

Good to Great TEACHING

Study Guide

FOCUSING ON THE LITERACY WORK THAT MATTERS

This book is designed to encourage personal reflection by initiating a dialogue, in writing or with others, that will elevate your instructional practices. Taking a closer look at your day for the purpose of analyzing your teaching can increase awareness of the day-to-day actions as a springboard to guide your efforts to more great work. Initiate this thoughtful reflection by responding to the questions on your own or with colleagues, using forms as a reference tool. It is helpful to use the spotlight teachers to initiate this reflective process before you apply it to your own teaching.

Chapter 1 Study Questions (pp. 1–25)

General Questions About the Reflection Process

- In the opening, you were asked to reflect on your past learning experiences (p. 1). What positive experiences will you replicate to ensure that your students receive the enthusiastic, meaningful, and purposeful learning opportunities they all deserve? What negative experiences will you remove from your own teaching?
- Our limited available time means we must be hypervigilant in noticing bad work we should eliminate in order to have time we need to opt for good/great work. What is one thing you currently do that is a less effective expenditure of learning time? What can you substitute that is a more worthwhile use of learning time?
- Think about the rich interplay between bad, good, and great work where we move in or out of a category in any given lesson (Figure 1.3, p. 6). Select a learning activity and identify an example of each of these categories.
- We can move back and forth between good and great work in an instant based on our choices, which may include seemingly minor adjustments. Consider any aspect of your teaching that reflects good work. What can you adjust to turn this into great work? How can you add this change to your daily instructional repertoire?
- Dialogue in the form of written reflections or oral discussion with colleagues is a critical feature of the change process described. Verbalizing our thinking helps to increase awareness that may lead to great work. Describe a change you have made in your teaching based on increased awareness. What other changes can you make?
- I state, “I don’t *tell* teachers what to do but *suggest* what may be invisible without another set of eyes and ears” (p. 12). These flexible collaborations help teachers to take ownership of their instructional choices. If you had another set of eyes and ears, describe an aspect of your teaching that could benefit from feedback.
- Throughout this book, I emphasize that great work requires us to slow down our instructional pace to build deeper levels of understanding. How are you slowing down your work? How does this slower pace increase the quality of your work?
- Stanier says, “*To do more great work, you need to make not one but two choices: What will you say yes to? What will you say no to?*” (p. 25). Respond to these key questions with examples. What will *you* say no to? What will *you* say yes to?

Questions About Spotlight Teachers: Lesley (pp. 11–17), Simone (pp. 17–20), and Danielle (pp. 20–24)

- Lesley and Simone used an anchor chart and discussion bookmark as a concrete written tool within varied settings. Create your own written reference tool to accompany an instructional goal in varied settings. How did this learning tool enhance and support your instructional goal? What would you adjust to increase learning?

- By contrast, Danielle found that a graphic organizer impeded her learning goals. Consider an instructional activity where a written reference may detract from your teaching. What else could you do to increase the quality of this lesson?
- These teachers carefully selected texts to build strategic knowledge *and* promote independence. Evaluate a text used in any learning activity. Did your text choice accomplish your goal for these students? What changes would you make?
- Lesley, Simone, and Danielle assume an active role in the learning process at all times. Examine an instructional activity and reflect on whether you used your time wisely. What can you do differently to better accomplish this in the future?
- Danielle chose to support her most challenging student because our most tangled readers afford us rich opportunities to be more effective teachers. Conduct a one-on-one learning experience with a struggling reader. What learning opportunities can you take away from this experience?
- These teachers made high-level discussion, comprehension, and word learning in context their instructional focus over isolated, low-level skill and drill. How are you using meaningful contexts to help students become more proficient readers?
- Danielle noticed that Cody is hyperfocused on his reading level. What do you do to ensure that the focus is on students' strengths over discrete levels? How can you address this problem for struggling readers more intentionally?
- Danielle broadened her arm of support beyond her own classroom by exploring other support options such as special education or reading buddies. Take a closer look at one of your struggling learners. What additional supports can you offer in or beyond your classroom to provide the *more* that they need to achieve success?
- These teachers “pick their battles” by substituting ineffective and less effective practices with more effective ones. What battles do you pick that will ultimately improve your teaching? What new battles are you willing to pick?
- Select one of the spotlight teachers to offer additional feedback. What could that teacher have done to elevate the lesson even more? What would you change in the same situation? How can you apply your suggestions to your own teaching?
- These teachers create positive instructional experiences through both support and feedback in the context of the learning experience. How do you offer these same opportunities in your own teaching? Does your teaching ensure student success?
- A common feature of each lesson is that all students are actively engaged with the teacher, peers, or on their own at all times. In other words, there is never a wasted moment. How do you actively engage students in learning at all times? What can you do to accomplish this more effectively and consistently in the future?
- These teachers demonstrate that there is no one-size-fits-all lesson that will work every time for every child. Each teacher made choices based on their professional readiness, personal goals, and their knowledge of their students. What would you have done differently from your personal perspective?

Questions Using the Completed Reflection Forms

- Our teachers completed the first form, *Reflective Lesson Analysis and Interactive Samples* (pp. 16, 19, 22). Look at one completed form and make suggestions that would elevate their teaching even higher. What changes would you have made?
- Lesley stated in her form, “I want every minute to count for all kids” (p. 16). How do you make every minute count for all kids? What changes are needed?
- Simone posed a question that can move us to great teaching: “Anything I can still change?” (p. 19). She is particularly concerned about how she can enhance book discussions for her higher-level readers. What suggestions would you make? How can Simone adjust this lesson to address the needs of more proficient readers?
- Danielle stated that she wants to incorporate focused word work in her one-to-one session with Cody (p. 22). What activities can you suggest to promote word work without losing her important emphasis on meaningful reading?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice (Reflective Lesson Analysis and Interactive Samples)

- Videotape a lesson with students. Review the lesson and complete the top portion of the form with instructional adjustments that will move you closer to great work. Repeat the lesson and complete the bottom portion of the form. Did the changes you made in the second sequence elevate your lesson? What new changes would enhance this lesson in the future?
- Initiate a shared collaboration with a colleague using the same lesson activity. After the first learning sequence, discuss how you can enhance the lesson in a second learning sequence. Repeat the lesson with these changes and meet again. How effective were those changes? What new changes could you make?
- Excellent teachers begin by celebrating what they are already doing effectively. List those things you are proud of in your teaching. Now take a closer look at your list. What is one thing you can move to even higher levels of excellence? What can you do to move closer to great work in the future?
- This form is designed to increase your awareness of what you need to alleviate and what you can celebrate as you make changes in your teaching. Complete a form for varied lessons over a period of several weeks. Place the completed forms side-by-side and compare them. How has the quality of your teaching improved?

Chapter 2 Study Questions (pp. 26–48)

General Questions About the Reflection Process

- I emphasize that we must articulate our vision before we can take action, stating, “We thoughtfully shape vision into practice when we are clear about who we are, what we stand for, and what matters to us” (p. 26). Respond to these important questions from a personal or school community perspective: Who are you/we? What do you/we stand for? What matters to you/us?

- I describe vision as an “instructional compass to guide our efforts” (p. 26). To accomplish this, our vision must flexibly guide rather than dictate our actions. How will you ensure that your vision is a flexible guide to improved instruction?
- Look at the instructional template of critical components and descriptions (Figure 2.1, p. 27). Do you address each of these components? What changes are needed in your teaching? (You will respond to these questions again at the end of the chapter.)
- According to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2012), *best practice* is “serious, thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching” (p. 27). What does this definition mean in your words? In what ways does your teaching reflect this definition?
- I emphasize that our goal is to dramatically increase purposeful and meaningful reading, writing, and talking each day (p. 27). This means students spend much of the day actively engaged in authentic learning rather than the “stuff” that robs time from these experiences. How are you achieving this crucial daily goal?
- I state that interactive application is often the missing piece that “moves us from good ideas on paper to excellent ideas in practice” (p. 27). How are you moving your goals from ideas on paper to an instructional reality in your classroom?
- I suggest establishing *non-negotiables*, or instructional features that are central to your efforts toward great work (p. 28). What non-negotiables are worth fighting for regardless of other time demands? What non-negotiables will you establish?
- I emphasize that “a vision statement is worthless unless we believe in and abide by the sentiments” (p. 29). Identify one vision statement. How are you bringing that vision to life through your daily actions? In what ways are you veering from those sentiments? How can you increase your commitment to that vision?
- Revisit the three factors that offer an instructional sense of direction: vision, overarching goals, interactive application (Figure 2.2, p. 28). Select one vision statement that reflects your values. Use this to create overarching central goals with interactive application. Review it over several weeks and make changes to reflect your increasing commitment. How are you remaining true to these things?
- Sharon stated, “I used to think I needed permission to do things I know my kids need but now I give myself permission” (p. 31). Do you give yourself permission to put your students first even if outside forces or demands may conflict with those ideas? How do you guarantee great work for students no matter what is happening around you?
- Review the bad-good-great continuum and sample charts (pp. 32–35). Select one instructional goal and create an enlarged or minichart to detail that goal. How will you use the chart to flexibly guide your instructional actions? Is the chart growing and changing with you over time? In what ways?
- Revisit the instructional template (Figure 2.1, p. 27). What changes have you made to address these components as you have worked through this chapter? What are you doing with greater frequency? What are you choosing to eliminate?

Questions About Spotlight Teachers: Katie (pp. 37–40), Melinda (pp. 40–43), and Barb (pp. 43–46)

- Katie recognizes her role in emotionally *and* academically engaging her special education students. What are you doing to engage every student emotionally and academically? What changes can you make to ensure this commitment?
- Katie made an observation about her teaching when she stated, “I talk too much and I think my students need to do more talking” (p. 38). Honestly reflect on your teaching. What changes should you make so your students more actively engage in learning? What personal observations do you make about yourself that will elevate your teaching?
- Melinda created an interactive chart to reflect her changing purpose for literature discussions (p. 42). List your instructional goals and create an interactive chart to visibly reference those goals. How can this support and guide your instruction?
- Barb created a small-group anchor chart to initiate a more focused purpose and offer a concrete learning tool (p. 46). Create an anchor chart for a small-group lesson. Did this maximize or detract from your instruction? In what way?
- Select any of the spotlight teachers. What suggestions would you make to that teacher to enhance the lesson further? What feedback would you offer? Would you do anything differently if you had the same lesson goals?

Questions Using Completed Reflection Forms

- Sharon (p. 30) and Teri (p. 32) both completed an *Ongoing Goal Setting Pie Chart* that reflects distinctive instructional viewpoints. Compare and contrast their goals and their efforts to move toward them. What commonalities do they share? What can you take from their learning experiences to use in your own teaching?
- Melinda added ten minutes to her literature discussions so her students will have more time for reading (p. 42). How would you spend that precious additional ten minutes with a focus on active literacy engagement? What would you do with an extra fifteen minutes?
- Melinda opted to use sticky notes for students to respond to literature discussions and less time to complete student-response forms. How do the sticky notes create a more flexible tool? How else can you use sticky notes to promote thinking?
- Compare and contrast the *Interactive Central Goal Chart with Working Action Plan* that Katie (p. 36), Melinda (p. 43), and Barb (p. 46) completed. How are they all achieving more great work based on their distinctive instructional central goals? What goals do you have in common with these teachers?
- Select a completed chart that best reflects a central goal you want to work toward. What action steps can you apply? What new action steps would you add? Use a red pen to modify the action steps based on the central goal.

- Melinda made an adjustment in her teaching based on her students, stating that they “wanted and needed more time to read” (p. 43). What choices do you make that take student needs into account? What changes are you willing to make that put their needs above your own? Do your students guide your efforts?
- Barb made a commitment to create more flexible groups “by adjusting groupings by need, not by specific reading levels” (p. 46). What instructional adjustments are you making? How are these adjustments increasing your instructional flexibility?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice (Ongoing Goal Setting Pie Chart; Interactive Central Goal with a Working Action Plan)

- I emphasize three essential questions effective teachers ask: “*Do I say yes to the things that matter? Do I say no to the things that don’t matter? Do I have the wisdom to know the difference?*” (p. 47). Complete an *Ongoing Goal Setting Pie Chart* with those questions in mind.
- Complete the *Ongoing Goal Setting Pie Chart* on your own. Then, when the chart is complete, collaborate with a peer and compare and contrast your goals. How are your goals alike? How are they different? Initiate an engaging dialogue to share ideas and consider possible additions that may be relevant. Adjust the form based on these conversations.
- Repeat the *Ongoing Goal Setting Pie Chart* over an interval of time. Look at the completed charts as a visual overview of how your teaching is changing. Are you sustaining changes you have made in the past? Do your goals help you to achieve more great work? Do you acknowledge a continued commitment by fine-tuning your goals over time? How is the landscape of your work changing?
- Complete the *Interactive Central Goal with a Working Action Plan*. Initiate this goal with action steps within varied learning activities. Now revisit the form and modify it using a red pen based on any new thinking arising from the instructional experience. What can you do to elevate this goal? What changes are needed?
- When your central goal becomes a normal part of your instructional day, establish a new central goal on a second form. Central goals are never fully achieved but are accomplished at increasingly higher levels of proficiency until they become part of who we are. How will you incorporate your initial goal into your new goal?

Chapter 3 Study Questions (pp. 49–69)

General Questions About the Reflection Process

- Instructional freedom comes with our responsibility to devote time and energy on achieving more great work on a daily basis. How do you maintain instructional freedom by making the most of each minute, regardless of other distractions?
- Good is the enemy of great (p. 50) because good work requires the time we could be using for more great work. Reflect on one thing you do that reflects good work. How can you elevate this good work to great work? What changes will you make?

- I describe a rich menu of instructional options (pp. 54–57). Examine your teaching and evaluate how these categories play a role in your day. What options are you implementing? What options are you neglecting? How can you reallocate time in order to incorporate every instructional option?
- I describe both homogeneous and heterogeneous small groups (pp. 55–56). These variations ensure flexible groups with a broader range of small-group instructional opportunities. Do you include both grouping options? What are the benefits of one variation over the other?
- Select one of the instructional menu of options you feel is neglected or done less effectively in your own teaching. How can you make room for that option in your day? How will this addition create a more balanced literacy framework?
- Consider the statement, “If more than 20 percent of students in general education are not successful, then we may need to take a closer look at the quality of that instruction” (p. 65). How do you create a differentiated instructional setting so that every student is successful irrespective of where they fall in that grade level? Do you view students beyond a narrow grade level? How do you differentiate?
- I distinguish between “kid-delity,” where student need is taken into account, and fidelity, with strict adherence to a program (pp. 65–66). Discuss how an overemphasis on programs without taking students into account enhances or diminishes teaching. How do you insist on addressing kid-delity even within the confines of programs?
- Look at the visual and description of the three motivation factors—organization, environment, and resources (Figure 3.12, p. 67). Why are these motivation factors precursors to an effective literacy program? How are you addressing these factors as your first order of business? What changes or additions do you need to make?
- Respond to this statement about a quality great teachers share: “They know that our students are our best teachers if we keep our hearts and minds open to the lessons they have in store for us” (p. 69). How do you pay attention to the lessons your students have in store for you? How does your teaching change to demonstrate that you *are* listening?

Questions About Spotlight Teachers: Sarah (pp. 50–53), Debbie (pp. 57–60), and Lesley (pp. 61–65)

- Revisit Sarah’s two-hour reading block (p. 62). Notice how she rotates between an instructional menu of whole-class, small-group, or one-to-one learning. Do you have an instructional day in place that incorporates these learning options? Adjust your schedule to accommodate the instructional menu of options on a daily basis.
- Look at the chart entitled “Sarah’s Instructional Transformation over Time” (p. 52). Think about changes you’ve made in your literacy program. What are you proud of? What changes are still needed? Celebrate the changes in your teaching over any period of time and the successes you have achieved. How do these changes benefit your students?

- Debbie understands her struggling readers need instruction that is *in addition to* what they receive in a general education setting. How do you ensure intensive support for your struggling readers designed to accelerate their growth? What can you do to ensure these multi-dipping opportunities are in place?
- In the first sequence (p. 58), Debbie used an example removed from the book as a model while her example in the second sequence rose from the book (p. 59). How do you trust the book to do the work it was meant to do? Do your instructional demonstrations rise from a text? How can you make learning more text-based?
- Look at the personal bookmark example (p. 60). How does this student-created bookmark move closer to great work for that child? How can you personalize the bookmark for your students across varied instructional settings? Create several bookmarks and consider how this personalized tool benefits your students.
- Lesley created a mix-and-match view of instructional settings. Do you use these varied instructional settings in your own teaching? How does this help you meet the needs of the wide range of varied learning needs in your classroom?
- Look at Lesley’s “Connection! So What?” anchor chart (p. 62). Create an anchor chart that will promote the same comprehension strategy (making and justifying text connections). How are your charts alike? How are they different? How will you use this anchor chart to continually reinforce this learning?
- I state that our spotlight teachers are creating a classroom culture based on two characteristics: 1) they create full days of reading, writing, and talking where substance is valued over “stuff”; 2) they believe that success is the right of every learner (pp. 68–69). How are you addressing these characteristics? Use specific examples of how you are accomplishing this in your teaching.
- These teachers know that instructional activities in more intimate settings offer a closer glimpse of students *and* their teaching practices. How do you use these opportunities to maximize your teaching? What information can you gain from your own teaching? List specific observations you have made in these smaller settings. How are you using these “noticings” to become a better teacher?

Questions Using Completed Reflection Forms

- Lesley completed the *Personal Investigation of Instructional Grouping Activities* to reflect a mix-and-match view of grouping (p. 54). Look at your own teaching and establish goals for whole-class, small-group, and side-by-side teaching. How do you move away from whole-class learning by incorporating smaller settings?
- Lesley used the *Varied Instructional Grouping Activity Planning Form* to reflect her increasing student awareness (p. 62). Look at her notes and identify comments that demonstrate this heightened sense of awareness. How can you apply this to your own teaching? Are you working to achieve the same heightened sense of awareness to help you in better meeting the needs of your students?

- Look at Lesley's *Status of the Class Weekly Overview*. Consider any suggestions you would make based on this chart. What changes would you suggest? How will this chart help you analyze and evaluate changes needed in your own teaching?
- The forms in this chapter are designed to work together, so one teacher completed them to reflect this interrelated nature. Look at them collectively and think about what they tell you about Lesley. What is Lesley doing effectively? What feedback would you offer Lesley to further enhance her teaching based on these forms?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice (Personal Investigation of Instructional Grouping Activities; Varied Instructional Grouping Activity Planning Form; Status of the Class Weekly Overview)

- Complete the *Personal Investigation of Instructional Grouping Activities* for at least three weeks. This gives you an honest view of changes that may be needed in your teaching. Are there any management or organizational issues you need to address before moving to smaller settings? Are you expanding support options during the course of the year? Is there anything missing in your teaching?
- Use the *Status of the Class Weekly Overview* as a quick visual reference to ensure you are addressing student needs. Do you address the needs of all students while acknowledging that more proficient readers don't need the same intensity (frequency and size of group)? Do you prioritize struggling readers? What changes do you need to make? Continue to complete the form as you make these changes.
- Create an instructional activity that blends our menu of options and complete the *Varied Instructional Grouping Planning Form*. How effectively are you using a common learning goal in a wide variety of settings? Are you coordinating your efforts across settings with common goals that take student need into account?
- At the end of a week, set the completed forms side-by-side. This comparison will give you a view of your teaching and illuminate where changes may be needed. How are you ensuring a variety of learning opportunities? What is your next goal?

Chapter 4 Study Questions (pp. 70–93)

General Questions About the Reflection Process

- Read the description of a school library where “books are like candy” (pp. 73–74). How is Jan's role as a “teacher and instructional partner” contributing to both student and teacher success? Compare this library with your own. How can your library put students at the center in the same way?
- Allington states, “There is no shortage of funding to double the size of classroom and school libraries” (p. 74). He suggests alleviating resources that waste time so we can shift our focus to books. List any resources that fail to elevate instruction. How will you reallocate available funds to a focus on securing high-quality texts? If you had unlimited funds, what would you purchase to shift your focus?

- Revisit our seven literacy guidelines (pp. 75–76). Reflect on each of these points in terms of your literacy program. Are you addressing each of these guidelines as a critical component of literacy? What are the missing ingredients?
- To find the time to put our seven guidelines at the center of our instruction, we must first create an instructional trash can or “stop doing list” (pp. 83–84). List those things you will put in your trash can. What will you eliminate to make room for the work that matters? Does your day reflect your values? Why not?
- In describing the Crayola Curriculum, Schmoker defines coloring as a “*patently, tragically counterproductive*” activity (p. 84). Yet, thoughtful drawings can be a tool to support thinking and talking. Make a list of any drawing activities you do in a day. Evaluate each one based on these contrasting views. Is the drawing the end goal (stuff) or a means to an end (thoughtful reflection in the form of quick draws)? How do these activities detract from or add to student learning?
- I describe how to transform a trivial worksheet into a “worthsheet” with simple adjustments (pp. 84–87). Select a recommended worksheet and transform it into a worthsheet that will promote meaningful learning. Compare these two activities. How does each one increase or diminish learning?
- A narrow learning activity was broadened using a basket of books that revolved around a topic (pp. 84–87). Varied texts made it easy to incorporate independent, small-group, peer-supported, and teacher-supported settings. Select a topic and create a basket of texts at varied reading levels. How does this broader perspective differentiate learning? How will it engage all learners in successful reading?
- Dawn uses a SMART Board as a valuable resource (pp. 87–88). Look at any suggested SMART Board activities. Divide these suggestions according to whether they reflect technological worksheets or worthwhile learning experiences based on our seven guidelines. What do you need to eliminate on this list? What can you add?
- Look at the table of suspect worksheet activities and meaningful alternatives (p. 88). Select a questionable worksheet recommended by the publisher and use the list to determine its worth. Estimate the amount of time a suspect activity would take. List the authentic, worthwhile learning alternatives you could do instead.
- Bregman states that we need “to figure out the one and only thing that will have the highest impact and then focus 100 percent of [our] effort on that one thing” (p. 92). Respond to this using our seven guidelines. Do you focus on high-impact goals over trivial tasks? What one thing will you focus “100 percent” of your effort on?
- Schmoker states, “Students could and should be reading and writing in class on average at least four to five times as much as they are now” (p. 93). Look at your instructional day. How will you dramatically increase active literacy engagement? What do you need to eliminate to accomplish this lofty goal?
- Lesley stated, “I can’t stop asking myself after each lesson: What was bad? What was good? What was great?” (p. 93). Reflect on your teaching day and respond to those questions. Did you make the best possible choices today? What choices will you make tomorrow that will move you closer to great work?

Questions About Spotlight Teachers: Betsy (pp. 70–73), Heather (pp. 77–83), and Nita (pp. 89–91)

- Read the description of Betsy’s lesson. Consider her intentional language and how she interweaves modeling and support while gradually relinquishing control to her students. Reflect on one of your read-aloud activities. How are you interweaving modeling and support *while* actively engaging students in independent learning?
- After modeling, Betsy’s students leave tracks on their thinking with sticky notes on clipboards. Create a read-aloud lesson and use sticky notes to leave tracks on thinking using both teacher modeling and student engagement. How do the sticky notes offer a meaningful instructional and reflection tool?
- Heather stated, “I have made a concerted effort to move toward the best work I can do with my students” (p. 77). What changes have you made to do your best work with students? What other changes will elevate your work even higher?
- Reread how Heather recreated a schedule to meet with students on a regular basis while prioritizing those who need the most support. Look at your schedule and consider how to accomplish this. Create a sliding scale like the one Heather describes to meet the needs of all students while prioritizing your most struggling readers.
- Read-aloud is a central feature of learning for Betsy and Heather as they use this time to introduce and model new learning that is reinforced in varied activities. How are you using read-aloud to introduce new learning while embedding that learning in smaller instructional settings?
- Heather ensures that each child is reading at all times and uses this time to listen to and support students individually. Reflect on a small-group reading activity and consider how you consciously take advantage of these opportunities. What do you need to do differently to maximize available time? Do you build one-on-one time into small groups? What changes can you make?
- Nita opted to use anchor charts in place of a passive worksheet to teach author’s purpose. How does her choice to take control of her teaching with a meaningful activity maximize her teaching? How do you take control of your own teaching by opting for more powerful learning experiences in place of passive suggestions?
- Nita uses the basal as a flexible tool she gradually moves away from in the second part of the year. Do you put students first by using resources as flexible tools that leave room for incorporating professional judgment? What are you saying no to so you can say yes to the things that matter? In what ways are you willing to step away from published material to make decisions based on your students?
- Patty created a jigsaw vocabulary activity that allowed students to assume greater responsibility for learning by teaching an expert word to peers (p. 92). How is this preferable to a passive vocabulary form? Select one questionable suggestion in a teacher’s guide and list other preferable vocabulary activities.

Questions Using Completed Reflection Forms

- Take a closer look at Heather's completed form (p. 82). What has she adjusted in her lesson so that the bulk of time is spent reading, writing, and talking? How can you use her lesson in your own teaching?
- Reread Heather's form and think about her lesson. What would you tell her she has done effectively? What changes would you suggest? What would you do in the same situation? What adjustments would you make based on your students?
- Look at Nita's Instructional Transformation form (p. 90). Look at the suggested activities and explore her transition to more effective instructional options. How did Nita's lesson transform a passive activity into a meaningful and engaging one? How can you use this in your own teaching?
- Look at Nita's form. Suggest other worthwhile learning activities to teach author's purpose. Are these options a good use of time? Are your instructional choices based on the value they offer students rather than a perceived responsibility to publishers?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice (Instructional Transformation Through Professional Decision Making; Instructional Planning Form and Lesson Guide)

- Use the *Instructional Planning Form and Lesson Guide* to create an instructional plan before, during, and after the lesson. How will you help students apply this learning at each stage? Take notes in the right column during and after the lesson. What changes are warranted based on the lesson? What should you adjust? Repeat the lesson with another group using these adaptations. Compare these lessons.
- Use the *Instructional Planning Form and Lesson Guide* for a shared collaboration with a colleague. Plan the lesson together and complete the left side of the form. After teaching the same lesson, compare your reflection notes on the right side. Mark changes to elevate the lesson on the form. Try these ideas in a new group.
- Use a teachers' guide recommendations to complete *Instructional Transformation Through Professional Decision Making*. Identify a less effective suggestion and list alternatives that would be a better use of time. Teach one of those alternative ideas and compare it with the initial suggestion. How did the alternative approach elevate your teaching? Why is the initial idea a less effective expenditure of time? What else could you have added to this list?
- Complete *Instructional Transformation Through Professional Decision Making* with a colleague. Work together to create a worthwhile instructional plan that is based on your students' needs. Initiate the same learning goal or two different goals. Meet again and compare the results of your lesson transformation. How was it more effective? What other changes could you make?

Chapter 5 Study Questions (pp. 94–122)

General Questions About the Reflection Process

- I describe the *watchful listening* habits of teachers who are “present in the moment” (pp. 94 and 101). This process makes us consciously aware about what happens around us and how we can use this in our teaching. Practice watchful listening habits by keeping a record of your observations for one week. Put a sticky note with each child’s name on a clipboard and make a daily notation. How can you use these observations to improve your practices? What can you use in your teaching?
- Assessment as a *potent transformative tool* refers to changes that occur in both the learner and teacher (p. 95). Discuss how your daily assessment is changing you as a teacher. What are you doing differently as a result of what you learn? How are you changing as a result of these assessment practices?
- Einstein said, “Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts” (p. 96). List all assessments for one week. Identify those that count and those that have little potential to inform instruction. What do you need to do more of? What do you need to do less of? What practices are worth your time and effort? What can you alleviate to make room for these things?
- Reflect on the powerful assessment options to inform and transform our practices (Figure 5.2, p. 97). What options do you currently use? What options do you need to add to your assessment repertoire? How effectively do the assessment options in place inform instruction? What changes are needed?
- Reflect on kindergarten teachers using an interactive writing journal (pp. 100–102). How can you use this in your teaching? What adjustments can you make in the activity to make it an instructional tool beyond kindergarten?
- Read about Mustang first-grade teachers using reading records (pp. 109–110). How is this important assessment process supporting their move to great work? What can you learn from their efforts to become a more effective teacher using assessment as a *potent transformative tool*?
- Good assessment practices are developed slowly over time so that process is seen as more important than a product. Take a reading record for one student over a period of several weeks. What can you glean about this child based on the results of this experience? How will you apply this knowledge in your teaching? When you are ready, add one more student to your learning process.
- Consider the cautionary advice for reading records (pp. 110–111). Respond to these cautions and discuss adjustments you may need to make in your practices. How will you use reading records to inform instruction? How can they improve student learning *and* your teaching? What will you do to gradually implement reading records as a powerful informative assessment process?
- I describe an assessment wall as a problem-solving tool (pp. 111–114). Reflect on the valuable information teachers can glean from this tool. Initiate an assessment

wall or mini-assessment wall with one grade level. How do conversations reflect the problem-solving focus? What are you learning about your students on the wall? What instructional adjustments are warranted?

- Reflect on the strategy wall (pp. 114–115). What open-ended strategy options will you add to the wall that can benefit all teachers? How can you adjust ideas across grades and content areas? How are you initiating meaningful dialogue about these instructional practices? Why is it a worthwhile expenditure of time to generate a common instructional toolbox?

Questions About Spotlight Teachers: Patty (pp. 103–106), Nita (pp. 106–108), and Lesley (pp. 115–121)

- Patty initiated knee-to-knee reading as a flexible learning activity that allows her to use varied student text options. Prepare for knee-to-knee reading using teacher read-aloud to create a compliment chart. Pause during the reading or revisit key portions to generate compliments to add to the chart based on good oral reading practices. Invite students to share brief oral reading samples to add compliments.
- Initiate knee-to-knee reading using a compliment chart. Observe students as they are engaged in the learning activity and record oral reading observations based on the chart. After the reading activity, share your observations with students and add any new compliments to the chart.
- Think about how this activity acknowledges the unique needs of your readers and helps them think about what good readers do. Why did Patty's focus on fluency as more than speed elevate her teaching? Why is this crucial learning for students?
- As students become more independent, take an observer's stance. As you rotate, make anecdotal notes about your observation. How can you use what you learned in your teaching? How does being present in the moment lead to great work and increase your instructional role? What is worth sharing with students?
- Patty wanted to incorporate new instructional goals into knee-to-knee reading (p. 104). What other goals would you add to this list? How can you use knee-to-knee reading as an ongoing instructional experience based on a wide variety of goals?
- Nita initiated knee-to-knee writing to combine drawing and writing in a peer collaboration activity. Initiate this learning activity after ample teacher modeling. How does the combination of drawing and dialogue support the writing process? What changes did she make that maximized this learning activity? What other changes could you make?
- Nita describes how she increased the quality of knee-to-knee writing through her read-aloud, explaining, "Marc Brown did what I could never do—paint a visual picture of what good writers do and don't do" (p. 108). Reflect on this statement. How do you use read-aloud to paint a visual picture for writing? How does the combination of read-aloud and knee-to-knee writing help to paint this visual?

- Lesley applied the Good to Great concept to students by creating a wall chart and personal student form (p. 115–117). Create a similar chart to support your teaching goals. How will this self-assessment help your students learn about themselves as readers while offering valuable information about your teaching? How will you use this to inform your teaching?
- To ensure that reading continued over the holidays, Lesley’s students initiated a reading plan (pp. 117–121). Create a plan for your students to read more at home. How can you engage them in this process and help them set their own goals? How will you ensure access to books for students who do not have books at home?
- Apply George Loewenstein’s view of curiosity to your role as a teacher (p. 122). How does your curiosity about students impact your instructional effectiveness? What actions does your curiosity lead you to? How does this increase the quality of your teaching?

Questions Using Completed Reflection Forms (Exploring Daily Assessment Practices and Possibilities; Informal Assessment and Instructional Planning Record)

- Look at Brittany’s *Exploring Daily Assessment Practices and Possibilities* (p. 99). Consider how she has made a commitment to assessment. What are you doing that is on Brittany’s list? What are you doing that is not reflected on this list? Is everything on the list an effective expenditure of time?
- Use Brittany’s completed form to think about what you can learn from her goals. Use a red pen to identify assessments you will commit to, add to or substitute with new assessments, or alleviate assessments that would not support your goals.
- Nita completed the *Informal Assessment and Instructional Planning Record* using a knee-to-knee writing activity (p. 107). Look at her notes and reflect on how she uses her observations to enhance future instruction and maximize the potential for learning. How did Nita increase the quality of the learning experience over time?
- Add to Nita’s form in red as you consider changes you would make. What would you do differently? What would be your next step? Initiate the learning activity and revisit the form. What changes would you make in the future?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice

- Complete the *Exploring Daily Assessment Practices and Possibilities* alone or with a colleague. Look at changes you need to make in your assessment practices at the top of the form. What will you alleviate? What do you need to add that will inform your teaching? What will you commit to? Does your list include a broad range of assessment options? Will each of these inform instruction?
- Use the *Informal Assessment and Instructional Planning Record* to implement a lesson activity described in this chapter. How does this activity help you integrate assessment and instruction as an inseparable process? What can you change in the activity to maximize this process based on your assessment observations?

- Complete the same form using any lesson objective in varied groups. Looking at the same learning goal across contexts or settings will help you think through the changes you are making in deeper ways. How is each experience informing your practices? What changes will you make as a result?

Chapter 6 Study Questions (pp. 123–129)

Reflecting on Our Own Teaching

- I used the dictionary definition of change: *to give up something in exchange for something else* (p. 123). As you've worked through the pages of this book, what less effective practices have you given up in exchange for something that will be a better expenditure of time for students? What new goals have you established?
- The spotlight teachers in the book have made a choice to say no to the wrong things so they can say yes to the right things. How are you making that choice in your own teaching no matter how challenging those choices may be? What are you changing to put your students first? What changes do you still want to make?
- Reread the description of fifth-grade student Maddy (p. 128). Compare Maddy's learning experience in her previous school and Sunapee. How has moving to a new school in Sunapee changed her as a learner? Are you offering your students life-changing opportunities as learners? In what ways are your students lucky to be in your school and your classroom? Revisit Maddy's poem at the beginning of this book. How did the Sunapee school help Maddy blossom and grow?
- Look at the questions written above the sign in the final picture (p. 129): *When is change hardest? When is it easy? Can books change people? How? Can people change? How?* What changes are you making to turn these questions into a reality for your students? What are you doing or not doing to create that reality?

Questions Using Completed Reflection Forms

- Debbie and Lesley completed a *Timeline of Professional Growth Transformation* (pp. 126–127). Since change looks different for each teacher, compare Debbie's and Lesley's personal transformation based on the forms.
- Debbie reflects her experience as a Title 1 teacher with her small-group instruction while Lesley reflects her efforts to create varied instructional opportunities in her fifth-grade classroom. Select the teacher who best fits your instructional goals. How are you alike? How are you different? Use a red pen to reflect these distinctions.
- Lesley stated, "I constantly think now—what am I doing that is working? How can it be better? What can I get rid of?" (p. 125). Respond to these questions personally. What are you doing that is working? How can it be better? What can you get rid of?

Putting the Reflective Forms into Practice (Timeline of Professional Growth Transformation)

- Complete the final form and celebrate the changes you have made. What are you especially proud of in your personal transformation? What goals do you still have to acknowledge in the never-ending role of the transformation process?
- Collaborate with a colleague and share your forms. What commonalities do you have? What are the differences? What are your next-step goals?
- Use the form to create a vision for the future by completing the NOW section on the right based on your future goals. What is the instructional frame you *want* to create? Now complete the THEN section on the left based on where you are at this time. At the bottom, reflect on what you need to do to create the vision that you alone control. How will you get to where you know you can be? What do you need in order to accomplish those changes?