and Details 2 - Determine the main idea of a text</p>	<p>Select and include appropriate and important details when writing a summary of a text</p> <p>Write about the larger messages on main ideas</p>
<p><b>Sample 2</b></p> 		
<p><b>Sample 3</b></p> 		

# How to Provide Feedback

## Teacher Feedback

When teachers regularly respond to readers, students get the message that their thinking is valued and taken seriously by their teacher. Feedback is also far more relevant when it is timely. Many teachers find it helpful to create a schedule for responding to readers' notebooks so students can work toward completing an entry before a certain date, and the teacher can systematically respond to all of the readers in her class.

For the youngest readers, feedback is best received via individual reading conferences. Although it is important to carefully review each reader's notebook on a weekly basis, teachers may only be able to schedule individual reading conferences every couple of weeks.

Second and third grade teachers may find it manageable to expect that students will complete one letter or other type of written response to their teacher each week and that they will receive a response in a timely manner. Many teachers divide their students into groups so that due dates are scattered throughout the week. The chart below illustrates the way a teacher might schedule their feedback cycle.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Letter Due to Teacher</b>	<b>Feedback Due to Student</b>
Group A	Monday	Wednesday
Group B	Tuesday	Thursday
Group C	Wednesday	Friday
Group D	Thursday	Monday
Group E	Friday	Tuesday

Written feedback to readers should:

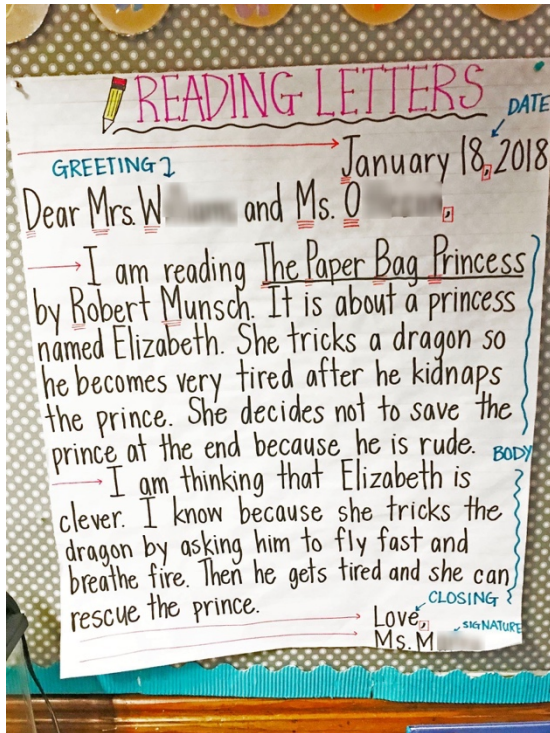
- Model correct form for a letter and sentence structure.
- Reinforce that students should be writing about their thinking, not only a summary of the book.
- Ask questions that require students to provide evidence or explain their thinking more.
- Make suggestions of other books the student might like or connect the text to other books that the student has read.

Whether teachers are providing written feedback or providing feedback during conferences, the interaction should feel like a conversation between readers. While it is easy to get distracted by spelling or letter formation errors, teachers will want to keep the feedback focused on supporting the student in thinking as a reader.

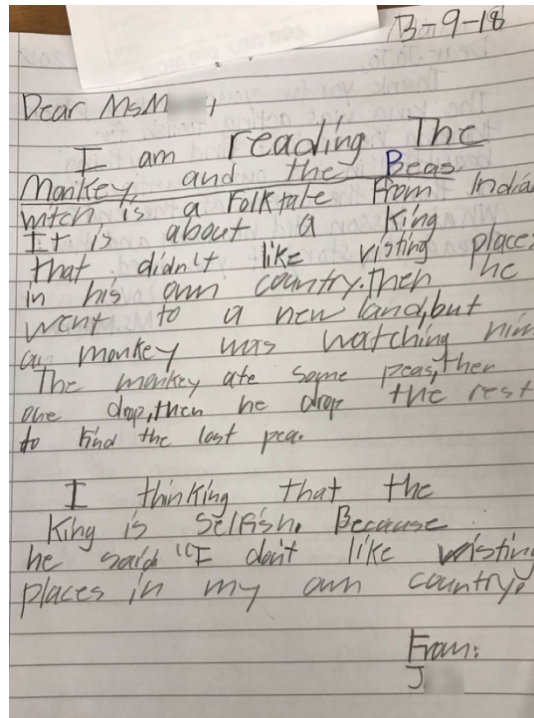
## From Co-construction to Independent Application to Teacher Feedback

The following pages contain artifacts from one second grade classroom led by two teachers, Ms. M and Ms. O. It illustrates how students utilized co-created anchor charts to respond to their independent texts. Examples of written feedback from the teachers are also included.

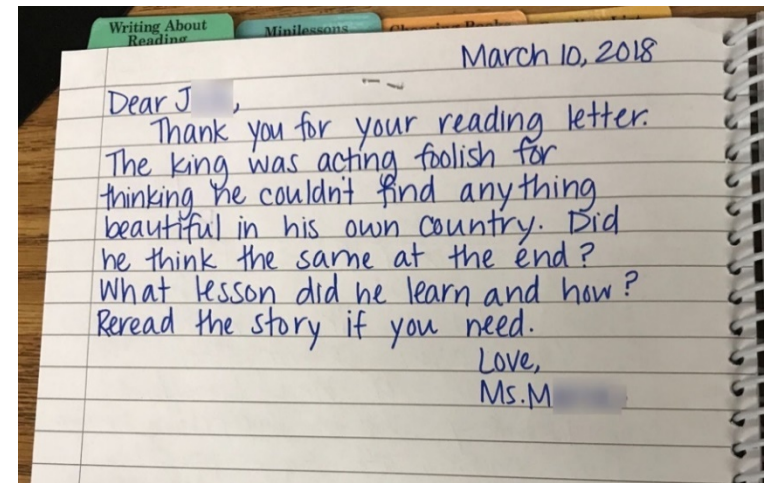
In January, Ms. M shared an exemplar letter with the class and they annotated it together, highlighting the most important features of this form (Figure 1). During the week following the lesson, she required students to write one letter about their independent texts because it was their introduction to this form of writing. The letter writing format was appealing to Joseph from the beginning. He appreciated the back-and-forth communication with his teacher and the freedom letter writing gave him to discuss his thinking about all of the books he was reading (Figure 2). As you can see in the dated example of teacher feedback in Figure 3, Joseph was choosing to use this form months after it was introduced.



**Figure 1: Co-constructed Anchor Chart**



**Figure 2: Independent Application**



**Figure 3: Teacher Feedback**

In her feedback, Ms. O supported the student in utilizing an anchor chart that was co-created during interactive read aloud to write more effectively about his independent text.

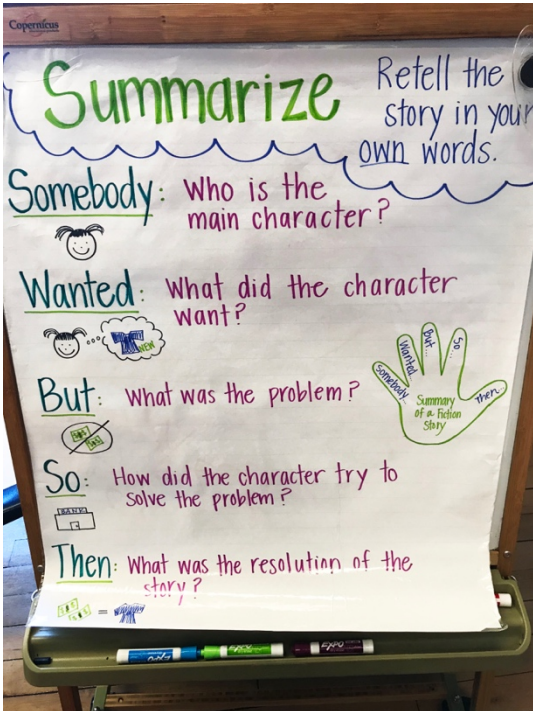


Figure 4: Co-constructed Anchor Chart

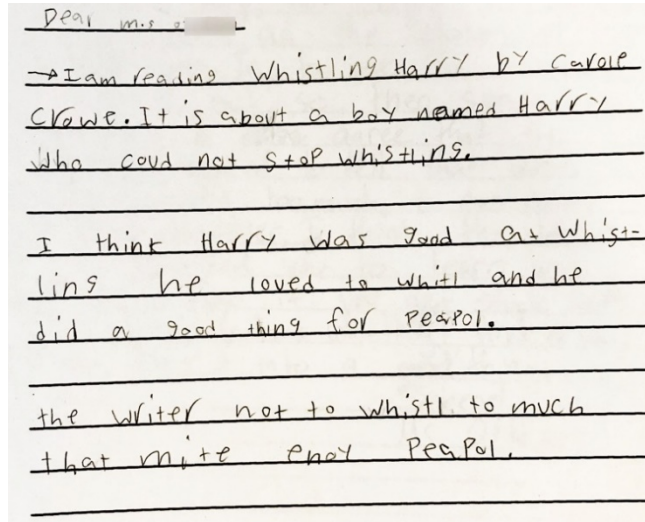


Figure 5: Independent Application

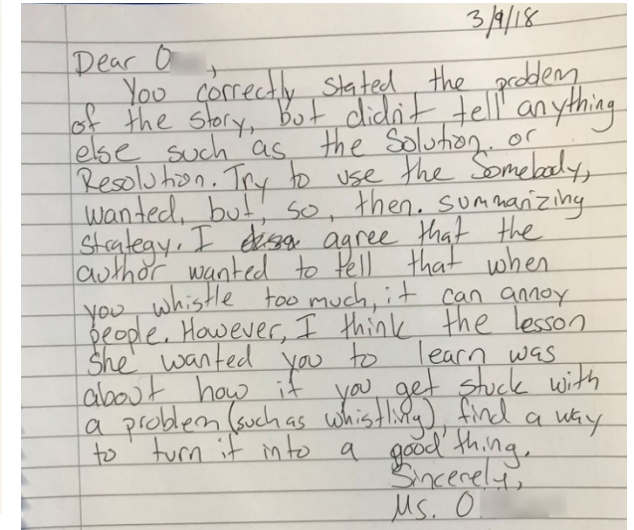


Figure 6: Teacher Feedback

In a lesson about the thinking that readers do, Ms. O created an anchor chart to share with her students (Figure 7). Then the class used shared writing to co-create a list of the ways readers might use sticky notes to keep track of their thinking as they read (Figure 8). Then, a student used the strategy of asking questions while she read. As she read, she placed the questions in her reader's notebook and answered them as she read more (Figure 9). Her teacher reinforced the use of this type of reading response (Figure 10).

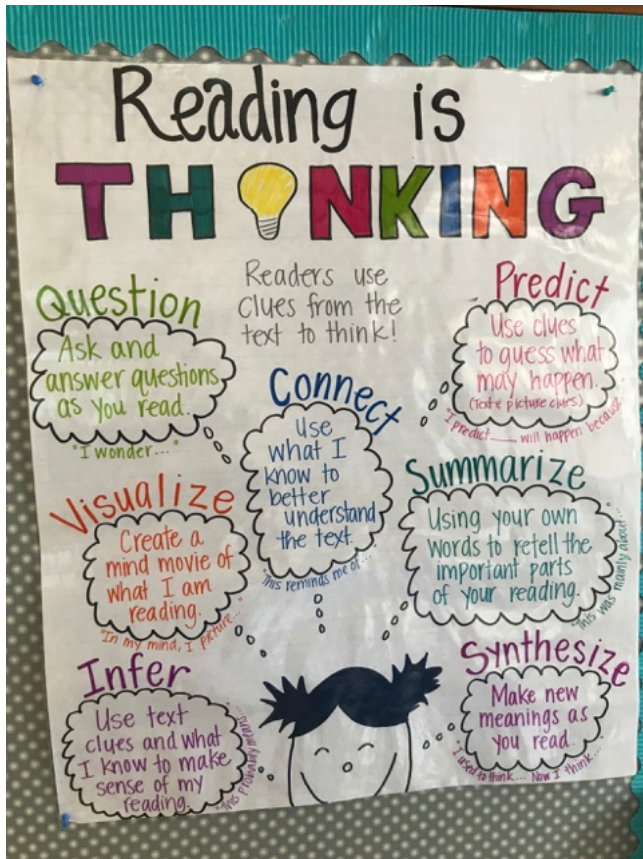
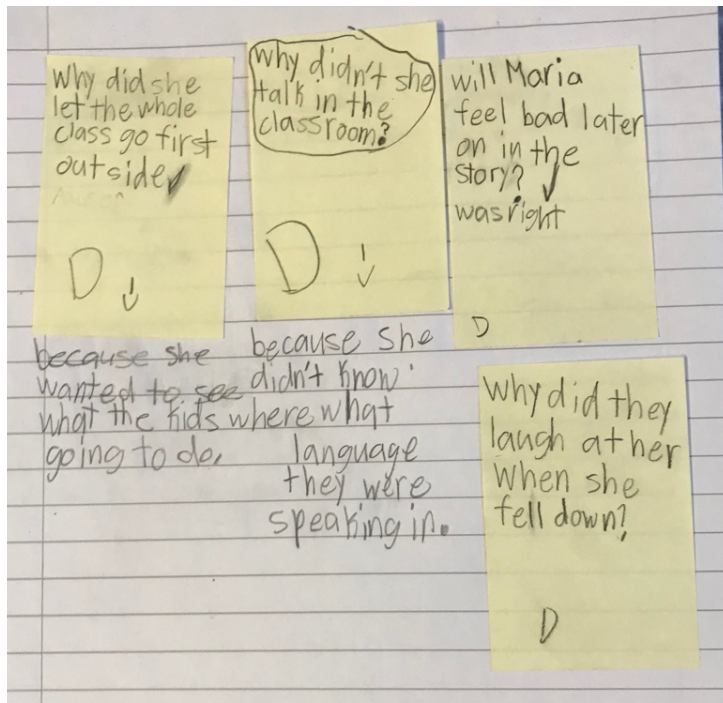


Figure 7: Anchor Chart

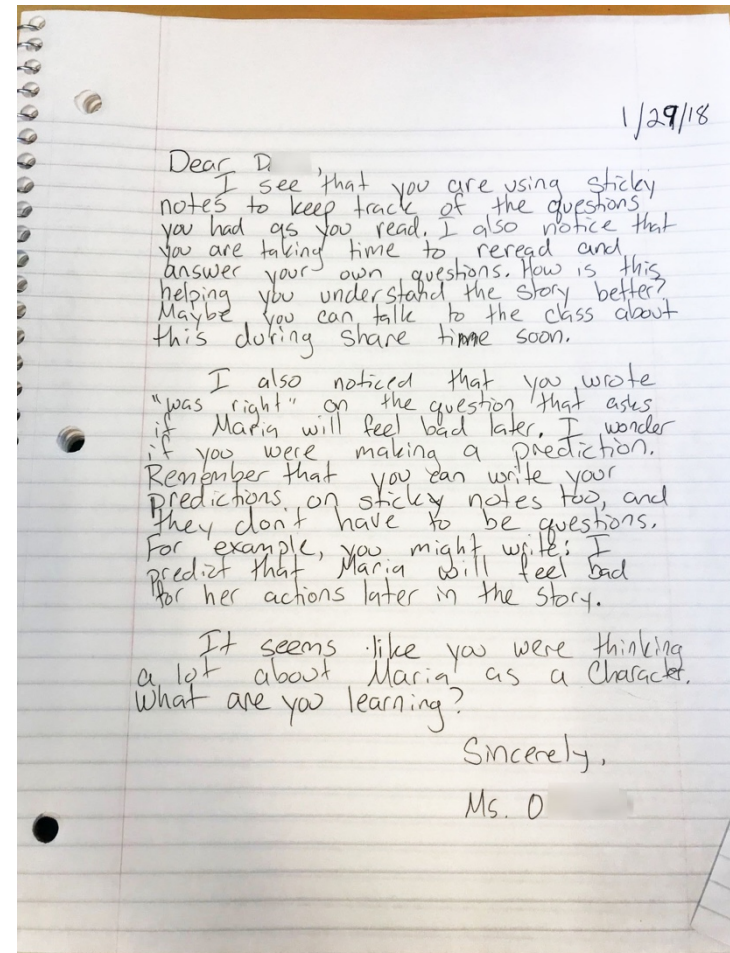
Ways to use Sticky Notes During Independent Reading	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark places to discuss during share time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a sticky note where you begin to understand a trait of one of the characters by noticing their actions, what they say, or what others say about them.</li> <li>• Place a sticky note where you begin to understand the problem and another where it is resolved.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a chapter or section summary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this chapter...</li> <li>• In this section...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write down the things that you are wondering about and the questions that you have as you read and then answer them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm wondering...</li> <li>• Why did...?</li> <li>• How did...?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make predictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think...</li> <li>• I predict...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections to Science and Social Studies concepts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This makes me think about...</li> <li>• This reminds me of...</li> </ul>

Figure 8: Co-constructed Anchor Charts





**Figure 9: Independent Application**



**Figure 10: Teacher Feedback**

## Sharing with a Community of Readers

After independent reading time is over, teachers may ask individual students to read their entry or share their ideas with the whole group. Teacher may select students who have applied their learning effectively to their written response. The teacher might also identify an opportunity to seek the social support of the group to coach a student to try out something new in their writing. In these whole group scenarios, the teacher includes students in the conversation but ultimately guides the learning. Sharing time can be a very powerful teaching time.

Sometimes, teachers might ask all readers to share an entry that they are working on with a partner in order to provide students with an authentic audience and nurture the community of readers. As readers share, their reading identities become known to their peers.

<b>Readers' Notebooks Across the Grades</b>			
	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grades 1-Early 2</b>	<b>Grades Mid-2-3</b>
<b>Read, Think, Talk</b>	Surround the interactive read aloud, shared reading, and guided sessions with meaningful talk.		
<b>Reader's Notebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlined pages</li> <li>• Respond to interactive read aloud, shared reading, and possibly listening station texts and independent reading texts</li> <li>• Simple sections</li> <li>• Drawings with some words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlined pages</li> <li>• Respond to interactive read aloud, shared reading, listening station texts, small group reading texts, and independent reading texts</li> <li>• Simple sections</li> <li>• Drawings and words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlined and/or lined pages</li> <li>• Respond to interactive read aloud, shared reading, small group reading texts, listening station texts, and independent reading texts</li> <li>• Organized into sections</li> <li>• More words than pictures</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback</b>	During share time or during individual conferences	During share time or during individual conferences	In reader's notebook, in letters to support and deepen students' thinking, and in conferences.

## Discuss

How do readers benefit from regular written or verbal feedback from teachers?

How does share time foster a community of readers? How does it benefit the reader that is sharing their work? What speaking standards are supported through these conversations?

What challenges do you anticipate teachers experiencing with providing feedback? What are some ways you might offer them support to address these issues?

### **Assessment**

“Students’ written responses to what they have read provide evidence of their thinking. When we examine writing in response to reading, we can make hypotheses about how well readers have understood a text” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 163).

Entries in a reader’s notebook also provide a record of the writing about reading that a student can produce at a particular point in time. They provide evidence of how a student takes on new forms and genres for writing independently as they respond to texts. A wealth of information about how students are applying the phonics principles to their own writing can also be found on every page. Teachers can notice change over time in individual behaviors or notice trends across the whole group that can inform teaching during all elements of the literacy block.

As we explored extensively during Semester 4, a simple note-taking system can help teachers record behaviors and understandings they notice when looking at readers’ notebooks. Recall the chart below, “Analyzing Written Response to Text through Independent Writing,” which allows teachers to notice the thinking that the student is doing as a reader *and* as a writer.

With the goals of the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards, teachers can use the *Alignment Document* to prioritize teaching opportunities. Teachers can choose to use one form for each student, adding notes cumulatively each time they examine student writing to understand individual progress, or place all students on one form to consider needs across the whole group. (See appendix for reproducible forms.)

<b>Analyzing Written Response to Text Through Independent Writing</b>			
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Understands</b>	<b>Partially understands</b>	<b>Does not currently understand</b>
<b>Writing</b>			
<b>Reading</b>			
<b>Possible Teaching Opportunities</b>			
<b>Tennessee English Language Arts Standards Addressed</b>			

**Discuss**

How do teachers in your district currently assess written responses to texts? How might readers' notebooks provide additional information?

# Synthesis

In the chart below, list the values and opportunities that readers' notebooks provide for students and teachers.

<b>Written Response to Texts During Independent Reading</b>		
	<b>Value and Opportunities for Students</b>	<b>Value and Opportunities for Teachers</b>
List the values of readers' notebooks		

## Takeaways

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# Module 5: Reading Conferences

## Objectives

- Articulate the purpose for individual reading conferences
- Define the role of the teacher and the student within the structure of a reading conference
- Analyze reading conferences to see how they provide unique opportunities to affirm and expand a reader's thinking
- Examine how reading conferences provide a teacher with opportunities to teach and to collect ongoing assessment information

## Link to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Independent reading focuses on **Reading** and **Foundational Literacy** standards, while incorporating additional **Writing** and **Speaking & Listening** standards through responding, conferring, and tasks.

## TEAM Connection

- Standards and Objectives
- Motivating Students
- **Questioning**
- Feedback
- **Teacher Knowledge of Students**

# What is a reading conference?

A reading conference is a quick, powerful conversation with an individual reader. The goal is to talk “reader to reader” in order to learn about and improve the reading lives of students.

A predictable structure for conferences allows students and teachers to share expectations about the routine and content of the conference. Shared expectations help to ensure that the conference is brief, purposeful, and tailored to the strengths and needs of each student.

There are four critical phases to any reading conference (Yates, 2015).

1. **Research (R):** In this phase, the teacher asks the student some open-ended questions in order to notice what the reader understands and is doing effectively. Students who have many opportunities to talk about books during interactive, shared, and small group reading times will have prior experience with responding to open-ended questions. Opening a conference with prompts such as the following, typically helps teachers glean a great deal of information:

- How's it going?
- What have you been noticing so far about this book?
- What are you thinking about?

It's important that teachers use the following communication tools while researching in order to collect the most robust information on the reader:

- wait time;
- listening and paraphrasing;
- non-verbal cues to communicate interest; and
- artifacts from readers' notebooks.

Teachers may also find it useful to listen briefly to the student's oral reading.

2. **Decide (D):** In the second phase of the conferring process, the teacher uses the information gathered on the reader to decide on an action step. Based on what was learned during this conversation, and on what was previously understood about the reader, the teacher decides which reading behavior to reinforce and which behavior to teach. Asking the following questions may help a teacher prioritize next moves:
  - What teaching will make the reader more independent or confident?
  - What might I reteach to this student? Is there a behavior taught during interactive read aloud, shared reading, small group reading instruction, or independent reading that the reader is not applying effectively?
  - What is the reader ready to take on next? What is this reader almost doing effectively? What is on the edge of this student's learning without being a gigantic leap?
  - What will be helpful for this reader to consider for other texts on other days? What teaching will be most generative?

3. **Teach (T):** In the third phase of the conferring process, the teacher provides the student with a concise, clear teaching point. The teacher may demonstrate the behavior using the student's independent reading text or might guide the student through applying the teaching to their reading. The teacher pays attention to using shared language that is consistent with how readers discuss texts when using other instructional strategies throughout the day. The teacher makes a note of the teaching point in a dedicated record-keeping space for reading conferences.
4. **Link (L):** In the final phase of the conference, the teacher explains how the teaching point can be applied to other texts in the future. She or he explains how taking on this behavior will improve the student's understanding. For some students, it is helpful to ask them to make a note for themselves. This would not be helpful for beginning readers.

(Adapted from Yates, 2015, pp. 105–109)

The goal in every reading conference is for the student to do most of the talking. Teachers need to be explicit with students about this from the start, but more importantly, teachers need to create space for student talk by carefully listening and prompting with open-ended questions. The teacher's role in reading conferences is to build relationships with each student, to affirm thinking, and to expand each student's processing powers. Over time, students will begin to view conferences as an exciting opportunity to deepen their understandings and share their thinking with another more experienced reader.

Each conference allows the teacher to notice more about the reader's strengths and areas for growth. As teachers get to know the readers in their class better, they can refine their research, decision-making, and teaching to better target the needs of each individual.

### **Ms. Larson's Conference with Leo (Grade 3)**

Read through the transcript of a conference between a teacher and her third grade student. The interaction has been annotated to highlight some places where the four phases of the reading conference are being implemented using the following key:

**R** to indicate language of research by the teacher

**D** to indicate possibilities for teaching

**T** to indicate that a teaching point has been delivered by the teacher

**L** to indicate that a link has been made

**Profile of Leo As a Reader:** Leo is a self-extending reader. He engages thoughtfully in interactive speaking during interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group instruction. He reads at a Lexile level of 800 with high accuracy and fluency.

Ms. Larson has noticed that during interactive read aloud discussion, with prompting, Leo is beginning to use enduring understandings from the content areas to determine the author's purpose in nonfiction texts (3.RI.CS.6, 3.RI.RRTC.10: Analyze an author's purpose in choosing a



topic or telling a story, and 3.LS4.2 Infer that plant and animal adaptations help them survive in land and aquatic biomes).

Because Leo is one of many students who needs reinforcement with taking this behavior on independently, Ms. Larson chose this as her area of focus for the brief teaching she did before she sent students off for independent literacy activities and reading groups. As she shared a couple of examples from interactive read aloud, she used the language “Use what you already understand about a concept to understand more about the author’s purpose.” She wants to give Leo more opportunities to link this this way of thinking to his independent reading.

<b>Dialogue</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Hi Leo! I see you’re reading another Steve Jenkins book. You seem to really enjoy his work.</i>	Ms. Larson’s opening is friendly and makes Leo’s reading interests feel known.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Yes. I think he’s one of my favorites.</i>	Leo is relaxed and understands the conversational nature of a reading conference.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>What do you like so much about his books?</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson begins to research this conference with a non-threatening, open-ended question that gets Leo talking more.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>I really like the illustrations. And I’ve learned a lot too. I’m really interested in animals.</i>	Leo gives a very minimal and surface-level response but opens a door for prompting.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>What are you learning from “Never Smile at a Monkey?”</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts Leo to share more about this informational text.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>This book teaches you how to keep yourself safe from wild animals.</i>	Leo shares his thinking about the main idea of this text.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Tell me more.</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts for Leo to elaborate.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Well...Like if you press these pouches on this frog’s neck, it’s poison.</i>	Leo shares a fact from the book.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>What else?</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts for Leo to elaborate.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>The platypus has spikey legs that have poison on them. If they kick you, you get poisoned.</i>	Leo shares a fact from the book.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>What else did you learn?</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts for Leo to elaborate.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Kangaroos can do like a handstand move and kick you in the chest.</i>	Leo shares a fact from the book.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Wow. So... you said that you think this book is about staying safe around wild animals. That seems like a really important idea in the book. I notice that Steve Jenkins writes like he is talking right to you.</i>	<b>(D)</b> Ms. Larson reinforces Leo’s initial claim and uses her knowledge of the text to prompt for a deeper analysis. She is deciding how to help Leo shift his thinking to articulate the conceptual understanding that is foundational to this book.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>He’s kind of giving advice.</i>	Leo’s response shows that he understands Ms. Larson’s claim about the use of the second person voice in this text.

Dialogue	Analysis
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>He is, isn't he? Do you think these animals are only dangerous to humans though?</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts Leo to think further about the main idea of the text.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>No.</i>	Leo is not offering a lot of information to Ms. Larson.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Why do you say that?</i>	<b>(R)</b> Ms. Larson prompts for Leo to elaborate.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Because animals also have to keep safe from other animals that might try to hunt them. Like we were talking about in science, they have special ways of surviving when predators come after them. They know how to protect themselves.</i>	Leo demonstrates his understanding of the text by connecting with his content knowledge.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Exactly! I was thinking about our science unit too! We talked a lot about how adaptations help animals survive. It's so useful to make those connections. It really helps us understand the deeper messages of the book. So, why do you think Steve Jenkins wrote this book?</i>	<b>(T)</b> Ms. Larson once again reinforces Leo's thinking. This time she frames his thinking in a generative way. She wants Leo to understand that connecting with content knowledge is an effective action that readers can take to understand the author's purpose.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>He wanted to say that people need to know about the dangerous things animals can do to people so that people can stay safe if they are ever around these animals. And probably that animals aren't being mean, they just need to stay safe too. They are probably afraid of people.</i>	Leo expands on his analysis by adding that the adaptations described in the book can make these animals dangerous to humans, but serve a very important function for the animals.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>That sounds like a really big idea. Whenever we read a book, it's important to think about why the author wrote the book and the BIG message the author wants us to understand.</i>	<b>(T)</b> Ms. Larson uses some teaching language to once again reinforce Leo's thinking and reiterate that this strategic action is helpful for understanding the author's message and the big ideas of a text.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Ok.</i>	Leo acknowledges that he understands.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>So, when you read your other books, you can think about the big idea the author wants you to take away. That helps us understand why the author wrote the book.</i>	<b>(L)</b> Ms. Larson explicitly links the learning to independent reading.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Ok.</i>	Leo acknowledges that he understands.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>I think we should start a bin in our classroom library with books about animal adaptations. Don't you?</i>	Ms. Larson's suggestion honors Leo's interest in animals, builds their relationship, and reiterates the importance of this fundamental biology concept.
<b>Leo:</b> <i>Yes. Should I give you this one when I'm all done?</i>	Leo seems interested in participating in this project.
<b>Ms. Larson:</b> <i>Yeah. That would be great! Thanks, Leo.</i>	Ms. Larson concludes in a friendly manner.

**Discuss**

What did you notice about how the teacher implements the four critical phases of the reading conference?

What did Ms. Larson learn about Leo as a reader?

What did Leo learn from this conference?

## Mr. Russell's Conference with Flor (Grade 1)

Read through the transcript of a conference between a teacher and his first grade student. Annotate the interaction to identify and analyze the four phases of the reading conference. Note powerful teaching moves in the analysis column as well.

Use the following:

**R** to indicate language of research by the teacher

**D** to indicate possibilities for teaching

**T** to indicate that a teaching point has been delivered by the teacher

**L** to indicate that a link has been made

**Profile of Flor as a Reader:** Flor actively participates in interactive read aloud and shared reading. She is an empathetic person who easily connects with characters in fiction texts (1.RL.IKI.7 Either orally or in writing when appropriate, use illustrations and words in a text to describe its characters). At Lexile level 250, Flor is in the early phase of reading development. She controls a large number of high-frequency words and is using meaning, her knowledge of oral language structure, and print information to solve new words. When reading independently, she is able to summarize short texts. Her reading can still be slow and deliberate at times, but she is putting some familiar phrases together. During small group reading instruction, her teacher has recently observed that she is beginning to notice punctuation.

Mr. Russell has been trying to support most readers in his class with using character feelings to read dialogue with phrasing and expression. He has been selecting texts for shared reading that give them lots of opportunities to practice together. His whole class link yesterday used the language "Think about how a character is feeling and make your voice sound like the character is talking," to help students apply this thinking to their independent texts. He referred to portions of *Who's in the Shed?* by Brenda Parkes and *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me* by Eric Carle to provide students with meaningful examples. Flor was able to demonstrate this behavior with social support.

Dialogue	Analysis
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> Hi, Flor. I see you are reading some books from your browsing box.	
<b>Flor:</b> Yes, I'm reading Baby Bear Goes Fishing again.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> I love that book. What made you choose to read it again?	
<b>Flor:</b> I love all the books about Baby Bear. I've read Blackberries and Father Bear Goes Fishing too.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> It's really exciting that you found a series of books that you like. What was the surprising part in this book?	

Dialogue	Analysis
<b>Flor:</b> Well, Mother Bear said that Baby Bear was too little to go fishing, but he's not. He caught lots of fish for dinner.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> How do you think that made Little Bear feel?	
<b>Flor:</b> I think he was pretty proud of himself.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> I bet you're right, Flor. Read a little bit of the book to me.	
<b>Flor:</b> (reading without any expression)	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> Right here. See these quotation marks? Read it the way it would sound if you were Baby Bear, talking in this moment. He is really excited in this part.	
<b>Flor:</b> (reads with expression)	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> When you read books where characters are talking, it helps to think about how they are feeling in the story, doesn't it?	
<b>Flor:</b> Yes.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> Remember how we practiced thinking about that yesterday in Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me and in Who's in the Shed? Any time you read a book where the characters talk to each other, think about how they're feeling.	
<b>Flor:</b> Okay.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> I'm going to write that down so when I come check in with you again we can see how that's helping you as a reader. Also, there are many other Baby Bear books, so we will have to make sure you get a chance to read those too. Would you like that?	
<b>Flor:</b> Yes, I love Baby Bear books.	
<b>Mr. Russell:</b> Great, I'll show you where to find them in the library.	

**Discuss**

How did this conference help to build a relationship between Mr. Russell and Flor?

How did this conference affirm Flor's thinking?

How did this conference expand Flor's reading processing system?

# Why confer with readers?

## Values of Reading Conferences

Time is the greatest resource in every school building. When teachers feel like their to-do list is endless, it is easy to view meeting one-to-one with each reader in the room as just one more thing to check off the list. In order to make time for conferring, it is important that teachers understand the many values of this individualized teaching.

Values	Why is it important?	What would it look like, sound like, and/or feel like if this were the classroom teacher's goal?
1. Build strong relationships with each reader.		
2. Facilitate a community of readers by getting to know each reader.		
3. Support oral language development, especially academic language.		
4. Reinforce high expectations for reading.		
5. Support readers in applying what they are learning throughout the elements of the literacy block.		

<b>Values</b>	<b>Why is it important?</b>	<b>What would it look like, sound like, and/or feel like if this were the classroom teacher's goal?</b>
6. Provide additional opportunities for readers to demonstrate their text comprehension and for the teacher to support students' meaning making.		
7. Provide oral feedback to students about responses to texts in their readers' notebooks.		
8. Assess each reader's strategic processing through conversation and oral reading on an ongoing basis.		
9. Differentiate instruction.		
10. Set goals.		



# How to Confer with Readers

## Introducing Routines and Expectations

Like any new instructional routine, students must understand the expectations for conferring before they have a reading conference with their teacher. It is important that teachers establish the tone and purpose of these interactions and clarify the role of the teacher and the role of the student. Before teachers begin to regularly use the first few minutes of independent reading to link to the elements of the literacy block, they might use a brief, whole group teaching time that precedes independent reading to discuss and model reading conferences with students.

As teachers begin conferring with individual readers, they want to focus on building relationships and trust. Eye contact, a smile, and a gentle request to talk with students about what they are reading can go a long way in making readers feel comfortable. It can be intimidating for students who are not yet comfortable with conferring to be called up to sit with the teacher, so the teacher can move to sit beside the student to relieve some of that anxiety. Although conferring is a time to collect valuable assessment data, it should not feel like a testing situation or an interrogation!

Here are some questions that teachers might consider using with students at the beginning of the year:

- What kinds of books do you like to read most? Why?
- What are you reading now?
- What books do you have in your stack (pile)? Or, what books would you like to have in your stack?
- What's one thing I should know about you as a reader?
- How can I help you grow as a reader?
- What are you learning about yourself as a reader?
- What goals are you setting? What would you like to work on next?

(Miller & Moss, 2013)

Once teachers set a friendly, conversational tone for conferring with each reader, they can begin to incorporate explicit teaching into their conferences.

## Scheduling Conferences

It is helpful to establish a conferring schedule for both students and teachers. Once students understand the expectations for conferring, they begin to appreciate the individual attention and support they receive during these one-on-one discussions. Establishing a conference schedule ensures that the teacher fits in this important opportunity for individualized instruction to her teaching routine.

Conferring schedules depend greatly on the amount of time that the teacher has to confer with students during the day. Ideally, teachers conduct conferences while students are engaged in

independent literacy work. If teachers can find ten minutes during that time to meet with two readers each day for five minutes or less, then the entire class will have a chance to confer with their teacher once every two to three weeks. It is helpful to coordinate the conferring schedule with the schedule that has been established for reader's notebook feedback so teachers can bring recent written responses into the discussion.

The charts below illustrate how a teacher might group students to coordinate feedback to the readers about reader's notebook entries with bi-weekly individual conferences over the course of one month. Conferences might be scheduled in a way that allows the teacher to read recent responses prior to entering into a reading conference with an individual so the teacher can bring additional data into the decision-making phase of the conference. This could be especially important when working with the youngest readers, who also benefit from an audience for their responses, but cannot access written feedback.

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Response Due to Teacher</b>	<b>Feedback Due to Student</b>	<b>Reading Conferences Over the Course of One Month</b>
Group A (5 Students)	Monday	Wednesday	Week 2/4
Group B (4 Students)	Tuesday	Thursday	Week 2/4
Group C (5 Students)	Wednesday	Friday	Week 1 or Week 2/Week 3 or Week 4
Group D (5 Students)	Thursday	Monday	Week 1/3
Group E (6 Students)	Friday	Tuesday	Week 1/3

The chart on the next page illustrates how teachers can:

- Meet with each reader two times per month, if they create a thoughtful schedule in advance.
- Come prepared to maximize the power of the conference by coordinating each reader's notebook feedback with their reading conference.

Sample: Reading Conferences Across One Month					
<b>Week 1</b>	Group D: Student 1 Student 2	Group D: Student 3 Student 4 Student 5	Group E: Student 1 Student 2 Student 3	Group E: Student 4 Student 5	Group E: Student 6
<b>Week 2</b>	Group A: Student 1 Student 2 Student 3	Group A: Student 4 Student 5  Group B: Student 1	Group B: Student 2 Student 3 Student 4	Group C: Student 1 Student 2 Student 3	Group C: Student 4 Student 5
<b>Week 3</b>	Group D: Student 1 Student 2	Group D: Student 3 Student 4 Student 5	Group E: Student 1 Student 2	Group E: Student 4 Student 5 Student 6	NO SCHOOL
<b>Week 4</b>	Group A: Student 1 Student 2 Student 3	Group A: Student 4 Student 5  Group B: Student 1	Group B: Student 2 Student 3 Student 4	Group C: Student 1 Student 2 Student 3	Group C: Student 4 Student 5

If teachers cannot find enough time to confer during independent reading time, they may find a few minutes during other independent work times during the day, such as during choice time or arrival time. Teachers might also confer with those students who complete daily tasks quickly while the rest of the class continues their individual work.

**Teaching During Reading Conferences**

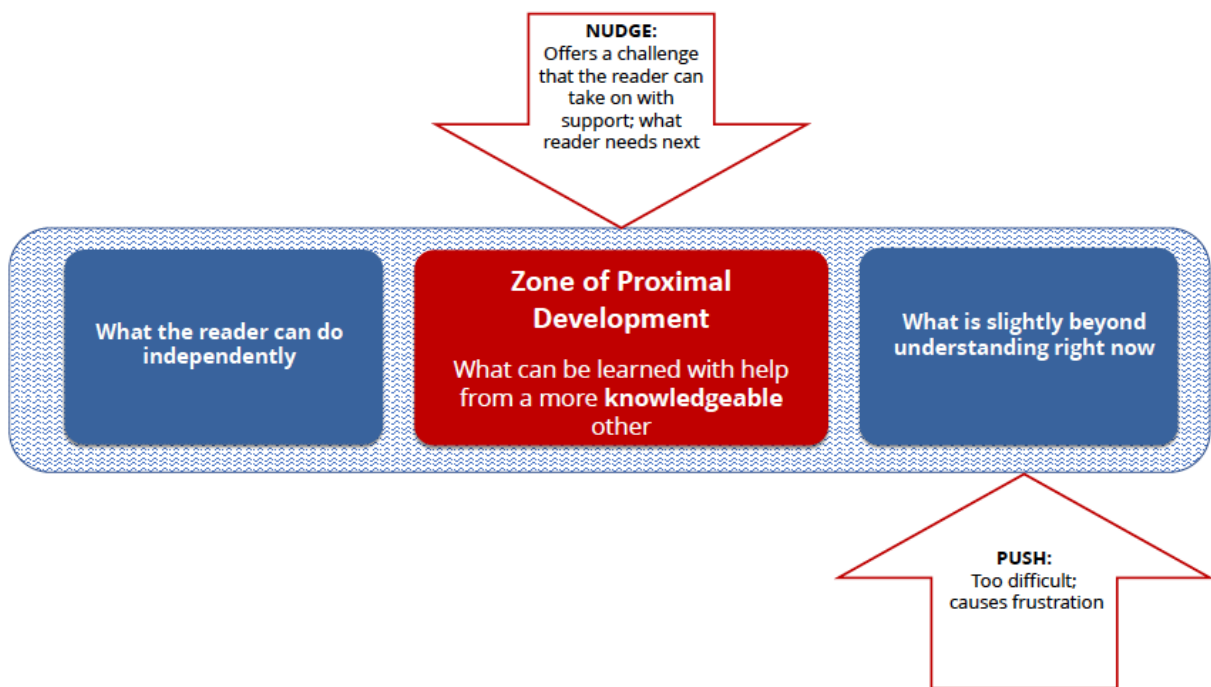
The four critical phases of the reading conference will only make an impact on readers if careful listening is paired with powerful teaching language. In so many ways, conferring is similar to the reflective conversations that coaches have with teachers. Through listening, teachers collect the information they need to respond precisely to each student.

Listening to students sounds like a simple directive, but active listening requires that teachers are aware of how their own experiences intrude on their ability to focus on the words and experiences of the child. At the same time, the teacher should work toward achieving a shared understanding through authentic questioning of the student that will guide instruction to what the child actually needs rather than what the teacher imagines the child needs.

(Porath, 2014, p. 633-634)

The most effective prompting will be worthless if the teacher is not actively listening to the student's responses. Through listening to and carefully observing the reader, the teacher begins to see the boundaries of each student's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and the edge of the student's learning. The ZPD is the "zone" in which the student might be able to take on a task independently with some teaching support. Identifying the ZPD is a powerful way to gently lead development forward (Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

During a conference, the goal is to "nudge" the reader to take on one or two new challenges that fall within their reach. If the teacher gives too hard of a "push" by providing too much teaching or teaching that the learner is not yet ready to take on, the reader will become frustrated and overwhelmed (Glover, 2009).



Prompts and questions can deepen students' comprehension of a text as well as support them in reflecting on their book choices and how they are growing as readers.

Teachers also use artifacts and resources during conferences. They can refer to previous reader's notebook entries, reading logs, anchor charts created during other portions of the literacy block, etc. Asking students to use the book itself – either to sample oral reading or as reference to find support for a claim – can also be a very effective way of seeking data or demonstrating a reading behavior for a student.

The purpose of teaching during individual reading conferences, like in all reading instruction, is to help readers to expand their systems of strategic actions. It's important to notice and respond to the ways in which readers are making meaning by thinking within, beyond, and about the text.

## Language of Conferring

Students benefit when teachers intentionally work to use a consistent vocabulary across instructional strategies to teach for, prompt for and reinforce reading behaviors. Using the clear, concise language from *Prompting Guides 1* and *2* (Fountas & Pinnell, 2016a and 2016b) makes conferring a seamless part of the literacy block.

All of the sections of *Prompting Guide 1* (2016a) can be useful for teaching responsively after oral reading during a conference. While *Prompting Guide 2* is filled with useful language for helping comprehend within, beyond, and about the text, a few sections were designed with reading conferences in mind including the following:

- "Prompts for Reading Conferences," page 57;
- "Reading List," page 58;
- "Making Book Choices," page 58.

Choose some examples of helpful language from *Prompting Guide 2* (2016b) that you might suggest teachers use in reading conferences to build a relationship, support students' reading identities, affirm their thinking, and expand their processing systems. Write the examples in the critical phase of the reading conference where that language might be most useful.

	Helpful Language
Build a Relationship	
Support Students' Reading Identity	

	<b>Helpful Language</b>
<b>Affirm Thinking</b>	
<b>Expand Thinking</b>	

## **Application: Transcript Analysis**

As you read the following transcripts of individual reading conferences, highlight the language and instructional moves that each teacher uses to build a relationship, support students' reading identities, affirm their thinking, and expand their processing systems.

### **Ms. LeBlanc's Conference with Emma (Grade 2)**

**Profile of Emma as a Reader:** Despite her ability to read texts that are above grade level accurately and fluently, Emma is in the transitional phase of reading development. She is quiet during interactive read aloud and shared reading. However, she participates in turn and talks and small group conversations more comfortably. Emma is able to summarize her reading, but often struggles to articulate the larger themes and main ideas in the books she reads independently. At Lexile level 700, her teacher is hoping Emma will use more evidence from the text to support her claims (1.RL.KID.3 Describe characters, setting, and major events in the story using key details, 1.RL.KID.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text).

Three weeks ago, Ms. LeBlanc worked with the whole class on this important behavior. During their folktale unit, the class used shared writing to create an anchor chart with predictions and evidence from the text or from their conceptual understandings to support them. Ms. LeBlanc hung the chart in the classroom as a resource for students. She followed up by making a whole class link during independent reading using the language, "Use what you understand from the text, from other texts, or from the world to support your predictions."

**Emma:** *I'm reading The Tail of Emily Windsnap.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *That's the one I just gave you?*

**Emma:** *Yes.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *What are you thinking?*

**Emma:** *I'm thinking it's really good. There's not a lot of dialogue, so it's kind of hard to figure out what the characters are like by what they're saying.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *What do you think of the characters so far?*

**Emma:** *I think they're really good.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *Tell me more. Who are the characters?*

**Emma:** *There's Millie, the babysitter. There's some people in her swimming group, but I forget their names. And there's Emily.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *Who's the main character?*

**Emma:** *Emily.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *Ok. Tell me a little bit about her.*

**Emma:** *The first time Emily went to swimming lessons, she went in the water and it felt like her legs were being tied together. Like she couldn't move them apart. So now the mom doesn't... The mom used to not want her to go swimming at all but now she doesn't want her to leave because after the first swimming lesson she doesn't want her to leave because she just bought the swimsuit, the bag, and the towel and stuff.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *So, how's Emily feeling about swimming?*

**Emma:** *She doesn't like it because she doesn't want it to happen again.*

**Ms. LeBlanc:** *Where in the story does it tell you that? Did something happen?*

**Emma:** I forget where it was. She said something like she couldn't move her legs apart and they were heavy. I couldn't find where it was because there are no pictures.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** Based on the cover (a picture of a mermaid's tail), do you think she is going to go back in the water again?

**Emma:** Probably.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** Can you make a prediction?

**Emma:** I'm predicting that maybe when she finds out what she is, maybe she'll go back into the water again.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** Do you think it's funny about the title where it says, The Tail of Emily Windsnap?

**Emma:** OOOHHHH I get it!

**Ms. LeBlanc:** What kind of tail/tale are we talking about?

**Emma:** A mermaid tail.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** A mermaid tail. How do you know?

**Emma:** Because it's spelled different and the story is about this.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** Yes, it's spelled different: T-a-i-l. How would it be spelled if it was like a story tale?

**Emma:** T-a-l-e.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** Hmm... Does that give you a hint? Sometimes you can look at the cover and look at the title and it might give you a clue about what's going to happen. Remember when we were reading all of those tall tales and we talked about predicting and made that chart? We need to have evidence to support our predictions, don't we?

**Emma:** Yes. Like the description of Emily's legs and the title in this book.

**Ms. LeBlanc:** That is absolutely an example of evidence we need to support our predictions. I'll be interested to know if you can tell me some more information about Emily because I've only read this one, not the rest of the series and I think she's a really interesting character. I think you're going to find some things that will happen that will be interesting to you. Thanks Emma.

**Emma:** Thank you.

## Notes



## **Ms. Kelly's Conference with Alex (Grade 1)**

**Profile of Alex as a Reader:** Alex is an enthusiastic reader at the beginning of the transitional phase of reading development. He has made quick progress during first grade and is reading at a Lexile level of 500. He reads very quickly and does not always effectively integrate his use of meaning, his knowledge of oral language structure, and the visual information in the print. Although he is able to engage in interactive speaking about appropriately complex texts during shared and interactive reading, he tends to focus more on the print during small group instruction than on the meaning. When meaning is lost, he does not slow down to monitor his reading or self-correct his errors. The whole class struggled with this early in the year and it had been a focus in shared reading. Ms. Kelly, his teacher, has been talking with Alex and other students reading in the same homogeneous group about the importance of stopping to problem-solve if the text doesn't make sense. She is anticipating opportunities to reinforce this teaching (1.FL.PWR.3.h Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills when decoding words in connected text with purpose and understanding) during his conference.

**Ms. Kelly:** *Hi, Alex. I see you're reading the book I introduced earlier this week in a book talk, Henry and Mudge. Is that the reason why you chose it?*

**Alex:** *Yes, it sounded like it might be fun to read, especially since I am a boy and I have a dog too. My dog's name is Rocky, though.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Oh, that's great, Alex. Sometimes readers choose books about characters that remind them of themselves. That makes a lot of sense. Are you seeing any other things about Henry and Mudge that remind you of you and your dog?*

**Alex:** *Well, I haven't read much of the book yet. I'm only in the second chapter, but it says that Mudge grew to be really big. My dog Rocky isn't that big, thank goodness.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Yeah, it must be hard to keep such a big dog. Go ahead and read a little of that chapter for me.*

**Alex:** *(Reading) ". . . he weighed one hundred eighty pounds, and he stood three feet tall, and he dropped. He drooled . . . sat on him."*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Thanks, Alex. I noticed a place back here where you read something that didn't make sense. (Turns back to the page where Alex read dropped for drooled.) You said dropped here. Does that make sense?*

**Alex:** *No, it doesn't make sense to say, "He dropped." Plus, there aren't any ps in that word, so it's drooled.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Do you know what that word means?*

**Alex:** *Yes, my dog drools too. It's when the slobber comes out of his mouth.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Why don't you read that again and see if "drooled" makes sense.*

**Alex:** *(Rereads correctly) Yeah. That makes sense.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *If a word doesn't make sense or look right, what do you have to do?*

**Alex:** *Go back and fix it.*

**Ms. Kelly:** *Yes. We always need to make sure that we understand what we are reading and that it makes sense. We talked about that in our small group the other day. Well, keep reading and see if Henry and his dog, Mudge, remind you of yourself and your dog, Rocky, in any other ways. Thanks, Alex.*

## Notes

### Mr. Henry's Conference with David (Kindergarten)

#### Profile of David as a Reader:

David is in the emergent phase of reading development. Guided by the meaning from the highly supportive pictures, he has learned how to use the language of patterned texts to read his Lexile level 50 texts with accuracy. He uses his voice to print match and a small, but growing core of high-frequency words to monitor his reading. His teacher, Mr. Henry, is anticipating supporting David with cross-checking the initial sound with the meaning conveyed through the picture and his oral language structure. He has been demonstrating his ability to do this regularly during shared reading because many students in David's class are also working on using multiple sources of information to problem-solve as they read.

Mr. Henry has also been working with students in using knowledge-based competencies to understand more about the books they are reading (K.KID.3 With prompting and support orally identify the connection between two ideas or pieces of information in a text). They have recently completed a unit of study on weather (K.ESS2.2 Identify patterns in spring, summer, autumn, and winter).

**Mr. Henry:** *Hey David! I see you're reading Out in the Weather. How's it going?*

**David:** *Good!*

**Mr. Henry:** *Can you read a little bit of this book to me?*

(David reads last few pages of text)

**Mr. Henry:** *So, what are you thinking about?*

**David:** *I like this book. It's about a family that does a lot of stuff together.*

**Mr. Henry:** *Tell me more.*

**David:** *The family is going outside one day, and the weather keeps changing.*

**Mr. Henry:** *What do you mean?*

**David:** *Let me show you. (opens to beginning)*

*First it is raining. (turns page) And then it stops. (turns page) And then it is windy. (turns page) And then it is freezing. (turns page) And then it is snowing.*

**Mr. Henry:** *You know. You're right, David. Each page in this book is showing a different type of weather. But I'm wondering about something you said. You said it is all happening in one day. Look at this page with the snow and now look at this page where the family is at the beach. Do you think that all of this happened in one day?*

**David:** Yes.

**Mr. Henry:** Let's think about what we learned about weather. Look carefully at our chart that we made with our class about weather. What season can sometimes bring snow?

**David:** Winter.

**Mr. Henry:** During what season do we usually go to the beach?

**David:** Summer.

**Mr. Henry:** So, can it be winter and summer all in one day?

**David:** No.

**Mr. Henry:** So now are you thinking about everything in this book happening in one day?

**David:** Nope.

**Mr. Henry:** No, what?

**David:** It isn't one day because it's different seasons. It's just showing what the family does in different weather.

**Mr. Henry:** That's right. You're using what you have learned about weather to help you understand this book. It's important to think about what you already know about to help you understand the books you're reading. Got it?

**David:** Got it!

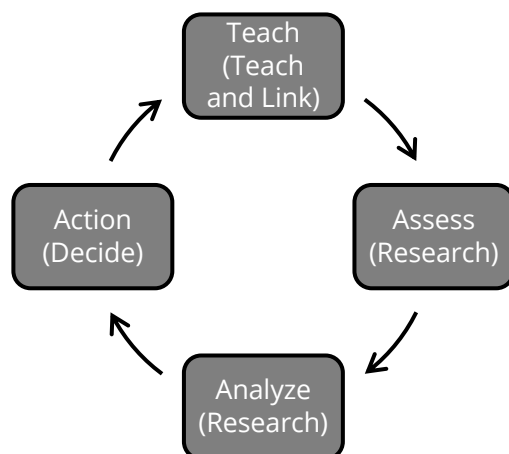
## Notes

## Systematic Assessment

Conferring presents unique opportunities to closely observe readers. As teachers become more familiar with the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards and reading behaviors to notice, teach for, and support, they will feel empowered to make precise observations and teaching decisions that meet readers where they are and lift them.

In many ways, the reading conference requires teachers to quickly progress through the data-driven instructional cycle pictured below. As the conference opens and unfolds, teachers conduct **research** by analyzing the reading behaviors that they observe through student talk or oral reading (analyze). Based on what they understand about the reader, they must **decide** what to teach, prompt for, or reinforce (action). Teachers **teach** the student about how to be more effective as a reader and try to make a **link** from new learning to prior learning (teach). As they observe the students throughout the elements of the literacy block, they notice and note how the student is taking on the behavior independently and applying it to reading continuous texts (assess). These observations are part of the research process and will help determine how they approach the next conference with the student.

### Phases of the Reading Conference in Relation to the Responsive Teaching Cycle



Especially because this interaction is fast paced and information rich, it is important that teachers become systematic in the ways in which they document their observations so they can use the wealth of available data to inform their whole group, small group, and individual teaching. There is not a magical form that works for all teachers, but effective note-taking forms can help teachers collect the following data:

- name of student;
- date of conference;
- notes taken during the research phase;
- teaching that affirmed reading behaviors;
- teaching that expanded systems of strategic action; and
- a watch list of any notable observations that were not a priority in this conference but may become a priority in future conferences.

While many teachers find it convenient to use a single sheet of paper to make notes on their conferences, others find it valuable to develop a way to have data for each student available in a running list so it is easy to refer to the teaching points and topics discussed during prior conferences. One example is included on the next page and additional examples are in the appendix.

<b>Reading Conference Notes</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>General Notes</b>	<b>Affirmed</b>	<b>Expanded</b>	<b>Watch List</b>
4/25 Flor	Enjoys Baby Bear Series; helped her find them in library	Readers have favorite series.	To read with expression, think about how characters feel.	Didn't support claims with evidence, but I didn't prompt for more information, so it's hard to know.

### **Reflecting on Conferences**

The more that teachers confer with readers, the more comfortable teachers and readers become. While comfort is important for successful conferences, teachers ultimately need to reflect on the content of their conferences. Teachers may want to take time to ask themselves the following questions as they work to continuously improve their reading conferences.

- How have you used what you already know about this reader to prepare for the conference?
- How well are you getting to understand the students' reading identities? Do you know their tastes and preferences? How are you incorporating this information into your own book talks, your classroom library, and your text selection during interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading instruction?
- How effectively are you using the four phases of a reading conference (research, decide, teach, link)?
- How do your past experiences impact your present interactions? Do you support and direct students to books and genres that were especially meaningful for you? Do you discount texts that aren't familiar or that you do not enjoy? (Porath, 2014, p. 634)
- How often are you asking direct questions about students' thinking...questions that begin with "How do you know...?" and "Why do you think...?" (Porath, 2014, p. 634)
- How well are you probing for further explanations for the students' responses and behavior? How often are you using phrases that ask students to elaborate such as "Say more," or "What do you mean by that?" (Porath, 2014, p. 634)

- Are you providing enough wait time to invite the student into the conversation? (Porath, 2014, p. 634)
- Are you using data collected in individual conferences to inform teaching during whole group and small group literacy instruction throughout the day?

**Synthesis: Roleplay a Reading Conference**

Form a group of four. One participant reads a text while another acts as the teacher. The two others observe the reading conference. Then, pairs switch roles. Use the framework of research, decide, teach, and link to shape your interaction.

Reading Conference Notes for _____				
Date	General Notes	Affirm	Expand	Watch List

Reading Conference Notes for _____				
Date	General Notes	Affirm	Expand	Watch List

**Discuss**

How did these conferences build a relationship between the teacher and the student?

What notes would you record as the teacher of this conference?

What new insights did you gain about the process of conferring from this role play experience?

## Closing Words

Conferring can give us the force that makes our minilessons and curriculum development and assessment and everything else more powerful. It gives us an endless resource of teaching wisdom, an endless source of accountability, a system of checks and balances. And, it gives us laughter and human connection – the understanding of our children that gives spirit to our teaching.

(Calkins, Hartman, & White, 2005, p. 6)



# Module 6: An Environment That Supports Independence

## Objectives

- Consider the characteristics of a classroom environment that support a community of independent readers
- Examine the physical characteristics of a classroom environment that is designed for independence
- Understand how to establish routines for managing independent and collaborative work

## Link to Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Independent reading focuses on **Reading** and **Foundational Literacy** standards, while incorporating additional **Writing** and **Speaking & Listening** standards through responding, conferring, and tasks.

## TEAM Connection

- Standards and Objectives
- **Motivating Students**
- Teacher Knowledge of Students
- Thinking
- Expectations
- **Managing Student Behavior**
- Environment
- Respectful Culture

# How to Establish a Supportive Community of Readers

## Discuss

Think about a group or organization to which you belong. Why do you feel a sense of belonging to that group?

How does a shared sense of belonging contribute to the success of the group in achieving its goals?

## A Climate of Acceptance & Inclusivity

<b>A Climate of Acceptance &amp; Inclusivity</b>			
<b><i>If a teacher values the statement, how will it be evident in their classroom environment?</i></b>	<b>Looks Like</b>	<b>Sounds Like</b>	<b>Feels Like</b>
<p>"In addition to a sense of autonomy and competence, we all have a basic human need to feel a sense of belonging. (Deci and Flaste, 1995) For children in a classroom, this feeling is critical if they are to be motivated from within to learn. When they feel safe and valued, they're more willing to do the risk-taking and the cooperative give-and-take that lead to greater learning (Jensen 1998)" (Denton, 2007, p. 8).</p>			
<p>"Building a community of readers and writers in your classroom is a way of teaching them what it means to be human" (Fountas &amp; Pinnell, 2017, p. 504).</p>			
<p>"When we value students' background and culture, the point comes across loud and clear; unfortunately, the opposite is also true. Most teachers are (or will be in a few years) in schools with highly varied populations as the number of immigrants swells and families where English is not the first language spoken in the home, grow" (Fountas &amp; Pinnell, 2017, p. 505).</p>			
<p>"Instead of students accommodating themselves to the dominant culture, teachers should value students' social and cultural identities (Delpit, 1995)... teachers assume the role of meeting the students' diverse needs to help them become academically successful, culturally competent, and socio-politically critical" (Yoon, 2009, p. 17).</p>			

## A Community of Independent Readers

A classroom community that supports independent reading also supports students in learning to be confident, self-motivated, kind, and thoughtful members of a community of learners who know that they are in control of their own learning and can work with others to achieve their goals. The classroom community is so much more than just the physical space.

The chart below lists some practical factors that contribute to the social and emotional health of a community of readers. Classrooms that provide students with a predictable, peaceful environment with daily options for choice and self-regulation support independence during reading and throughout the day.

<b>A Community of Independent Readers</b>			
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Why is this important for independent reading?</b>	<b>Trends observed across classrooms</b>	<b>New ideas for strengthening classroom communities during independent reading</b>
<p>“Classrooms are effectively managed when there is predictability around expectations, routines, and relationships...It also means that the relationship between the students is also predictable; that the classroom is a safe place to learn, take risk, make mistakes, and recover free from personal or emotional harm” (Schimmer, 2011, para 3-5).</p>			
<p><b>Predictability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured time frames for lessons, across day, across week</li> <li>• Clear routines</li> </ul>	<p><b>Routines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide predictability for teachers and students;</li> <li>• must be taught and practiced to ensure they will be followed;</li> <li>• lead to student independence, such that teacher can focus on conferring and small group instruction.</li> </ul> <p><b>Schedules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support students in developing time-management skills;</li> <li>• help students think about what they can accomplish during one period or across a whole week;</li> <li>• help students anticipate transitions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-managed classrooms have routines in place for each activity in the classroom.</li> <li>• Teachers who value independence spend the first weeks of school introducing routines and practicing them until they are under control, then revisit them as necessary.</li> <li>• Students who know what is expected and how the day will flow are more independent, but also seem more productive and relaxed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop lesson plans—with the help of coaches—for teaching routines for independent reading, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ returning a book from the classroom library;</li> <li>➢ moving from individual seats to the large group meeting area;</li> <li>➢ retrieving and returning writing materials, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make sure teaching language is simple and specific.</li> </ul>

<b>A Community of Independent Readers</b>			
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Why is this important for independent reading?</b>	<b>Trends observed across classrooms</b>	<b>New ideas for strengthening classroom communities during independent reading</b>
<p>“The classroom should be a place where people speak to each other with respect and listen courteously. The general tone of voice should be soft” (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017, p. 515).</p>			
<p><b>Peaceful Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serene ambiance (not silent)</li> <li>• Problem-solving stance</li> <li>• Empathy valued</li> </ul>			
<p>“Having control over one’s learning nourishes the sense of agency. Buckley (2015) describes how even very young children learn to make choices, and they are more eager, have more stamina, and are more likely to demonstrate on-task behavior when they see themselves as having a role in their own learning” (Fountas &amp; Pinnell, 2017, p. 516).</p>			
<p><b>Choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for students to exercise control over their learning</li> <li>• Builds agency (belief that actions impact outcomes)</li> </ul>			

<b>A Community of Independent Readers</b>			
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Why is this important for independent reading?</b>	<b>Trends observed across classrooms</b>	<b>New ideas for strengthening classroom communities during independent reading</b>
<p>“Agency is a critical element in self-regulation. If you have the power over your own learning and a chance to change, then you are able to manage your progress toward the goal” (Fountas &amp; Pinnell, 2017, p. 520).</p>			
<p><b>Self-Regulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to self-manage</li> <li>• Emphasis on personal responsibility and ownership of learning within a community of learners</li> </ul>			

## **Socially and Emotionally Healthy Readers**

If they are to grow as thoughtful users of literacy, students need to build social and emotional abilities. It is worthwhile to consciously teach social and emotional health along with literacy. As teachers, we want to communicate daily in a way that honors readers and writers as people and helps them develop a sense of agency - people who believe that they can act with effectiveness.

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 503)

## **Discuss**

How does teaching social and personal (emotional) health support students in becoming thoughtful users of literacy?

# How the Physical Environment Supports Independence

A thoughtfully designed and well-organized classroom environment allows students to navigate their environment with confidence and independence as they engage in independent reading.

<b>Analyzing the Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Things to look for in a classroom environment</b>	<b>Support for independent reading</b>
Are there well-defined areas for large, small, and independent work?	
Is the classroom library inviting and well-organized?	
Are books easy to find and return?	
Can students easily access a variety of digital texts, including multi-modal texts?	
Are books and/or digital texts integrated into work stations?	
What kinds of resources are on the classroom walls and display areas to help students think about, learn, and use words?	
What kinds of references and resources are available for student use?	



<b>Analyzing the Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Things to look for in a classroom environment</b>	<b>Support for independent reading</b>
How is print displayed and featured in various areas of the room?	
Are lists of words posted on the walls that relate to areas of the curriculum such as math, science, or social studies?	
How is students' thinking represented on the walls in the classroom – co-created anchor charts, student writing, and work samples?	
How well does the material displayed include all members of the community and reflect its diversity?	
Are there numerous displays of written language at student eye-level?	
Are materials labeled? (Younger students may need both a label and a picture to support their independent use of materials.)	
Are there resources such as poems, big books, and other print materials readily available for students to read?	
Are there sets of books organized around concepts being taught?	

<b>Analyzing the Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Things to look for in a classroom environment</b>	<b>Support for independent reading</b>
Are all materials organized for easy access and return?	
Are furniture and dividers arranged so the teacher can have a full view of the classroom?	
Is there a comfortable and well-supplied area for independent writing?	
Are noisy and quiet areas separated?	
Is there a well-organized place for teacher materials?	

**Notes**

How might you revisit this tool to support independent reading in your school or district?

# How to Establish Routines for Managing Independent Work

The well-managed classroom needed to conduct small group guided reading lessons allows for students to engage in independent reading and writing about reading.

## Managing Independent Reading in Kindergarten & Grade 1 Classrooms

Children in kindergarten and first grade are just beginning to learn to be independent members of a classroom community. An organized environment supports them in this learning and allows the teacher to work with small groups of students or individual students while the rest of the class engages in literacy tasks independently at their seats/tables or at literacy stations located throughout the room. “Independent tasks must be authentic and *worthwhile*. Each must have learning value, especially in the area of literacy, rather than simply keeping students busy. Children need to spend their time thinking, talking, reading, writing, and listening” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 525). Young children need to be active participants in their own learning. Tasks should be simple, engaging, and social in nature.

The period of time allotted for independent literacy work varies and can range from 30 minutes up to an hour or more. Along with word work connected to lessons related to foundational skills, students may be listening to books read on an iPad, tablet, or other device, writing in readers’ notebooks in a variety of forms that have been introduced during shared and interactive writing, and engaging in independent reading. A variety of independent literacy tasks allows for young readers to engage in other activities as they build stamina for independent reading.

Independent reading may include a variety of activities for the youngest readers (K-1), including both oral (repeated reading, choral or echo reading, partner reading) and silent reading activities. Time spent reading independently may begin with just five to 10 minutes but can gradually increase across the year as the students’ ability to sustain reading increases. (See Semester 5, Module 6, page 3 for a list of suggested K-1 independent literacy tasks.)

## **Managing Independent Reading in Grade 2 & 3 Classrooms**

A classroom community organized for independence supports the self-management skills that older students are beginning to develop. Again, independent work must be meaningful and engaging, not just busywork. It should link to other teaching and learning that has occurred, support social interaction and collaboration, and be open-ended. While the teacher is working with small reading groups, or conferring with individual readers, the rest of the students in the class are engaging in independent reading and independent literacy work. The amount of time spent reading independently increases as texts become more complex and students' ability to read them increases. In the beginning of grade 2, teachers may need to scaffold students into more extended independent reading time. Students are taught to choose books at the appropriate level from the classroom library, keep a record of books read, and create written responses to texts in their readers' notebooks. Students also develop an expectation that they will be conferring about their reading periodically with the teacher. Some teachers post schedules of their conference dates with students so everyone is prepared.

## **Using Whole Group Share Time to Foster Strong Routines and High Expectations**

Following independent work and small group reading time, a teacher may decide to bring children all together for a short time to share out learning. The whole group share time that follows small group instruction and independent reading is an opportune time to have students reflect on how successful or unsuccessful they feel their independent work went that day. These conversations can happen as needed throughout the year but are essential as the routines are being established. Students might report on their struggles and triumphs with:

- working independently;
- working collaboratively (if applicable);
- using appropriate voice volume;
- locating materials;
- sharing materials;
- using resources in the print-rich environment; or
- choosing books.

Conversations should help students focus on their own contributions to the community of readers rather than allowing students to report on the behaviors of others. Expectations for behavior during independent reading, for using materials, and for navigating the physical environment must be taught explicitly to students at the beginning of the year and constantly revisited as needed.

## Discuss

Compare the recommendations for the kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms to the recommendations for grades 2 and 3. What values are at the core of independent reading, regardless of grade level?

How might reflective conversations during share time support the shared values of predictability, peaceful environment, choice, and self-regulation within a community of learners?

# Independent Reading and Reading Conferences: Synthesis

## Notes

How has your thinking about independent reading and reading conferences shifted or expanded as a result of our work over the last few days?

# Guide to Planning for Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

Independent reading takes place in a classroom environment that is well-managed and organized to support agency, independence, and learning, so all students can maximize their time for reading, thinking about, and responding to texts while the teacher confers with individual readers.

<b>Guide to Planning Independent Reading and Reading Conferences</b>
<b>Create an environment for independent reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the readers and establish a classroom library with a wide selection of genres, topics, text types and modalities, and difficulty levels.</li><li>• Assure books reflect cultural diversity.</li><li>• Arrange for adequate time in the schedule, so children choose books, apply reading strategies, build stamina, and enjoy reading.</li><li>• Establish classroom organization and routines to support independence.</li></ul>
<b>Launch independent reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce students to the organization of the classroom library.</li><li>• Teach students how to self-select books with interest and level of difficulty in mind.</li><li>• Familiarize students with all texts available to them for independent reading, including browsing boxes, poetry notebooks and other familiar shared-reading texts, and classroom library books.</li><li>• Through shared and interactive writing, support students in developing a repertoire of ways to respond to their reading through writing.</li></ul>
<b>Provide ongoing instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver daily, purposeful whole group lessons—designed to meet the needs of the range of readers in the classroom—to support readers in applying learning from across the elements of the literacy block to their self-selected texts.</li><li>• Confer with individual readers to provide opportunities to think and talk about reading, identify plans, goals, and needs, and give individual instruction.</li><li>• Provide regular opportunities for students to write about reading and receive feedback from the teacher.</li></ul>
<b>Facilitate assessment and reflection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observe and analyze student responses to gain formative assessment data.</li><li>• Observe and analyze the climate of the classroom during independent reading time to determine which routines and structures need to be revisited.</li></ul>

**Discuss**

Think about a specific person or group of people that you support in your role as coach. Which areas will need to be introduced? Which areas will need continued support?

What other ways might you use this guide in your coaching role?



## Closing Words

The amount of enthusiasm for independent reading is the real measure of a successful literacy classroom. The outcome is the child's confidence, agency, and engagement in independent reading for a lifetime

(Fountas & Pinnell, 2017, p. 2).

# Module 7: Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement

## Objectives

- Develop a plan to continue to build collective teacher efficacy
- Consider support systems within a larger design for change that, when utilized, increases the likelihood that professional learning will create lasting change

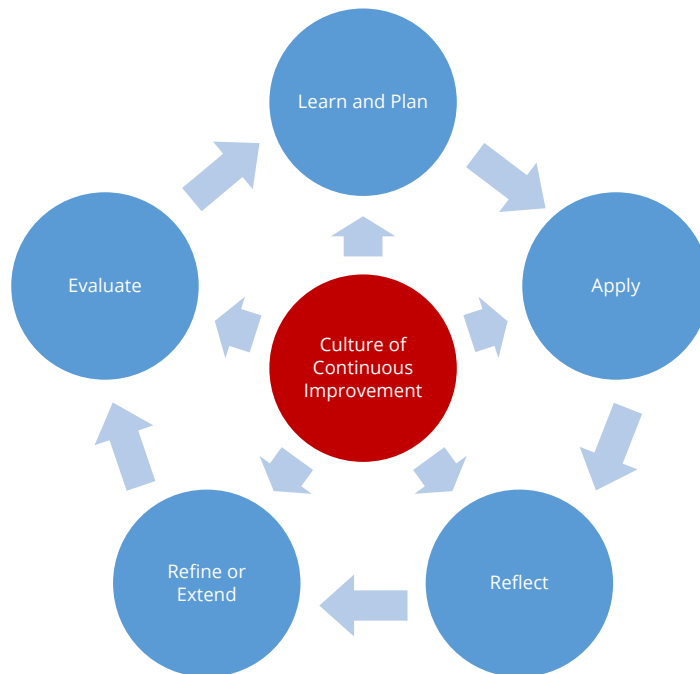
## Link to Tennessee Professional Learning Standards

- Implementation
- Data
- Outcomes
- Learning Community

## TEAM Connection

- Assessment Plans
- Teacher Knowledge of Students

# Sustain the Coaching Cycle within a Culture of Continuous Improvement



The Read to be Ready coaching cycle is infinite. Even when implementation is going well, engaging in the evaluate phase will always produce an abundance of possible next steps. Through the evaluation process, school- and district-level teams begin to understand more about their successes and identify their areas of need. Using information to refine practices requires cooperation, coordination, endurance, innovation, and perseverance. In order to preserve momentum, all of the stakeholders must recommit to their values and beliefs and to pursuing their collective goals.

School communities that are able to function as true professional learning communities are committed to continuous improvement.

When staff work together as a professional learning community – when they work together to clarify purpose and priorities, establish and contribute to collaborative teams, participate in continuous improvement cycles of gathering data on student achievement, identify areas of concern, generate strategies for improving student performance, support each other as they implement those strategies, and gather new data to assess the impact of their collective efforts - and when they are relentless in their efforts to improve achievement for all students, they increase the likelihood of sustained, substantive school improvement.

(DuFour, 2003, p. 72)

For the Read to be Ready Coaching Network, this means that coaches lead teams through a constant inquiry process in which they objectively critique and assess the impact of professional learning on both teacher and student learning based on several data sources. The evaluation process always leads to the refinement of literacy practices and adjustments to the ways in which the learning community collaborates.

**Discuss**

In what ways have you and your team used the evaluation process to engage in an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement?
What successes have you and your team experienced with the evaluation process?
What have you and your team done to persevere when the process became challenging?
As a leader, what are some goals that you have set for your team as they continue to work together to evaluate the impact of Read to be Ready?

# Develop a Sense of Collective Teacher Efficacy

A culture of continuous improvement requires the whole community to be the reservoir from which resources to sustain efforts can be drawn. In order to maintain this reservoir, it is essential that coaches work diligently to build and sustain a sense of “collective efficacy” within the school community. Collective efficacy is the belief in “colleagues’ ability to affect student outcomes in a positive way” (Gray, Kruse & Tarter, 2017).

Over the two last decades, a great deal of research has pointed to collective teacher efficacy as an important factor in improving student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). In his meta-analysis of 250 factors that impact student achievement, Professor John Hattie’s 2017 list puts collective teacher efficacy as one of the top two greatest factors influencing improvements in student achievement (along with teacher estimates of achievement). Schools in which teachers experience a sense of collective efficacy are characterized by the optimistic attitude held by teachers that they can problem solve together to meet the needs of all students. These school communities are likely to set challenging goals and pursue them tenaciously (Protheroe, 2008).

Teachers’ sense of efficacy can be developed on a variety of levels. A teacher may develop *personal teaching efficacy* when they have confidence in their own ability to impact student achievement. They may develop a sense of *general teaching efficacy* if their experiences have shown them that teachers can affect student achievement even if they have not yet had personal experience with seeing those results. There are three powerful factors that impact a teacher’s sense of efficacy:

1. **Performance accomplishments:** The teacher has personally been able to make a difference in student learning.
2. **Vicarious experiences:** The teacher has observed others using effective practices and feels that she might be able to use techniques to achieve similar results with her own students.
3. **Social persuasion:** Teachers have received feedback that highlights effective teaching behavior while receiving specific constructive suggestions for how to improve their teaching.

Experiences of personal and general teaching efficacy within a community can ultimately build a sense of *collective teacher efficacy* when teachers believe that their colleagues, with support of the school community, can impact even the most difficult-to-reach students. The ways in which the school fosters collaboration and shared leadership can amplify a sense of collective efficacy when teachers feel that asking for support from colleagues is perceived as an acceptable and even a desirable behavior. As schools and districts continue to pursue Read to be Ready’s theory of action, developing a sense of collective efficacy is critical.

Developing a Sense of Efficacy Within a Community of Educators		
Factors that impact a teacher's sense of efficacy	What have you done to help teachers build a sense of personal, general, and collective efficacy so far?	What else might you do to help teachers build a sense of personal, general, and collective efficacy?
<p><b>Performance accomplishments:</b> The teacher has personally been able to make a difference in student learning.</p>		
<p><b>Vicarious Experiences:</b> The teacher has observed others using effective practices and feels that he or she might be able to use techniques to achieve similar results with their own students.</p>		
<p><b>Social persuasion:</b> Teachers have received feedback that highlights effective teaching behavior while receiving specific constructive suggestions for how to improve their teaching.</p>		

# Factors to Amplify Professional Learning Outcomes

When we, as change agents, seek out support systems within the school, outside the school, and across the larger network, professional learning outcomes can be amplified, and barriers to change can be broken down. Professional learning that is embedded within a larger design for change may have support systems already in place to address and, in some cases, even control some of the barriers. The more you can utilize these support systems, both within and outside of the school, the greater the likelihood that your professional learning program will create lasting change.

*Within the school:* A school that creates a climate of learning for students and teachers is inviting and attractive, with student work displayed, and meeting areas clearly designated. Well-stocked book rooms, classrooms, and professional libraries—and supplies for teaching—reflect an emphasis on learning. The principal is visibly present and welcome at professional learning sessions. The principal exudes support for learning by their actions related to scheduling, in order to minimize interruptions, maximize learning time, and allow for teachers to continue to refine their practice. She or he is part of the larger leadership team that works together to support the goals of professional learning, by analyzing student data to identify areas of improvement and need, creating schedules for professional learning, building a common vision for the school, solving problems as they occur, and providing visible leadership that sets the “norm” for learning.

*Outside the school:* Factors outside the school can support or impede school improvement. School district administration and school boards can impact change by supporting professional learning, insisting on high quality, and allocating resources to make the greatest impact. Their actions related to personnel, policy, and resources over time create stability and consistency in the schools they serve. Parents and community members can provide strong support for professional learning when they are aware of what it entails and the impact it is having. Strong communication with families and the community is key. The design of any professional development plan must consider state and federal policies and funding since these factors impact what happens in schools.

*Across a larger network:* Creating and belonging to networks of teachers, like the Read to be Ready community, which connect schools, districts, states, and even countries, can greatly benefit professional learning. Networks can be sources for new information and can link teachers with common interests and goals. Specialized training might be offered within the network, and it can be helpful in solving problems of change. Teachers, working in different contexts and with different problems, share new ideas as a result of looking at things from different perspectives. Members of the network support one another (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

## Discuss

What shifts have you noticed in these support systems over time in your school or district?  
How have they evolved or changed?

Recall the Barriers to Change in the chart below that we have explored in previous semesters. Consider how the support systems within the larger design for change might be utilized to address or remove each barrier.

<b>Barriers to Change</b>	
1.	<b>Unstable Environments:</b> Changes in administrators, teachers, and students
2.	<b>Lack of a Common Vision:</b> Differing philosophies and ideas among teachers and administrators
3.	<b>Isolationism:</b> Preference for working alone rather than as professional colleagues
4.	<b>Rigid organizational patterns:</b> Traditional ways of managing and using time that do not always promote student learning
5.	<b>Separation:</b> Division and competition of departments, grade levels, and other groups
6.	<b>Fear:</b> Fear of negative attention or jealousy of others for stepping out front or being a leader
7.	<b>Stuck in a Rut:</b> An unwillingness to expend the extra effort that change requires
8.	<b>Lack of confidence:</b> Fear that the change will not “work” or that individuals cannot accomplish the goals
9.	<b>Lack of Ownership:</b> Feelings of powerlessness, because changes are imposed by others
10.	<b>Desire for quick solutions:</b> Going so fast that no one has time to reflect, build ownership, and problem solve



**Notes**

How might support systems within the larger design for change be utilized to address or remove one of the barriers to change?

## Closing Words

The goal of continuous improvement is not simply learning a new strategy but rather creating conditions for perpetual learning. This creates an environment in which innovation and experimentation are viewed not as tasks to be accomplished or projects to be completed but as ways of conducting day-to-day business – forever.

(DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009, p. 91)

# Module 8: Sustaining Professional Learning

## Objectives

- Assess improvements in teaching and learning across all instructional outcomes
- Plan for next steps in professional learning
- Consider the role of the coach in sustaining cycles of continuous improvement

## Link to Tennessee Professional Learning Standards

- Implementation
- Data
- Outcomes
- Learning Community

## TEAM Connection

- Assessment Plans
- Teacher Knowledge of Students


# Assessing Improvement

The six instructional outcomes of the Read to be Ready coaching initiative are intended to help drive Tennessee toward its critical collective goal – by 2025, at least 75 percent of Tennessee third graders will read on grade level. Reaching that goal requires ongoing assessment for the sake of improvement.

Given six instructional outcomes, each consisting of several critical attributes, tracking improvement can be challenging. A “gap analysis” is a way of thinking about where things are right now in relation to goals. Use the tables on the following pages to rate the current status of implementation. Copies of each assessment are also included in the appendix.

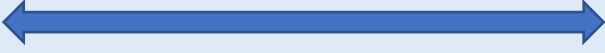
### Assessment: Interactive Read Aloud

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of interactive read aloud...</b>	Response			
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Analyze and select high-quality, content-rich, complex texts	1	2	3	4
Collect texts in a set focused around a concept	1	2	3	4
Craft questions with attention to the conceptual knowledge and enduring understandings of the unit	1	2	3	4
Implement impactful vocabulary instruction	1	2	3	4
Use think alouds to support meaning-making	1	2	3	4
Engage students in synthesizing information for multiple texts	1	2	3	4
Create rigorous, authentic daily and end-of-unit tasks that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4


### Assessment: Shared Reading

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

	Response			
				
<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of shared reading...</b>	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Analyze and select high-quality and appropriately complex texts	1	2	3	4
Incorporate shared reading into text sets	1	2	3	4
Craft questions with attention to the conceptual knowledge and enduring understandings of the unit	1	2	3	4
Integrate vocabulary instruction	1	2	3	4
Model during shared reading	1	2	3	4
Use support structures to make text accessible to all students	1	2	3	4
Create rigorous, authentic daily and end-of-unit tasks that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4


### Assessment: Teaching Foundational Skills Out of Text

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of teaching foundational skills out of text...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Consider student needs in connection with standard goals	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives based on student needs	1	2	3	4
State the foundational skill in clear, concise language	1	2	3	4
Use an adequate number of meaningful examples to make the foundational skill clear	1	2	3	4
Use visual models (e.g., charts, magnetic letters, etc.) to demonstrate the foundational skill	1	2	3	4
Engage the students in the application of foundational skills using specific tasks that extend learning opportunities	1	2	3	4
Engage students in shared learning opportunities (e.g., letter-sound matching, word learning, etc.) in which they provide examples of how they applied their knowledge of foundation skills	1	2	3	4
Observe student responses to gain formative assessment data	1	2	3	4

### Assessment: Teaching Foundational Skills Linked to Authentic Text


***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of teaching foundational skills linked to authentic text...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Consider student needs in connection with standard goals	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives based on student needs	1	2	3	4
Teach students based on their needs how to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say words slowly, identify sounds, and represent them with letters</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice the visual features of words</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use word parts or spelling patterns</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read, write, and use high-frequency words</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice and use word structure</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn new word meanings</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
Use language to teach, prompt for, or reinforce fluent processing of text	1	2	3	4
Observe student responses to gain formative assessment data	1	2	3	4




## Assessment: Interactive Speaking

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of interactive speaking...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Plan for interactive speaking activities that expand understanding of concepts and texts by listening to and responding to peers	1	2	3	4
Establish routines for listening to and responding to peers	1	2	3	4
Engage students in interactive speaking activities where they express their own ideas clearly and accurately, build on each other's thinking, and use text-based evidence	1	2	3	4
Use facilitative talk to demonstrate and prompt for effective discussion	1	2	3	4
Observe and analyze student responses to inform teaching decisions and gain evidence of learning	1	2	3	4

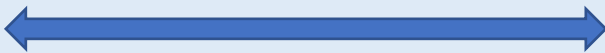
### Assessment: Shared and Interactive Writing

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of shared and interactive writing...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Plan for interactive speaking activities that demonstrate the writing process and provide opportunities for students to expand their conceptual knowledge and understanding of facts	1	2	3	4
Utilize language that supports students in composing and constructing a variety of text types	1	2	3	4
Facilitate opportunities for students to write daily and over extended time frames to apply their learning	1	2	3	4
Use assessment of writing behaviors to inform teaching decisions and gain evidence of learning	1	2	3	4

## Assessment: Small Group Reading with Appropriately Complex Text

**Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.**

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of small group reading...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Use assessment and observational data to group or regroup students homogeneously and heterogeneously	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives that will support skills-based and knowledge-based competencies	1	2	3	4
Select and analyze appropriately complex text to provide specific learning opportunities for small groups of students	1	2	3	4
Create a classroom environment that supports small group reading	1	2	3	4
Use appropriate structure for homogeneous and heterogeneous small group reading lessons to differentiate instruction that may include:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how to introduce a text to support the reader's ability to use meaning, language, and print</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe how readers work through a text</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make notes of critical reading behaviors as evidence of student strengths and needs</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how to engage students in discussing the text to build knowledge and deeper comprehension of text concepts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make teaching points to support learning of strategies and concepts that students can apply to other texts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the strengths and needs of individual learners within specific developmental reading phases in the areas of accuracy, fluency, and/or comprehension</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage students in application of letter/word work to support fluency and flexibility in decoding when reading authentic texts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4

## Assessment: Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of independent reading and reading conferences...</b>	Response			
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Identify the purpose and objectives of independent reading and reading conferences	1	2	3	4
Consider students' strengths and needs in relation to the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards in order to meet the needs of all learners during independent reading and reading conferences	1	2	3	4
Organize the classroom library by selecting genres and texts that correspond to enduring understandings or essential concepts that are addressed in instruction, as well as texts that reflect students' interests and experiences, cultural diversity, and range of difficulty	1	2	3	4
Provide time in the schedule so children choose books, apply reading strategies, develop content knowledge related to enduring understandings, build stamina, and enjoy reading	1	2	3	4
Put classroom organization and routines in place to support independence	1	2	3	4
Support self-selection of books by students based on their interests	1	2	3	4
Confer with individual readers to facilitate individualized instruction and provide opportunities for students to use the academic language of interactive speaking	1	2	3	4
Strengthen strategic thinking and independent written responses to texts by participating in writing demonstrations (through shared and interactive writing) and by receiving regular feedback from teachers	1	2	3	4

## Analysis

Looking across all the rating scales, where are the lowest ratings (i.e., biggest gaps) for your school?

Are there any relationships or connections among your ratings that you want to investigate further?

# Understanding Professional Learning Needs

A strong definition of professional learning needs is critical for developing effective responses. Assessing gaps is a good first step for understanding those needs, but jumping from such an assessment directly into actions would be premature. A more rigorous analysis of needs can help identify the most appropriate strategy or strategies for moving forward.

Root cause analysis is one strategy for analyzing needs. Root cause analysis asks educators to move beyond the obvious manifestations of needs or challenges and dig into their origins, or root causes. Root causes may take any shape or size. Some frequent root causes of challenges are summarized below.

Knowledge/Understanding	Infrastructure	Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• knowledge/understandings of new concepts</li><li>• opportunities for practice and feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• time</li><li>• meeting space</li><li>• resources</li><li>• staffing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• communication</li><li>• shared leadership</li><li>• using evidence in decision making</li></ul>

The 5 Why technique is a commonly used approach for root cause analysis. The 5 Why approach is relatively straightforward. It starts with identifying an issue, asking why it occurs, and then postulating an answer why. The process is repeated until an actionable root cause can be identified. Five steps is a rule of thumb, but it may take more or fewer steps to get to a root cause.

## Example

Problem statement: Many teachers at my school aren't selecting appropriate texts for small group instruction.

1. Why aren't these teachers selecting appropriate texts for small group instruction?  
They are only using Lexile levels for text selection.
2. Why are teachers only using Lexile levels?  
Teachers say they don't have time to assess qualitative aspects of complexity.
3. Why do teachers say they don't have enough time?  
Teachers have other priorities in planning time and they don't see the value of making text analysis a high priority.
4. Why do teachers not see assessing text complexity as a high priority in planning time each day?  
Teachers feel overwhelmed. They aren't familiar with the analysis process, and/or they don't value the analysis process. They also don't see how it will become easier with practice.

## Discuss

What are some steps the coach would take to support teachers based on the root cause analysis?

Imagine that the coach accepted the teachers' initial explanation (step two) without investigating further. How would this alter the actions the coach took to improve the situation? How would this impact the effectiveness of her actions in creating real change?

## Practice

Problem statement: The R.M.S. *Titanic* sank on its maiden voyage in 1912.

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

**Apply**

Use the space below to work through a problem you identified based on the assessments on pages 134-141.

Problem statement:
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why?
Why?



**Reflect**

How did this process support your understanding of the problem you identified?

# Planning to Meet Professional Learning Needs

Using the information from the gap analysis and root cause analysis, educators can come together to create a realistic plan to meet future professional learning needs. Once educators feel like they've identified the root cause of a problem, it is important to engage in a thorough analysis before jumping to a single solution.

The analysis process includes describing the problem from an objective point of view. It is important to document what the issue or challenge looks like and sounds like in the building, including how pervasive it is. Such documentation will help pinpoint solutions that are appropriate to the scale of the problem and will also help you know whether or not your response or solution is effective. Involving relevant stakeholders in the analysis and brainstorming process brings critical voices and perspectives for revealing different aspects of the problem and/or solutions.

The steps in the planning process are:

1. Describe the issue, including what it looks like or sounds like, how you've observed it, and how pervasive it is.
2. Brainstorm actions/solutions.
3. Select actions/solutions.
4. Identify supports inside and outside of the school.
5. Plan how you will implement the action/solution.
6. Know how you will evaluate effectiveness.

## Planning Template Example

In the example on the next page, a coach uses her analysis from the 5 Whys to plan. Notice that the coach slightly rephrased and narrowed the answer to the fourth Why as a way of framing the challenge.

## Professional Learning Needs Planning

### What is the professional learning need or challenge?

Teachers don't understand or value the text analysis process and they haven't had enough practice to see that it will become easier over time.

### Evidence

What does it look like/sound like?	How have you observed it? (What kind of evidence do you have?)	How pervasive is the issue? School-wide? All or some educators?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Texts selected for small group reading that are not well-matched to readers' strengths and needs because they are based only on Lexile level</li> <li>-Students in small groups are not able to process texts effectively and are not getting to deeper meaning</li> <li>-Feedback from teachers that they feel overwhelmed by text analysis process and they don't have time to do qualitative text analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Small group reading lesson plans only include Lexile levels</li> <li>-Observation of small group reading indicates teachers are doing most of the work to process the texts with students</li> <li>-Feedback about professional learning so far indicates this is still an area of confusion for teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Seems to be throughout grades K-3</li> </ul>

### Brainstorm solutions.

- Structure a "practice session" with grade-level teams where the coach brings a selection of books related to a current unit of study and the team practices analyzing the qualitative features and connecting those features to the needs of learners.
- Use the next coaching cycle to focus intensely on text analysis with individual teachers.
- Video an effective small group lesson and ask teachers to reflect on how/why students got to deeper thinking – stress the importance of text selection.

## Professional Learning Needs Planning

**What solution(s) will you try?**

-Structure a “practice session” with grade-level teams.

**Why this solution?**

This solution can be undertaken quickly. It will give everyone a chance to talk as a group and be part of the learning. It has a short turnaround benefit.

**How might you utilize support systems within your school, outside your school, and across your district/network?**

-It may be helpful to talk to the librarian about some possible books before I select them.

**Where will “input” come from? (resources, texts, outside trainer, etc.)**

-Books will be pulled from the book room and library  
-The coach will bring one pager on qualitative text analysis—very simplified and brief

**How will it be introduced? (PLC, grade-level meeting, coaching, PD day)**

-Grade-level meeting

**How will you know if the solution is effective?**

A couple of things might happen.

1. I will be alert for “eureka moments” during the session indicating teachers’ thinking about how much there is to think about with text complexity and how that relates to demands on readers.
2. If the team sees the process as valuable, they may ask for more support like this and ask the coach to come back for another session.
3. If the process is effective, teachers will see more evidence of deeper thinking in the small group lesson.

## Analyze

What did you notice about the connection between the problem, the solution selected, and the way the coach would know if the solution was effective?

**Practice**

<b>Professional Learning Needs Planning</b>		
<p><b>What is the professional learning need or challenge?</b></p> <p>Teachers are not using interactive writing (IW) because they don't know how to facilitate it effectively.</p>		
Evidence		
<b>What does it look like/sound like?</b>	<b>How have you observed it? (What kind of evidence do you have?)</b>	<b>How pervasive is the issue? School-wide? All or some educators?</b>
<p>-In coaching sessions, kindergarten and first grade teachers state that it takes too long to do IW and that students get bored and are not engaged.</p>	<p>-I have observed all kindergarten and first grade classrooms over the past month and have not seen a single IW lesson or seen any evidence of teachers doing IW (e.g., no documents on the walls).</p> <p>-Principal's observations are also that IW is not happening in kindergarten and first grade.</p>	<p>Kindergarten and first grade teachers are not doing IW.</p>
<p><b>Brainstorm solutions.</b></p>		
<p><b>What solution(s) will you try?</b></p>		

**Professional Learning Needs Planning**

**How might you utilize support systems within your school, outside your school, and across your district/network?**

**Where will "input" come from? (resources, texts, outside trainer, etc.)**

**How will it be introduced? (PLC, grade-level meeting, coaching, PD day)**

**How will you know if the solution is effective?**

**Apply**

<b>Professional Learning Needs Planning</b>		
What is the professional learning need or challenge?		
Evidence		
<b>What does it look like/sound like?</b>	<b>How have you observed it? (What kind of evidence do you have?)</b>	<b>How pervasive is the issue? School-wide? All or some educators?</b>
<b>Brainstorm solutions.</b>		
What solution(s) will you try?		
How might you utilize support systems within your school, outside your school, and across your district/network?		



**Professional Learning Needs Planning**

**Where will “input” come from? (resources, texts, outside trainer, etc.)**

**How will it be introduced? (PLC, grade-level meeting, coaching, PD day)**

**How will you know if the solution is effective?**

**Reflect**

How might you use this template to help teachers respond to issues in their classrooms?

# Sustaining Personal Energy for Leadership

“School improvement will fail if the work of coaches remains at the one-to-one level. Coaches are system leaders” (Fullan & Knight, 2011, p. 53). If coaches want to be effective leaders, they must embrace their integral role within a system and develop their abilities to function as powerful agents of change. With that role comes a variety of challenges from constructively building content understanding, to motivating individuals and teams, to facilitating difficult conversations, and to advocating for what is best for children. It is a demanding and multi-faceted role that can make individuals experience excitement, satisfaction, exhaustion, frustration, and isolation all at once!

There are several high-leverage leadership tactics described by Jim Knight that coaches can employ in order to make an impact while building and maintaining the personal routines, boundaries, and mindsets that help to make their leadership role as Read to be Ready coaches sustainable.

## **Tactic 1: Stay Detached**

Change is challenging for everyone. As a defense mechanism, teachers often attack “the face of change” (a.k.a. The Coach) by questioning the coach’s expertise or the effectiveness of the coach’s suggestions. Coaches can protect themselves from “attacks” like these by building partnerships and trying to understand where the teacher is coming from and why they might feel the way they do.

## **Tactic 2: Walk on Solid Ground**

Stay committed and connected to the principles of the Read to be Ready network and the theory of action for Teaching Literacy in Tennessee. Bring colleagues back to discussions of values and beliefs when morale is low.

## **Tactic 3: Clarify your Message**

Maintain the stance of a learner to continue to develop your own understandings and your ability to articulate them to others. Use your growing expertise to meet others where they are.

## **Tactic 4: Manage Change Effectively**

As a leader, keep the outcomes in mind, but be transparent about how things will unfold and how implementation expectations will change over time. Support teachers in noting progress along the way.

## **Tactic 5: Confront Reality**

The goal of coaching is continuous improvement. Whether you approach the truth through inquiry or through forthright communication about what you are noticing, coaching is about honest conversations on behalf of the children you all serve. Teachers will feel satisfaction from being given opportunities to become more reflective and knowledgeable, even when they are being asked to confront the reality that their teaching is not perfect.

**Tactic 6: Understand School Culture**

Work toward changing the norms that do not benefit students by taking a problem-solving stance in all interactions with teachers. “In a sense, culture functions like gravity, no one can see it, but it keeps things in place” (Knight, 2009, p. 122). Work hard to understand the negative ways that the gravitational pull is keeping some teachers stuck or the positive ways that it is keeping people grounded. Discourse is powerful. Through demonstration, reshape the kinds of conversations that are valued in the culture.

**Tactic 7: Be Ambitious and Humble**

Show fierce determination for bringing life to the values and beliefs that underlie the work of the Read to be Ready Coaching Network. At the same time, stay committed to learning alongside your colleagues and pursuing your own professional learning.

**Tactic 8: Take Care of Yourself**

Leadership can be emotionally exhausting. It is easy to become cynical, pessimistic, and frustrated. Making time to connect with others and yourself will provide you with the fuel you need to keep going.

**Examples**

A few examples of how a coach might use these tactics are provided below. The blank spaces can be used to write your own.

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>How might a coach employ this tactic?</b>
Stay detached	If you feel attacked, be curious instead of defensive. Ask yourself, “What did people hear that made them think this?”
Take care of yourself	Start an online meeting group with other coaches where you can discuss success and challenges and support each other.
Walk on solid ground	Remember that teachers care about their students and whenever you can reframe conversations to focus on what they notice about students.

## Closing Words

The power of collective capacity is that it enables ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things—for two reasons. One is that knowledge about effective practice becomes more widely available and accessible on a daily basis. The second reason is more powerful still—working together generates commitment.

(Fullan, 2010, p. 72)

# Appendix Table of Contents

## **Appendix A: Module 2**

- Tip Sheet: Using Teaching Videos in Professional Development

## **Appendix B: Module 3**

- Adding Books to the Classroom Library
- Say Something

## **Appendix C: Module 4**

- Analyzing Written Response to Text Through Independent Writing

## **Appendix D: Module 5**

- Reading Conference Forms
- Reading Conference Record
- Resource List

## **Appendix E: Module 7**

- Classroom Analysis Form

## **Appendix F: Module 8**

- Assessments
- Planning Template

## **References**

# Appendix A: Module 2



## Tip Sheet: Using Teaching Videos in Professional Development

A video clip that provides a real-life example of a teacher working with students is useful for professional learning and development. The goal in using these video clips is to provide a shared experience that you can reflect upon in your own understanding of teaching. The videos provided are examples, *not* exemplars of teaching. The teacher has graciously shared their own teaching so it can be a vehicle for your conversation and professional learning.

In order to keep the focus on the teaching and learning demonstrated during the video clips, professional developers should facilitate discussions that are thought provoking and generative in nature. The purpose is not to “fix” the teaching, but to use the examples of teachers and students working together to think about one’s own teaching. Thought-provoking discussions around teaching examples help identify issues and problems that we experience as teachers and generate questions that can lead to problem solving.

Though there is no such thing as perfect teaching, the clips selected will provide an appropriate example for discussion. The questions below provide an important lens for considering videos of teaching, and can help maintain focus on teaching and learning.

### Teacher Planning and Facilitation of Instruction

1. What are the teacher’s goals for this lesson and how did she/he organize the lesson to address those goals?
2. How is the instruction structured to promote a high level of student engagement?
3. How does the teacher use knowledge of the students during the lesson?
4. What do you notice about the teacher’s use of language (e.g., clarity, appropriate amount of talk, relevance to the lesson/unit, responsiveness to students’ comments, etc.)?
5. What refinements can the teacher apply from this lesson to inform future lessons?

### Student Participation and Learning

1. What evidence demonstrates students’ previous learning?
2. How are students engaging in the reading/writing/language processes?
3. What evidence might indicate that the students fully understand, partially understand, and/or don’t yet understand the concepts?
4. What is evidence of student learning as a result of the teaching?
5. How did students respond to the materials the teacher selected?
6. What do you notice about the students’ use of language (clarity, amount, relevance to the lesson)?

# Appendix B: Module 3

## Adding Books to the Classroom Library

- Search in out-of-the-way places in your school (closets, storage areas, etc.).
- Check books out of the bookroom (sign out books of varying levels).
- Check books out of the school library if you have one and from a variety of public libraries.
- Use book club points to “buy” books.
- Appeal to your parent organization.
- Appeal to local businesses for grants.
- Collect from neighbors books their children no longer need or want.
- Shop yard sales for very inexpensive books.
- Place a book donation box by the front office or lobby. Donate to classrooms in need *or* turn them in for credit at a local used bookstore (if applicable). Use the credit to purchase more appropriate or desirable books.
- Apply for grants. Some sources for grants are the [National Home Library Foundation](#), [Snapdragon Book Foundation](#), [Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation](#), [The Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries](#) and the [Dollar General Literacy Foundation](#) as well as Target and Walmart.
- Visit bargain booksellers online: Amazon, [Book Outlet](#), [Thrift Books](#), [Better World Books](#), [Books A Million](#).
- Attend public library book sales. (Purchase books for as little as \$0.25!)
- Resale shops, such as Goodwill, Salvation Army, and children’s thrift shops often sell children’s books.
- If at least 70 percent of the students in your classroom come from low-income families, check out First Book.
- [Kids Need to Read](#) is another program that provides free books and literary resources to schools and libraries. To be eligible for the program your school must serve at least 50 percent of children living at or below the national poverty line
- The Literacy Empowerment Foundation sponsors the [Reading Resource Project](#), an ongoing program that distributes softcover books to support literacy programs.
- Look for free e-books: [Digital Book Index](#), [International Children’s Digital Library](#), [Library of Congress](#), [Project Gutenberg](#) <http://storytimeforme.com/>, [www.librivox.com](http://www.librivox.com)
- [BookBub](#) is a free daily email that notifies you about limited-time, free and discounted bestselling e-book titles in genres you choose.

**Say Something:**

Some useful stems are listed below to support the discussion.

Purpose	Language Stems
<b>Observe/ Comment</b>	I noticed that ... I think that ... I saw (heard)... This is helpful because ... This is hard because ... This is confusing because ... This makes sense because ... I noticed that the author said ... This (sentence, phrase) here is confusing because ... This (sentence, phrase) makes sense because...
<b>Clarify</b>	Now I understand ... No, I think it means ... At first I thought ..., but now ... I agree with you, and ... What this means is ... Now I understand the part of the text here ... No, I think this part of the text means ... At first I thought this (sentence, phrase) meant..., but now... I agree with you, and this part of the text here confirms ... What this (sentence, phrase) here means is ...
<b>Infer</b>	One thing I think is ... I wonder if ... When the author said _____, it made me think...
<b>Connect</b>	This reminds me of ... This is similar to ... This ... makes me think of ... This ... is like ... because ... This (sentence, phrase) reminds me of ... This (sentence, phrase) is similar to ... This (sentence, phrase) ... makes me think of ... This (sentence, phrase) also ... This (sentence, phrase) ... is like this (sentence, phrase) ... because
<b>Question</b>	What might happen if ... ? Do you think that ...? What evidence supports ...? In other words, are you saying...? How did this (sentence, phrase) ...? In what ways is this (sentence, phrase) like ... ? Do you think that this (sentence, phrase) ...? What evidence from this text supports ...? In other words, are you saying this (sentence, phrase) ...?

(Adapted from Beauchamp, 2013)



# Appendix C: Module 4

<b>Analyzing Written Response to Text Through Independent Writing</b>			
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Understands</b>	<b>Partially understands</b>	<b>Does not currently understand</b>
<b>Writing</b>			
<b>Reading</b>			
<b>Possible Teaching Opportunities</b>			
<b>Tennessee English Language Arts Standards Addressed</b>			

# Appendix D: Module 5

## Reading Conference Forms

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Conference Observations</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Book _____</p> <p>Fluency _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comprehension _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Comments/Observations _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

**Reading Conference Record**

**Week of:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Student Names</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Comments: Book Title, Fluency, Comprehension, Observations, etc.</b>

Reading Conference Notes for _____				
Date	General Notes	Affirm	Expand	Watch List

Reading Conference Notes for _____				
Date	General Notes	Affirm	Expand	Watch List

# Appendix E: Module 7


## Analyzing the classroom environment

Analyzing the Classroom Environment	
Things to look for in a classroom environment	Support for independent reading
Are there well-defined areas for large, small, and independent work?	
Is the classroom library inviting and well-organized?	
Are books easy to find and return?	
Can students easily access a variety of digital texts, including multi-modal texts?	
Are books and/or digital texts integrated into work stations?	
What kinds of resources are on the classroom walls and display areas to help students think about, learn, and use words?	
What kinds of references and resources are available for student use?	
How is print displayed and featured in various areas of the room?	

<b>Analyzing the Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Things to look for in a classroom environment</b>	<b>Support for independent reading</b>
Are lists of words posted on the walls that relate to areas of the curriculum such as math, science, or social studies?	
How is students' thinking represented on the walls in the classroom – co-created anchor charts, student writing, and work samples?	
How well does the material displayed include all members of the community and reflect its diversity?	
Are there numerous displays of written language at student eye-level?	
Are materials labeled? (Younger students may need both a label and a picture to support their independent use of materials.)	
Are there resources such as poems, big books, and other print materials readily available for students to read?	
Are there sets of books organized around concepts being taught?	
Are all materials organized for easy access and return?	

<b>Analyzing the Classroom Environment</b>	
<b>Things to look for in a classroom environment</b>	<b>Support for independent reading</b>
Are furniture and dividers arranged so the teacher can have a full view of the classroom?	
Is there a comfortable and well-supplied area for independent writing?	
Are noisy and quiet areas separated?	
Is there a well-organized place for teacher materials?	


# Appendix F: Module 8

Assessment: Interactive Read Aloud				
<i>Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.</i>				
Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of interactive read aloud...	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Analyze and select high-quality, content-rich, complex texts	1	2	3	4
Collect texts in a set focused around a concept	1	2	3	4
Craft questions with attention to the conceptual knowledge and enduring understandings of the unit	1	2	3	4
Implement impactful vocabulary instruction	1	2	3	4
Use think alouds to support meaning-making	1	2	3	4
Engage students in synthesizing information for multiple texts	1	2	3	4
Create rigorous, authentic daily and end-of-unit tasks that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4




### Assessment: Shared Reading

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

	Response			
				
<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of shared reading...</b>	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Analyze and select high-quality and appropriately complex texts	1	2	3	4
Incorporate shared reading into text sets	1	2	3	4
Craft questions with attention to the conceptual knowledge and enduring understandings of the unit	1	2	3	4
Integrate vocabulary instruction	1	2	3	4
Model during shared reading	1	2	3	4
Use support structures to make text accessible to all students	1	2	3	4
Create rigorous, authentic daily and end-of-unit tasks that are aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4


### Assessment: Teaching Foundational Skills Out of Text

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of teaching foundational skills out of text...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Consider student needs in connection with standard goals	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives based on student needs	1	2	3	4
State the foundational skill in clear, concise language	1	2	3	4
Use an adequate number of meaningful examples to make the foundational skill clear	1	2	3	4
Use visual models (e.g., charts, magnetic letters, etc.) to demonstrate the foundational skill	1	2	3	4
Engage the students in the application of foundational skills using specific tasks that extend learning opportunities	1	2	3	4
Engage students in shared learning opportunities (e.g., letter-sound matching, word learning, etc.) in which they provide examples of how they applied their knowledge of foundation skills	1	2	3	4
Observe student responses to gain formative assessment data	1	2	3	4


### Assessment: Teaching Foundational Skills Linked to Authentic Text

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of teaching foundational skills linked to authentic text...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Consider student needs in connection with standard goals	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives based on student needs	1	2	3	4
Teach students based on their needs how to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say words slowly, identify sounds, and represent them with letters</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice the visual features of words</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use word parts or spelling patterns</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read, write, and use high-frequency words</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice and use word structure</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn new word meanings</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
Use language to teach, prompt for, or reinforce fluent processing of text	1	2	3	4
Observe student responses to gain formative assessment data	1	2	3	4


## Assessment: Interactive Speaking

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of interactive speaking...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Plan for interactive speaking activities that expand understanding of concepts and texts by listening to and responding to peers	1	2	3	4
Establish routines for listening to and responding to peers	1	2	3	4
Engage students in interactive speaking activities where they express their own ideas clearly and accurately, build on each other's thinking, and use text-based evidence	1	2	3	4
Use facilitative talk to demonstrate and prompt for effective discussion	1	2	3	4
Observe and analyze student responses to inform teaching decisions and gain evidence of learning	1	2	3	4


### Assessment: Shared and Interactive Writing

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of shared and interactive writing...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Plan for interactive speaking activities that demonstrate the writing process and provide opportunities for students to expand their conceptual knowledge and understanding of facts	1	2	3	4
Utilize language that supports students in composing and constructing a variety of text types	1	2	3	4
Facilitate opportunities for students to write daily and over extended time frames to apply their learning	1	2	3	4
Use assessment of writing behaviors to inform teaching decisions and gain evidence of learning	1	2	3	4

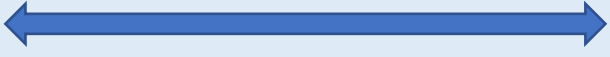
## Assessment: Small Group Reading with Appropriately Complex Text

**Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.**

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of small group reading...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Use assessment and observational data to group or regroup students homogeneously and heterogeneously	1	2	3	4
Identify lesson purpose and objectives that will support skills-based and knowledge-based competencies	1	2	3	4
Select and analyze appropriately complex text to provide specific learning opportunities for small groups of students	1	2	3	4
Create a classroom environment that supports small group reading	1	2	3	4
Use appropriate structure for homogeneous and heterogeneous small group reading lessons to differentiate instruction that may include:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how to introduce a text to support the reader's ability to use meaning, language, and print</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe how readers work through a text</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make notes of critical reading behaviors as evidence of student strengths and needs</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how to engage students in discussing the text to build knowledge and deeper comprehension of text concepts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make teaching points to support learning of strategies and concepts that students can apply to other texts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the strengths and needs of individual learners within specific developmental reading phases in the areas of accuracy, fluency, and/or comprehension</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage students in application of letter/word work to support fluency and flexibility in decoding when reading authentic texts</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4

## Assessment: Independent Reading and Reading Conferences

***Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best matches your response.***

<b>Teachers in my building effectively implement this critical attribute of independent reading and reading conferences...</b>	Response			
				
	Not at All			Consistently
Integrate the Tennessee Academic Standards	1	2	3	4
Identify the purpose and objectives of independent reading and reading conferences	1	2	3	4
Consider students' strengths and needs in relation to the Tennessee English Language Arts Standards in order to meet the needs of all learners during independent reading and reading conferences	1	2	3	4
Organize the classroom library by selecting genres and texts that correspond to enduring understandings or essential concepts that are addressed in instruction, as well as texts that reflect students' interests and experiences, cultural diversity, and range of difficulty	1	2	3	4
Provide time in the schedule so children choose books, apply reading strategies, develop content knowledge related to enduring understandings, build stamina, and enjoy reading	1	2	3	4
Put classroom organization and routines in place to support independence	1	2	3	4
Support self-selection of books by students based on their interests	1	2	3	4
Confer with individual readers to facilitate individualized instruction and provide opportunities for students to use the academic language of interactive speaking	1	2	3	4
Strengthen strategic thinking and independent written responses to texts by participating in writing demonstrations (through shared and interactive writing) and by receiving regular feedback from teachers	1	2	3	4

## Planning Template

<b>Professional Learning Needs Planning</b>		
What is the professional learning need or challenge?		
Evidence		
<b>What does it look like/sound like?</b>	<b>How have you observed it? (What kind of evidence do you have?)</b>	<b>How pervasive is the issue? School-wide? All or some educators?</b>
<b>Brainstorm solutions.</b>		
What solution(s) will you try?		
How might you utilize support systems within your school, outside your school, and across your district/network?		



**Professional Learning Needs Planning**

**Where will "input" come from? (resources, texts, outside trainer, etc.)**

**How will it be introduced? (PLC, grade-level meeting, coaching, PD day)**

**How will you know if the solution is effective?**

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