



Book Group in a Bag

Practical Steps to Creating Book Study Groups

Why do a book study?

A book study is about a conversation; a conversation intended to stretch thinking and influence practice. Book studies are an effective form of professional development and can be used by educators at all levels for their personal and professional growth.

What steps should be considered before planning a book study group?

According to Diane Sweeny in *Learning All the Way*, book study groups are most effective when they are:

- Are voluntary;
- Involve participants in the decision-making process regarding content and group norms;
- Reflect regularly on whether the time spent has been productive;
- Include rituals and celebrations;
- Determine norms and procedures as a group;
- Avoid assuming certain participants are experts (all are here to learn); and
- Consider the book study group a time for learning and reflective participation.

How should the group set up the book study?

- Establish a good physical environment
- Select a facilitator for each meeting
- Use questions in the facilitator's guide to start the discussion
- Create a schedule with timelines.
- Determine goal and objectives. It might be helpful to have some initial goals and objectives and present them to the group. Asking the participants for goals and objectives, again, will draw them into the process.
- Relax, keep it positive
- Snacks and other incentives are always helpful and set the tone for an enjoyable experience.

Other questions to consider:

- Who will facilitate the meetings? Will the facilitator role be rotated between participants?
- How will the group respect and gain input from people with differing opinions or people who are not actively participating?
- How will PDC points be awarded for this process? The group should keep in mind that participants could work on application and impact level by keeping journals of the process, redesigning data systems, etc.



Book Group in a Bag: Facilitator's Guide

Available for Checkout

Collaborative Strategic Reading: Strategies for Improving Comprehension (2001). Janette K. Klingner, Sharon Vaughn, Longmont, Colorado: Sopris West.

Book Description

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) teaches students with varied ability levels four specific comprehension strategies while working cooperatively. It is geared for third through eighth grade general education classrooms and can be used as an intervention tool for grades nine through twelve. Student strategies includes previewing the text; giving ongoing feedback by deciding “click” (I get it) or “clunk” (I don’t get it) at the end of each paragraph; getting the “gist” of the most important parts of the text; and “wrapping up” key ideas. It provides step-by-step instructions, lesson plans, sample teacher-to-student dialogues, whole class activities and reproducibles.

Helpful Hints

In order to facilitate the study group most effectively, a team may want to consider doing the following:

- Using technology to support the book study group. Buildings and districts across Kansas have utilized technology including hot links to make the materials more accessible for teachers. Technology will also allow greater participation to time-strapped staff.
- The text contains short, easy to read chapters that can be used during faculty meetings to engage all staff in discourse about RtI.
- Rotate facilitation of the group. In this way, more people will take ownership of the process. *(Please see the Practical Steps to Creating Book Study Groups” document enclosed in this packet.)*

Framing the Context of a Book Study: Powerful Tools for Learning

Two powerful venues for deepening understanding, impacting student outcomes and contributing to the growth of learning organizations are professional learning communities and communities of practice. One of the most effective ways to make your school a learning organization is to create a professional learning community or a community of practice. The concept of a professional learning community is a powerful influence around the work of restructuring schools. According to Rick Dufour in *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don’t Learn*, the fundamental role of schools is “learning, not teaching.”

While Dufour acknowledges that this is “an enormous distinction,” he notes that the emphasis on learning leads those within the school to place their focus and energy on three important questions:

1. What is it we want all students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when students experience difficulty?

Another option for helping schools and districts is to create a community of practice. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A community of practice (CoP) makes connections from person to person for mutual inquiry and learning about a practice or issue. Everyone’s voice is needed. Participants develop a shared identity and share a repertoire of knowledge and experiences (Wenger, 2003). Both professional learning communities and communities of practice move system stakeholders from knowing to doing.

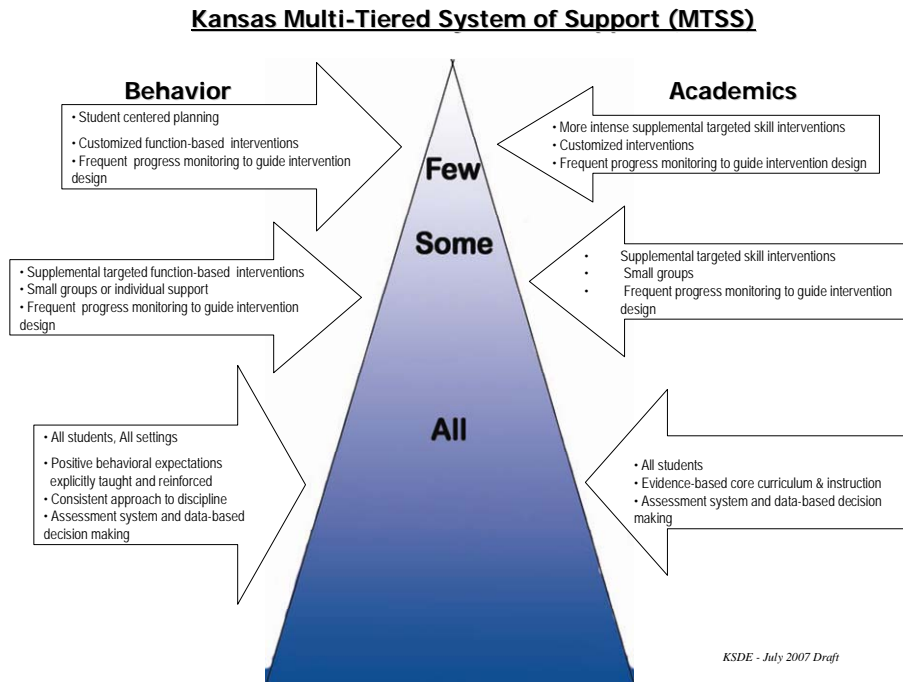
A book study becomes a powerful tool that these communities can use to engage in powerful, professional discourse. A building or existing PLC or CoP may want to add a book study as another tool to aid in professional development. When your school or team begins planning their book study, keep the above questions in mind as a way to frame all discussions around student learning and school improvement.

Framing the Context of Discussion within the Kansas Multi-tiered System of Support

These book studies were created from information and resources gathered by pilot sites who served as early implementers of a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) in Kansas. These schools and districts recommended several books that pertain to the practices embodied by MTSS. In response to the growing demand for more information about MTSS and what it looks like in Kansas, Project SPOT has developed a series of Book Groups in a Bag. Each book bag can be checked out or purchased. For a list of facilitated Book Group in a Bag titles, please see www.Projectspot.org.

The facilitator’s guide has been created to frame learning and discussions specifically within a MTSS framework. MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each Kansas student to achieve high standards.

Graphically, MTSS looks like this:



The core beliefs underpinning MTSS include:

- Responsibility and leadership are critical at all levels for planning, implementing, and evaluating
- Change at all levels must be intentional, coherent, and dynamic
- Intentional design and redesign of resources are matched to student needs
- An empowering culture creates collective responsibility for student success
- Academic and behavioral performance data are used to inform instructional decisions
- Intervening at the earliest identification of need is necessary for student success (PreK-12)
- Reciprocity between policy and practice is based on research and outcomes
- Collaboration among educators, families and community members is the foundation to effective problem-solving and instructional decision making.

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The following section contains discussion questions broken out by chapter. These questions are designed to facilitate thinking and discussion around *Collaborative Strategic Reading: Strategies for Improving Comprehension*.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Collaborative Strategic Reading

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). It will give an introduction on how students learn to implement the preview strategy before reading, a self-monitoring strategy called “Click and Clunk”, a strategy while reading called “Getting the Gist” and the “Wrap Up” strategy after students are finished reading. This chapter will give reasons why it is beneficial to teach CSR and the research that supports this format. The chapter ends with a quick section on how the rest of the book is organized.

Helpful Hints

As you read the overview chapter, think of the purpose and the critical components of each of the four comprehension strategies in the CSR plan. Also, allow extra time for groups to re-teach the CSR strategies in a creative way.

Discussion Questions

1. What comprehension strategies are currently being taught in classrooms and/or school wide? Are they being taught explicitly? Does your staff have specific comprehension strategies in place for struggling readers?
2. Discuss how your students are doing with comprehending expository text according to your school data. Is this an area of concern for all students or subgroups of students?
3. Divide up into 4 groups. Have each group come up with a creative way (using visual, kinesthetic, and auditory modes) to teach the four steps in the CSR’s Plan for Strategic Reading on pages 2-3.
4. Relate the information contained in the last paragraph on page four to how CSR will fit in each of the tiered settings (core, tier 2 and tier 3) relating to struggling readers.
5. Create a Venn diagram or some other visual to show the main differences of CSR and Reciprocal teaching. Which style will students benefit from?

Chapter 2: Teaching the CSR Comprehension Strategies to Your Class

Overview

This chapter helps educators with their lesson plans for teaching CSR comprehension strategies. These strategies teach students the metacognitive and self-regulation skills they need to comprehend well.

Helpful Hints

As you read this chapter, think of the major points you must consider before, during and after reading. Also, consider reading through and discussing the *Frequently Asked Questions* sections as a group.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the three types of metacognitive knowledge. When would these be used?
2. What are the three phases of scaffolding instruction? Would these three phases be beneficial to teach in a tiered setting?
3. Why would it be important to explicitly teach metacognitive instruction?
4. After reading about the lesson plan format on page 18, together read through lessons one and two. Discuss how teaching CSR explicitly will benefit all students in the core, tier 2 and tier 3 settings.
5. Discuss how ideas on pg. 48 could be used in tier 2 settings.

Chapter 3: CSR and Cooperative Learning Groups

Overview

Chapter 3 begins by giving a brief overview of Cooperative Learning and its value in incorporating it into the CSR lessons. It explains the components and how to assign students to groups. A section explaining possible roles for students and how to teach them the roles is helpful before reading through the sample lessons provided. The teacher is there to facilitate students' success.

Helpful Hint

While reading through this chapter, take the time to assign students to groups by following the steps on page 56. Have this information ready before discussion. Also, be thinking of how you can assign groups in a tier 2 setting.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss your school's current practices and training with cooperative learning. What benefits are seen? Who are your experts?
2. According to CSR what are the two main responsibilities of cooperative learning groups?
3. As a group, after reading through the *Why Should We Include Cooperative Learning?* section on page 54, use the Get the Gist strategy with this part of the passage.
4. Discuss possible best settings and best times for teaching the roles for CSR groups as described on page 60.
5. If time permits, actually take parts and read through the sample lesson on pages 61-65 to get a feel for a complete lesson. Next, have group members give a response to how they see this process working in their classrooms or with tier 2 groups.
6. End this chapter by brainstorming ways to use before and after group work to benefit your core and tier 2 students' reading comprehension.

Chapter 4: CSR Materials

Overview

This chapter provides materials to be used to teach and practice the process of CSR.

Helpful Hints

Be thinking about what would be needed for teachers to actually begin using CSR in the classroom. This may be best used as a “make-it and take-it” session to prepare materials. The facilitator may want to have transparencies, hard stock paper, etc., ready for this session. Have each group member bring at least one example of expository text being used in classrooms.

Discussion Questions

1. Take some time to look through expository materials provided by group members. Read the Content Area Textbook section on pages 74-75 to use as a guide for appropriateness for CSR.
2. Discuss other available resources in your building for teaching CSR such as Scholastic News, Weekly Reader, or passages in a comprehensive reading program such as Treasures or Houghton Mifflin.
3. Knowing that struggling readers many times also have difficulty with writing, discuss how tier 2 instruction might help support the use of learning logs during core instruction.
4. The remainder of this session could be used to have a group make-it and take-it to prepare materials to get started. Discuss organization of materials in the classroom for easy access for students.

Chapter 5: Adaptations to CSR for Secondary Students

Overview

This chapter provides ideas for how to adapt CSR or secondary content area instruction. The authors discuss areas such as teaming, materials, instructional grouping, and vocabulary instruction where adaptations can be helpful.

Helpful Hints

Think of how the focus of reading instruction in the secondary content areas shift from primary and intermediate grades as well as how students are different learners.

Discussion Questions

1. Develop a visual or graphic organizer to show how the emphasis of reading instruction changes on a continuum from early primary through grade 12.
2. Take what has been learned about CSR so far and discuss how teachers can make adaptations to accommodate the learning needs of struggling readers. How would it fit in a tier 2 setting?
3. Study the table on page 109 and discuss how this information could be used to design good instruction for struggling readers.
4. How could a staff use the teaming concepts discussed on pages 108 and 110 in an existing secondary setting, so that students would benefit from common language and comprehension instruction across content areas?
5. How are grouping options the same and different at the secondary level? How could tier 2 interventions using these comprehension strategies be scheduled in a secondary setting?
6. Discuss and share favorite teacher tips from this book and personal teaching experiences.
7. Review the critical components of integrating CSR into both narrative and expository text. How is vocabulary instruction emphasized and why?



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Feedback Form

Please provide feedback upon completion of the book study. Return this form in the facilitator guide folder.

1. Was the facilitator's guide useful in leading your discussion of *Collaborative Strategic Reading*? Why or why not?
2. How can we improve this experience?
3. Would you recommend this to other groups?