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*Sincerely,
Karen Haag*

Get Help; Give Help

When I first taught asking questions, I thought students could only ask questions about confusing parts and vocabulary. One day I realized that they could also read as authors, too! I could teach them to ask questions as if they were writers. The questions they brought would be in the form of theories: Do you think the mother was coughing because the author was foreshadowing her illness?

So, now when students say, I don't have a question, I point out that questions don't only have to be about plot, but can also be about inferences.

Minilesson

ENGAGE: Talk about a time you noticed that someone came to a discussion group and had no questions. Or ask a child to share a similar experience.

EXPLAIN: Explain that there are really two different kinds of questions to bring to reading groups. One type is plot questions. Plot questions would include anything interfering with a reader's understanding of the story: vocabulary (words readers don't know), setting (where the story takes place), characters (who is who in the story), plot (the sequence of the events) - questions that can be answered by looking back at the story. I call these "Get Help Questions".

Many students don't have any plot questions. I encourage you to bring inferential questions: why did the author write this books anyway, what is the main idea, what is the theme, how will the book affect the way I will think or act differently, do I like the book, what clues did the author put in the story? These are also questions readers bring to groups. I call these "Give Help Questions" because others may not have noticed what the reader noticed. Bringing these types of questions to group discussion helps everyone think deeply.

Share learning target: I can bring Get Help and Give Help questions to discussion groups.

STUDENTS EXPLAIN: Ask students to THINK-PAIR-SHARE by explaining the difference between the two types of questions. Clear up any questions they have.

EXPLORE: Give students a copy of the [Get Help; Give Help handout](#) (next page). Tell them to read with this new purpose in mind. Students go to reading time and find questions to bring to discussion circles.

EVALUATE: Bring students back to the closure circle.

Find out if anyone found a Give Help question that they will bring to their reading group. Assess. It's really not important that students identify the two kinds of questions as much as they know that *both kinds of questions are helpful*. This minilesson is designed to communicate to the students that they must come to discussion groups with questions. It's for the students who always say, "I don't have a question." The lesson is also to show all students that Give Help questions will deepen the conversations as well. They may never have thought of these questions as a possibility to bring.

TEACHER'S NOTE: Harvey and Goudvis say in their video "[Strategy Instruction in Action](#)" that students *have to discuss the literal before they can discuss the inferential*. We can't skip them too quickly through sorting the details of the text first to clarify misconceptions. I believe Get Help; Give Help is less confusing than Thick and Thin questions because they don't feel like any question is wrong.

Handout to glue in reader's notebook.

Bring **questions and observations** to your group!


GET HELP

Words I can't pronounce or don't know.
Anything I don't understand.

GIVE HELP

What clues did I notice?
What do I think will happen?
What is the message, the theme?
Why did the author write this book?
How is the book affecting me?
How will this book make me think or act differently?
What does this book make me think about?
Do I like the book?



Cut  -----

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Words I can't pronounce or don't know.
Anything I don't understand.

GIVE HELP

What clues did I notice?
What do I think will happen?
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