

CHAPTER 1

Guided Comprehension: Helping Students Transact With Text

If you read and comprehend what you read, it stays in your brain. But if you read and don't comprehend what you read, it will just go in one side of your brain and SWOOSH real fast right out the other side.

Jake Scheffler, Grade 7

As literacy professionals, our ultimate teaching goal is to create independent, strategic readers who are capable of engaging in a variety of literacy tasks. Keene and Zimmermann (1997) liken this to a traveler equipped with the necessary tools to make a trip independently. Our role is to equip learners with the proper tools and the ability to select those necessary to reach the predetermined destination. Because it is impossible to anticipate every reading opportunity learners will encounter along the way, readers must learn to use a variety of tools in diverse contexts, thus developing a repertoire of strategies.

In current literacy practice, the destination or goal is for readers to transact with the text and the context in order to comprehend (Rosenblatt, 1978). Transaction implies that a reader's personal experiences shape his or her understanding of narrative and expository text, indicating that response is personal and may vary.

Durkin (1978/1979) defines reading as *comprehension*, indicating that the focus of reading instruction should be on the strategies readers use in order to make sense of text. Smith (1997) extends this idea by defining reading as a thinking process. Suggesting that reading is about cognition indicates that the focus of instruction should not be on the print, but rather on how readers connect with the print. Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, and Paris (1998) endorse this idea, noting, "Teachers support their students' strategic reading through lessons that attend explicitly to how to think while reading" (p. 4).

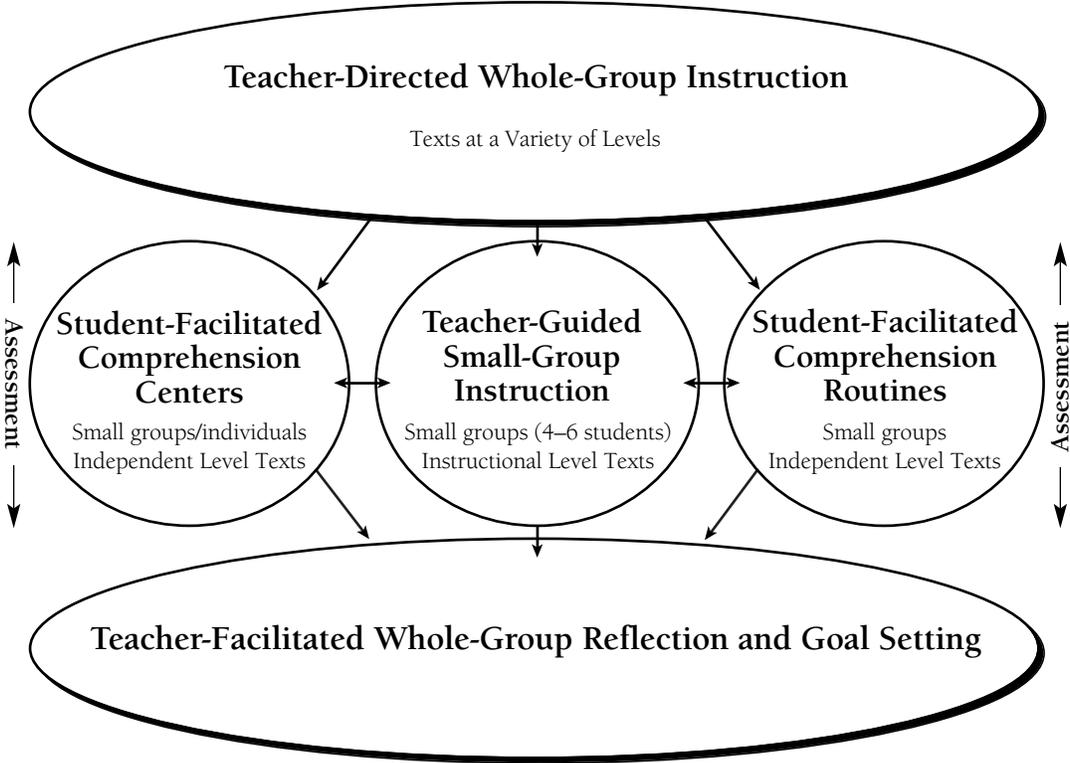
Describing reading as a thinking process seems quite logical and natural if we examine a reader's transaction with text. To begin, the student contemplates text selection and uses a variety of strategies to make connections to background knowledge. The reader previews the text by activating background knowledge, making predictions about the content, making connections, and setting a purpose for reading. During reading, the student self-questions, visualizes, monitors, thinks about words, and makes connections to self, text, and world. After reading, the learner summarizes, evaluates, and makes connections to self, text, and the world, again engaging in cognitive processes. To successfully transact with text, students need to be thinkers. To effectively think through the reading process and transact with a variety of texts, students need to know how to use comprehension strategies such as previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating.

In this chapter we begin by introducing Guided Comprehension, a context in which students and teachers engage in reading as a strategy-based thinking process. We then present the Guided Comprehension Model, a framework designed to help teachers and students engage in reading as a thinking process. Finally, we discuss 10 tenets of reading comprehension and describe their connections to the Model.

WHAT IS GUIDED COMPREHENSION?

Guided Comprehension is a context in which students learn comprehension strategies in a variety of settings using multiple levels and types of text. It is a three-stage process focused on direct-instruction, application, and reflection. In Stage One, teachers directly instruct students using a five-step process. In Stage Two, students apply the strategies in three settings: teacher-guided small groups, student-facilitated comprehension centers, and student-facilitated comprehension routines. In Stage Three, teachers and students engage in reflection and goal setting. Student engagement with leveled text and placement in small groups are dynamic and evolve as students’ reading abilities increase.

THE GUIDED COMPREHENSION MODEL



The Guided Comprehension Model is a framework designed to help teachers and students think through reading as a strategy-based process. Designed for use in grades 3–8, the Model is based on what we have learned from existing research, knowledge of best practice, and personal experience. It integrates the following:

- direct instruction of comprehension strategies
- leveled independent, instructional, and challenging texts
- dynamic assessment
- scaffolded instruction (varying levels of teacher support, with eventual relinquishing of control to students)

- various genres and text types
- reading, writing, and discussion
- strategy instruction and application in a variety of settings
- independent practice and transfer of learning in multiple settings
- reflection and goal setting

Structurally, the Model has three stages that progress in the following sequence:

Stage One: Teacher-directed whole-group instruction

Stage Two: Teacher-guided small-group instruction and student-facilitated independent practice

Stage Three: Teacher-facilitated whole-group reflection and goal setting

Naturally situated within the context of balanced literacy, the Guided Comprehension Model is active for both teachers and students. For example, teachers engage in direct instruction and select texts and strategies based on student needs, which are assessed continually. Teachers also participate by facilitating students' engagement in reading, writing, and discussion. Students' active roles in Guided Comprehension include thinking through the reading process, transacting with text in multiple settings, using strategies, and responding in a variety of ways.

The Guided Comprehension Model includes opportunities for whole-group, small-group, paired, and individual reading experiences. Students transact daily with texts at a variety of levels. Teachers direct whole-group instruction, explicitly teach strategies and skills, and work daily with Guided Comprehension small groups. Teachers also observe and assess students as they engage in their independent comprehension activities.

The Model progresses from explicit teaching to independent practice and transfer (see Figure 1). All stages of the Model are necessary to ensure that students can independently apply comprehension strategies in multiple settings. Assessment permeates every aspect of the Model, facilitating our gathering of information about student progress, which continually informs teaching and learning.

We designed this model for use with students in grades 3–8 not to diminish the importance of comprehension in early literacy, but to focus on the direct and often more complex teaching of comprehension strategies needed by more experienced readers. Beyond this philosophical perspective, the need for an effective teaching model clearly exists in grades 3–8, as students move into more challenging and content-based literacy experiences.

In the next section we describe Guided Comprehension's natural emergence from current research on best practice. To illustrate this, we discuss 10 research-based comprehension tenets and describe how they relate to the Model.

Figure 1. Overview of Guided Comprehension Instruction

STAGE ONE

Teacher-Directed Whole-Group Instruction—Teaching a comprehension strategy using easy, instructional, or challenging text.

Explain the strategy of the day and how it relates to the class goal.

Demonstrate the strategy using a think-aloud and a read-aloud.

Guide student practice by reading additional sections of text aloud and having students apply the strategy with support. Monitor students' applications.

Practice by having students apply the strategy to another section of text you have read, providing minimal support. Applications can occur in small groups or pairs.

Reflect by having students think about how they can use this strategy with texts they are reading on their own.

STAGE TWO

Students apply the comprehension strategies in teacher-guided small groups and student-facilitated comprehension centers and routines. In these settings, students work with varying levels of support and use appropriate instructional and independent level texts.

Teacher-Guided Small-Group Instruction—Applying comprehension strategies with teacher guidance using instructional level texts and dynamic grouping (4 to 6 students).

Review previously taught strategies and focus on the strategy of the day.

Guide the students to apply the strategy of the day as well as previously taught strategies as they read a section of the instructional level text. Prompt the students to construct personal meanings. Scaffold as necessary, gradually releasing support as students become more proficient. Encourage discussion and repeat with other sections of text.

Practice by having students work in pairs or individually to apply the strategy. Have students record their applications in their Guided Comprehension Journals and share them during reflection in either small group or whole group.

Reflect and extend by having students share ways in which the strategy helped them to understand the text. Talk about ways in which students can apply the strategy in the comprehension centers and routines.

Student-Facilitated Comprehension Centers and Routines—Applying comprehension strategies individually, in pairs, or in small groups with independent level texts.

Comprehension centers are independent activities to practice strategy application and extend understandings.

Comprehension routines are procedures that foster habits of thinking that promote comprehension of text.

STAGE THREE

Teacher-Facilitated Whole-Group Reflection and Goal Setting—Reflecting on performance, sharing experiences, and setting new goals.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Use authentic measures in all stages.

TENETS OF READING COMPREHENSION

Studies have shown that multiple factors affect successful reading comprehension. The following research-based tenets delineate those we believe to be the most influential:

- Comprehension is a social constructivist process.
- Balanced literacy is a curriculum framework that fosters comprehension.
- Excellent reading teachers influence students' learning.
- Good readers are strategic and take active roles in the reading process.
- Reading should occur in meaningful contexts.
- Students benefit from transacting with a variety of texts at multiple levels.
- Vocabulary development and instruction affect reading comprehension.
- Engagement is a key factor in the comprehension process.
- Comprehension strategies and skills can be taught.
- Dynamic assessment informs comprehension instruction.

Although the tenets have strong research underpinnings, they are also designed to inform instruction. In the section that follows we create connections between theory and practice.

Comprehension Is a Social Constructivist Process

Brooks and Brooks (1993) define constructivism as a theory about knowledge and learning. From a constructivist perspective, learning is understood as “a self-regulated process of resolving inner cognitive conflicts that often become apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection” (p. vii). Constructivists believe that learners make sense of their world by connecting what they know and have experienced with what they are learning. They construct meaning through these connections when educators pose relevant problems, structure learning around primary concepts, seek and value students' ideas, and assess student learning in context (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

According to Short and Burke (1996), constructivism frees students of fact-driven curricula and encourages them to focus on larger ideas, allows students to reach unique conclusions and reformulate ideas, encourages students to see the world as a complex place with multiple perspectives, and emphasizes that students are responsible for their own learning and should attempt to connect the information they learn to the world around them through inquiry.

Constructivism is manifested in classrooms that are characterized by student-generated ideas, self-selection, creativity, interaction, critical thinking, and personal construction of meaning (McLaughlin, 2000b). In such contexts, authentic

literacy tasks assimilate real-world experiences, provide a purpose for learning, and encourage students to take ownership of learning (Hiebert, 1994; Newmann & Wehlage, 1993).

Constructivists believe that students construct knowledge by linking what is new to what is already known. In reading, this concept is reflected in schema-based learning development, which purports that learning takes place when new information is integrated with what is already known. The more experience learners have with a particular topic, the easier it is for them to make connections between what they know and what they are learning (Anderson, 1994; Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Comprehension is viewed as

the construction of meaning of a written or spoken communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and the message in a particular communicative context. Note: The presumption here is that meaning resides in the intentional problem-solving, thinking processes of the interpreter during such an interchange, that the content of meaning is influenced by that person's prior knowledge and experience, and that the message so constructed by the receiver may or may not be congruent with the message sent. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 39)

Vygotsky's principles enhance the constructivist perspective by addressing the social context of learning (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). According to Vygotsky, students should be taught within their zones of proximal development (Forman & Cazden, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). Instruction within the zone should incorporate both scaffolding and social mediation. As Dixon-Krauss notes when explaining this Vygotskian principle, "It is through social dialogue with adults and/or more capable peers that language concepts are learned" (1996, p. 155). Such social interaction encourages students to think and share their ideas.

Guided Comprehension connection: The Guided Comprehension Model is based on the view of comprehension as a social constructivist process. This is evinced in the Model in numerous ways including the ultimate goal of students' transaction with text and the value placed on learning in a variety of social settings.

Balanced Literacy Is a Curriculum Framework That Fosters Comprehension

Balanced literacy is a curriculum framework that

gives reading and writing equal status and recognizes the importance of both cognitive and affective dimensions of literacy. It acknowledges the meaning-making involved in the full processes of reading and writing, while recognizing the importance of the strategies and skills used by proficient readers and writers. (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 1997, p. 4)

Authentic texts, print-rich environments, student ownership of learning, and frequent opportunities to read, write, and discuss for a variety of purposes characterize balanced literacy classrooms. Pearson (2001) suggests that the model of comprehension instruction supported by current research actually does more than balance these learning opportunities: It connects and integrates them.

In this integrated view, reading, writing, and discussion are all thinking processes that are focused on the construction of meaning. They are response-related and promote students' transaction with texts and with others. Both direct and indirect instruction are valued components of balanced literacy. In this context, direct instruction is characterized by the teacher purposefully interacting with students and taking an active role in their acquisition of skills and strategies by explaining, modeling, and guiding (Almasi, 1996; Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Duffy et al., 1987; Roehler & Duffy, 1984). Indirect instruction affords students opportunities to make discoveries without teacher guidance (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 1997).

Balanced literacy has cognitive, social, and affective dimensions. It promotes higher order thinking, interaction, personal response, and comprehension. Situating teaching and learning within this curriculum framework creates an optimal environment for engagement.

Guided Comprehension connection: Guided Comprehension is naturally situated in the framework of balanced literacy for numerous reasons. These include the following shared beliefs: Reading is a meaning-making process; reading, writing, and discussion are integrated; both cognitive and affective aspects of literacy have value; student ownership of learning is critical; and the explicit teaching of comprehension skills and strategies is essential.

Excellent Reading Teachers Influence Students' Learning

Excellent reading teachers are valued participants in the learning process. As the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1997) has reported, the single most important strategy for achieving U.S. education goals is to recruit, prepare, and support excellent teachers for every school.

A knowledgeable teacher is aware of what is working well and what each student needs to be successful. A knowledgeable teacher knows the importance of every student having successful literacy experiences, and it is the teacher's knowledge that makes a difference in student success (International Reading Association, 1999).

The teacher's role in the reading process is to create experiences and environments that introduce, nurture, or extend students' abilities to engage with text. This requires that teachers engage in explicit instruction, modeling, scaffolding, facilitating, and participating (Au & Raphael, 1998).

Both reading researchers and professional organizations have delineated the characteristics of excellent reading teachers (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; International Reading Association, 2000; Ruddell, 1995). The following characterization of such reading teachers integrates their ideas.

Excellent reading teachers believe that all children can learn. They base their teaching on the needs of the individual learner. They know that motivation and multiple kinds of text are essential elements of teaching and learning. They understand that reading is a social constructivist process that functions best in authentic situations. They teach in print-rich, concept-rich environments.

Such teachers have in-depth knowledge of various aspects of literacy, including reading and writing. They teach for a variety of purposes, using diverse methods, materials, and grouping patterns to focus on individual needs, interests, and learning styles. They also know the strategies good readers use, and they can teach students how to use them.

Excellent reading teachers view their teaching as multifaceted and view themselves as participants in the learning process. They integrate their knowledge of the learning cycle, learning styles, and multiple intelligences into their teaching.

These teachers understand the natural relationship between assessment and instruction, and they assess in multiple ways for a variety of purposes. They use instructional strategies that provide formative feedback to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and student performance. They know that assessment informs teaching as well as learning.

Guided Comprehension connection: Teachers who engage in Guided Comprehension are knowledgeable not only about the concept, but also about their students. They know that students read at different levels, and they know how to use the Model to accommodate each reader's needs. These educators are participants in the reading process. They know how to use a variety of materials in a variety of ways, within a variety of settings. Guided Comprehension provides a context for such teaching.

Good Readers Are Strategic and Take Active Roles in the Reading Process

Numerous reading researchers have reported that much of what we know about comprehension is based on studies of good readers (Askew & Fountas, 1998; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Pearson, 2001). They describe good readers as active participants in the reading process who have clear goals and constantly monitor the relationship between the goals they have set and the text they are reading. Good readers use comprehension strategies to facilitate the construction of meaning. These strategies include previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating. Researchers believe that using such strategies helps students become metacognitive

readers (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Roehler & Duffy, 1984).

Good readers read from aesthetic or efferent stances and have an awareness of the author's style and purpose. Reading from an aesthetic stance is for the emotional, lived-through experience; reading from an efferent stance is for extracting factual information (Rosenblatt, 1978). Good readers read both narrative and expository texts and have ideas about how to figure out unfamiliar words. They use their knowledge of text structure to efficiently and strategically process text. This knowledge develops from experiences with different genres and is correlated with age or time in school (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000).

These readers spontaneously generate questions at different points in the reading process for a variety of reasons. They know that they use questioning in their everyday lives and that it increases their comprehension. Good readers are problem-solvers who have the ability to discover new information for themselves.

Good readers read widely, which provides exposure to various genres and text formats, affords opportunities for strategy use, increases understanding of how words work, provides bases for discussion and meaning negotiation, and accommodates students' interests.

These readers monitor their comprehension and know when they are constructing meaning, and when they are not. When comprehension breaks down due to lack of background information, difficulty of words, or unfamiliar text structure, good readers know a variety of "fix-up" strategies to use. These include rereading, changing the pace of reading, using context clues, cross-checking cueing systems, and asking for help. Most important, good readers are able to select the appropriate strategies and to consistently focus on making sense of text and gaining new understandings.

Guided Comprehension connection: Creating successful, strategic readers is the ultimate goal of Guided Comprehension, and students fully participate in the process. Students' roles are extensive and include engaging in comprehension as a thinking process and transacting with various levels of text in multiple settings.

Reading Should Occur in Meaningful Contexts

Lipson and Wixson (1997) suggest that the context is a broad concept that encompasses instructional settings, resources, approaches, and tasks. The instructional settings include teacher beliefs, literacy environment, classroom organization, classroom interaction, and grouping. Instructional resources are comprised of elements such as text types and text structures. Instructional approaches include the curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment practices. Task type, content, form, and implementation are the elements of the instructional tasks.

More specific, literacy-based descriptions of context include ideas offered by Gambrell (1996a), Hiebert (1994), and Pearson (2001). They suggest that the classroom context is characterized by multiple factors including classroom organization and authentic opportunities to read, write, and discuss. They further note that the instruction of skills and strategies, integration of concept-driven vocabulary, use of multiple genres, and knowledge of various text structures are other contextual components.

Guided Comprehension connection: Guided Comprehension is a context for learning. Its three stages incorporate a variety of settings, resources, approaches, and tasks.

Students Benefit From Transacting With a Variety of Texts at Multiple Levels

Students need to engage daily with texts at multiple levels. When such levels of text are being used, teachers scaffold learning experiences and students receive varying levels of support, depending on the purpose and instructional setting. For example, when text is challenging, teachers can use a read-aloud to provide full support for students. When the text is just right for instruction, students have support as needed, with the teacher prompting or responding when required. Finally, when the text is just right for independent reading, little or no support is needed.

Transacting with a wide variety of genres enhances students' understanding. Experience reading multiple genres provides students with knowledge of numerous text structures and improves their text-driven processing (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000). Gambrell (2001) notes that transacting with a wide variety of genres—including biography, historical fiction, legends, poetry, and brochures—increases students' reading performance.

Guided Comprehension connection: In Guided Comprehension, students have opportunities to engage with a variety of genres at independent, instructional, and challenging levels on a daily basis.

Vocabulary Development and Instruction Affect Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary instruction, another valued component of balanced literacy, has strong ties to reading comprehension. As the National Reading Panel (2000) notes, “Reading comprehension is a complex, cognitive process that cannot be understood without a clear description of the role that vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play in the understanding of what has been read” (p. 13). Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) support this view, observing, “Learning new

concepts and words that encode them is essential to comprehension development” (p. 217).

In their review of the existing research, Blachowicz and Fisher (2000) identify four guidelines for vocabulary instruction. They note that students should (1) be actively engaged in understanding words and related strategies, (2) personalize their vocabulary learning, (3) be immersed in words, and (4) develop their vocabularies through repeated exposures from multiple sources of information.

Baumann and Kameenui (1991) suggest that direct instruction of vocabulary and learning from context should be balanced. The instruction should be meaningful to students, include words from students’ reading, and focus on a variety of strategies for determining the meanings of unfamiliar words (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991). Another important aspect of such teaching is making connections between the vocabulary and students’ background knowledge.

Vocabulary growth is also influenced by the amount and variety of text students read (Baumann & Kameenui, 1991; Beck & McKeown, 1991; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Teacher read-alouds, which offer students access to a variety of levels of text, contribute to this process (Hiebert et al., 1998).

Guided Comprehension connection: In Guided Comprehension, students are immersed in words. They engage daily with texts at multiple levels in a variety of settings, and they learn words through both direct instruction and use of context. They also learn vocabulary strategies in scaffolded settings that provide numerous opportunities for practice and application, paired and group reading, and teacher read-alouds.

Engagement Is a Key Factor in the Comprehension Process

The engagement perspective on reading integrates cognitive, motivational, and social aspects of reading (Baker, Afflerbach, & Reinking, 1996; Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999). Engaged learners achieve because they want to understand, they possess intrinsic motivations for interacting with text, they use cognitive skills to understand, and they share knowledge by talking with teachers and peers (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997).

Engaged readers transact with print and construct understandings based on connections between prior knowledge and new information. Tierney (1990) describes the process of the mind’s eye and suggests readers become a part of the story within their minds. Teachers can nurture and extend this by encouraging students to read for authentic purposes and respond in meaningful ways, always focusing on comprehension, personal connections, and reader response. Baker and Wigfield (1999) note that “engaged readers are motivated to read for different purposes, utilize knowledge gained from previous experience to generate new

understandings, and participate in meaningful social interactions around reading” (p. 453).

Gambrell (1996a) suggests that “classroom cultures that foster reading motivation are characterized by a teacher who is a reading model, a book-rich classroom environment, opportunities for choice, familiarity with books, and literacy-related incentives that reflect the value of reading” (p. 20). Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) note that highly motivated readers read for a wide variety of reasons including curiosity, involvement, social interchange, and emotional satisfaction.

Motivation is described in terms of competence and efficacy beliefs, goals for reading, and social purposes of reading (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Motivated readers believe they can be successful and are willing to take on the challenge of difficult reading material. They also exhibit intrinsic reasons for reading, such as gaining new knowledge about a topic or enjoying the reading experience. Motivated readers enjoy the social aspects of sharing with others new meanings gained from their reading.

Guided Comprehension connection: The Guided Comprehension Model is based on students’ active engagement. Guided Comprehension is a cognitive experience because students think through the reading process, it is motivational because students’ interests and opportunities for success are embedded in the Model, and it is social because students interact with teachers and peers on a daily basis.

Comprehension Strategies and Skills Can Be Taught

Durkin’s research in the late 1970s reported that little if any comprehension instruction occurred in classrooms. Instead, comprehension questions, often at the literal level, were assigned and then corrected; comprehension was assessed but not taught. Current studies demonstrate that when students experience explicit instruction of comprehension strategies, it improves their comprehension of new texts and topics (Hiebert et al., 1998). Comprehension strategies generally include

- previewing—activating background knowledge, predicting, and setting a purpose;
- self-questioning—generating questions to guide reading;
- making connections—relating reading to self, text, and others;
- visualizing—creating mental pictures while reading;
- knowing how words work—understanding words through strategic vocabulary development, including the use of graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cueing systems to figure out unknown words;
- monitoring—asking, “Does this make sense?” and clarifying by adapting strategic processes to accommodate the response;

- summarizing—synthesizing important ideas; and
- evaluating—making judgments.

Fielding and Pearson (1994) recommend a framework for comprehension instruction that encourages the release of responsibility from teacher to student. This four-step approach includes teacher modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and application of the strategy in authentic reading situations. This framework is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) work on instruction within the zone of proximal development, and scaffolding, the gradual relinquishing of support as students become more competent in using the strategy.

Linking skills and strategies can facilitate comprehension. Comprehension strategies are generally more complex than comprehension skills and often require the orchestration of several skills. Effective instruction links comprehension skills and strategies to promote strategic reading. For example, the comprehension skills of sequencing, making judgments, noting details, making generalizations, and using text structure can be linked to summarizing, which is a comprehension strategy (Lipson, 2001). These and other skills—including generating questions, making inferences, distinguishing between important and less important ideas, and drawing conclusions—facilitate students' use of one or more comprehension strategies. Generating questions is an example of a skill that permeates all the Guided Comprehension strategies (see Figure 2).

After explaining and modeling skills and strategies, teachers scaffold instruction to provide the support necessary as students attempt new tasks. During this process, teachers gradually release responsibility for learning to the students, who apply the strategies independently after practicing them in a variety of settings.

Guided Comprehension connection: This tenet is a core underpinning of Guided Comprehension because the Model is designed to promote comprehension as a strategy-based thinking process. It incorporates the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and the skills that enable their use. The Model also provides multiple opportunities for practice and transfer of learning.

Dynamic Assessment Informs Comprehension Instruction

Dynamic assessment captures students' performance as they engage in the process of learning. It is continuous and has the ability to afford insights into students' understandings at any given point in the learning experience. Dynamic assessment reflects constructivist theory and is viewed not as an add-on, but rather as a natural component of teaching and learning (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Dynamic assessments, which are usually informal in nature, can be used in a variety of instructional settings. This includes scaffolded learning experiences in which students have varying degrees of teacher support. Assessing in this context

Figure 2. Generating Questions: A Skill That Supports Comprehension Strategies

Comprehension Strategy	Narrative Text (<i>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</i>)	Expository Text (Chapter: “The American Revolution”)
Previewing	What is this story about? What might happen in this story?	What do I already know about the Revolutionary War?
Self-Questioning	Why is the wolf telling this story?	Why did this war occur?
Making Connections	How does this little pigs story compare or contrast to the original?	How does the text description of Washington crossing the Delaware compare or contrast to the film we saw? To the article we read?
Visualizing	Is my mental picture of the wolf still good? Why should I change it?	What did an American soldier look like? A British soldier?
Knowing How Words Work	Does the word make sense in the sentence?	What clues in the text can I use to figure out the word <i>representation</i> ?
Monitoring	Does what I’m reading make sense? If not, what can I do to clarify?	Does what I’m reading make sense? Did French soldiers fight in this war? How can I find out?
Summarizing	What has happened so far?	What is the most important information in the chapter?
Evaluating	Do I believe the wolf’s story? Why? How does this story rank with other little pigs stories I’ve read?	How would my life be different if we had not won this war?

captures the students’ emerging abilities and provides insights that may not be gleaned from independent settings (Minick, 1987). Dynamic assessment is also prevalent in portfolios because it provides an ongoing view of student growth.

Guided Comprehension connection: Assessment permeates the Guided Comprehension Model, occurring for multiple purposes in a variety of settings. Dynamic assessment provides insights into students’ thinking as they engage in all stages of the Model. This, in turn, informs future teaching and learning.

The Guided Comprehension Model is dynamic in nature. It accommodates students’ individual needs, employs a variety of texts and settings, and utilizes active,

ongoing assessment. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 we detail the stages of the Model: teacher-directed whole-group instruction, teacher-guided small groups and student-facilitated independent practice, and teacher-facilitated whole-group reflection and goal setting.

To learn more about discussion, motivation, and current reading research, read

Gambrell, L.B., & Almasi, J.F. (Eds.). (1996). *Lively discussions! Fostering engaged reading*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Guthrie, J.T., & Alvermann, D. (Eds.). (1999). *Engaged reading: Processes, practices, and policy implications*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kamil, M.L., Mosenthal, P.B., Pearson, P.D., & Barr, R. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

