



Comprehension Strategy Units

Teaching Comprehension Strategies

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In *Literacy Place for the Early Years*, reading instruction focuses on phonological awareness, word solving skills, vocabulary acquisition, and, most importantly, comprehension. Research has shown that proficient readers routinely use a variety of strategies to understand texts. LPEY has been created to enhance the teaching of **eight strategies**, including: self-monitoring, analyzing, predicting, making connections, sequencing, inferring, evaluating, and synthesizing. These strategies are emphasized in all of the reading areas and are used for literature response writing. The same strategies are taught each year, beginning in Kindergarten; however, at each grade level, students will read increasingly more complex and varied texts and will gain competence in applying the strategies in different contexts.

To support students' acquisition of comprehension strategies, you should teach the strategies **one at a time**. Although reading strategies are interdependent, highlight, and studying each one on its own allows students to recognize the contributions each strategy makes to effective reading and helps develop metacognitive awareness of the reading process.

Self-monitoring is the underlying comprehension strategy that allows readers to use the other strategies in combination and to make changes to strategy use while reading. Therefore, it is a good strategy to begin with. The other strategies can be taught in any order based on your students' needs. The list below provides a possible sequence for teaching the strategies based on more concrete to abstract ways of accessing information from text. See the "Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record" found in the *Reading Guide* for specific behaviours listed under each strategy.

1. Self-monitoring
2. Analyzing
3. Sequencing
4. Making Connections
5. Predicting
6. Inferring
7. Evaluating
8. Synthesizing

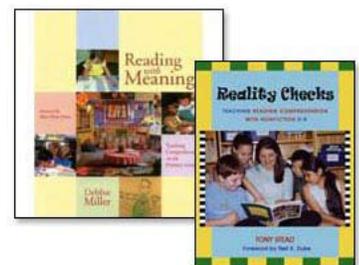


Once you have determined the strategy you will teach, use the "Planning Charts" in the Reading Guide to find texts specific to this strategy. You will want to choose texts for Read Alouds, Shared Reading, and Guided Reading. Strategies are introduced in supported Read Aloud and Shared Reading sessions, and applied in Guided and Independent Reading. Each teaching plan emphasizes one or two comprehension focuses for each text. Remember to keep things simple and explicit for students, so don't try to do everything outlined in the plans all at once.

As you begin the process of teaching a strategy, you will find that it takes "surprisingly long periods of time" to proceed from modelling experiences to independent application of the strategy. In fact, this gradual release of responsibility model may take three or four weeks in duration, depending on the needs of your class. Ultimately, it is a student's demonstration of a strategy when using an unfamiliar text that is the most reliable indication of successful strategy use.

For further professional reading on comprehension strategies, check out these great books:

- *Reading with Meaning* by Debbie Miller
- *Reality Checks* by Tony Stead



Stay tuned for upcoming issues of Teaching Tip of the Week for *Literacy Place for the Early Years*.

If you have a question you would like answered, please email your request to: workshops@scholastic.ca.