CHAPTER 9

Today's Comprehension Strategy Instruction

"Not Your Father's Oldsmobile"

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Success in school depends on the ability to make sense of a range of different types of texts. In Kintsch's (1998) words, reading comprehension is a "paradigm for cognition." The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) defines comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (p. 11). Whether one is reading for enjoyment, for a deep literary experience, or for new information, comprehension is the key.

The foundational skills described by Johnson and Kuhn in Chapter 8 act in service to the successful acquisition of reading comprehension. They are necessary but not sufficient for children to become proficient at making sense of the texts they read. As we begin our discussion of comprehension, *constrained-skills theory* (Paris, 2005) can help us understand and address some of the ways that comprehension instruction and assessment are more complex than the instruction and assessment of the constrained skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency (see Stahl, 2011). As an unconstrained skill, comprehension is different from the constrained skills that are learned to mastery levels within a short time period. Comprehension is learned across a lifetime. It is never fully mastered, because proficiency varies by text difficulty, genre, task, and instructional context. Both instruction and assessment must be considerate of these dimensions of comprehension.

Therefore, although we certainly want to be thorough, explicit, and systematic in teaching the constrained skills in the primary grades, recent research has demonstrated that we also want to be intentional and assertive in our attention to comprehension instruction as early as preschool and throughout the primary grades (Dooley, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2010; Solari & Gerber, 2008; Stahl, 2008b, 2009). Providing opportunities

for children to be accountable for making sense of a wide range of texts for a range of purposes should span the entire school experience.

The present chapter through Chapter 17 of this volume provide research on and examples of some effective ways for teachers to address the multiple dimensions of the comprehension process (see Figure 9.1). In this chapter, I focus on effective comprehension strategy instruction, one aspect of the comprehension curriculum that is supported by a robust research base. In addition to the classic studies that are the foundation for strategy instruction, I focus on the instructional implications of recent research that changes the face of traditional strategy instruction in important ways.

First, I provide a brief review of research on effective strategy instruction and discuss considerations for linguistically or academically diverse learners. Next is a description of three models of comprehension strategy instruction in action in real classrooms. Finally, I describe some ways that teachers can engage in professional development to enhance comprehension strategy instruction in their own classrooms.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Any discussion of comprehension strategies must begin with a definition. The National Reading Panel (2000) report, like some other documents, was a bit confusing because it addressed cognitive strategies and teaching strategies collectively in its section on comprehension. Also misleading is the set of skills that might be listed in a core reading program or the item analysis for a standardized test. *Strategies* are intentional cognitive actions undertaken by readers in the initial stages of learning a new skill or at the point of reading difficulty (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Paris, Lipson, and Wixson

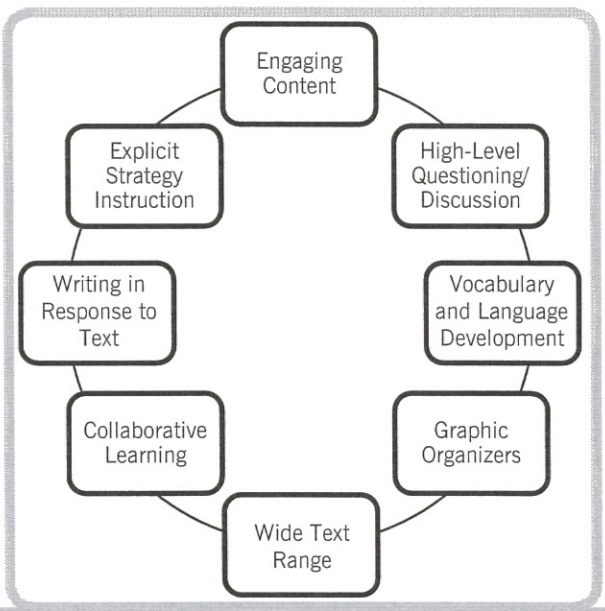


FIGURE 9.1. Components of a comprehensive comprehension curriculum.

(1983) describe reading strategies as "skills under consideration," to indicate that the same action might be a skill or a strategy, depending on the reader's intention and control of the reading task. Simply put, *skills* tend to be automatic, fluid, and effortless, but cognitive *strategies* are deliberate mental efforts by a reader to help remember or gain a deeper understanding of the text. To avoid confusion when referring to what teachers do, I use the term *technique*.

What Strategies Should Be Taught?

Deciding what strategies to teach does not have to be confusing, even though a few research syntheses have recommended slightly different strategies depending on the criteria being used for inclusion in the synthesis (National Reading Panel, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010; Stahl, 2004). Most of the comprehension studies that were included in the National Reading Panel report were conducted in grades 3–6. The Shanahan et al. (2010) and Stahl (2004) studies looked exclusively at studies conducted in grades K–3. However, in general, the converging research supports from strong to moderate levels the instruction of the strategies in Table 9.1.

How to Teach Strategies

Although it is important to explicitly teach each strategy individually, strategies need to be viewed as a repertoire (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Schuder, 1993). You might consider teaching comprehension strategies as being analogous to planning a meal. In planning a dinner party, you would be mindful of the total menu and how the foods will work together, but you would look up the individual recipes. In preparing the meal, you might have a few dishes cooking simultaneously, but you always have an eye on the preparation of each dish as a separate entity. The actual meal incorporates all of the dishes, some individually and others simultaneously. The beverage, like monitoring, is there from start to finish.

Research indicates that an explicit approach to teaching the individual strategies is useful (Baumann & Schmitt, 1986; Duffy, 1993a; Paris et al., 1983). The direct instructional model should include *declarative*, *procedural*, and *conditional* knowledge. First, teachers share an explicit description of the strategy with the students (declarative knowledge). In addition, they describe a procedure for applying the strategy or how to do it. Conditional knowledge includes a discussion of why the strategy is useful, when it is useful, and when it is not likely to be useful as an aid to comprehension. See the accompanying box for an example of how one teacher explicitly taught purposeful predictions.

Because of the complexity of teaching comprehension strategies, most experts recommend applying a *gradual release of responsibility* (Baumann & Schmitt, 1986; Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Pressley et al., 1992). The gradual release of responsibility begins with explicit instruction by the teacher, who over time releases more responsibility to the students for assuming ownership of strategy application (see Figure 9.2). Typically, after the direct instruction of the strategy, a teacher might model the strategy, followed by students modeling the application of the strategy. Before the children are asked to be responsible for engaging in the activity independently, there would be a series of scaffolded experiences moving from highly supported contexts to

TABLE 9.1. Comprehension Strategies Supported by Research

Strategy	Description	Instructional implications and supportive teaching techniques
Targeted activation of prior knowledge and purposeful predictions	Students activate their existing, relevant knowledge and integrate it with text-based information to hypothesize what will happen in the text, followed by verification and taking stock.	In a targeted way, support students to make connections between their existing knowledge and what is likely to be in the text. Use DL/R-TA; RT.
Text structure: Narrative and expository	Students are able to use the organizational structure of narrative and informational texts to enhance meaning making and recall.	Explicitly teach both narrative and expository text structures, using the visual support of graphic organizers (including story maps).
Visualizing	Students create a mental image or representation of text.	Display a concrete object, then conceal; ask students to describe their mental image of the object. Gradually make the transition to sentences and shorter pieces of text, modeling the text cues that help us create mental images.
Questions: Answering high-level questions and generating questions	Students can both answer and ask important questions about the text.	Answering questions: Students are taught question–answer relationships or the source of the answers to teacher-generated questions. Use Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, In My Head (Raphael, 1986). Asking questions: Common question stems are taught, practiced, and posted. Question stems might be common words like *when*, *why*, and *how*, or stems related to common text elements (e.g., "The character said _____; what does that tell you about him?"). Use RT.
Taking stock/ summarizing/ retelling	Either orally or in writing, students can identify and report the key elements of a text.	During reading, stop periodically to ask children to describe the text events or information in their own words. Teach summary writing by physically limiting the number of words permitted to describe the key elements of increasingly longer pieces of text.
Generating inferences	Students retrieve information related to the text that is not explicitly stated, and they are able to generate new ideas based on text concepts (deductive reasoning).	Engage students in high-level questioning that focuses attention on causal lines in stories. Include both teacher and student think-alouds during the reading of complex texts. Include attention to critical analysis of the texts.

(continued)

TABLE 9.1. *(continued)*

Strategy	Description	Instructional implications and supportive teaching techniques
Monitoring and applying fix-up strategies	Students are aware of the need to make sense of text in an ongoing way, to identify any point at which they do not understand either the vocabulary or ideas in a text, and to decide what they might do to overcome comprehension hurdles.	Using a collection of very short text selections with a wide complexity band, students may be taught to decide whether their reading is "clicking" or "clunking." Fix-up strategies including decoding strategies, rereading, leveling the degree of confusion, and peer collaboration may be taught and posted.

Explicitly Teaching Purposeful Predictions: An Example

Declarative Knowledge: Making a purposeful prediction means thinking about what might happen next or what we are likely to learn about in an informational text, based on our experience and other clues found in the book. A purposeful prediction is *not* a wild guess about what we think is going to happen. We must use evidence. We must use clues.

Conditional Knowledge: We use purposeful predictions to help us stay focused as we read, to help us connect new information with what we already know, and to help us remember the story or important information.

Procedural Knowledge: We can make purposeful predictions for stories and informational texts *that we have never read before*. We can make them before we begin reading a book or story, and we make them at certain stopping points while we are reading for the next section or chapter, or even within a chapter. During reading, as we stop to take stock, we can check to see whether our prediction was on target (verifying). Then we can make a purposeful prediction to help us get ready to read the next bit. To make a prediction, we look at the title and think about what we know about the topic or what the story might be likely to be about. If it's an informational book, we can look at the table of contents and, based on what we know, predict what information the author might be telling us in each chapter. As we get inside the book, we can also use the pictures. Finally, we know that stories and books work in certain predictable ways. We know that stories usually have some problem that the character is trying to solve, so we can use that knowledge to anticipate what might happen next. In informational books, we know that headings can provide good clues about what the page or text section will be about. Good readers use all of these tools to make powerful and purposeful predictions.

Teaching Tip: Create a personal script like this for each strategy in Table 9.1.

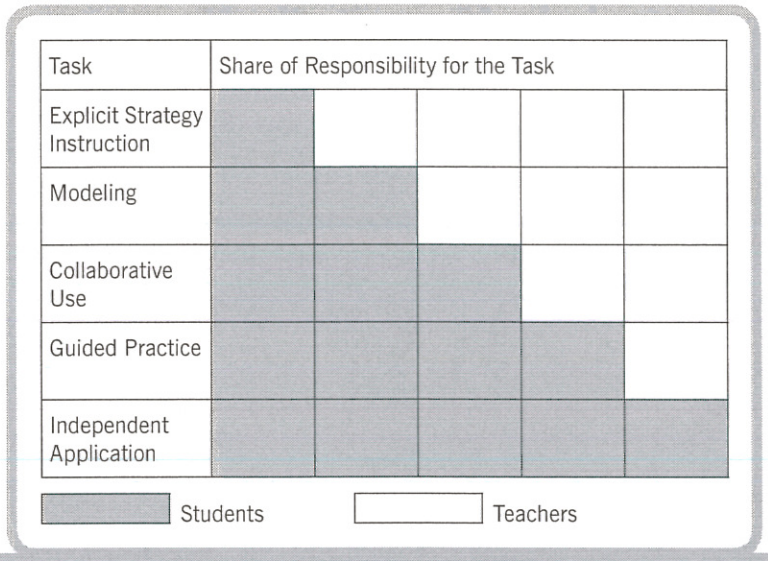


FIGURE 9.2. The gradual release of responsibility. Based on Duke and Pearson (2002), Pearson and Gallagher (1983), and Shanahan et al. (2010, p. 15).

less supportive contexts. Children might engage in a sequence of collaborative activities likely to include Think–Pair–Share within a whole-class discussion, a teacher-led small group, a student-led small group, or partner activity before the students ever assume independent responsibility for an accountable product (such as a summary or story map). The grouping practices described by Taylor in Chapter 3 allow for collaborative application and guided practice in using the strategy in isolation, or combinations of multiple strategies, to enhance the meaning-making process. In addition, posters, bookmarks, and other physical scaffolds may help students move from external to internal application of the strategies.

Instructional Protocols for Strategy Instruction

Several instructional protocols are effective ways to introduce and apply strategies before, during, and after text reading. In addition to supporting students, the application of these approaches can provide scaffolding for teachers who want to begin using strategy instruction in their classrooms. Although research shows that instruction in a single strategy can improve comprehension (e.g., Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993; Morrow, 1985; Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996), evidence seems to indicate that efficacious readers use multiple strategies in flexible ways (Cartwright, 2009; Kintsch, 1998; Paris & Hamilton, 2009; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). As a result, several researchers have developed instructional protocols that incorporate multiple strategies and hold students accountable for orchestrating them as needed during the reading process (Gaskins, Anderson, Pressley, Cunicelli, & Satlow, 1993; Klingner, Vaughn, Arguelles, Hughes, & Leftwich, 2004; Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Paris et al., 1983; Schuder, 1993). These protocols are intended to

be temporary scaffolds or ways to make visible the internal cognitive processing. It is also important to note that the following three protocols integrate strategy and discussion, so it is difficult to separate the contribution of each (Palincsar, 1986).

Directed Reading/Listening–Thinking Activity

The *Directed Reading/Listening–Thinking Activity* (DR/L-TA) is an instructional framework that engages children in thinking and talking about texts that they have listened to or read. The simplicity of the procedure and its robust research base enable it to serve as a good introduction to strategies for children and teachers alike (Baumann, Seifert-Kessell, & Jones, 1992; Davidson & Wilkerson, 1988; Stahl, 2008b; Stauffer, 1969). The teacher's role is to select an instructional-level text, divide the text into meaningful sections, and facilitate the discussion of each section. Students are responsible for establishing their own purposes for reading, generating predictions, justifying those predictions, independently reading the text, and verifying or revising predictions based on evaluations of information in the text during the teacher-led discussion of each section of text. Stauffer has recommended the use of the DR/L-TA with narrative or nonnarrative text at all grade levels.

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching (RT; Palincsar & Brown, 1984) is an instructional activity that takes place during reading with the purpose of gaining meaning from text and self-monitoring. The teacher and students engage in a discussion about a segment of text structured by four strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Initially, the teacher teaches each of these strategies individually for the students. After the strategies have been taught, the students take turns leading the discussion about each segment of text. Each student leader facilitates a dialogue that focuses on the four strategies. Typically, the students read a segment of text. Then a student discussion leader asks a question about the important information in the text; the other students answer the question and may suggest others. The student leader leads the group in clarifying any impediments to comprehension. Then he or she summarizes the text and predicts what is likely to come next, encouraging additional input from the group. The process is repeated as the children read each section of text, followed by a different student's leading the discussion. RT has effectively been implemented in all grade levels, with both good and poor readers and with a range of text types.

Transactional Strategy Instruction

Transactional strategy instruction (TSI) is a term used to describe a body of practices that are transactional in three senses: (1) Readers link the text to prior knowledge; (2) meaning construction reflects the group and differs from personal interpretations; and (3) the dynamics of the group determine the responses of all members, including the teacher. These practices were designed to systematize strategy instruction while allowing for flexible use of multiple strategies to prompt reader engagement (Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Gaskins et al., 1993; Schuder, 1993). Each strategy is taught

explicitly, but the text discussions incorporate all of the strategies in organic ways. TSI is long-term, and the strategies act as the vehicle for text discussions. TSI also applies a gradual-release-of-responsibility instructional model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), with the goal being to transform students into independent, self-regulating readers. Although the original research studies applied TSI predominantly with narrative texts, Reutzel, Smith, and Fawson (2005) demonstrated that the protocol was effective in supporting students in their recall and elaborations of the content in informational texts.

Concerns and Cautions Regarding Strategy Protocols

There do seem to be some issues surrounding comprehension repertoire protocols, and teachers need to attend to these as they implement strategy instruction. It is important for teachers and school administrators to remember that the purpose of strategy instruction is to enhance meaning making, not to require perfect strategy application. The goal is for children to use the strategies in flexible, responsive ways that help them overcome comprehension hurdles. Teachers need to guard against protocols' becoming so rote that mental engagement is compromised. S protocol should only serve as a temporary scaffold until children can apply the strategies flexibly as needed. Ideally, the strategies become internalized, but the protocols may be revisited and applied as new genres or more difficult texts are encountered.

What's New in Strategy Research?

Much of the research on strategy instruction was conducted in the late 1980s or early 1990s. However, new research about the role of strategy instruction in a comprehensive literacy program is ongoing. Recently, there has been an increased emphasis on conducting strategy instruction with children in the primary grades during teacher read-alouds and as they read a wide range of text genres (Dooley, 2010; Garcia, Pearson, Taylor, Bauer, & Stahl, 2011; Stahl, 2008b, 2009; Williams et al., 2002). In addition, there is evidence to indicate that comprehension is not restricted to a single medium (print, video, audio) (Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Kendeou et al., 2006), and that comprehension instruction of young children can be fortified with videos (Goldman, Varma, Sharp, & Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1999; Kendeou, Bohn-Gettler, White, & van den Broek, 2008; Kendeou et al., 2006). These studies did not engage children in "strategy instruction," but the researchers discussed and held children accountable for predicting, retelling, and making inferences, indicating that we can provide children with developmentally appropriate contexts for thinking about narratives and informational resources in ways that will support them on the road to becoming successful, thoughtful readers.

Finally, there is still ambivalence regarding whether the strategies themselves or the deep thinking that occurs during strategy application actually causes improvements in reading comprehension (Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; Rosenshine et al., 1996; Taylor, Pearson, Garcia, Stahl, & Bauer, 2006). At its best, strategy instruction teaches children how to mentally process a wide range of texts in dynamic, flexible ways in order to make meaning. However, engagement is compromised when strategies are taught in a formulaic fashion, without the students' assuming increasing responsibility for selecting and applying the most useful strategies. When strategies are taught

in rigid, routinized ways, the very thinking that yields text comprehension is absent (Hacker & Tenant, 2002). When approached in this manner, strategy instruction is likely to be less effective than other instructional approaches (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009).

In brief, the research seems to indicate that a good comprehension program does not rely on strategy instruction alone, but includes many other elements, including deliberate opportunities for high-level conversation and writing in response to or related to reading (see Figure 9.1). More in-depth information on discussions, conversations, vocabulary, concept learning, and writing in response to text can be found in Chapters 10 through 17 of this book.

Meeting All Students' Needs

Classroom teachers can take comfort in knowing that good strategy instruction is also effective in meeting the needs of children with diverse academic needs and children who come to school with diverse linguistic needs. The only difference is that these populations actually rely more heavily than the general population on thorough and explicit instruction of strategies in intentional ways.

Diverse Academic Needs

Reviews of comprehension interventions applied with students who had learning disabilities determined that explicit strategy instruction and a few other instructional enhancements yielded strong positive results (Berkeley, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2010; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001). Text enhancements, including things like graphic organizers and question placement within the text, seem to encourage thinking during reading. Berkeley and colleagues (2010) determined that many additional characteristics, such as peer mediation and training in self-regulation could be useful. For children who have encountered repeated failure in reading, self-regulation, and attribution assume increasing importance. *Attribution* means the degree to which a child associates his or her own actions with success or failure. Often struggling readers possess a "can't do" attitude, or they assume other children are successful because they are "smarter" or "good readers." Teaching children how to regulate their own reading by setting goals, monitoring, and applying strategies can be empowering. It makes explicit what was previously unseen and mysterious. RT (Klingner & Vaughn, 1996; Palincsar & Brown, 1984), *collaborative strategic reading* (CST; Klingner et al., 1998, 2004; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999), and *peer-assisted learning strategies* (PALS; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997) are all examples of strategy repertoire protocols that engage students in working collaboratively with peers to make sense of text. All engage children in using a few basic strategies, including predicting, summarizing, questioning, and monitoring. Research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of these protocols for children with reading difficulties.

Diverse Linguistic Needs

Because of the dynamic, unconstrained nature of comprehension, the instruction of students who are English language learners (ELLs) assumes increasing importance because there are so many things that can hinder the meaning-making process. Background

knowledge, vocabulary, and figurative language are all potential comprehension traps for ELLs who are reading a text written in U.S. English. Therefore, strategy application assumes an increasingly important role (Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996; Langer, Bartolomé, Vasquez, & Lucas, 1990).

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) has promoted a great deal of research involving children who are linguistically diverse (*http://crede.berkeley.edu*). Their standards for effective pedagogy include the application of language and literacy across the curriculum, teaching complex thinking, teaching through conversation, and relating student experiences to curriculum. A series of studies in comprehension involved the use of theme-based instruction, explicit instruction in strategies, and instructional conversations (Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999). These studies found that the integration of strategy instruction, response writing, and small-group discussion around engaging themes increased the likelihood that students who were ELLs could overcome comprehension hurdles.

SUMMARY OF BIG IDEAS FROM RESEARCH

- Teach comprehension strategies across the grade levels, beginning with the youngest students, and using a range of genres and complexity bands of texts (Dooley, 2010; Garcia et al., 2011; Shanahan et al., 2010; Stahl, 2008b, 2009; Williams et al., 2002).
- Teach strategies explicitly, applying a gradual release of responsibility (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Shanahan et al., 2010).
- Hold students accountable for orchestrating multiple strategies in responsive ways to make sense of texts and to expand their knowledge about the world (Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Gaskins et al., 1993; Schuder, 1993).
- Expand strategy instruction to include text enhancements, graphic organizers, and methods of self-regulation when students have learning difficulties (Klingner et al., 1998, 2004; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999).
- Be deliberate in integrating strategy instruction with small-group discussion and response writing around rich disciplinary (literature, science, social studies) content when students are ELLs (*http://crede.berkeley.edu*; Jiménez et al., 1996; Langer et al., 1990; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999).

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Much of the research about comprehension instruction is based on studies of expert readers. Researchers determined the behaviors that good readers used to attain high levels of comprehension, and then the researchers developed instructional practices that would enable teachers to foster these behaviors in their students. Because of the multidimensional quality of comprehension, it is hard teaching. A classic study by Durkin (1976) determined that most teachers asked their students questions about texts or gave assignments about texts, but that very little instruction on *how* to comprehend a text was provided. In essence, as teachers, we have tended to assess rather than to instruct comprehension. In today's classrooms, teachers may confront two additional and equally challenging dilemmas hindering the kind of sustained instruction that

characterizes the most effective comprehension instruction. On one hand, increased pressure to raise standardized test scores may limit comprehension instruction in some schools to teaching children to answer literal to low-level inference questions found on standardized tests. At the other extreme, well-intentioned teachers may allocate large blocks of time to independent, self-selected student reading that is only discussed briefly and superficially in a conference. Missing in both approaches is the opportunity to expand thinking to the new perspectives and cognitive frontiers described as the goal in Kintsch's (1998) comprehension model.

In this section of the chapter, I provide some real classroom examples of how teachers incorporated strategy instruction into a comprehensive literacy program. The following three examples move from the most discreet use of strategy instruction to a model that is content-driven and strategy-embedded. All three models are research-based. Teachers can feel confident that applying any one of the three models is likely to be effective in improving student comprehension. However, novice teachers may feel more comfortable starting with the structures provided in Model 1, Synthesized Comprehension Instruction, and over time moving gradually toward the more integrative Models 2 and 3, Modified Transactional Strategies Instruction and Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction. In essence, what is provided below could serve as a gradual release of responsibility for teachers.

Model 1: Synthesized Comprehension Instruction

Engagement seems to be a crucial component in reading comprehension. Both open-ended discussions and strategy instruction are means to get students to engage with texts in ways that result in high levels of comprehension. In addition, prior knowledge and vocabulary strongly influence the meaning-making process. *Synthesized comprehension instruction* (SCI) brings together cognitive strategy instruction (purposeful prediction, visualizing, taking stock/summarizing, questioning, and monitoring), responsive engagement (instructional conversations, theme identification, personal connections) and vocabulary instruction to form a comprehensive model of comprehension instruction (Garcia et al., 2011; Stahl, 2009; Stahl, Garcia, Bauer, Pearson, & Taylor, 2006; Taylor et al., 2006). Teachers in grades 2–5 applied SCI three times a week for 30–45 minutes, using their existing curriculum materials.

Typically, the instruction was carried out during the shared reading of grade-level texts. Teachers discovered that for strategy instruction, provocative conversations, and even rich vocabulary development, it was important to use *heavy texts* (Stahl, 2008a). Heavy narrative texts have well-developed plots, sophisticated vocabulary, and compelling themes. Informational texts are considered heavy texts if they introduce new concepts and present open-ended or controversial issues. Little books, particularly in the lower grades, did not have the content or vocabulary needed to stimulate rich instruction and discussion. Therefore, teachers tended to use stories found in their grade-level basal readers or other authentic literature, especially award-winning books that addressed multicultural and contemporary issues. Rather than applying a protocol, the teachers adhered to a set of principles that incorporated explicit strategy instruction, responsive engagement, and elaborated vocabulary instruction. Based on monthly observations and the teachers' lesson plans, the lessons tended to include all of the components but to emphasize certain components at particular points of the lesson (see Table 9.2).

TABLE 9.2. Synthesized Comprehension Instruction

	Vocabulary	Strategy	Responsive engagement
Before reading	Essential	Activation of prior knowledge Purposeful predictions	Targeted connections
During reading	Point of contact	**All as needed**	Connections Critique
After reading	Elaborated	Clarification Summarizing	**Themes** **Connections** **Critique**

Note. **Boldfaced** areas receive emphasis at that point of instruction.

Early in the year, the children had whole-class lessons on each of the strategies individually; ways to generate "juicy," higher-order, open-ended questions; and conversational conventions. Using think-alouds, the teachers modeled their own use of strategies, question generation, theme identification, and recognition of personal connections. While still operating in the whole-class setting, teachers conducted Think–Pair–Share conversations to model the components further. Next, teachers led small-group instruction that incorporated the components. Often these groups were conducted with instructional-level texts, particularly when strategies such as summarization or question generation were being practiced. This was followed by teachers sitting "on the side" as students assumed responsibility for leading the small-group conversations. These small-group conversations might take the form of RT (during reading) or instructional conversations (after reading). During the instructional conversations, the children might discuss themes, make personal connections, or share their response journal comments related to a compelling prompt such as "Describe a time when you should not tell the truth," or "Which energy alternative described in the book do you support and why?" This phase of instruction also included the occasional "fishbowl" conversation: One group carried on its discussion in the middle of the room as the other students observed from outside the "fishbowl." This was immediately followed by the observers participating in a teacher-led discussion about things that went well inside the "fishbowl" and what might have been done to improve the conversation.

This instruction was simply mapped onto the existing literacy curriculum in each research site. By beginning with whole-class instruction and introduction to individual strategies, it gave both the children and the teachers the time to gain expertise before moving into small group application of multiple strategies. Beginning with the RT format provided a structure for both the small-group interaction and concentrated practice in using the four strategies before moving to more flexible and responsive application. The small group provided a safe context for diverse learners to practice the strategies and share personal connections by using academic discourse associated with conversations about books.

Model 2: Modified Transactional Strategy Instruction

As a second-grade teacher, I was strongly influenced by the studies of TSI that had been conducted in other second-grade classrooms (Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993; Schuder,

1993). My school's literacy curriculum was built around a basal literature anthology, with additional time allocated for small-group reading with instructional-level texts. In this high-poverty school, a majority of the children entered second grade reading below level. I spent the first semester teaching the individual strategies explicitly, using the gradual-release-of-responsibility model in Figure 9.2. Explicit instruction, modeling, and collaborative practice with communal feedback occurred during read-alouds and shared reading of authentic literature and content materials. Much as in the cooking metaphor used earlier, I would focus on one or two particular strategies during each themed basal unit, but our discussions were transactional; *all* strategies were applied in flexible, responsive ways. I selected strategies that seemed most likely to support the meaning making of particular kinds of texts that were prevalent in the units (see Table 9.3). For example, our first themed unit— Families, Friends, and Neighbors—consisted of narratives. So my emphasis was on teaching the children to activate prior knowledge and to generate purposeful predictions. Since purposeful predictions had been taught in first grade, I felt comfortable moving on quickly to visualizing. Visualizing also was

TABLE 9.3. Sample Curriculum Calendar

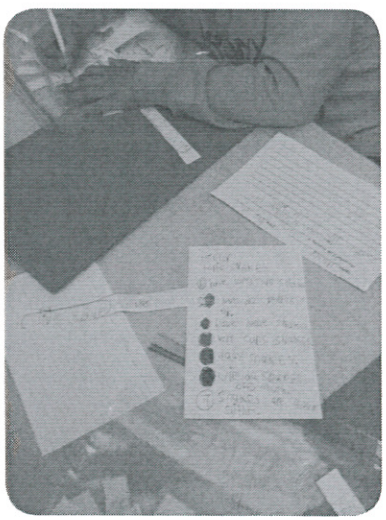
Unit title	Content	Strategy focus
Family, Friends, and Neighbors (Narrative)	Social studies: Communities	Activating prior knowledge Purposeful predictions Visualizing
Nature (Informational)	Science: Animals and their habitats	Text structure: Description Summarizing
Native Americans (Informational and narrative)	Social Studies: Native Americans and resources	Monitoring Inferring Critical literacy intro
Our Nation: A Melting Pot (Narrative, informational, and procedural)	Social studies: Culture and traditions	Monitoring Answering questions: Question–answer relationships Creating products by following directions
Folktales	Social studies: Culture and map skills	Narrative story structure Retelling/summarizing stories
Biographies	Social studies: Civil and women's rights	Asking good questions
Family Narratives	Social studies: Heritage	Asking good questions
Poetry	Literature: Poetry	Visualizing Inferring
Prehistoric Life and Earth Changes (Informational)	Science: Our changing earth	Asking inquiry questions

emphasized as we moved into our Nature unit with the text *Nature Spy* (Kreisler & Rotner, 1992). The Nature unit relied heavily on informational texts, which presented a need to explore the descriptive text structure and summarization to enhance communication processes. In my class, strategy instruction did not exist in a bubble. It was in service to reading, writing, and talking about texts and the ideas presented in those texts.

During the first half of the year, most strategy instruction occurred during read-alouds, shared reading, and small-group guided reading. Posters describing before, during and after reading behaviors served as reminders about how and when each of the strategies might be applied. By the end of January, most of the strategies had been explicitly taught and practiced in teacher-led guided reading groups. In February, the children self-selected partners and a wide range of biographies. Using the posters as reminders, children applied the strategies intermittently as needed except for taking stock and questioning, which occurred every two to four pages as they read their books with their partners. In March and April, the children applied the strategies as they read independently, but checked in through their participation in self-selected book clubs. In May, they conducted individual inquiry projects. These projects required them to ask a question with an answer unknown to anyone in our class (including me). Each student conducted independent research and then presented an exhibit to share the findings, incorporating spoken, written, and visual explanations.

By treating my curriculum as a collective, I was able to expand the blocks of time in which reading and writing were taught with authentic materials for real-life purposes, such as taking action to protect local threatened and endangered species during our "Animals and Their Habitats" unit (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). The experiences that were part of our content instruction supported the knowledge and vocabulary called for when the students were reading, writing, and talking about the engaging topics. Repeated exposures to vocabulary occurred in discussions, reading, and writing. This supported vocabulary development for all students, but especially for ELLs. The application of the strategies became transparent and functional for the students.

Model 3: Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction



Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) is an instructional framework for integrating science and literacy instruction that has been extensively tested in grades 3–5 but is likely to have wider applicability (Guthrie et al., 2004). Unlike the modified TSI that I implemented, CORI consists of more expansive science units that engage children in a series of learning phases: (1) Observe and personalize, (2) search and retrieve, (3) comprehend and integrate, and (4) communicate to others. Each science inquiry unit spans 6–12 weeks. Instruction of comprehension strategies is embedded within this framework. CORI applies the gradual-release-of-responsibility model for developing the activation of prior knowledge, questioning, summarizing, the use of graphic organizers, and searching for information. Students use the strategies to help them learn content to address

their own questions and to present/share with others. Curriculum guides, while not scripted, provide a scope and sequence for instruction. Additional, teacher resources are provided in the form of books, modules, videos, and summer institutes (Swan, 2003). To see CORI in action, go to *www.cori.umd.edu/what-is-cori/classroom-videos.php.*

LOOKING FORWARD

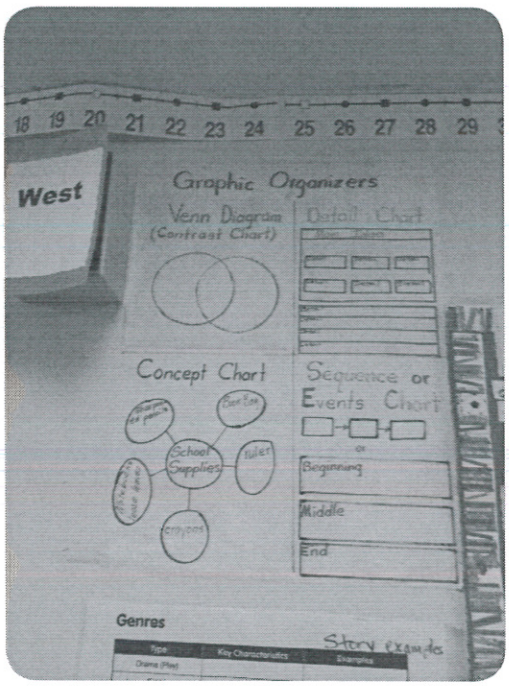
Throughout the years, there has been a great deal of converging evidence regarding strategy instruction. Teachers can feel confident in making some shifts that seem likely to increase their effectiveness and improve their students' text comprehension.

- Select a few key strategies and teach them well, using a gradual release of responsibility (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Shanahan, 2010).
- Be planful in incorporating a range of texts, including variations in genre, media, and degree of challenge (Adams, 2010–2011; Coiro & Dobler, 2007; Kendeou et al., 2008; Purcell-Gates et al., 2007).
- Address comprehension strategies across the curriculum and integrate whenever possible (Cervetti, Pearson, Bravo, & Barber, 2006; Guthrie et al., 2004; Klingner & Vaughn, 1999; Klingner et al., 2004; Reutzel et al., 2005) .
- Incorporate teacher mediation, peer mediation, and posters as forms of scaffolding (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Paris et al., 1983; Stahl, 2008b, 2009).
- Avoid rote strategy sequences, which discourage students' ownership of flexible strategy application in response to personal meaning-making hurdles (Hacker & Tenant, 2002; McKeown et al., 2009).
- Use a wide range of assessments to capture the multidimensional characteristics of reading comprehension (Afflerbach et al., 2008; McKenna & Stahl, 2009; Paris, 2005).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Is my tendency to teach the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with each strategy explicitly, or simply to mention and model each strategy before holding students accountable for application of the strategies?
2. To what extent do I apply a gradual release of responsibility, being mindful of (a) moving from more to less support from others, as well as (b) moving from more to less supportive media forms (e.g., experiential, video, picture books, hypertext, text only)?
3. To what extent do I weave strategy instruction across grouping configurations and curriculum areas?
4. Am I deliberate in matching my strategy emphasis with particular genres and curricular units, so that there is cohesion in my instruction in a way that is useful and makes sense to my students? For example, if my class science unit on plants includes many texts with sequential text structures, do I teach that text structure and facilitate a range of reading, writing, and discussion experiences that allow for application?

5. Do I engage in sustained strategy work, or is my tendency to teach a strategy once, twice, or intermittently?
6. Do I use opportunities with multimedia to engage my students with strategy application?
7. Are peer mediation and collaborative activities part of my own instructional repertoire? What do I need to do to prepare my students to maximize the effectiveness of peer mediation techniques (e.g., RT, CSR, PALS) in my classroom?
8. Do I take advantage of posters, bookmarks, and other "cheat sheets" as physical scaffolds to support my students on their way to independent, flexible strategy application?
9. To what extent does my instructional repertoire encourage my students' application of strategies in flexible, responsive ways, as opposed to boring, mindless routines and scripts? How might I stretch my own instructional repertoire?
10. To what extent do I use a wide range of assessments that reflect the multidimensional aspects of reading comprehension, so that I can adjust and differentiate instruction?



SUGGESTIONS FOR ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teaching comprehension strategies well is a juggling act. Unlike instruction in the constrained abilities, comprehension is neither linear nor taught to mastery. Comprehension varies by text, depending on prior knowledge, conceptual vocabulary, text decodability, text complexity, genre, and instructional context. When teaching comprehension strategies, teachers must balance those factors with their knowledge of their students. The complexity of the process makes it somewhat difficult to negotiate in a classroom (El-Dinary & Schuder, 1993; Gaskins et al., 1993). Some evidence indicates that more experienced teachers may be able to balance process–content instruction more efficaciously than novice teachers (Gaskins et al., 1993). Evidence also indicates that a staff development model devoted to the implementation of a multiple-strategy program must be long-term. The cognitive flexibility and adaptability required of teachers in these programs seem to be processes that develop over time. Because the instruction is transactional, it takes time and reflection to adjust these programs to the teachers, the texts being used, the students, and the classroom routines. Teachers in research projects report that their programs evolve over the course of 2–3 years, with continual minor modifications for improvement (Brown & Coy-Ogan, 1993; Duffy, 1993a, 1993b; Garcia

et al., 2011; Gaskins et al., 1993; Stahl, 2009). Involvement in a professional learning community (PLC) can provide ongoing support and encouragement.

Duffy (1993b) proposes a recursive nine-point continuum of teachers' progress and attitudes as they become expert teacher of strategies. On his continuum, teachers start out confused about which strategies to teach, the order of instruction, and integration with materials. They move to a midpoint in which they are more informed about the individual strategies, but have not yet learned how to implement strategy instruction within the traditional school curriculum and how to maintain a smooth classroom activity flow. At Duffy's later points, the teachers have become more fluid, flexible, and responsive to student needs in their strategy instruction, selection of materials, and choice of tasks.

Fine-Tuning Strategy Instruction

Session 1

- *PLC reflection.* Discuss this chapter with members of your PLC. In addition, discuss your answers to the *Questions for Reflection* (see above). What aspects of strategy instruction do you currently do well? What aspects of strategy instruction do you find challenging?
- *Moving forward.* Select two comprehension strategies, and use Figure 9.3 to record your instructional decisions related for each of these two strategies for the next 2 weeks. Select strategies that are a good match for your upcoming curriculum in literacy and the content areas.

Session 2

- *PLC reflection.* Bring Figure 9.3 to the meeting. How did a deliberate focus on two strategies change your teaching? How did a deliberate focus on the gradual release of responsibility change your teaching? What differences did you notice in your students? How comfortable were you and your students with using the strategies throughout the day in multiple contexts?
- *Moving forward.* Based on a discussion with your PLC, what might you try next to enhance your instruction of one or two additional strategies? Continue polishing and taking notes on your instruction of the strategies, using a gradual release of responsibility in a range of student contexts. Record what is working well for you and what is going well for your students. Record elements that you find challenging and the elements that are challenging for your students.

Session 3

- *PLC reflection.* Discuss the successes and challenges of your instruction since the last session. How well do you think your students are able to apply the selected strategies in a supportive setting? Next, consider using a strategy repertoire protocol. Have you ever used such a protocol with your students? What do you need to do to get your students ready to apply a peer-mediated repertoire protocol for continuing practice of the set of strategies? What steps can you take to prepare your students for peer-mediated

Using a Gradual Release of Responsibility to Teach _____
(Strategy)

Week of _____

Date					
Text					
Grouping configuration					
Select and briefly describe the degree of shared responsibility that best describes each lesson. A lesson may incorporate more than one form of interaction.					
Explicit strategy instruction					
Modeling					
Collaborative use					
Guided practice					
Independent application					

FIGURE 9.3. Gradual-release-of-responsibility planning form.

reading activities? Discuss releasing responsibility to them, and decide how you will scaffold the process and determine that they are functioning at high levels as you let go. With your PLC, discuss the external structures that you can put into place to make the gradual release of responsibility a smooth one. Consider temporarily using the DR/L-TA or RT to scaffold the small-group setting protocol. How might you use posters, bookmarks, discussion rubrics, fishbowl demonstrations, and video recording of small-group work to facilitate the process?

- *Moving forward.* Before the next PLC session, begin the transition to peer-mediated collaborative groups. Your actions will depend on how comfortable you and your students currently are with working in small-group collaboratives. At a minimum, it is likely that your students are now ready to participate in small-group applications of the repertoire of instructed strategies, with you modeling the discourse. Classrooms that have been engaged in small-group collaboratives may be ready to shift to student-led groups with a teacher listening in "on the side."

Session 4

- *PLC reflection.* Share your notes that describe your transition. Record accommodations that struggling readers, ELLs, and children with behavior issues may need to participate in a way that makes them shine as valued participants in the collaborative groups.
- *Moving forward.* Before the next PLC session, facilitate each peer-mediated discussion group from the beginning to the end of their discussion "from the side." Scaffold gently only as needed to prompt strategy use in ways that would enhance meaning making or to clarify the protocol that you established. Take notes to inform your next instructional moves.

Session 5

- *PLC reflection.* Discuss the successes and challenges that your students are encountering in their small-group and independent reading. How flexibly are they applying the strategies? Are the strategies being applied to help them remember and comprehend at deeper levels, or in a rote fashion? How well are they transferring the strategies to their nonstructured and independent reading? What evidence do you have?
- *Moving forward.* Review your notes. Discuss experiences with your PLC. Is more work needed on particular strategies or in transferring students' knowledge of strategies to more complex texts? Are more whole-class lessons called for on the more difficult strategies, such as asking high-level questions or monitoring for conceptual confusions beyond hard vocabulary? How are your diverse learners functioning in the small groups? Discuss next steps with your PLC.

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