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# Preface

**1***02 Reading Response Lessons: Improving Comprehension Skills for Test Day—and Beyond* empowers students to analyze any comprehension question and respond in clear, supported paragraphs. Teachers of Grades 3 through 12 will find the resources useful.

As a fifth-grade teacher, I find that my students struggle to comprehend what they read and to translate their comprehension into written words. The Hawai'i<sup>1</sup> Department of Education issues a list of 129 sample constructed-response questions that my students are expected to respond to in writing. I have seen similar lists for many other states. Countless teachers throw up their hands in frustration. If your students don't understand what to do when faced with a reading response question and you don't know what to try next to help them, this book is for you.

In 30-minute sessions, students practice test taking while learning critical and higher-order thinking skills. Students progress through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as the difficulty of the questions increases. Questions are provided for all three types of genres: narrative, informational, and functional. Scaffolding is provided to build skills to the independence level required by standardized testing. The scaffolding includes necessary vocabulary instruction to guide students through one of the hardest parts of reading response: understanding the questions! After students write their responses, they use a rubric, the same rubric each time, to assess their own work. Included in the rubric are the six traits of writing developed by Vicky Spandel to help students recognize what good writing is. Students can record their scores and practice the specific skills they are lacking. This

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1. In the Hawaiian language, the 'okina (apostrophe) is considered a consonant and denotes a glottal stop between letters, hence Hawai'i is the correct spelling.

process of self-assessment and goal setting moves students through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and the provided scaffolding toward evaluation and independence.

I invite you to flip back to the response sheets beginning in Chapter 9 to get a clear understanding of how the questions are deconstructed. You may also want to look at Chapter 7, which includes anchors for 34 of the questions to help you and your students recognize "good" answers.

Try a few of the response sheets with your class, using the suggested titles from Chapter 6. You will see immediate improvement in how well students can respond when they understand the questions and expectations.