



Workshop Guide

Readers in the Middle



This guide includes reflection questions and templates to support your viewing of the Readers in the Middle DVD, as well as suggestions for using the DVD in workshop settings with colleagues. The guide is divided by the chapter headings for each section of the DVD.

Introduction

- How is reading workshop structured in your classroom?
- The introduction included a poster with Katie Doherty's expectations for Reading Workshop. What are your expectations for reading workshop? Are there similarities/differences between yours and Katie's?
- How has your reading workshop changed since you started it?
- Do your students have notebooks? Why or why not? Are you happy with the writing components of your reading workshop?

Focus on Inferring: Read Aloud

- How do you use picture books with your students?
- Do you find that the transfer of skills from picture books to independent reading is natural or not? What do you do to support the transfer?
- What are some picture books that you've used successfully?
- Katie says, "You are welcome to write down any inferences you make, of course. But today, I want you to focus on...." How do you balance your teaching point with other things that your students discover on their own and want to share?
- Katie explains, "I try to give them language about what's in their head." How do you help give your students technical or literary language?
- How do you balance reading for enjoyment and using books to practice strategy work?
- Katie gives her students a lot of time to talk to one another. How much time do you give your students to talk to peers about their literacy work? Do you feel that it is usually enough, not enough, or too much?
- "Turn to two or three or maybe even four people" seems to work as a prompt in this classroom for peer discussions. How do you structure peer talk in your classroom?
- Katie moves around doing much informal assessment and conversation during the time students are sharing their thinking with others. What goals

do you have when you have these informal conversations with students in the midst of their conversations?

- Katie uses the follow-up question "What evidence do you have?" Why is this second layer of questioning important?
- Students refer to their notes often. They had an authentic purpose to keep notes in order to support their conversation. What authentic reasons do you give your students write in response to their reading?
- How do you decide which student comments that you want to have shared with the whole group?
- Katie values each comment and continues to ask students questions until their comment helps them understand the story. How do you make sure that connections, etc. support reading and understanding?
- Katie talks about managing the student comments while still valuing each one. How do you balance valuing all comments, yet not allowing incorrect assertions to be accepted by the whole group?

Conferring About Inferring

- How do you use conferences to support learning from whole-class lessons?
- Do your conferences usually connect to the whole class lesson? Why or why not?
- Katie says, "Keep going. I just want to eavesdrop on your conversation." What message does this comment give the students? How do you balance listening in and teaching?
- Katie selects texts carefully based on the strategy she is teaching. What criteria do you use to select texts?
- Katie confers with a student to catch up with students who have been absent. How do you keep up with students who have missed class?
- Katie gives control to the student in their reading by saying "Do you want to come up with a strategy or is it not a big deal?" How do you decide when to invite a student to do something, and when to insist?
- What strategies do you have for supporting students who are hesitant to share their thinking?

Book Clubs

- What are your purposes for book club? How are they similar or different from Katie's?
- How do your routines for book clubs compare to Katie's? Is there anything you would change after listening to Katie's thinking on book clubs?
- Katie uses a "book tasting" to help students choose their books. Is this something you might try? What are some other ways you help students preview and choose books?
- What is your role in book clubs in your classroom? How much do you chime in and how do you balance participating and giving control to your students?

Supporting Struggling Book Clubs

- Katie is honest with the group that is struggling. Do you think that this honesty supports students in moving forward in book club? Why or why not?
- What strategies have worked for you when intervening with struggling book clubs?
- Katie decides which groups to meet with based on current needs. How do you decide which groups to sit in on?
- How do you help groups like this develop independence so that they aren't relying on you to facilitate all conversations?
- Katie works to help her students reflect on their book club meeting as part of the group. How do you incorporate reflection into book clubs?

Response to Poetry

- Katie discusses the importance of a variety of responses to reading. Do you agree or disagree with the need for variety in response?
- Respond to the student conversation to the poem. Was there anything that surprised you?

Guided Reading Group

- What is the role of guided reading in your classroom?
- Katie opened the group up to anyone interested in participating. Do you ever issue open invitations to groups? Why or why not?

Book Talk Preparation

- What is your purpose for student book talks?
- What are the ways that Katie supports students in helping kids share books that you might try?
- What are some other ways that you invite students to share books with each other? Why do you think this is important?

Book Talks

- What benefit do you see for the class with this type of book talk?
- Why do you think it is important for students to ask questions?
- Katie uses the pattern of the comments to plan a minilesson on what questions to answer/not to answer. She decided not to address it in the midst of the talk but to teach a minilesson at another time. What patterns have you noticed lately in activities like this that might require a minilesson?

I Am the One Who

- What other writing prompts like this are inviting for your students, inviting participation from even the most reluctant writers?
- What other writing activities have you used to help students think about literature in new ways?
- Respond to the way Katie dealt with the inappropriate comment by the student. How do you handle similar situations?