Appendixes

Appendix A:
EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

We've created this curriculum guide using the curriculum design framework *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998), developed with the support of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The *Understanding by Design* approach is intended to deepen student understanding of important concepts and skills in such a way that this knowledge will endure over time. In contrast with the traditional way of designing curriculum (identifying objectives, planning lessons, and assessing results), the *Understanding by Design* framework uses a "backward design process" that identifies assessments before planning learning experiences and lessons. We've summarized the process of "backward design" below:

- Identify desired results: *What is worthy of student understanding?*
- Determine acceptable evidence: *How will students demonstrate their understanding?*
- Plan learning experiences, lessons, and instruction: *What will we have students experience and do in order to achieve the desired results?*

UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Stage One: Identify Desired Results

- What understandings are desired?
- What essential questions will guide this unit and focus learning?
- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire?

Stage Two: Determine Acceptable Evidence

- Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate understanding, knowledge, and skill?
- Through what prompts or academic problems will students demonstrate understanding, as well as more discrete knowledge and skill?
- Through what observations, work samples, and other tasks will students demonstrate understanding, knowledge, and skill?

Stage Three: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

- What sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to develop and demonstrate the desired understandings?

Appendix B: *Reading Comprehension Strategies*

Research on reading has shown that comprehension is a process that can be taught directly. When a student has the opportunity to use a comprehension strategy repeatedly, he or she eventually will begin to use it automatically and independently. Reading research has also shown that comprehension can be enhanced by collaborative learning—small- and large-group dialogue in response to open-ended questions. In *The Art of Teaching Reading*, Calkins (2001) suggests that literary interpretation can be taught:

> *The difference between experienced readers and the rest of us is that the experts have the strategies, the tools, and the inclination to extend and deepen their responses to a text.... Teaching interpretation means teaching students a process that, for the rest of their lives, will yield big, thoughtful responses to texts"* (pp. 477 and 478).

Voices From the Field uses a recurring set of questions proposed by Calkins to strengthen interpretation and divergent thinking about a text, as well as selected comprehension strategies from reading research. These are summarized below.

Strengthening Students' Interpretation Skills:

Calkins (p. 478) notes that the first interpretation strategy good readers use is to ask themselves one or two of the following questions:

- What is really important about this story?
- What does this story say about the world?
- What does this story say about my life?
- What is the point of this story for me?
- What is this story really about?
- Does it matter if people read this story or not? Why should or shouldn't they?

Comprehension Strategies Used:

1. *Creating Detailed Mental Images of Information.* Research has shown that comprehension of textual information increases when students can create detailed mental pictures of what they are reading. The mind stores knowledge in two forms—a linguistic form and an imagery form. The linguistic form is semantic in nature—the words stored in memory. The imagery form, in contrast, is expressed as mental pictures—and even physical sensations, such as smell, sound, taste, and touch. The more students use both sys-

tems of representation—linguistic and nonlinguistic, the better able they'll be to think about and recall what they've read. (Richardson, 1983; Muehlherr and Siermann, 1996; Desmarias et al., 1997; as referenced in Marzano et al., 2001).

2. *Creating Graphic Representations of Similarities and Differences*. Graphic representations of similarities and differences using such graphic organizers as Venn diagrams and comparison matrices can enhance student learning for many of the same reasons as those stated in #1, above (Marzano et al., 2001).
3. *Using Mixed-Ability Grouping and Cooperative Learning Strategies.* Reading comprehension can be increased when students are able to share their interpretations of a text with peers. Working in cooperative, mixed-ability groups can help students clarify the basic meaning of the text. As they hear the opinions and interpretations of others, students' own thinking about a text can be expanded upon, clarified, or enhanced (Fielding, 1994; Calkins, 2001; Marzano et al., 2001).
4. *Creating Graphic Representations of Key Ideas.* Drawing pictures or pictographs (i.e., symbolic pictures) to represent key ideas is an effective way for students to generate nonlinguistic representations of information. The more teachers use both linguistic and nonlinguistic systems of representation, the better students are able to think about and recall knowledge (Newton, 1995, as referenced in Marzano et al., 2001, p. 74).
5. *Analyzing Perspectives.* Stepping into the shoes of another and trying to see the world from that person's point of view not only builds empathy, but also strengthens students' critical thinking skills (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998; Marzano et al., 1997; Paul, 1990).
6. *Using Advance Organizer Questions.* Advance organizer questions can help students activate their prior knowledge and lead them to focus on the most important parts of the text. Research has shown that advance organizers, particularly in the form of higher-level questions, significantly increase student achievement (Walberg, 1999).
7. *Close Analysis of Text Passages*. As Calkins (2001) notes, when good readers really want to go deeper into the meaning of a story, they take a paragraph or part of the story that seems important and they study it in depth, trying to figure out what the author means and how it relates to their own thinking. This strategy is further enhanced when done in a small-group discussion format and when students have an opportunity to write essays based on the lines that held the most meaning for them.

8. *Dramatization of the Key Events in a Story.* This strategy is yet another variation of creating nonlinguistic and linguistic images of a text (Marzano et al., 2001). The more immersed students become in the dramatization, the more intense learning becomes. Through dramatization, students can experience a story both emotionally and rationally; in so doing, the story becomes more deeply embedded in long-term memory.
9. *Using Journals and Other Forms of Writing-to-Learn Strategies.* How well a reader constructs meaning depends in part on metacognition—the reader's ability to reflect on, think about, and control the learning process (i.e., to plan, monitor comprehension, reflect on what and how he or she has learned, and revise the use of strategies for comprehension). Reading comprehension is enhanced when students are encouraged to respond in writing to what they read through the use of journals, quick writing, mind mapping, and other strategies. Students' thinking about a text is greatly enhanced when journal writing prompts are designed to foster multiple interpretations.
10. *Literature Circles.* Reading comprehension is enhanced through social interaction—especially through large- and small-group dialogue, in which students are encouraged to seek out the meaning and formulate their own interpretations of the text. Literature circles are yet another cooperative learning strategy that can lead to increased student achievement (see #3 above). See Appendix C, page 178, for further information on literature circles.

Note:
The list of references on pages 180–183 provides complete bibliographic information on all citations in this appendix.

Appendix C:
LITERATURE CIRCLES

Description:

Literature circles are small, temporary discussion groups comprising students who are reading the same text (see Daniels, 1984). The circle usually consists of five students. Each student reads the story individually, and each student is also responsible for playing a particular role during the conversation once the story has been read. The roles are:

- *Summarizer:* lays out the story action at the beginning of the circle's meeting.
- *Discussion Leader:* devises thought-provoking discussion questions and keeps the discussion moving along.
- *Passage Master:* cites what he or she thinks are important passages to be read aloud and discussed.
- *Connector:* suggests connections between the text and students' real-world experiences.
- *Illustrator:* produces a graphic, nonlinguistic representation of what he or she thinks are the key ideas of the text and a brief written description of why these ideas are important.

How to Set Up a Literature Circle:

To set up a literature circle, divide the class into groups of five, and ask the students in each group to agree on the role for which each will take responsibility. Explain that each role requires a written component that allows you, the teacher, to see how they have prepared for their parts.

Student Guidelines:

If this is the first time you'll be using literature circles, ask students to keep several ground rules in mind:

- All participate in the discussion, in addition to taking responsibility for the particular role they are assigned.
- During discussion of the text, different interpretations are welcome, because they add richness and interest to the conversation.
- There is no one right way to respond to a text. Each person will find his or her own meaning in what has been read. When each member of the group feels free to express his or her point of view (and knows that it will be listened to with respect), the conversation becomes much more engaging.
- Conversations about the story should last a minimum of 30 minutes.
- Only one student may speak at a time.
- Each circle's discussion leader and illustrator are responsible for summarizing the important parts of the circle's conversation—including areas of disagreement—to the class on the day following the circle's discussion of the text.

Appendix D:

THE USE OF JOURNALS

Journal writing provides students with an opportunity to express their ideas, observations, and emotions while confident that their writing will be accepted without criticism.

Useful across the entire curriculum, journal writings can help students

- Explore experiences, solve problems, and consider varying perspectives.
- Examine relationships with others and the world.
- Reflect on goals, ideas, and values.
- Summarize ideas, experiences, and opinions before and after instruction.

The journals used in the curriculum units in *Voices From the Field* are literature logs or response journals. They are an integral part of reading instruction because students' responses are the basis for literature discussion and are central to assessment for comprehension. They contain not only self-selected topics but also assigned topics.

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