Larry Lewin believes that student-generated questions foster better reading and thinking. His stated goals for Teaching Comprehension with Questioning Strategies that Motivate Middle School Readers are that the strategies presented will promote self-monitoring, will deepen comprehension, and will cultivate intellectual curiosity. The strategies described will help students realize that reading is a conversation with the author, whether one is reading fiction or a textbook. Using the methods described in the book, teachers and students can have meaningful conversations about reading material based on student curiosity instead of focusing solely on what they need to memorize for a test.

Throughout the book, Lewin provides lots of examples and question starters. He includes real questions written by real students and images of students’ actual writing. Lewin suggests a variety of ways teachers can assess the questions their students ask and provides advice about how to solve common problems that arise. Lewin also provides generous references to the sources that have inspired his teaching.

Chapter one focuses on beginning activities teachers can use to introduce the concept of student questioning. The activities begin with students interviewing their teacher and fellow students, and then lead into writing questions about reading assignments. Later chapters expand on these concepts into intermediate activities: questions to myself, questions to a character (when reading fiction), questions to my teacher, and questions to the author. The classic questioning frameworks of Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) and Questioning the Author (QtA) are also discussed. Once again, these techniques build on the concepts presented in earlier chapters. The final chapter describes other advanced types of questioning activities aimed at creating suspicious, or critical, readers.

Lewin uses a variety of labels for different levels of questioning, such as puzzlement and wonderment questions, and thin, thick and sidekick questions. He connects the various levels of questions to Bloom’s Taxonomy, and advocates that students learn to write a variety of questions from literal and inferential to interpretive and big picture.

Overall, the book provides practical activities and strategies that beginning and veteran teachers across the disciplines can use right away in their classrooms.

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