Getting Started

◎ Strategy Basics

Strategies are deliberate, intentional, purposeful actions a learner can take to accomplish a specific task or become skilled (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012). Strategies make something a reader is attempting doable, actionable, and visible through a step-by-step procedure. Strategies offer a temporary scaffold to support a student's independent practice. Eventually, after the reader develops automaticity, the need for the strategy fades away. Strategies are a means to an end, not an end unto themselves (Duke, 2014b).

Researchers, practitioners, and theorists use the terms *skill* and *strategy* differently (e.g., Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Beers, 2002; Harris & Hodges, 1995; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007; Sinatra, Brown, & Reynolds, 2002; Taberski, 2000; Wiggins, 2013), with some using the word *strategy* to refer to a set of seven processes specific to comprehension (e.g., determining importance, visualizing, activating prior knowledge, and so on). In this book, you'll see those processes referred to as *skills*. As for strategies, you will find hundreds of them in this book that will support not only reading comprehension but also other important reading goals such as engagement, reading with accuracy, conversing about books, and more.

What Is the Research Base for Strategy Instruction?

The rationale for using strategies in the classroom is supported by an enormous research base (e.g., Alexander, Graham, & Harris, 1998; Chiu, 1998; Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Donker et al., 2014; Georgiou & Das, 2018; Haller, Child, & Walberg, 1988; Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 1996; Ho & Lau, 2018; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Weinstein, Husman, & Dierking, 2000). Strategy instruction has been demonstrated to positively impact *all* students, no matter their age, socioeconomic background, or gifted designation or if they have a learning dis-ability (Berkeley, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2010; Donker et al., 2014; Okkinga et al., 2018; Shanahan et al., 2010). Children who learn to use strategies are more *self-regulated*, actively working to use what they know to be successful and engaged with reading, which ultimately enhances their learning and overall performance (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Zimmerman, 1986, 2002).

Reading strategies have been shown to improve all areas of reading including, but not limited to, student's motivation and engagement (see McBreen & Savage, 2021), word-level reading (see Steacy et al., 2016), vocabulary acquisition (see Wright & Cervetti, 2017), comprehension (see Samuelstuen & Bråten, 2005), fluency (see Stevens, Walker, & Vaughn, 2017), and more.

Strategies offer *procedural* knowledge (i.e., "how-to"), which a learner can apply with intention and purpose, aligned to a reading goal (Alexander, Graham, & Harris, 1998). Research has shown even more effective results when strategies stu-dents learn are coupled with *conditional* knowledge (i.e., knowing *when* to apply them [Donker et al., 2014]), when they are meaningfully tied to students' goals, and when learners have agency and choice in their use (Allen & Hancock, 2008; Mason, 2004).

Throughout the literature on strategies, researchers tend to organize them into three main types: *cognitive*, *metacognitive*, and *management* (e.g., Boekaerts 1997; de Boer et al., 2018; Mayer, 2008; Pressley, 2002a; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). The three hundred–plus strategies in this book address all categories and sub-types (see chart on page 2).

Key Ideas from the Research

Strategies:

- provide **actionable steps**.

- are a **means to an end** (skills, goals), not an end in and of themselves.

- offer a **temporary scaffold**. As readers become increasingly automatic, conscious attention to a strategy fades.

- can **support readers' improvement in all areas of reading**—from motivation to decoding to fluency to comprehension and more.

- **benefit all students**—no matter their age, developmental level, or abilities.

- **support active self-regulation**, a key to learning and performance.

Types of Strategies, Definitions, and Examples

Type of Strategy	Definition	Examples	Example Strategies from This Book
Cognitive (see Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Mayer, 2008; Pintrich et al., 1991; Weinstein, Husman, & Dierking, 2000)	*Strategies used to increase understanding and make learning more meaningful*	Rehearsal strategies such as repeating information to remember it	**9.5** Read, Cover, Remember, Retell
		Elaboration strategies such as building connections between information and summarizing and paraphrasing	**5.16** Summarize with "Uh-oh . . . UH-OH . . . Phew!"
		Organization strategies such as drawing graphs or pictures to remember information or to represent relationships	**8.14** Consider Structure: Problem/Solution
Metacognitive (see Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006; Zimmerman, 2002)	*Strategies that activate and regulate cognition and help learners to monitor and control their learning*	Planning strategies such as setting goals, making a plan for learning time, deciding an order in which to approach a set of tasks	**2.9** Read with a Purpose in Mind
		Monitoring strategies such as checking on one's learning/comprehension and taking action to correct misunderstandings, such as rereading	**3.9** Check In with Yourself, Reread, Fix Up
		Evaluating strategies such as analyzing whether and how much was learned	**7.25** Analyze the Development of Theme
Management (see Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Pintrich, 2000)	*Strategies used to manage context to improve learning*	Management of effort strategies such as staying focused on the task(s) despite distractions or challenges	**2.17** Consider Mind over Matter
		Management of peers and others strategies such as working with peers or teachers in cooperation or collaboration to learn	**12.11** Reflect and Set Goals for a Conversation
		Management of the environment strategies such as using materials appropriately during learning, setting up a learning environment to be successful	**2.14** Choose Your Reading Environment

When Do I Teach Strategies?

Strategies are helpful any time you want students to get better at their reading, writing about reading, or conversation about reading. Strategies simply suggest to children *how to do it*, whether the *it* is reading with more stamina, decoding a word, reading with expression, figuring out the main idea, and so on. Teaching strategies means teaching explicitly, and that's good teaching for all children (e.g., Donker et al., 2014; Ehri, 2020; Shanahan et al., 2010; Williams, 2005).

During Your ELA/Literacy Block

If you teach reading as a subject area, reading strategies can help. Whether your students are all reading the same book, they're split into book clubs or literature circles, or they're all reading books they've chosen independently; whether you call your literacy time "balanced" or "comprehensive" or "structured"; whether you read novels together as a class, run a reading workshop, or teach using a core program; no matter who published your curriculum or how the lessons are organized—strategies have an important place. Also, it's a misconception that children *learn to read* until third grade and then they *read to learn* thereafter. Students of all ages continue to learn to read with increasing insight, depth, and engagement; can consistently add to their vocabulary knowledge; and can improve their conversations and writing about reading (e.g., Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Strategies belong in every literacy classroom, from preschool through high school . . . and beyond!

During Whole-Class, Small-Group, or One-on-One Instruction

Strategies offer students a how-to that helps the learning click more quickly and makes what you're teaching transferrable. If you're teaching a lesson to the whole class, before sending students off for independent practice, add a strategy to your demonstration to give students the steps they need to repeat what you showed them when they are working on their own. When you read aloud to your students, plan stopping places to think aloud and model strategies. If you find a small group of students in need of the same support, pull them together and offer a strategy with some guided practice. When students are in a book club, listen in to their conversation and consider if they could benefit from a strategy to deepen comprehension or conversation skills. When you're working with students one on one, quickly assess and then offer a strategy for what they can try next.

During Content Studies

During content studies you undoubtedly have knowledge-based goals and are explicitly teaching children information and vocabulary aligned to them. However, if children are reading (or writing or speaking about) texts during any part of your lessons, chances are they can learn to read, write, and speak with more care and comprehension by learning reading strategies along the way. If you teach some lessons focused on *what* you want students to know, and other lessons focused on *how* students access that knowledge from texts, they will learn even more content (Cervetti et al., 2012; Guthrie et al., 2004; Romance & Vitale, 2001).

Why Are There Three Hundred-Plus Strategies?

Students make the most progress when teaching is responsive to their needs; with the valuable instructional minutes we have, we should offer students strategies to help them stretch and grow beyond what they can already do (Anderson, Graham, & Harris, 1998; Glaser, 1984). In any given classroom, students are likely to have a wide range of abilities and interests and needs, their needs will shift as the year progresses, and the types of texts and genres they will read will vary (Fitzgerald, 2016; Tobin, 2008). To teach responsively, teachers need a massive toolbox of strategies and ideas, and the ability to be flexible and nimble.

Similarly, readers who have several ways to get at the same skill benefit because they can be flexible and nimble based on text type, reading situation, and more (Cartwright, 2006; Gnaedinger, Hund, & Hesson-McInnis, 2016). For this reason, in each chapter you'll find suites of strategies that build the same skill(s) or support readers in similar situations.

You may be excited about the hundreds of strategies in this book—but resist the urge to teach too many at once, or even throughout the year! In your weekly planning, you may select a few strategies to use for whole-class instruction (while guiding children through a read-aloud text, during science or social studies instruction to help them learn information from their textbook, during reading time to understand how to jot about their reading in meaningful ways), others to use with different small groups or targeted one-on-one instruction. But be careful not to teach too many all at once, or you risk burdening your students with a heavy cognitive load that may result in *no* strategies being used (Chandler & Sweller, 1991). Also, for students who learn with one teacher for Tier 1 instruction and a different teacher for intervention, try to give them practice with the *same* strategies focused on the *same goal* in both places rather than overwhelm them with too much all at once.

◎ Navigate the Book

Although this book is filled with hundreds of ideas for instruction, you don't need to read it in order—or really, read it in its entirety—before using it effectively. The book is organized according to *goals* with one chapter for each of thirteen goals. Then, each chapter is organized according to *skill progressions* that move from more basic strategies to more sophisticated ones across the chapter. Each *strategy* is explored on its own page, with accompanying lesson language, teaching tips, research links, prompts, charts, and more. The book is designed so you can quickly flip and find what you need to teach responsively and with intention.