

Golden Lamp Award Winner

Category: *Instructional Materials*



Company Name

Scholastic Education, a division of Scholastic Inc.

Product Mission

Text Talk is a systematic curriculum program that builds both oral vocabulary and comprehension skills. The program was authored by Dr. Isabel Beck and Dr. Margaret McKeown.

Market

Grades K-3

Publication Year

2005

Product Website

www.scholastic.com/texttalk

Key to Success

The developers paid as much attention to the design as they did to the content. Every page of the professional guide is well organized. The effective use of typography makes it easy for the teacher to find the book, page and lesson being taught. Instructional elements are strategically placed for optimum visibility in speech bubbles - the bubbles being a constant reminder that active speaking is the goal of the program. Together, good design and clear and concise writing result in a product that makes it easy for busy teachers to reinforce essential skills.

Inspiring Teachers to Active Classroom Discussion

How do you give teachers the experience of being trained by the experts? Scholastic's product development team asked that question when developing Text Talk, a reading program that uses trade books and direct instruction to build vocabulary and comprehension. As the program is based on years of research from academic experts and classroom trials, the team felt confident in the instructional method. The challenge was designing materials that communicated both the how and the why of this unique classroom approach.

"Teachers are busy," said Heidi Gilman Bennett, General Manager of Scholastic's Early Education Program. "We have an obligation to convey an instructional plan with laser-sharp focus, but we also aim to both inspire classroom teachers and deepen their professional knowledge."

Thus, the team came up with four avenues for teachers to advance their professional training at the same time they were teaching their students.

1. The Professional Guide provides compelling instructional lessons on every page. Basic research is presented in a quick, easy-to-read format, and lessons are broken down for each book, telling the teachers how they will progress and why. The "why" is on every page with further research notes, observational assessment questions, tips on generating student interaction, and sample worksheets and forms.
2. Text Talk Notes, pre-printed notes

that stick to the trade books' pages, help the teachers engage the students in meaningful discussions. Placing the notes on the appropriate pages before class allows the teacher to lead the interaction without fumbling with the professional guide and the read-aloud book or trying to generate questions on the spot.

3. The DVD contains video segments showing modeled lessons in a real classroom with children, giving teachers access to the experts who developed the program.
4. In-service training from Scholastic is available to schools that desire an extra level of instruction for the teachers.

The creators of Text Talk believe that by providing multiple avenues for professional development within the product, they are also improving the skills of literacy teachers.

"I think it's a grand ambition for a publisher to create a professional development program within instructional material," said Bennett, "but the most important thing I learned from developing Text Talk is that you can push the boundaries of supplemental publishing." For more information contact Heidi Gilman Bennett at hgilman@scholastic.com.

Judges' Comment: This winner is an effective example of translating research into practice. It has a high literacy quality and gives teachers great suggestions for classroom implementation.