
Preface

Let's try a little experiment in imagination. Imagine that schools could only commit to teaching one thing. What would you want that one thing to be? About two years ago, we tried this experiment with over 500 teachers across the country. We asked kindergarten teachers, high school physics teachers, and every kind of teacher in between. What do you think the most common answer was? *Reading . . .* and by a fairly wide margin.

To say that reading is important is about as profound as saying that exercise is good for you or that major league baseball players are well paid. In fact, it almost seems unnecessary to explain why reading is so important, but let's give it a try anyway. Here's our 30-second version.

Reading is an essential skill in our culture, and life is simply more difficult for poor readers. Reading is a skill teachers rely on because no amount of lectures, videos, or inquiries permit teachers to cover all of the essential material in their disciplines. And reading is thinking. Through reading, students practice and develop important thinking strategies such as making informed predictions, separating essential from nonessential information, forming main ideas, organizing ideas and details, gathering evidence, drawing conclusions and making interpretations, and raising questions, among others.

With so much of students' present and future academic success riding on reading, how can we help each and every student develop a strategic approach to reading deeply and well? Reading for Meaning is one very good answer. It is a highly flexible strategy, easily adaptable to the needs and abilities of all students, from primary students to struggling readers to gifted and talented learners. And, as you'll see in the model lessons throughout, it's every bit as vital in the mathematics classroom as it is in freshmen English.

In a Reading for Meaning lesson, students preview a series of three to seven statements about a text they are about to read. Once students have reviewed these statements, they read the text and collect evidence that

either supports or refutes each statement. As they discuss their findings in small groups, students improve their abilities to make inferences, identify important information, and develop convincing and well-organized explanations of what they have learned.

In this book, you'll be taking a comprehensive look at Reading for Meaning and six variations designed to meet a variety of instructional purposes. Specifically, you will

- Learn the origins of the strategy and the rich research supporting it in Chapter 1. You'll also see how the strategy plays out in different classrooms with different readings.
- Experience the five phases of Reading for Meaning in Chapter 2 by "joining" a high school classroom.
- Learn the seven steps for planning and implementing a Reading for Meaning lesson in your classroom (Chapter 3).
- Explore the connection between Reading for Meaning and assessment in Chapter 4. Here we focus on two different types of assessment: culminating assessments in which students develop and explain a position in an essay, and formative assessments in which you and your students gather data about how well students' reading and thinking skills are developing.
- Learn how to implement six variations on Reading for Meaning in Chapter 5:
 - Main Idea Fist List
 - Inductive Reading
 - Information Search
 - Do You Hear What I Hear?
 - Collaborative Summarizing
 - Comprehension Menus
- Help students turn Reading for Meaning into a learning strategy that they can use independently to solve the reading challenges posed by even the most difficult texts. Chapter 6 also includes reproducible organizers to help you design and implement Reading for Meaning lessons in your classroom.

We hope that you enjoy the journey to helping your students become better readers and more sophisticated thinkers, and we wish you success along the way.