

**Teaching Comprehension Strategies  
For the Long Haul**  
Using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

**Planning Phase**

- Teachers identify the strategy to be taught
- Teachers explore their own use of the strategy in adult text in several genres and discuss the various elements the strategy comprises --- they compile lists of various ways they use the strategy in reading and in other learning situations
- Teachers collect texts representing a wide range of genres and level they think are particularly conducive for modeling the strategy
- Parents are notified that an in-depth strategy study is beginning and given information about how they might discuss the strategy with their children
- Teachers prepare the classroom by creating comfortable, intimate areas in which children can meet to discuss their thinking, and the books they are reading; they collect materials necessary to record thinking; i.e chart paper, thinking logs, strategy notebooks, advanced organizer forms, sketching paper
- The Major Point Interview for Readers is administered to assess present performance level for the strategy to be studied

**Early Phase**

*Instructional focus* (Teachers focus on what the strategy is and why proficient readers need it)

- Teachers reveal how a proficient reader uses the strategy (in short text)
- Teachers discuss how they use the strategy when they are reading and how the strategy is useful in other areas of learning
- Teachers focus continually on how the strategy help readers understand more
- Teachers begin to model ways in which proficient readers use the strategy differently in different text genres and levels
- Reading conferences focus on students' early attempts to articulate their thinking and use of the strategy

**Student focus**

- Students begin to experiment with the strategy in their own work; groups of four, two, individually
- Students keep track of their individual application of the strategy --- post it notes, sketches, logs, conversations
- Students begin to share their use of the strategy in text at their level and in their interest areas

**Middle Phase**

*Instructional Focus* (typically in large and small group with increasing time devoted to conferences)

- Teachers continue to think aloud frequently, but may use longer text
- Teachers focus on how the strategy is used differently in different genres
- Teachers model and think aloud to reveal how use of the strategy actually help them understand more deeply and permanently
- Teachers show how readers reveal their thinking through the use of oral, written, artistic and dramatic means
- Teachers begin to discuss ways in which the strategy relates to strategies previously studied
- Teachers convene invitational (small, needs-based groups) to meet particular needs, i.e., students who aren't yet applying the strategy in text at their level, students who aren't yet

articulating their thinking about the strategy, students who aren't selecting challenging text in which to apply the strategy

- Conferences focus on diversifying the text in which students are independently using the strategy
- Parents are kept up to date about their students' progress in using the new strategy, they may be invited into the classroom to review the "thinking made public" students have recorded on charts and in strategy notebooks, etc.

#### *Student Focus*

- Students begin to diversify the genre in which they apply the strategy
- Students diversify the oral, written, artistic and dramatic means they use to share their thinking
- Students' book clubs focus on strategy use and ways in which strategy use enhances comprehension
- Students use the strategy in progressively more difficult text
- Students show evidence of using the strategy independently
- Students are increasingly able to articulate not only how they use the strategy, but why it helps them comprehend more deeply and permanently
- Students begin to share experiences in using the strategy to comprehend more deeply with other students and their teacher

#### **Late Phase**

*Instructional Focus* (think alouds and large group lessons give way to a great deal of time spent conferring and meeting with small groups)

- Teachers model/think aloud using the strategy in very challenging text in small, needs based groups
- Teachers use text they haven't read (cold reads) to authentically reveal through thinking aloud how they use the strategy the first time through a text or passage
- Teachers reveal the ways in which the strategy integrates with strategies previously studied
- Teachers administer the MPIR and discuss growth with students and parents
- Teachers begin the planning phase for the next strategy

#### *Student focus*

- Students assume responsibility for articulating their use of the strategy clearly and concisely in conferences and to other students
- Students teach some of the mini lessons, thinking aloud about how using the strategy helps them comprehend more deeply and permanently
- Students use the strategy and can articulate their thinking about the strategy in several genres
- Students share ways in which they use the strategy independently (not during class reading time)
- Students show eagerness to use the strategy in increasingly difficult text
- Students use the strategy flexibly (they use the strategy when they most need it and can "turn it down in their minds" when they need it less)
- Students use more than one of the strategies that have been taught adaptively (use one strategy in one type of text and a different strategy in a different type of text)

This example is based on the gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson and Gallagher, 1983)