

Study Guide for *Kindergarten Literacy: Matching Assessment and Instruction in Kindergarten*

This Study Guide can be used as a vehicle for discussion, an exchange of ideas as well as a resource for generating Actions you can take with your students.

The Guide is organized using two components:

1. Introduction that includes Thinking About Your Professional Development and Thinking About Your Practice which provide questions to ponder before you start reading *Kindergarten Literacy* and Preparing for Study Group Participation which gives some suggestions for organizing study group activities.
2. Guidelines for your Study Groups including:
 - a. a Synopsis of each chapter
 - b. a quote or excerpt to React To
 - c. Questions to Discuss
 - d. Take Action, which provides you with activities you can try in your classroom and then discuss in your next Study Group.

Introduction

Thinking About Your Professional Development

Before you start reading *Kindergarten Literacy* and examining your instructional practices, you may want to focus on the nature of your professional development experiences.

React to:

“All too frequently, districts purchase new material and expect that teachers’ instruction will automatically improve. As one of the teachers told me [Anne McGill-Franzen], ‘Often we are overwhelmed with an abundance of material we don’t know how to use. Professional development matters, kindergarten matters. Kindergarten can rule!’” P. 11.

Anne McGill-Franzen advocates teacher-centered professional development. This type of professional development focuses on teachers working together to study key topics, provides opportunities to pursue inquiry grounded in real contexts, and fosters an environment of collaborative study and collegial participation. She invites the reader to make this book the “impetus for an ongoing professional-development support group with other teachers” (p. 32). As veteran educator Anthony Alvarado wrote in the Winter 1998 issue of *American Educator*, “Thinking about our work and improving what we do—these things are professional development. So is collegiality—teachers talking about their practice and how to make it better.”

- 1 Initiate a round-robin discussion of your personal and collective experiences with professional development. Focus on professional learning designed to improve kindergarten literacy instruction. To ensure that everyone participates in the conversation, ask each person to limit his or her comments to two minutes and to concentrate on the lessons learned from the experiences described.

Following this discussion, read “Afterword” (pp. 267-271) in *Kindergarten Literacy*.

Discuss:

- 2 In what ways do the lessons learned from your professional development experiences reflect the perspective described in “Afterword”?
- 3 Reflect on the group’s discussion about professional development experiences. What strategies did the group use to facilitate the dialogue? Compare these strategies to the “Prompts to Initiate and Sustain Collaborative Dialogue” described on p. 268. What observations do you have that will help strengthen your professional conversations in the future?
- 4 Consider how you can incorporate a case study approach into your professional development program.

Thinking About Your Practice

Anne McGill-Franzen presents compelling arguments for literacy instruction in kindergarten. Furthermore, she provides a collection of assessment tools and instructional practices that teachers can easily implement throughout the school year. These resources enable teachers to align instruction with children's strengths and differentiate instruction to meet their diverse needs.

Discuss:

- 1 What are your views about literacy instruction in kindergarten? To what extent are these views consistent with those of your colleagues? With the community's expectations for the education of children in kindergarten? With school and/or district goals?
- 2 What challenges do you encounter in teaching literacy skills to kindergarten children?
- 3 What are your priorities for teaching literacy skills to kindergarten children?

Preparing for Study Group Participation

Based on her work in the University of Tennessee Teacher Quality kindergarten project, McGill-Franzen observes "rather than viewing professional development as a way to transmit expert advice from a coach to a teacher, we came to see it as collaborative study" (p. 267).

- 1 As a group, decide on two or three goals for this professional development study and establish a plan for the study group sessions.
- 2 Begin assembling a professional portfolio, including a binder or other mechanism for collecting resources, samples of lessons and student work, and professional journal for reflections.
- 3 Establish a plan for maintaining your portfolio and journal. Setting up a calendar, including scheduling time each week for reflecting and updating your portfolio is a good place to start.

For more information about teacher-centered professional development, you may find the following resources useful:

Diaz-Maggioli, G. (2004). *Teacher-centered professional development*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development

DuFour, R., Eaker, R. & DuFour, R. (eds.). 2005. *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service

Hord, S.M. (ed.). (2004). *Learning together—leading together: Changing schools through professional learning communities*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Husby, V.R. (2005). *Individualizing professional development: A framework for meeting*

school and district goals. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

National Staff Development Council. (2001). *Standards for Staff Development, revised edition*. Oxford, OH: Author. Available at <http://www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm>

Sullivan, S. & Glanz, J. (2006). *Building effective learning communities: Strategies for leadership, learning & collaboration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Chapter Overview, Study Guide Questions and Actions

Chapter One Kindergarten Rules!

Chapter Overview

Through an overview of research that supports literacy instruction in kindergarten, Anne McGill-Franzen presents persuasive arguments for restructuring kindergarten programs. Her case for kindergarten literacy provides the basis for moving the debate away from “skill-and-drill” versus “joyful learning through play.” In this chapter the author sets the stage for building a more rigorous literacy program in kindergarten. Notably, she focuses on the important contribution of an effective kindergarten teacher to students’ later academic success. In addition, the author invites readers to use this book as a professional development tool as a means to providing “engaging professional growth for teachers.”

React to:

***“...the individual and variable development of children is an opportunity to personalize our instruction. As teachers we must celebrate and affirm, but also extend and elaborate each child’s developing knowledge of written language”
P. 12***

Discuss:

What is your response to the chapter title, “Kindergarten Rules!”?

What factors in recent years have contributed to the increased emphasis on literacy instruction in kindergarten? Consider the impact of federal, state, and/or district policies on the kindergarten program.

What arguments are sometimes advanced in opposition to reading instruction for kindergarten children? How can you use the research presented in this chapter to counter this opposition?

Is your kindergarten program in the *hot seat*? If so, what can you do to provide *calm, cool direction* that will ensure that your students benefit from what research reveals about effective instruction.

Take Action:

Review state and/or district literacy standards for kindergarten. Inventory your instructional practices to determine which are most effective in helping students meet those standards.

Based on what you have read in Chapter One, develop a presentation about research in

literacy instruction in kindergarten for delivery to the parents of children in your classroom. With a colleague, critique the presentation to ensure that the message is clear and not overwhelmed with jargon.

In your professional journal, reflect on your beliefs about reading and writing instruction in kindergarten. In what ways have your beliefs changed over the time that you have been teaching kindergarten? Which of your beliefs have remained constant? To what extent has research influenced your beliefs and practices?

Chapter Two The Research That Informs This Book

Chapter Overview

This chapter extends the information about research that was summarized in Chapter One. Here you will read about research into children's print awareness, their speaking and listening vocabulary, and what McGill-Franzen has learned from a decade of work with teachers in early childhood and primary grade classrooms. The arguments favoring teacher-centered professional development are elaborated through references to research including the Tennessee Kindergarten Literacy Project which provides a model for literacy instruction as well as professional learning.

React to:

This statement is from a teacher who participated in the Tennessee Kindergarten Literacy Project.

“In the beginning I was concerned that I would not be able to help my at-risk students. I was afraid that I would not provide the ‘right’ kind of instruction. I had heard about positive results, but I wasn’t sure that I could be successful with my students. Meeting regularly with my colleagues gave me a chance to hear that other teachers were facing many of the same fears and struggles. ... We compared notes. We learned from each other.” P. 31

Discuss:

How do the research findings about children's print awareness compare to what you have observed with your students? How do you differentiate instruction to accommodate children's diversity in print awareness?

In what ways are children's speaking and listening vocabularies predictors of later achievement? What practices have you found to be useful in building children's vocabularies?

Why is it important to embed kindergarten literacy strategies in “well-rehearsed classroom routines?” What challenges have you encountered in planning your program to include more literacy instruction?

Summarize the features of the Tennessee Kindergarten Literacy Project (pp. 25-31). In what ways does your situation reflect features of this project? What would be required in your school or district to replicate this project in part or completely?

Refer to the “Framework for Kindergarten Literacy” (pp. 28-29). With a partner or small group, discuss each feature and how it is represented in your classrooms. What does this

review reveal about literacy instruction in your classrooms?

Take Action:

Compare your literacy teaching strategies to those listed in the graph, Experienced Kindergarten Teachers' Use of New Teaching Strategies in Literacy, p. 30. In your professional journal, list the strategies in a chart then, over a period of several weeks, map your use of the strategies. Note which children receive instruction in selected strategies as a means to identifying individual differences as well as the effectiveness of your efforts to differentiate instruction. Share your findings with colleagues at a future study group session.

Reflect on how you can use the Framework for Kindergarten Literacy (pp. 28-29) to guide professional development discussions as well as your instructional planning. Use these reflections as the basis for a discussion about the effectiveness of the study group activities in a future meeting.

To review a continuum of children's development in early reading and writing, refer to *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children*. (1998). Newark, DE: International Reading Association and Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. Available at <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/PSREAD98.PDF>

Chapter Three Ten Minutes That May Change a Life

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a collection of assessment tools for systematically observing, documenting, and interpreting children's literacy knowledge at the beginning of the year, at midyear, and at the end of the year. As can be inferred from the chapter title, "Ten Minutes That May Change a Life," these assessments are timely, practical, and easy to use. Vignettes about individual students' performance add to the authentic quality of the material in the chapter. The assessments include letter-sound identification, phonological awareness, print concepts, spelling, text writing, word writing, text reading, and word reading. Tips for getting started, keeping track of student progress, and maintaining student portfolios are included to facilitate your planning. The material in this chapter will enable you to become well-informed about the literacy development of each child in your classroom. Such information will be invaluable in planning instruction as well as communicating with parents about their children's literacy learning. Because of the scope and depth of assessment information provided in this chapter, you will need to plan your study group time carefully in order to take full advantage of these resources.

React to:

"Many early childhood advocates often equate good assessment with simply "kid watching," and kid watching we do, but to describe assessment as only "watching" somehow doesn't reflect the interactivity of the process of learning about children's development. We must purposefully engage children in reading and writing tasks that are the components of literacy in order to describe where children are—and where they need to go." P. 35

Discuss:

In this chapter McGill-Franzen uses two metaphors to describe children's literacy development: (1) a journey along a road (pp. 35-36), and (2) wading pools and rapids (p. 101). Reflect on what these metaphors bring to mind in light of your teaching experience. Generate additional metaphors to describe children's literacy development in kindergarten. You may want to make a record of these metaphors and add to the list as you progress through this study of kindergarten literacy.

What assessments are given to kindergarten children in your school? What are the purposes of these assessments? When are they administered? How useful are these assessments in helping you make decisions about the children's literacy instruction?

How do you organize your time so that you can conduct individual literacy assessments with your students? Review and comment on "Suggested Schedule for Kindergarten Literacy Assessment" (p. 37) and "Tips for Getting Started" (p. 38).

Share examples of record keeping forms that you use for individual students and the entire class. Select two or three examples for close inspection, taking note of the advantages or limitations of each form. Compare these forms to the Kindergarten Literacy Assessment Class Record Sheet (pp. 40 and 42) and “Student Profile Sheet” (pp. 39 and 41). What modifications can you suggest for your own forms or for those provided in Chapter Three? Skim the chapter to review additional examples of record forms related to individual assessments.

How do you organize and manage portfolios of children’s work? What do you include in the portfolios? How do you use the portfolios to help children become aware of their progress in literacy? How do you use the portfolios to report children’s progress to parents?

List the assessments described in this chapter on chart paper or a transparency for the overhead projector. Discuss the assessments one at a time noting the kind of information from each that helps teachers plan instruction. To focus the discussion, you may want to give examples of how selected students performed on these kinds of assessments. Summarize the discussion by adding notes about each assessment.

Five student vignettes are included in this chapter: Jackson (pp. 51-53); Megan (p. 62); Tikea, Jacob and Olivia (pp. 82-84); Tikea (p. 93); and Olivia (pp. 98-99). Form five groups with each group assigned to review and discuss one of the vignettes. What can you learn about your students by reflecting on these student vignettes? Share your observations with the entire group when it reconvenes.

Take Action:

Use the literacy assessments described in this chapter with your students. Report your findings to the group at a future study group session.

Inventory your literacy assessment practices using the eight topics in Chapter Three as a guide. Is assessment ongoing in your classroom? How well do you think you are adapting instruction based on individual children’s assessments? In what areas do you need assistance in interpreting assessment results? Use this inventory to identify topics for discussion with your colleagues in future study group sessions.

In your professional journal, reflect on this statement:

“If you believe, as I [Anne McGill-Franzen] do, that teachers can and must move kindergarten children’s development forward, regardless of what they bring to school, then the place to begin is not with the curriculum but with the child.” P. 33

Chapter Four What Counts as Progress?

Chapter Overview

This chapter moves the discussion from literacy assessment to planning activities based on the assessments. Being able to identify patterns in children's performance is an important aspect of interpreting assessment results and knowing how to plan instruction accordingly. You will examine some class profiles, identify patterns that help focus instruction, and follow two teachers as they use the results of assessments to plan instruction at the beginning of the year, at midyear, and at the end of the year. The author describes the stages of early literacy development: Stage 1—Letters 7 Sounds Kids and Sounds Kids, Stage 2—Almost Readers, and Stage 3—Readers. The characteristics that describe children at each stage offer the reader criteria to apply in his/her own classroom. As in the previous chapter, McGill-Franzen includes student vignettes that convey realistic messages about assessment and instructional planning.

React to:

“...virtually any kindergarten teacher will look at a class profile and see that each student needs something distinct. Such a profile gives a bird’s-eye view on the need to make instruction a dynamic blend of individual, small-group, and whole-class work, the last of which provides kindergartners with a predictability that is precious to them at this age. The trick is to infuse the whole-class literacy routines with the knowledge gleaned from the profile.” P. 135

Discuss:

What benchmarks for behavior and skills do you use as “norms” to evaluate children’s development? Do members of the study group adhere to the same benchmarks? What benchmarks are identified by the school? By the district? What is the role of state standards in evaluating children’s development?

Review the process by which one district constructed local norms (see pp. 127-130). Does your school/district have anything comparable? If not, how can you use this information to create the impetus to construct local norms?

How do you use assessments that accompany commercial materials used in your program? What are the strengths and limitations of these assessments? What do you do to overcome the limitations?

Form two groups to discuss how the teachers, Mandy and Ruth, planned their instruction based on the results of assessments and what you learned from reading about their work. You may wish to develop a chart to show what each teacher did so that you can compare notes from your discussions and observe how Mandy’s and Ruth’s experiences are comparable to yours. Suggested headings for the charts: Initial Grouping

Decisions/Activities, Midyear Decisions/Activities, and Intervention
Decisions/Activities.

Working in pairs, discuss Jackson: Ruth's Case Study Student (pp. 153-158). How does this case study reflect the guidelines for conducting a case study (pp. 269-271)? Do you have students whose literacy development is comparable to Jackson's? How do your instructional decisions compare to those that Ruth made for Jackson?

Take Action:

Identify two students at different stages of early literacy development, and begin a case study of each. Refer to "Procedure for Conducting a Case Study" (pp. 269-271) for guidance in developing the study as well as Ruth's description of Jackson (pp. 153-158). Periodically, share your progress in developing the case studies with colleagues during study group sessions. Subsequently, present one or both of your completed case studies to the group. Reflect on how studying students whose literacy development differed helped you to differentiate instruction.

Consider the students in your class that would be grouped at each stage of early literacy development: Stage 1—Letters & Sounds Kids and Sounds Kids, Stage 2—Almost Readers, Stage 3—Readers. Compare your instructional decisions for each group with the practices that Ruth and Mandy used with their students. What insights into your instruction have you gained from reading about Ruth's and Mandy's practices?

Continue to use assessments from Chapter Three to evaluate your students' progress and differentiate instruction. Share your findings and observations with colleagues at future study group sessions.

In your professional journal, reflect on this statement and describe what you are doing to become an "evaluation expert":

..the ultimate purpose of assessment is to provide instruction that is optimal for all children. To achieve this ideal...teachers must become 'evaluation experts'.
P. 126.

Chapter Five Teaching the Alphabet, Names, and Words

Chapter Overview

This chapter, as well as the next two chapters, describes a wide range of instructional practices to support children's literacy development. Working within the framework for kindergarten literacy introduced in Chapter Two (pp. 28-29), McGill-Franzen now describes specific teaching routines and strategies that will build children's literacy development. Suggestions are included for read-alouds, visualization, and guided practice. These suggestions apply to "noticing features of names," "linking read-alouds to word study," learning to say, read, and write words," and "word study routines." Summaries are provided for guided practice with names, letter recognition, and alphabet books. Charts show the stages of word recognition and a summary of spelling stages.

React to:

"I can't emphasize enough that what holds kindergartners' attention to letters and sounds is their motivation! They want to do the "grown-up" reading that gives them access to storybooks and they want the power of writing a message that can be understood by others. ... what keeps kids engaged in the nitty-gritty work of spelling, decoding, and remembering words is the opportunity to successfully read and write." P. 196

Discuss:

Discuss the extent to which you have been able to apply the Framework for Kindergarten Literacy (p. 164). Which areas in the framework appear to be receiving more or less attention than others? Why is this so? Based on this review, what adjustments do you think you should make in your instruction?

Form three groups to analyze and discuss the instructional strategies for (1) Noticing features of names: teaching routines and strategies (pp. 165-174), (2) Linking read-alouds to word study (pp. 174-178), and (3) Beyond names: how children learn to say, read, and write words (pp. 178-182). Identify practices that are routine in your instruction as well as those that you have intended to use but haven't yet done so. With your colleagues talk about how you organize materials and group students for selected activities. Share the highlights of your conversations when the groups reconvene.

To what extent do you model reading behavior for your students? In the group, take turns demonstrating how you think aloud as you help students with selected reading activities.

The last section of this chapter, Purposeful Puzzling: Open-ended Word Study Routines (pp. 183-196), provides a wealth of suggestions to help advance children's word recognition. With a partner or a small group, review each of the routines taking note of those you use frequently, those that you have used with limited success, and those that

you have not used. Consider how you can incorporate more of these routines in your instruction.

Take Action:

McGill-Franzen closes the chapter with this admonition: “As you use these practices on your own, remember to build on children’s strengths, link new information to familiar, and make your instruction explicit and personal” (p. 196). In your professional journal, reflect on this statement and judge how it defines what you are doing to use best practices with your students.

In your professional journal, reflect on ways in which you accommodate variations in oral language and meet the needs of English language learners.

Conduct a lesson in which you explain to the children what you are thinking. If necessary, refer to the sample think-aloud (pp. 169-171) as a model for your lesson. If possible, video tape the lesson. View and discuss the video with colleagues at a future study group meeting.

Review and update the entries in your professional portfolio. Plan a study group session in which participants share materials they have assembled in their portfolios.

Reflect on “Prompts to Initiate and Sustain Collaborative Dialogue” (p. 268) to determine how well the group discussions are functioning. If there are problems with the discussion, work with your colleagues to devise ways to improve the quality of the dialogue.

Chapter Six Writing

Chapter Overview

The strategies described in this chapter enable teachers to integrate writing and reading instruction for kindergarten students. Noting that learning to write often precedes learning to read, McGill-Franzen defines a sequence of writing development and accompanying instructional routines that foster children's written expression. This discussion takes into account the use of both narrative and expository patterns in writing instruction. Descriptions of dictated writing, shared writing, and interactive writing provide effective models that teachers can follow or easily adapt. Linking reading to writing, an essential component of kindergarten literacy instruction, is presented in depth along with transcripts of teacher and student talk that exemplify best practices.

React to:

“Watching a kindergartner learn to write is like watching a morning glory unfurl in the morning sun. One minute the child is writing a faint scribble on the page, and the next time you turn around, the writing is in full bloom. What a thrill it is to see that full, bold color, and hear a new voice declaring itself to the world. And, oh, children have so much to say.” P. 222

Discuss:

What have you observed about the written expression of children in your class? How do you characterize the different stages of writing development that you observe in the children's writing samples? Refer to the chart, A Child's Understanding of Print Concepts (p. 198). Discuss how this information applies to children in your class?

Refer to the state standards for kindergarten writing. Discuss how the standards are represented in McGill-Franzen's description of a sequence of writing development (pp. 199-203).

Refer to the chart, Early Concepts of Text Writing (p. 202). To what extent is each genre (non-chronological and chronological) represented in the writing of children in your class? Comment on your use of narrative and expository materials in your literacy instruction. Do you tend to favor one form of material over another? What factors do you think have contributed to the recent emphasis on using informational text with young children?

Define how you use each of these writing activities: Dictated Writing, Shared Writing, and Interactive Writing. What purposes do these different activities serve in building children's knowledge of writing?

What activities do you use to link reading to writing? With a partner or in a small group

review one or two lesson plans for linking reading to writing. Refer to the suggestions for lesson planning (pp. 212-213) to guide and focus your discussion of the lesson plans.

Refer to Example 1: Daily Interactive Writing (pp. 207-210) and Example 2: Link Writing to a Read-Aloud (pp. 213-218). Form two groups to discuss each example. Note how each teacher models writing behavior and scaffolds instruction. Share your observations with the entire group when it reconvenes.

How do you organize your instructional schedule so that children have opportunities to read and write every day? Compare your schedule with the sample provided at the top of p. 219.

Share your experiences in conducting writing conferences with your students. In what ways do you think your conferences are successful in helping to improve the children's writing? What would you like to improve in these conferences?

Take Action:

Refer to the types of writing listed on pp. 220-221. How many of these types of writing are evident in your classroom? Do you need to expand the range of writing experiences for your students?

In your professional journal, consider how your instruction matches this description of the teacher's role in helping children learn to write.

"...our role as teachers is to help our students continue to build from the simple to the complex, from the one to the many, from the random to the related. We teach them to build their knowledge from the one letter, to the one word, to one sentence, and beyond, until by year's end, our kindergartners are writing many sentences of sustained ideas." P. 199

Chapter Seven Reading

Chapter Overview

In this chapter you will learn how to implement reading routines that help children to grow in their ability to decode and comprehend text. At the beginning of the chapter, McGill-Franzen summarizes observations from research about the nature of reading, components of literacy development, and children's concurrent learning about letters, words, and sequences of words in texts. She reminds us about the interdependence of word knowledge and topic knowledge, syntax, vocabulary, and genre knowledge. The chapter includes descriptions of routines for read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, inquiry circles, and independent reading. Leveled books are described along with titles for a text set on the topic bugs. A sequence for building print knowledge is presented using the Clifford stories as an example. Charts are provided to summarize procedures for the guided reading lesson, implementing inquiry circles, making a class story, observing oral reading and recording errors, sharing reading of student-made books, and the processes that move children towards independent reading. The comprehensive treatment of reading instruction provides a blueprint for an effective kindergarten reading program.

React to:

“In order to teach effectively, we must observe children reading orally. In order to know what to teach next, we must identify what children already know about print and what kinds of information they are using to decode word and make sense of print. ...the expert teacher notices patterns in children’s literacy development—patterns that include strengths as well as weaknesses.” P. 247

Discuss:

Identify the routines that you use for reading instruction. List contributions from each of the group members on chart paper, the chalkboard, or a transparency. Discuss each routine briefly noting the purpose, frequency of use, and materials. Compare your routines with those presented in Chapter Six. Is there a one-to-one match?

From your reading of Chapter Six, identify routines that you want to develop more effectively with your students. With a partner, develop a lesson plan that implements at least one of the routines. Share observations and advice about the lesson planning with the entire group when it reconvenes. Arrange to either video tape or have a colleague observe as you teach the lesson. Use the video or observation as the basis for discussion in another study group session.

What materials do you use for reading instruction? What are the strengths and limitations of these materials? What suggestions do you have for organizing the classroom library so that books and other reading materials are easily accessible for the children?

Form small groups to analyze the instructional examples provided in this chapter. Consider the instructional purpose, the nature of the materials, and what the example reveals about children's reading development. Share your comments with the entire group when it reconvenes. The examples are listed below:

- 1 Example 1—A snapshot of guided reading Levels A-D (p. 242)
- 2 Example 2—A snapshot of guided reading Level F (p. 243)
- 3 Example 3—A snapshot of guided reading Levels H-K (pp. 243-244)
- 4 Example 4—Multi-level text set on bugs (pp. 245-246)
- 5 Example 5—Developing inferences from illustrations (pp. 251-252)

If you have been developing a case study, provide an example of the child's oral reading record. Discuss in the group what the example reveals about the child's reading strengths and weaknesses.

What routines and materials do you use to link reading and writing? Comment on the ideas presented in "Linking Reading to Writing with Series Books" (pp. 252-259) that helped you to extend your practice.

How frequently do you confer with individual students about their reading? Do you consider that these conferences are helpful? What changes would you like to make in the way in which you handle these conferences? What guidance do you find in the section "Side-by-Side Teaching: Angela's Conference with Rosa" (pp. 259-262)?

What evidence do you provide parents to show how their children are developing as readers? What questions do parents most often ask about their children's reading and writing? How have you used the material in *Kindergarten Literacy*, along with your experience, to answer these questions confidently?

If this is your last study group session centered on the book *Kindergarten Literacy*, share reflections about what you have learned through your reading and discussions. Refer to the goals that the group set in the introductory discussion and consider to what extent you have been successful in meeting those goals.

Take Action:

In your professional journal, reflect on all the routines you use to teach reading. Evaluate each routine according to frequency of use, your comfort level with it, and its impact on the children's reading development. Note what changes you want to make in your instruction and devise a plan to implement those changes.

Reflect on the following statements in the context of your experience:

"Routines create comfort and predictability. Teaching strategies make the process of reading and writing visible and accessible to the young learner."

Routines, and the tasks embedded within, all support the same goal for kindergartners—to read and write independently.” Pp. 264-265

Review your professional portfolio and, if necessary, update and reorganize it.

Reflect on the conversations you had with colleagues during the course of the study group sessions. What have you learned about yourself, your teaching, and your colleagues through “collaborative dialogue?” In what ways has this dialogue shaped your assessment and instructional practices? Share your thoughts with a colleague or other members of the study group.