

# MAKING MORE OF OUR STORIES – TEACHING STUDENTS TO INTERPRET TEXTS

January 11 & 12, 2006: Grades 6-12

January 11: Holiday Inn, Newark • January 12: Ramada, Mt. Laurel

Very often, when we pull alongside the kids in our classes and ask them to talk about what's going on in their minds while they read, they tell us that they are seeing the story in their minds. They are imagining the characters and the scenes in which the story is taking place. The most engaged readers describe this imagining with energy and passion – the joy of reading is getting lost in the world of the story.

Too often, however, the imagining that kids do is left on the pages of the text. The kids energetically follow their journey of their stories, but the experience ends with the last word on the last page. The kids rarely think to take the characters and their stories out of the text and into their own world. They rarely see in the books possibilities for examining larger ideas and issues.

## Learn practical strategies for:

- Developing daily lessons and year-long curriculum that will help students pay closer attention to the texts they are reading and develop justifiable interpretations
- Using the structures and practices of reading workshop to help kids articulate their thoughts and explore other's ideas
- Utilizing conferring and formal assessment tools to evaluate students' interpretive skills
- Demonstrating, developing, and implementing reading conferences that enhance accountability
- Encouraging in-depth reading
- Implementing strategies that benefit struggling readers as well as proficient and advanced readers
- Developing book clubs as a way for students to share their thinking
- Helping students to think more deeply, question more thoroughly, and engage more fully with the texts they are reading

*Donna has...given us the gift of a look into her wonderful classroom and her mind as a thoughtful and highly professional teacher.*

**Randy Bomer**

*Author of **Time for Meaning and For a Better World***

*... It is rare to have the opportunity to gape at the instruction provided by great teachers. Donna Santman has given us the chance to see... teaching at its best.*

**Lucy Calkins**

*Author of **The Art of Teaching Writing***

**shades of meaning**

Comprehension and Interpretation in Middle School

DONNA SANTMAN  
Foreword by RANDY BOMER

**Donna Santman** is a middle school literacy teacher and reading coach at Intermediate School 89 in New York City. A former staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Donna consults with schools around the country supporting teachers in developing and implementing rigorous reading and writing workshops as well as supporting schools in thinking about literacy needs across the curriculum. She is author of **Shades of Meaning: Comprehension and Interpretation in Middle School** (Heinemann, 2005) and co-author (with Calkins and Montgomery) of **A Teachers' Guide to Standardized Reading Tests: Knowledge is Power** (Heinemann, 1998).

**About the Presenter**