

Resource Companion for *Reading to Learn*

A Companion to *Reading to Learn: A 7-Step Framework for Optimizing Comprehension in Pre-K–12 Classrooms*

About the Book

This resource is a companion to *Reading to Learn: A 7-Step Framework for Optimizing Comprehension in Pre-K–12 Classrooms* by Kevin Perks and Melissa Strand, published by Teachers College Press (2026) in partnership with WestEd.

The book introduces a practical, research-grounded framework for comprehension instruction across all grade levels and content areas. At its core, it draws a critical distinction between the *Science of Comprehension* and the *Science of Comprehension Instruction*. The 7-step framework translates both bodies of knowledge into clear, observable classroom practices for teachers at every stage of their career.

About the Authors

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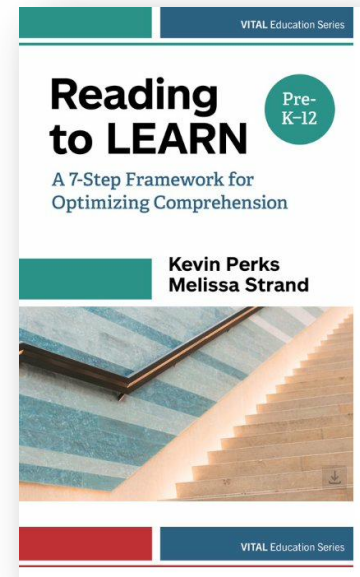
Melissa Strand is a school improvement and literacy specialist at WestEd. A former National Board-Certified Teacher with a master's in bilingual/multicultural education and a PhD in cognition and instruction, she brings over 23 years of experience as an elementary school teacher, university professor, and instructional coach. Her work focuses on building literacy capacity in districts and states across the country.

About the VITAL Education Series

The VITAL Education Series (Visibly Improving Teaching and Learning) is a growing collection of resources from WestEd and Teachers College Press, built on the idea that improving practice requires making the processes that shape teaching and learning more visible.

How to Use These Online Resources

Each resource in this document comes from a specific chapter in *Reading to Learn*. The resources are designed to be used alongside the book, but they also include sufficient context to be useful as stand-alone tools. To get the most out of these materials, we recommend reading the corresponding chapter before using the tools in your classroom or with your professional learning community.



About This Resource

This companion brings together tools and graphics from *Reading to Learn: A 7-Step Framework for Optimizing Comprehension in Pre-K–12 Classrooms* into a single downloadable document. The resources are organized in the order in which they appear in the book, from the *Reading to Learn* framework graphic in Chapter 3 through the Theory of Action graphic in Chapter 14. Each section begins with a brief description of the resource and its suggested uses.

Chapter 3

- The *Reading to Learn* Framework Graphic—a full-color printable graphic of the framework’s two-layer structure

Chapter 4

- Vignette Note-Taking Tool
- Four classroom vignettes illustrating the framework across grade levels and content areas

Chapter 5

- Framing Questions for Planning and Reading
- Scaffolding Matrix
- *Reading to Learn* Planning Tool

Chapter 13

- Book Study Discussion Protocol
- Book Study Note-Taking Tool
- Protocol for Tuning a Lesson

Chapter 14

- Theory of Action Graphic—a full-color printable graphic for school leaders

CHAPTER 3: THE *READING TO LEARN* FRAMEWORK

The *Reading to Learn* Framework Graphic

This full-color graphic of the *Reading to Learn* Framework depicts the framework’s two-layered structure: seven core comprehension practices organized across the three phases of reading (Before, During, and After) and five supporting practices that amplify comprehension throughout.

Suggested uses: Print and post in classrooms or professional learning spaces, use as a reference tool when planning lessons, or share with colleagues as a visual introduction to the framework.



CHAPTER 4: VIGNETTES AND NOTE-TAKING TOOL

Vignette Note-Taking Tool and Classroom Vignettes

The note-taking tool on the following page is a structured observation form for use before, during, or after reading a vignette or observing a lesson. The four vignettes that follow illustrate the *Reading to Learn* Framework in action across grade levels and content areas.

VIGNETTE NOTE-TAKING TOOL

Vignette Title:

Text Type(s):

What factors might make the text(s) challenging?

Core practice	Was it integrated? If so, how was it integrated?
Setting the Purpose	
Identifying Text Elements	
Activating Background Knowledge	
Anticipating and Predicting	
Gathering Information	
Making Sense of Information	
Applying Learning	

Supporting practice	Was it integrated? If so, how was it integrated?
Collaboration	
Writing to Think and Communicate	
Academic Discourse	
Motivation	
Metacognitive Awareness	

Vignette 1: How Writers Build Suspense

In Mrs. Sullivan’s 8th-grade English class, students are diving into the short story “Night Drive” by Will F. Jenkins (1962). It is a suspenseful short story about revenge. The class is about to read the second section of the story, in which the female protagonist begins to suspect she may have a serial killer in her car.

As the class begins, Mrs. Sullivan addresses her students: “As you know, we need to warm up before we start reading. Let’s review our objective for today.” She scans the room, pausing on a quiet boy in the middle. “Johnny, remind us why we are reading ‘Night Drive.’”

Johnny pauses thoughtfully. “We are looking for examples of how the author builds suspense.”

“Excellent,” Mrs. Sullivan replies with a smile. “Tell me more. Why is this useful?”

Johnny considers for a moment. “Because you want us to use some of the same strategies in the stories we are writing.”

“That’s right, Johnny. Thank you.” Mrs. Sullivan turns to the rest of the class. “Yesterday we identified several ways Jenkins builds suspense as an author. What were some of those strategies?” She scans the room. Many hands go up, but she calls on Jessica, an attentive student seated at the back who had not raised her hand.

Jessica opens her notebook, glances at her notes, and replies, “We identified four strategies: descriptions of nervousness, eerie details, things that seem out of place, and references to a past mystery.”

“That was spot-on, Jessica. Great.” Mrs. Sullivan walks toward the front and gestures to a prompt written on the whiteboard. “Open your writer’s notebooks. You have 5 minutes to respond to the following prompts: *What do you anticipate will happen in the next section of the story? And what new strategies, if any, do you think Jenkins will use to build suspense?* He may reuse strategies you’ve already noticed or introduce new ones. What do you predict they will be?” She glances at the clock. “You have 5 minutes. Remember, use all your time to write! Go!”

As students begin writing, Mrs. Sullivan circulates around the room, pausing often to read over shoulders and offer quiet encouragement or feedback. To provide differentiated support, some students are working in pairs; others are working alone. When the time is up, she invites a few students to share their predictions. She then directs everyone to take out their stories and join their reading partners.

Once all students are settled in pairs or groups of three, Mrs. Sullivan explains the reading task: “Today, you’ll do what you did yesterday: underline sentences or passages in the rest of the story. But today, you’ll be more specific in how you code the text. Yesterday, you used an *S* to mark suspense. Today, use these new codes based on what we discussed:

- “*FN* for feelings of nervousness.
- “*ED* for eerie or scary details.
- “*PM* for references to a past mystery.
- “*ODD* for things that seem out of place.”

“You can use *NS* for a new strategy if it doesn’t fit one of these categories. Any questions?” Seeing nods and eager expressions, she adds, “Great. You have 20 minutes to read and code the rest of the story.”

Students begin reading quietly in pairs, taking turns and pausing regularly to discuss and annotate. One pair and one trio work with a Spanish version of the story, using it to support bilingual discussion and deepen comprehension. Mrs. Sullivan moves through the room, stopping to listen, prompt, or offer guidance as needed. Most students finish within the allotted time; a few need more time. Those who finish early jot down any new suspense strategies they notice in their notebooks.

Once everyone is done, Mrs. Sullivan reconvenes the class. “Let’s discuss what new strategies Jenkins uses to build suspense in this section.” She writes students’ observations on the board as they share. Then she asks students to turn in their notebooks for review.

With about 15 minutes left, Mrs. Sullivan transitions the class into a writing session. “Now return to your own mystery stories. Remember to try using some of the suspense strategies we’ve been studying.” She again circulates through the room, holding mini-conferences to offer guidance and feedback.

As the end-of-class bell nears, Mrs. Sullivan returns to the front of the room and points to the homework posted on the board. “Before you leave, jot down tonight’s assignment. Visit the class website and complete the entry ticket for tomorrow. It will ask you to reflect on how ‘coding the text’ helped you understand what Jenkins is doing and which strategies you’re using in your own writing. Be thoughtful.”

As the bell rings, she raises her voice above the bustle. “Have a great day! See you all tomorrow. Excellent work today!”

Vignette 2: Exploring Linear Relationships

In Ms. Alvarez’s 7th-grade math class, students are exploring linear relationships by analyzing patterns in a table of values. As students settle in, Ms. Alvarez addresses the class with a tone of invitation. “Today we’re going to be pattern detectives. I’m going to show you a table, but only one row at a time. Your job is to figure out what’s going on and explain how you know. Now, who can tell me *how* I want you to show me what is going on? By doing what? No hands. Please take a few moments to jot down your response in your math journal. Go!”

The students open their journals and start writing down their thoughts. After 30 seconds or so, Ms. Alvarez calls on a student. “Felicia, how are you going to show me what is going on?”

Felicia glances at her notebook. “By creating an equation?”

“Excellent,” Ms. Alvarez says. “Now, turn to your partner and explain in your own words how an input-output table works. You should have the definition in your notebooks from the other day.”

Students flip through pages and begin talking in low voices. Some pairs speak in English, and others blend English and Spanish to explain their reasoning. Ms. Alvarez moves between tables, listening closely. When she hears a student reading directly from their notes, she leans in and says quietly, “Try saying it your way. You can check your notes if you need to.”

The students start flipping through pages in the journal and talking to each other. After a minute or so, Ms. Alvarez calls on a student in the back. “Gabe, please explain to me how an input-output table works.”

Gabe, a student with dark hair, begins to read from his math notebook. “An input-output table is a way to organize . . .”

Ms. Alvarez raises her hand and interrupts politely. “Please use your own words, Gabe. Don’t just read what you have. Try covering the definition and explaining in your own words.”

Gabe places his hand on his notebook and tries again. “It’s when you have a table where you put a number in, and then you do something to it—like times it by 2 or add 5—and then you get a new number out. The table helps you keep track of what you started with and what you ended up with. If you look at a bunch of the numbers, you can usually figure out what the rule is.”

Ms. Alvarez smiles. “Very good, Gabe. Does anyone wish to share anything else?” An eager student in the front raises their hand. “Yes, Simone?”

Simone says, “You use the table to figure out the rule or an equation that explains the rule.”

“Excellent, both of you. Now let’s try it.”

Ms. Alvarez turns to the whiteboard and reveals just the first row of an input-output table:

x	y
1	3

A moment of silence ensues. Then she asks, “What do you notice? What do you wonder?”

Several hands go up. “Maybe y is x plus 2?” one student ventures. Another chimes in, “Could just be coincidence. We need more.”

Ms. Alvarez nods. “Let’s see what happens next.” She adds the second row:

x	y
1	3
2	5

A ripple of excitement moves through the room. “It’s going up by two!” someone exclaims.

“Is it? Let’s test that theory. Let’s add one more row.”

She reveals the third row:

x	y
1	3
2	5
3	7

Now the room hums with quiet talk. Ms. Alvarez circulates again, adjusting her questions for different groups. With one group of students, she gestures to their table and says, “Try writing what happens from one row to the next in words first, and then see if you can turn it into an equation.” At another table, she challenges students who finish early: “If you already have a rule, test it with $x = 10$ and see if it still works.”

As she stops by a group of English Learners, she points to the class word wall, where *input*, *output*, and *rule* appear in both English and Spanish. “Use these words as you explain,” she reminds them. “They help your math sound precise.” The students nod and rehearse their explanations together before recording them in their notebooks.

Students jot down possibilities in their notebooks. One pair leans in together, whispering over a half-formed equation. Another has written, “Rule: $y = 2x + 1$.” Ms. Alvarez crouches beside them. “Why do you think that’s the rule? Where does the +1 come from?”

They point to the first row. “If x is 1, 2 times 1 is 2. But y is 3. So, you’d have to add 1.”

“Does it work for the other rows?”

The student quickly calculates. “Yeah. For 2, it’s 4 plus 1. And for 3, it’s 6 plus 1.”

“Nice,” she says, and moves on.

After giving all of the pairs a chance to explore, she brings the class back together. “Let’s test your rules. What do you get if x is 10? If it still works, you’re on the right track.”

They solve together, then shift from analysis to explanation. Ms. Alvarez asks them to describe how they figured it out to another pair and to compare notes: What did you notice first? What changed your mind? How did you know your rule was right?

With about 15 minutes left, she projects a new task:

x	y
2	9
3	13

“Use what you learned today. Figure out the rule for this new pattern. You’ll complete the next two rows and write the rule you think fits. This time work on your own or in your assigned pairs.”

Students get to work, pencils scratching, checking and double-checking. As they finish, Ms. Alvarez encourages them to go back to their predictions and test again. Before the bell rings, she offers a final prompt: “On the back of your exit slip, tell me one thing that helped you figure it out. Was it something you noticed? A mistake you fixed? A conversation you had with a classmate? Remember to use math terms from our word wall in your responses.”

Vignette 3: Read-Aloud in Kindergarten

The smell of snacks still lingers in the air as Mrs. Garcia’s kindergarten students finish putting away their lunch bags. Sunlight pours through the windows and warms the reading corner of the classroom, where a cozy carpet and a large easel await. Mrs. Garcia claps her hands once and calls out, “Girls and boys, we’re going to read a story together in the corner. Please head over calmly and take a seat.”

The students make their way to the round carpet and settle in. Mrs. Garcia sits on a low chair, a bright yellow book on her lap and a gentle smile on her face. She waits patiently until the students are quiet, then raises her hand. One by one, the students raise theirs in response until the room is still.

“Thank you for finding your seats so quickly,” she begins. “Today we’re reading one of my favorite books, *And Here’s to You!* You’ll notice each page follows a similar pattern. After we read, we’re going to create our own page to add to the book.”

She holds up the book for all to see. On the cover is an illustration of a girl with her arms wide open, birds perched on her hands, with a dog and a duck nearby. She points to the title and slowly traces each word with her finger. “This says *And Here’s to You!* Read it with me.” She slowly traces her finger under the words in the title and reads the words. The students mimic her. She does this a few times.

Next, she turns to a student near her and asks, “Maria, what do we call the name of a book?”

Maria hesitates, then softly says, “The title?”

“Yes! Great job.” Mrs. Garcia continues, “William, this says ‘David Elliott.’ Who do you think he is?”

William calls out, “The author!”

“And Joaquin, it also says ‘illustrated by Randy Cecil.’ What does that mean?”

Joaquin responds, “They made the pictures in the book.”

“Excellent,” says Mrs. Garcia. “This book is about celebrating.” She gestures to the easel next to her where the word *Celebrate* is written in bold purple marker. “Who can tell me what it means to celebrate?”

Felicia raises her hand. “We celebrate birthdays in my house. With cake and balloons!”

Mrs. Garcia chuckles. “That’s right! We celebrate things that are special to us. Now, turn to a partner and share something you love or something you celebrate in your family.”

Students turn knee-to-knee, their voices bubbling with laughter and stories. Some pairs chat in English, while others slip naturally into Spanish to share ideas about fiestas, pets, or special meals.

After a moment, Mrs. Garcia signals with her hand. “I heard a lot of you mention pets. Well, this book celebrates all kinds of living things—creatures of every kind. Before we start, let’s make some predictions. What creatures do you think we’ll see in the book?”

Students eagerly call out suggestions. As they speak, Mrs. Garcia writes their ideas—monkeys, dolphins, cats, snakes—in green marker around the word *Celebrate*.

She opens the book and begins. On the first page, a girl stands smiling among birds. Mrs. Garcia prompts, “What do you see in the picture?”

“Birds!” “She’s smiling!” “There are feathers!”

She nods. “Let’s read together.” Her finger glides under the text.

Here’s to the birds!

The feather people!

Birds!

“Let’s read that again,” she says. “Now, can you connect the words to what you see in the picture?”

Johnny chimes in, “The birds have feathers!”

Sandra adds, “She’s a person. So, birds are people too in this book?”

Mrs. Garcia grins. “Yes! The author calls all kinds of creatures ‘people’ to celebrate them.”

Page by page, Mrs. Garcia reads about fish, bears, bugs, cats, dogs, cows, and frogs. She pauses frequently to ask what students notice and helps them connect illustrations to the words on the pages. Sometimes she asks students to read repeated lines aloud.

As she reads, she also gestures at times toward a bilingual word wall behind her, where key terms such as *celebrate/celebrar*, *creature/criatura*, and *feather/pluma* are displayed with small pictures. As she rereads, she points to words on the wall on occasion and encourages the class to repeat them in both English and Spanish.

After the final page, which celebrates all kinds of people, including the reader, Mrs. Garcia flips to a blank sheet of chart paper. A fill-in-the-blank version of the text awaits:

Here’s to the _____!

The _____ people!

Here’s to the _____ ones.

The _____ ones.

Here’s to the _____ ones.

The _____ ones.

Oh, I love the _____!

“Let’s write our own page,” she announces. “Esperanza, what is an animal we didn’t read about?”

“Horses!” Esperanza shouts.

“Perfect.” With the class’s help, Mrs. Garcia fills in the chart:

Here’s to the horses!

The neighing people!

Horses!

Here’s to the brown ones.

The black and white ones.

Here’s to the prancy ones.

The love-to-eat-apples ones.

Oh, I love the horses!

She pauses to reread the class’s new page twice, first in English, then line by line in Spanish, inviting bilingual students to help with the translation. “See?” she says, smiling. “We can celebrate in two languages.” A few students beam proudly. “You are all authors now,” she adds. “And after lunch, you’ll be illustrators, too. We’ll draw pictures of our horses to go with our page. Wonderful work today!”

Vignette 4: Analyzing Structural Texts in CTE

The eight students in Mr. Archembault’s building trades career and technical education (CTE) class pour out of the van the moment it comes to a stop in front of a two-story blue house in a residential section of town. Many are holding coffee cups. A few munch on egg sandwiches. When all of the students are standing in a circle on the lawn around the instructor, Mr. A addresses the group.

“Good morning, everyone. I know it was a little bit of a ride to get here, so I hope you are fresh and ready to go. As I told you last week, we are visiting a potential client who would like to buy a hot tub and put it on his deck. Your task will be to work with a partner to analyze the existing deck. You’ll notice that there are three versions of the note-taking form in your packets—one with guiding questions, one with open prompts, and one that is blank for those of you who want to design your own. Choose the version that best helps you organize your work. You will use the form to record your observations and generate a list of questions to ask the client. Then you and your partner will discuss what needs to be done and what recommendations you will make. Your final task will be to write a price quote. The client may or may not choose one of your quotes.” Mr. A pauses for a moment. “Are there any questions at this point?”

A female student to Mr. A’s left raises her hand. “Who will we be partnered with?”

Mr. A smiles. “Thanks for asking, Lacey. I was just about to get to that.” Pulling a piece of paper from a folder he is carrying, Mr. A begins to read off names. “Lacey, you are with Jordan. Billy, you are with Tyler. Sam and Walker are partners. Finally, Kyle and Carter will be together.” After the names are read, a couple of students give high fives. One student groans in fake annoyance.

Smiling at the good-natured camaraderie, Mr. A clears his throat. “Okay, enough goofing around. Before I set you free, there are a few things I want to discuss to make sure you are ready to do your analysis. First, take a few moments to discuss with your partner what things you might expect to find when you look at the deck. Go ahead. Confer.”

The students find their partners and begin to discuss in soft voices. One student pauses and calls out, “Mr. A, how old is the deck?”

“That is a good question to ask the client, Billy—we’ll get to that in a bit—but it is over 15 years old.” Billy nods and returns to talking with his partner.

As students confer, a few pairs examine their note-taking forms, deciding which version to use. One group selects the structured form with sentence starters; another opts for the open version, preferring to sketch and annotate freely. Mr. A encourages each team to pick the approach that helps them work most effectively.

After a couple of minutes, Mr. A asks the students to share some of the things they expect to find when they look at the deck. Some of the pairs mention the type of materials and different styles of decking that they expected to find. One pair predicts that the deck will be connected to a second-floor bedroom, and they expect to find long beams resting on cement footings.

Mr. A then provides them with another prompt: “Okay, you have thought a little bit about what you might find when you look at the deck. How about some key information you need to know beforehand? Based on what I told you, is there any information that would be helpful before examining the deck?”

A few students raise their hands. Mr. A points to a boy in a baseball cap to his left. “Carter. Go ahead.”

“Well, if they want to put a hot tub on the deck, we need to know how big it is.”

Mr. A presses for more information. “What do you mean? Why does it matter how big it is?”

Carter pauses for a second. “Well, we need to know how much water it holds to figure out the weight.”

Mr. A pushes some more. “So?”

“Knowing the weight will tell us how much support is needed and if the deck is designed to hold the weight. We might need to add support.”

Mr. A smiles. “Good thinking!”

Another student calls out, “We’ll also need to know how many people the tub is designed to hold so that we include that weight as well.”

“Another good thought!” Mr. A observes.

For the next few minutes, the students share other thoughts and ideas. When this discussion has finished, Mr. A gives them their next task.

“Okay, everyone! Gather around again. In a minute or so, you can grab your clipboards and pencils and go around the back to begin inspecting the deck. I have already spoken to the owner, so we can head over there now. Oh! They have a German shepherd, and he is inside—so do not be afraid if you hear him barking. I have met the dog, though. His name is Spunky. He is friendly. As you may know—sometimes dogs get out! Okay, go ahead!”

In their pairs, the students begin to make their way through the gate and to the back of the house. Once in the backyard, they see the deck. It is connected to the main door in the back, but because the house is on a slope, much of the deck is elevated over 5 feet above the ground at one end. The students walk around and under the deck. In their pairs, they analyze the deck and record notes on their clipboards. As the students inspect, the instructor goes from group to group, pointing out aspects of the deck and asking questions.

Twenty minutes later, Mr. A calls the group together again. “All right, everyone, I am now going to give you a couple of minutes with your partners to generate a list of questions to ask the client, Mr. Caldwell. He will come outside in a few minutes, and you can then ask him your questions. Take good notes. After you get your information, we will head back to school, where you will work on putting together a list of recommendations and a quote.”

Vignette Analyses

The analyses that follow examine each vignette through the lens of the *Reading to Learn* Framework. For each vignette, we describe where the teacher integrated the seven core practices and five supporting practices, as well as where they did not. As we discuss in the book, the framework is intended to be flexible. Not every practice needs to appear in every lesson with every text. Good comprehension instruction is selective and strategic. These analyses are meant to model that selectivity, not to suggest that a lesson must use all 12 practices to be effective.

We encourage you to complete your own analysis using the note-taking tool before reading ours. The most useful comparisons are not between your observations and ours, but between the patterns you notice across all four vignettes and what those patterns reveal about your own instructional priorities.

Vignette 1: How Writers Build Suspense

Grade 8, English Language Arts

Text Type(s):

Literary fiction—a suspenseful short story (a second section of “Night Drive” by Will F. Jenkins, 1962)

What factors might make the text(s) challenging?

Students are reading a second section in isolation, requiring them to reconstruct prior narrative context. The analytical task—identifying author craft—requires reading simultaneously at the story level and the technique level, a cognitively demanding double perspective. Mature themes (a potential serial killer) may also be emotionally activating for some students.

Core practice	How was it integrated?
Setting the Purpose	Strong. Mrs. Sullivan opens by having Johnny restate the objective, identifying how the author builds suspense and, crucially, its application purpose: using the same techniques in students’ own mystery stories. The purpose is both immediate and authentic, not set by the teacher alone.
Identifying Text Elements	Present. Students work explicitly with genre-specific structural elements—the four suspense techniques (<i>FN, ED, PM, ODD</i>)—which function as text features students are taught to recognize and track. The text type (short story, second section of a longer work) is not discussed directly, but the text’s craft elements are treated as named, learnable features.
Activating Background Knowledge	Present. Mrs. Sullivan opens with a review of the four suspense strategies students identified in the prior session, building directly on that prior learning before students encounter new material. Brief but purposeful.
Anticipating and Predicting	Strong. Before reading, students write predictions in their notebooks: What will happen next in the story? What new or repeated suspense strategies will Jenkins use? This creates genuine investment in confirming or revising hypotheses during reading.
Gathering Information	Strong. The text-coding system (<i>FN, ED, PM, ODD, NS</i>) is the backbone of the lesson. Students annotate the text with purpose—each code aligned to a suspense technique they will later apply in their own writing—rather than marking indiscriminately.
Making Sense of Information	Present. After reading, Mrs. Sullivan reconvenes the class to share and discuss what new strategies students found. The discussion moves toward shared literary analysis, though the vignette gives us only a glimpse of this phase before transitioning to writing.
Applying Learning	Strong. Students transition directly from analysis into their own mystery writing, explicitly directed to apply the suspense strategies they coded. The homework entry ticket extends this by asking students to reflect on how the coding process shaped their craft decisions.

Supporting practice	How was it integrated?
Collaboration	Present. Students work in reading pairs with discussion checkpoints, and some pairs work with a Spanish-language version of the story to support bilingual comprehension. Collaboration is structural support here, not a featured instructional goal.
Writing to Think and Communicate	Strong. Writing appears at every phase—prediction writing before reading, text annotation during, notebook jotting for early finishers, mystery story writing after, and a reflective homework entry ticket. Writing is not supplemental; it is the primary thinking tool throughout.
Academic Discourse	Present. Whole-class discussion after reading requires students to share and evaluate coded findings. The exchanges between Mrs. Sullivan and individual students (Johnny, Jessica) model the kind of accountable academic talk expected of all students.
Motivation	Present. The authentic purpose—improving students’ own mystery writing—gives the analytical work real stakes beyond compliance. The design creates intellectual investment, though motivation is a byproduct of the lesson structure rather than an explicit instructional focus.
Metacognitive Awareness	Present. The homework entry ticket directly prompts metacognitive reflection: How did coding the text help you understand what Jenkins is doing, and which strategies are you using in your own writing? This is meaningful, though it happens outside the observed lesson window.

Vignette 2: Exploring Linear Relationships

Grade 7, Mathematics

Text Type(s):

Mathematical text—an input-output table presented incrementally through a slow reveal

What factors might make the text(s) challenging?

The “text” is a data table rather than prose, requiring disciplinary reading skills many students have not explicitly developed. Students must read the table and simultaneously construct meaning about an underlying rule they cannot yet see. The task demands movement between concrete data and abstract generalization—a significant inferential leap.

Core practice	How was it integrated?
Setting the Purpose	Present. Ms. Alvarez frames the lesson as pattern investigation and asks students up front to articulate how they will demonstrate understanding—by writing an equation—before the table appears. The purpose is somewhat co-constructed with the students, though the investigative frame is teacher designed.
Identifying Text Elements	Present. Students are directed to the bilingual word wall where the structural vocabulary of this text type—input, output, rule—is displayed in English and Spanish. The table’s conventions are treated as features to be read, not assumed.
Activating Background Knowledge	Strong. Rather than having students reread a definition, Ms. Alvarez has them explain how input-output tables work in their own words to a partner. When Gabe covers his notes and restates the concept from memory, Ms. Alvarez confirms genuine schema activation. The distinction matters: She is checking for real understanding, not surface recall.
Anticipating and Predicting	Strong. The slow-reveal structure is built entirely around prediction. Students predict what the next row will show before it appears, forming hypotheses and testing them against each new reveal. Anticipation is not a pre-reading warm-up here: it is the instructional architecture of the entire lesson.
Gathering Information	Present. Students record observations and emerging patterns in their math journals as rows are revealed. The information gathered is relatively simple, but recording it is necessary for the sense-making work that follows.
Making Sense of Information	Strong. Ms. Alvarez consistently pushes beyond pattern identification toward mathematical explanation. “Why do you think that’s the rule? Where does the +1 come from? Does it work for the other rows?” Students must justify their reasoning, not just report a pattern. The pair who reasons through $2x + 1$ across multiple rows demonstrates the depth of sense-making she is after.
Applying Learning	Present. Students apply the pattern-finding process independently to a new input-output table, completing missing rows and writing the rule. The exit slip asks them to reflect on what helped them, which positions the process, not just the product, as the learning.

Supporting practice	How was it integrated?
Collaboration	Present. Partner work structures the lesson throughout—explaining the table type, discussing emerging patterns, and comparing notes. Some pairs work in English, while others blend English and Spanish. Collaboration is primarily a cognitive support structure rather than a featured goal.
Writing to Think and Communicate	Present. Students write in their journals at multiple points and complete a written exit slip. Writing is a consistent tool for recording and reflecting, though it serves a supporting rather than central role.
Academic Discourse	Present. Ms. Alvarez explicitly references the word wall and prompts students to use precise mathematical vocabulary in their explanations. The press for explanation over description (“Why?” rather than “What?”) is the most notable discourse move in the lesson.
Motivation	Present. The slow-reveal structure generates genuine curiosity—a “ripple of excitement” when patterns emerge, with students leaning in and whispering over equations. Motivation is an effect of the design, not a separate instructional focus.
Metacognitive Awareness	Present. The exit slip explicitly asks students to identify what helped them figure out the rule, whether it is a noticed pattern, a corrected mistake, or a peer conversation. This makes strategy awareness concrete, though it is confined to the closing minutes.

Vignette 3: Read-Aloud in Kindergarten

Kindergarten, English Language Arts

Text Type(s):

Patterned picture book: *And Here's to You!* by David Elliott, read-aloud

What factors might make the text(s) challenging?

The book uses figurative language (calling animals “people”), which requires interpretive understanding beyond literal comprehension. The co-authoring task demands that students internalize the text’s structural pattern well enough to replicate it. Multilingual learners must access both the vocabulary and the cultural concept of celebration the book centers on.

Core practice	How was it integrated?
Setting the Purpose	Present. Mrs. Garcia establishes two connected purposes before reading: understanding the book’s repeating pattern and using it to create a new page afterward. The application task anchors the reading, though purpose-setting happens quickly in service of getting to the book.
Identifying Text Elements	Strong. Mrs. Garcia explicitly teaches title, author, and illustrator before opening the book. During reading, she consistently connects words on the page to illustrations through finger-tracking and direct prompting. The repetitive pattern itself is treated as a text feature—something the author designed intentionally and something students will use.
Activating Background Knowledge	Strong. Before reading, Mrs. Garcia builds a visual word web around <i>Celebrate</i> , inviting students to share what they celebrate at home. This draws on students’ cultural and family experiences as genuine prior knowledge, and the bilingual exchanges that follow signal that home-language knowledge counts here.
Anticipating and Predicting	Present. Students predict which creatures will appear in the book based on the cover illustration, and their guesses are recorded on the word web. Anticipation is brief and playful (appropriate for the age and text) but it does create investment before the first page.
Gathering Information	Present. As Mrs. Garcia reads page by page, she prompts students to observe what they see in each illustration and connect it to the words on the page. Students are actively noticing and gathering, though the process is teacher guided throughout, given the age group.
Making Sense of Information	Present. Mrs. Garcia guides interpretation at the text’s most conceptually challenging moment—Why does the author call animals “people”?—helping 5-year-olds engage with figurative language and authorial intent. Sense-making happens through discussion rather than independent processing.
Applying Learning	Strong. The lesson culminates in co-authoring a new page about horses using the exact pattern students read. Students apply their understanding of text structure, vocabulary, and the author’s celebratory intent. The production task is not an add-on; it is the reason for all the reading that preceded it.

Supporting practice	How was it integrated?
Collaboration	Present. Turn-and-talk with partners before reading and the co-authoring of the new page are both collaborative structures. The lesson is primarily teacher led, as is appropriate for a kindergarten read-aloud, but student contributions shape the shared product.
Writing to Think and Communicate	Present. The co-created page is the primary writing product. The visual word web functions as a shared composing tool. After the observed lesson, students will illustrate the page, adding another communicative mode. Writing is embedded in the application task rather than distributed across the lesson.
Academic Discourse	Present. Mrs. Garcia consistently models and expects vocabulary use—for example, <i>title</i> , <i>author</i> , <i>illustrator</i> , <i>celebrate/celebrar</i> , <i>creature/criatura</i> —with bilingual display supporting multilingual students. The expectation that students explain their thinking (“Who do you think he is?” “What does that mean?”) builds early academic talk habits.
Motivation	Strong. The lesson is warm, playful, and genuinely culturally responsive. Student contributions are visibly recorded and celebrated. Bilingual students are positioned as resources when the class rereads the new page in Spanish. Students are told they are “authors now,” and they believe it.
Metacognitive Awareness	Not a feature of this lesson. Metacognitive instruction is developmentally complex for kindergartners, and Mrs. Garcia makes no explicit moves in this direction. The lesson’s cognitive work is externalized through discussion, illustration, and co-authoring rather than turned inward for self-monitoring.

Vignette 4: Analyzing Structural Texts in CTE

High School, Career and Technical Education (Building Trades)

Text Type(s):

Nontraditional/structural text—a physical deck at a client jobsite; a differentiated note-taking form; oral client interview

What factors might make the text(s) challenging?

The “text” is a physical structure rather than print, requiring students to apply disciplinary knowledge to analyze or “read” what they observe. Students must synthesize on-site observation, prior construction knowledge, and client specifications into a professional recommendation. The authentic stakes—a real client who may or may not select their quote—make precision consequential rather than academic.

Core practice	How was it integrated?
Setting the Purpose	Strong. Before the van stops, Mr. Archembault has established the full purpose: analyze the deck, generate questions for the client, develop recommendations, and write a professional quote. The genuine consequence—the client will choose one or none of their quotes—makes this purpose professionally real rather than school real.
Identifying Text Elements	Present. Before the inspection, students discuss what structural features to look for: what a deck of this age and configuration typically involves. The three-version note-taking form (guided questions, open prompts, blank) functions as a differentiated genre scaffold, making the categories of a professional structural assessment explicit.
Activating Background Knowledge	Strong. Mr. Archembault prompts structured partner discussion before inspection: What do you expect to find, and what information would be helpful to know in advance? Carter’s unprompted reasoning about hot tub weight, water capacity, and structural load demonstrates that students have activated and are actively applying prior knowledge, not retrieving facts on demand.
Anticipating and Predicting	Present. Students discuss what structural features they expect to encounter before approaching the deck. One pair predicts connection to a second-floor bedroom with long beams on cement footings, a specific, informed prediction that shapes their observational focus during inspection.
Gathering Information	Strong. The differentiated note-taking forms guide systematic observation across structural categories. Students record what they observe on clipboards while Mr. Archembault circulates, prompting attention to specific features. The client interview adds a second information-gathering episode: students must generate good questions and take useful notes under real professional conditions.
Making Sense of Information	Present. After inspection, pairs work to synthesize their observations, formulate client questions, and begin to develop assessments. The client interview provides additional data students must integrate with what they observed. The final recommendation and quote are the culminating sense-making products, though that work falls outside the observed window.

Core practice	How was it integrated?
Applying Learning	Strong. The professional quote is a genuine applied product, not a simulation. Students are applying structural knowledge, observational evidence, and client specifications to produce something a real person may act on. Application is the point of the entire lesson.

Supporting practice	How was it integrated?
Collaboration	Present. All work is conducted in assigned pairs throughout: pre-inspection discussion, the inspection itself, client interview preparation, and recommendation development. The partnership structure distributes cognitive load and mirrors professional practice.
Writing to Think and Communicate	Present. The note-taking forms are the primary recording tool during inspection, with students choosing the version that best supports their thinking. The professional quote is the final written product. Writing serves documentation and communication purposes in line with actual CTE practice.
Academic Discourse	Present. The pre-inspection discussion develops technical vocabulary and causal reasoning (weight, load capacity, structural support). The client interview is a professional discourse task: Students must ask precise questions, listen carefully, and take accurate notes under real conditions.
Motivation	Strong. The authentic context does the motivational work that classroom simulations cannot: a real house with a real client. The high fives and mock groans at partner assignments signal that students are genuinely invested in this work in a way that they would never be with a textbook exercise.
Metacognitive Awareness	Not a feature of this lesson. There is no explicit prompt for students to reflect on their observational or reasoning strategies. Mr. Archembault’s questioning during inspection—for example, “What do you mean? What does it matter how big it is? So?”—does press students to examine their own reasoning, but this is instructional scaffolding rather than deliberate metacognitive instruction.

CHAPTER 5: PLANNING TOOLS

Framing Questions, Scaffolding Matrix, and Planning Tool

Here are three tools for translating the *Reading to Learn* Framework into practical instructional decisions: framing questions organized by reading phase, a scaffolding matrix for calibrating support to text difficulty and student need, and a lesson-planning tool.

Framing Questions for Planning and Reading

These framing questions support strategic planning and reading with the *Reading to Learn* Framework. Each question is organized by reading phase and pairs a reader-facing question—the metacognitive prompt students can internalize for independent use—with planning prompts for teachers. Use Tables 1, 2, and 3 when designing lessons, sequencing strategies, and scaffolding comprehension with complex texts.

Table 1. Framing Questions for Before Reading

Practice	Reader/Student question	Teacher planning prompts
Setting the Purpose	<i>Why am I reading this?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What task, question, or problem will motivate students to engage with this text? • How can I frame the purpose so it feels authentic and meaningful to students? • What culminating activity will help students use what they've read?
Identifying Text Elements	<i>What kind of text is this, and how is information displayed and organized?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What structures or features should I preview to help students navigate? • What visual, organizational, or genre-specific elements might present challenges? • How can I model recognizing and using these features?
Activating Background Knowledge	<i>What do I already know that might help me understand this?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What relevant concepts or vocabulary have students encountered? • What assumptions does the text require? • How can I activate or build prior knowledge quickly and equitably? • What just-in-time supports might some learners need?
Anticipating and Predicting	<i>What do I expect to encounter in, or learn from, the text?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What questions or predictions can spark curiosity? • What title, headings, images, or snippets can I emphasize to build anticipation? • How can I encourage students to generate and revise predictions as they read?

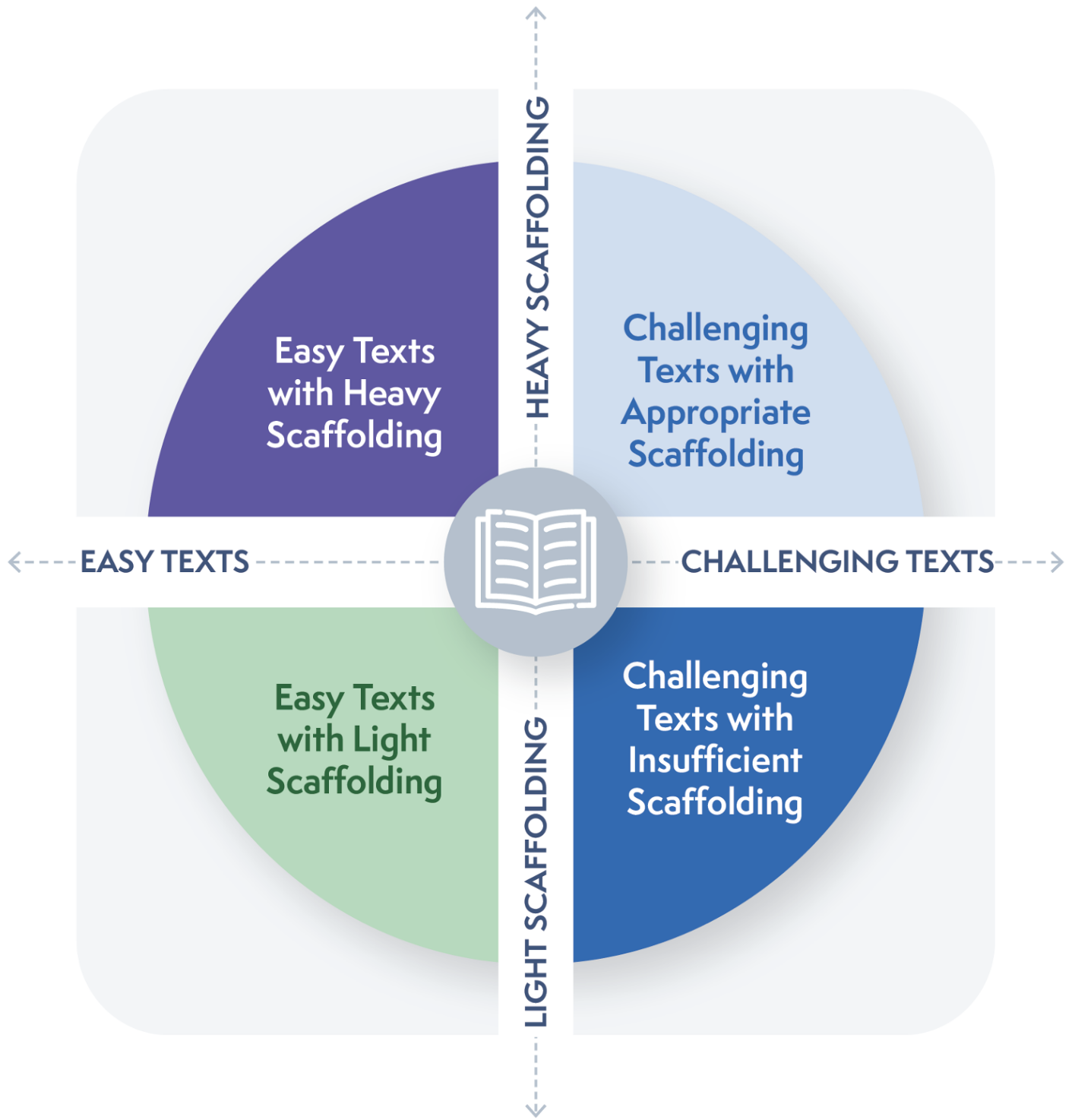
Table 2. Framing Questions for During Reading

Practice	Reader/Student question	Teacher planning prompts
Gathering Information	<i>What kind of information am I looking for, and how will I gather it?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I support students in locating and recording key information? • What note-taking structures will help students connect ideas to their reading purpose? • How can I model selective reading?
Making Sense of Information	<i>How do ideas I'm reading about fit together, and how do they connect with my purpose?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What thinking routines or prompts will help students synthesize? • What questions can deepen interpretation and inferential thinking? • How can I encourage connections within and across texts?

Table 3. Framing Questions for After Reading

Practice	Reader/Student question	Teacher planning prompts
Applying Learning	<i>How can I use or apply what I learned so that I remember it?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What authentic task or product can students create? • How can I design tasks requiring transfer to new contexts? • What reflective questions will consolidate and extend understanding?

SCAFFOLDING MATRIX



READING TO LEARN PLANNING TOOL

Directions

Use this tool to plan comprehension-focused lessons with complex texts. First, identify your text and overall lesson goals. Then, consider which *Reading to Learn* practices your students will need and select two to three complementary research-based practices to weave throughout. **Note:** *You don't need to leverage all practices in every lesson; choose strategically based on your text, students, and learning objectives.*

Text(s):

Lesson Objective:

What scaffolding levels do my students need? High Medium Low

Who might need additional scaffolding? Why?

Core Reading to Learn Practices

Check the practices you'll emphasize and note your strategy/approach:

- Purpose:** Why am I reading this?
 - What task, question, or problem will motivate students to engage with this text?
 - How can I frame the reading purpose so that it feels authentic and meaningful to students?

Strategy:

- Text Elements:** What kind of text is this, and how is information organized?
 - What structures or features should I preview to help students navigate the text?
 - What tools or strategies (e.g., graphic organizers) might help students track structure?

Strategy:

Background Knowledge: What do I already know that can help me understand this?

- How can I activate or build prior knowledge quickly and equitably?
- What just-in-time supports might some learners need to access the text?

Strategy:

Anticipation and Prediction: What do I expect to encounter?

- What questions or predictions can spark curiosity before reading?
- How can I encourage students to generate predictions and revise them as they read?

Strategy:

Information Gathering: What information connects to my purpose?

- How can I support students in locating and recording key information?
- How can I model or scaffold selective reading for a specific goal?

Strategy:

Making Sense: What does it mean, and how do ideas fit together?

- What thinking routines or prompts will help students synthesize what they've read?
- How can I encourage students to make connections within and across texts?

Strategy:

Application: How can I use or apply what I learned?

- What authentic task or product can students create to apply their learning?
- How can I design tasks that ask students to transfer ideas to new contexts?

Strategy:

Supporting Practices

❑ Collaboration

How can students work together to activate knowledge (before), deepen understanding (during), and extend thinking (after)?

What structured talk opportunities will ensure equitable participation?

Strategy:

❑ Writing to Think and Communicate

- What brief writing can help students activate knowledge (before), process thinking (during), or consolidate learning (after)?

- How can writing support meaningful communication beyond the reading experience?

Strategy:

❑ Academic Discourse

- What discipline-specific terms will students need to use?

- How can I create opportunities for students to practice academic language throughout?

Strategy:

❑ Motivation and Engagement

- How can I connect this text to students' interests and authentic work?

- What elements of choice, collaboration, or authentic purpose can I include?

Strategy:

❑ Metacognitive Awareness

- How can I model strategic thinking and encourage self-monitoring?

- What prompts will help students plan (before), adjust (during), and evaluate (after)?

Strategy:

CHAPTER 13: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TOOLS

Book Study Discussion Protocol, Note-Taking Tool, and Lesson-Tuning Protocol

Here are three tools for equipping PLCs with practical structures for collaborative book study, individual note-taking, and collaborative lesson refinement.

BOOK STUDY DISCUSSION PROTOCOL

Suggested Time: 60 Minutes

This protocol guides PLC teams through collaborative engagement with chapters from *Reading to Learn*, supporting deep professional learning and practical application.

Step 1: Establish Roles and Revisit Norms (2 minutes)

- The facilitator identifies and clarifies roles:
 - Facilitator: Guides discussion and monitors process
 - Timekeeper: Tracks time and signals transitions
 - Recorder: Captures key insights and action items
 - The facilitator revisits team norms and asks members to select one to focus on during today's session.
-

Step 2: Engage With Pre-Reading Prompts (6 minutes)

- The facilitator selects and poses two to three pre-reading prompts from the chapter that best align with the team's learning needs.
 - Participants reflect individually on each prompt (1–2 minutes per prompt).
 - Participants share responses through turn-and-talk or brief whole-group discussion.
-

Step 3: Orient to the Chapter (5 minutes)

The facilitator clarifies the reading purpose by stating what the team should focus on while reading.

- The team briefly previews the chapter structure together, scanning headings, subheadings, and key features.
 - The facilitator introduces the *Reading to Learn* Book Study Note-Taking Tool.
 - Participants prepare to read and take notes.
-

Step 4: Read and Take Notes (20 minutes)

Participants engage in silent reading of the chapter.

Participants take notes as they read.

Step 5: Share Initial Observations (10 minutes)

- **Round 1—Key Takeaways (5 minutes):** Each participant briefly shares one key idea or strategy that resonated most strongly from their notes.
- **Round 2—Questions and Wonderings (5 minutes):** Participants share questions that emerged during reading or in areas where they want deeper understanding.

Step 6: Discuss and Make Meaning (10 minutes)

- The facilitator opens a discussion focused on the following:
 - connecting ideas across participants' observations
 - exploring questions raised in Step 5
 - examining implications for current instructional practice
 - sharing specific classroom examples where concepts apply
 - The facilitator uses strategic questioning to deepen thinking:
 - “Can you tell us more about that?”
 - “How might this strategy address challenges we’ve discussed?”
 - “What connections do you see to previous chapters?”
-

Step 7: Plan Applications (3 minutes)

- Participants individually identify one concrete application they will try before the next meeting.
 - Suggested frame: “Based on this chapter, I will try _____ with _____ to support _____.”
 - **Optional:** For deeper planning, participants may use the *Reading to Learn* Planning Tool from Chapter 5 to design a specific lesson.
-

Step 8: Reflect on Learning (2 minutes)

- Participants briefly share the following:
 - one shift in thinking about comprehension instruction after reading this chapter
 - one aspect of the discussion process that supported learning
 - The recorder captures key reflections.
-

Step 9: Determine Next Steps (2 minutes)

- The facilitator works with the team on the following:
 - Identify the next chapter to be read.
 - Set the meeting date and time.
 - Assign any preparation tasks.
 - Confirm roles for the next session.

THE *READING TO LEARN* BOOK STUDY NOTE-TAKING TOOL

Chapter Title:

Purpose for Reading:

Key ideas and strategies	Connections and applications
Record main concepts, research findings, or specific strategies. Use brief phrases rather than complete sentences.	Note how ideas connect to your current practice, questions that arise, or potential applications in your classroom.

PROTOCOL FOR TUNING A LESSON

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to support collaborative conversations to tune a lesson. Although this protocol may be used on its own, it is intended to be used as part of a collaborative teaching and learning cycle in Phase 2 of the VITAL Collaboration framework.

Suggested Time: 45–55 minutes

Preparation and Materials

- Completed *Prep Sheet for Lesson Tuning*
- Relevant lesson materials and data

Protocol

Step 1. Establish Roles and Set Norms (2 minutes)

- The facilitator ensures that each role for the session is filled: facilitator, presenting teacher, timekeeper, notetaker.
 - The facilitator reminds the group of meeting norms: pausing, paraphrasing, posing questions, putting ideas on the table, providing data, paying attention to self and others, and presuming positive intentions.
-

Step 2. Present Materials (3 minutes)

The presenting teacher

- provides important background information about specific classes and students' needs,
 - shares any relevant student work and/or formative assessment data,
 - provides a brief overview and description of the materials, and
 - describes the objective of the lesson and explains how learning will be measured.
-

Step 3. Review Lesson Materials (2 minutes)

- Silently review lesson materials.
-

Step 4. Clarify Materials (3 minutes)

- Ask clarifying questions that prompt answers with *quick* responses (e.g., yes/no).
-

Step 5. Review the Focus Standard (5–10 minutes)

- Identify the focus standard that aligns with this lesson.
- If this group has previously unpacked the standard, review the *Protocol for Analyzing a Standard* to discuss the knowledge and skills that apply to this lesson.
- If this group has not previously analyzed the standard, identify the knowledge and skills needed for this lesson.

Step 6. Determine the Focus for Feedback (1 minute)

- The presenting teacher poses a question or identifies an element of the lesson for the group to focus on to guide feedback.

Step 7. Tune the Lesson (15–20 minutes)

- Silently review the lesson again and make note of praise, probing questions, and suggestions for polishing it (“polish suggestions”) that are related to the focus for feedback.
- Share praise of effective practice.
- Discuss probing questions and polish suggestions.

Step 8. Reflect on the Lesson (5 minutes)

- The presenting teacher identifies lesson elements they will adjust as a result of this discussion.

Step 9. Plan for Observing, If Applicable (2–5 minutes)

- What evidence of student learning do we want to look for?
- What teaching behaviors do we want to record?
- When will the observation take place (date and time)?

Step 10. Plan for Analyzing Student Work, If Applicable (2–5 minutes)

- What student work will we collect and analyze as a result of this lesson?

Step 11. Prepare for Next Steps (2–3 minutes)

- Outline an agenda for the team’s next meeting:
 - What protocol will we use?
 - What preparation tasks need to happen in advance?
 - Who will be responsible for each preparation task?
- Have participants summarize their next steps as a result of this meeting.

Step 12. Debrief the Process (2 minutes)

- Beginning with the presenting teacher, participants share reflections about the process and share insights they gained from the conversation:
 - What supported your learning?
 - What could we adjust at our next meeting to better support your learning?

CHAPTER 14: THE VITAL THEORY OF ACTION

The VITAL Theory of Action Graphic

This full-color graphic illustrates how five interconnected drivers—needs sensing, student outcome goals, teaching improvement goals, high-quality professional learning, and iterative feedback—work together as a system to produce collective improvements in teaching and better outcomes for students.

Suggested uses: Print and post in professional learning spaces or leadership team rooms, use to anchor conversations about schoolwide implementation planning, or share with leadership teams as a visual framework for guiding improvement work.

