



# Impromptu Book Clubs: Sharing the Joy of Books Kids Choose Themselves and Love Best

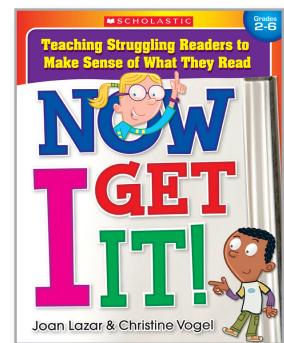
by JOAN LAZAR

*A person who reads well can take control of her life rather than having it be controlled by others. But learning to read well takes time and practice. The easiest and most pleasurable way to practice is to read self-selected materials.*



## LITERACY CHAMPION: JOAN LAZAR

- Joan Lazar is The co-author of *NOW I GET IT! Teaching Struggling Readers to Make Sense of What They Read* (Scholastic 2010)
- The Founding Director of two highly effective literacy nonprofit organizations in Newark, New Jersey: Reading Naturally, a teacher and tutor training organization, and The Newark Literacy Campaign, a citywide reading tutorial service for people of all ages.
- A classroom teacher for 20+ years ages 1st Grade-Adult.
- A Literacy Coach in New Jersey public schools guiding classroom teachers to teach reading effectively.
- Joan Lazar has received Outstanding Nonprofit Leader award twice from The Prudential Foundation, as well as the Literacy Advocate of Newark award from the United Way of Essex County.



## One to Know: Helping Readers Share Their Enjoyment of their Self-Selected Books

I have helped children, new to reading, find others to talk to about their self-selected books. They participate in an impromptu “Book Club.” These children clamor to do this because it is a great joy for them to talk about a loved book with others who feel likewise. It is also a way for each reader to enlarge her understanding of the author’s meaning. Frequently, one reader

may notice a subtle meaning that another reader had not thought about—which is a great and unexpected gift to all!

Children new to reading find that starting their conversation with “Book Club” members is most interesting when each first briefly summarizes what s/he thinks happened in the section they are discussing. They are comparing their understandings of what happened in the section. If there are differences, and there surely will be, the Club members share their textual evidence along with their own related experiences.

As reading is mainly a process of inference and prediction, the next discussion is what they predict might happen next and why. This is often followed by what surprised them in that section and why. They often conclude with what they are still wondering about. All of the conversations could be shared in person, in writing through emails, or electronically through Zoom.

## **What to Know and Do**

Trained educators/tutors/family members can help Book Club members conduct such robust and joyful conversations about their self-selected books. These mentors will never enter into the conversations about the book per se. Instead they can help Book Club members to converse fruitfully about their book by merely offering discussion topics such as those described above.

## **More to Know and Do**

Full descriptions and examples of how to stimulate such reader-to-reader discussions which expands comprehension of their book can be obtained by contacting Joan Lazar at [lazajoa@gmail.com](mailto:lazajoa@gmail.com). Put in the subject line “Bring Me Book for Book Club”.