

2ND Edition

COMPREHENSION SHOULDN'T BE SILENT

FROM STRATEGY INSTRUCTION TO STUDENT INDEPENDENCE

Good Readers...

Visualize

Make
Connections

Ask Questions

Predict

Summarize

**Michelle J. Kelley &
Nicki Clausen-Grace**

**INTERNATIONAL
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800 BARKSDALE ROAD, PO BOX 8139
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michelle J. Kelley is an associate professor in reading at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida, USA, where she teaches preservice teachers and graduate students in the Teaching and Learning Principles Department. Her role also includes mentoring and providing professional development to educators. Last year, she was a Professor in Residence at Carillon Elementary School in Oviedo, Florida, where she taught most of her university classes. She's also in charge of the on-campus Summer Reading Clinic.



Michelle's teaching career began in West Gardiner, Maine, USA, where she completed her MA in Literacy Education from the University of Southern Maine in Portland while teaching fifth graders. She later moved to Central Florida, where she taught for nine years before becoming a literacy specialist for the intermediate grades. Upon receiving her EdD in educational leadership from the University of Florida in Gainesville, Michelle worked for the Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence Center as a professional developer.

Michelle has worked extensively in urban and suburban schools. Her research area is comprehension, and she has devoted a great deal of time to the role of independent reading in terms of engagement, motivation, self-efficacy, and metacognition. Her articles have appeared in *The Reading Teacher*, *Voices From the Middle*, and other notable journals. She has authored several children's books, been recognized with several Disney Teacherrific awards, and received numerous grants to facilitate literacy. Michelle is actively involved in several literacy-related service organizations. Currently, she's a co-editor of *Literacy Research and Instruction*, a journal published by the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers.

Michelle lives in Florida with her husband, Shaun, also an educator. They have two children, Tyler and Heather. Michelle enjoys crossword puzzles, reading, traveling, and cooking. She can be reached at michelle.kelley@ucf.edu.

Nicki Clausen-Grace is a teacher, author, consultant, and staff developer. She teaches fourth grade at Carillon Elementary School in Oviedo, Florida, USA. As a consultant, she speaks on a variety of literacy topics, including reading engagement, content area reading, literature/textbook circles, word study, and comprehension strategies.



As a columnist for *Central Florida Family*, Nicki authored more than 50 articles on local schools and other education topics. She has also written articles on parenting and reading, as well as six children's books published by Rourke: *Please Say Please* (2007), *Haircuts Don't Hurt* (2007), *What Can You Make?* (2007), *Drag Racing* (2009), *Sprint Car Racing* (2009), and *Demolition Derbies* (2009).

Born and raised in Missouri, Nicki earned her undergraduate degree in elementary education from the University of South Florida in Tampa and her master's in elementary education from the Lockheed Martin/UCF Academy of Science and Math at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She has won numerous Disney Innovative Teaching Practices and Teacherrific awards, and she attained National Board Certification as a Middle Childhood Generalist in 1999.

Nicki lives in Florida with her husband, Jeff, also a teacher. They have two children, Brad and Alexandra. When she isn't working, Nicki likes to bike, boat, cook, read, and spend time outdoors with her family. She can be reached at njgrace@bellsouth.net.

PREFACE

When we first began our work together, the Common Core State Standards didn't exist. Like many of you, we were concerned about what we perceived as the shallow treatment of reading comprehension. Teachers moved rotely through basal series, following an instructional pattern that was predictable but had little to do with reading deeply. Many times, it went something like this:

Monday: Introduce the vocabulary.

Tuesday: Students read the story independently.

Wednesday: Students read the same story aloud.

Thursday: Students listen to the text on tape.

Friday: Students take the comprehension test and possibly do a related activity as culmination.

Students began to see reading as little more than following this pattern and answering the questions correctly at the end. Independent reading time was more about the teacher getting caught up on grading papers or taking a few minutes to read various materials than about students practicing reading strategies with support. Reading conferences were often focused on early reading, and intermediate reading sessions lacked substance. We knew we had to do better if we were going to purposefully move our students toward true reading comprehension. This desire and curiosity brought us together and began our journey into metacognition.

Fortunately, our intermediate-age students are usually on their way to becoming readers when we get them, and many are fluent. Unfortunately, many come with a view of reading as a purely mechanical act, something they only do at school. These students can read most of the words on a page, but they haven't yet learned how reading can help them lead a richer, more meaningful life. They haven't yet escaped into a text. Moreover, just as important, many students don't know how to repair meaning when it breaks down.

Our task is to help all of these readers, whatever their strengths and needs are, gain a deeper understanding of what they read. We must indoctrinate them into the world of thoughtful literacy. To do this, we may still need to work on the mechanics of reading with some and stimulate a motivation to read in others. But to improve comprehension, all readers will need the intricate act of making meaning to be broken down into smaller, more explicit steps.

What's New in the Second Edition

We came together in December of 2003 as teacher researchers looking to answer some questions about reading engagement and metacognition. Nicki, then a third-grade teacher, and Michelle, an assistant professor, collaborated on some key issues in Nicki's

class. We wanted to know how to purposefully move all students toward deeper comprehension and knew that reading engagement was a critical piece of the puzzle. The Metacognitive Teaching Framework (MTF), elaborated in the first edition of this book, was the result of our collaboration.

Since then, many things in education have changed. Whereas students used to come to us with very little reading strategy knowledge, now they almost always have some background in strategy use. Whereas standardized testing used to be considered one measure of a student's learning, it's now considered by policymakers as the definitive measure of students' learning gains and a bellwether of teacher proficiency. Teacher evaluation systems have been redefined, causing teachers to mine through a variety of concepts: "value-added," scales versus rubrics, and goals versus objectives. The nationwide effort to adopt and implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGACBP & CCSSO], 2010a) has caused a major shift in teaching. Terminology such as *unpacking the Standards*, *text complexity*, and *close reading* dominates teacher lounges and staff meetings.

We've also stepped more firmly into the 21st century. Many classrooms now have access to interactive whiteboards, tablets, and laptops. Combined with the explosion of free interactive applications and user-friendly programs, these technologies have invigorated teaching and learning. Of course, we're also beginning to teach a generation of students who've grown up with a smartphone glued to their hands. We're challenged to engage students who are used to constant, responsive technology.

Like you, we've navigated our way through all of these changes to the best of our abilities. As we addressed each new challenge, we reflected on our use of the MTF and realized that not only is it still valid, but it also helps us meet these challenges head-on. This thought process has helped us strengthen our model to support teachers as they seek to develop thoughtful, successful readers. This second edition is the product of seven years of implementation, reflection, and discussions with other teachers who use the MTF on a daily basis.

In this new edition, we've revised our work in the following ways:

- Explicit connections to the CCSS
- New rubrics and scales that are useful to both teachers and students for each of the strategies
- Updates to all chapters based on years of implementation and feedback
- New activities, assessment options, and centers in each of the strategy chapters
- New options for using technology resources with many activities
- Suggestions and resources for using this book with preservice teachers, in a lesson study group, or for professional development

Organization of the Second Edition

This book supports many of the professional resources available on teaching strategies. Where it differs, however, is the level of specificity it offers teachers and students. The

MTF, including strategy components, self-assessment and goal-setting plans, and R⁵ (our independent reading structure Read, Relax, Reflect, Respond, and Rap), can be used to help your students take what they learn in strategy lessons to the highest level of integration: independent use. If you haven't yet used strategy units, this book supplies a basis for doing so. They work especially well when you integrate reading with content area studies, which results in a deeper understanding of both content and reading strategies.

This book is divided into three parts. Part I provides an overview of the MTF. In Chapter 1, we share our rationale for explicitly teaching reading strategies to develop metacognitive readers. We also provide brief definitions of terms, concepts, and structures that appear throughout the book. Then, we outline the MTF used to teach each strategy, including how to create an environment that nurtures metacognition. In Chapter 2, we help you get started by sharing daily, weekly, and yearly plans for implementation, including explicit lessons for success. Part II contains a more in-depth description of how we nurture and promote conversations about texts. Chapter 3 explains the use of book clubs, textbook circles, and other structures to promote discussion, and Chapter 4 provides a detailed look at R⁵. Part III, Chapters 5–9, describes the strategy units that you can use to make each strategy more accessible to students. It includes CCSS-aligned activities to engage students with and reinforce strategy component use.

Additionally, scales, rubrics, and self-assessment and goal-setting plans are offered for each strategy. Throughout the book, you'll examine classroom transcripts, view student samples, and read teacher transcripts to help clarify key points. Think and Discuss prompts appear throughout, as well as some professional learning activities, to deepen preservice and inservice teachers' personal learning. The Table of Contents includes each chapter's major section titles as well as specific lesson titles, listed in order so you can access them quickly and efficiently. The matrix in Appendix A will help you identify activities for teaching metacognitive strategies, and Appendix B lists the numerous reproducibles on the CD that's included with this book to help you put the strategies to use right away.

As we developed the MTF, we were highly influenced by the work of Keene and Zimmermann (1997) in *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop*. And as we read Tovani's (2000) *I Read, but I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers* and Miller's (2002) *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades*, we were compelled to look deeper at our own comprehension process. Daniels's (2002) *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups* guided us in our evolution from literature circles to book clubs and as we developed textbook circles to help our students engage more with the content. With a foundation of these inspirational books and now years of implementation, we've continued to adjust our instruction to make strategy use more explicit and accessible to our students.

Although the MTF methods were used by the authors in third- and fourth-grade classes, many primary, middle, and high school teachers have adapted the framework with a high degree of success. For example, some early primary teachers have created anchor charts with just a couple of the components for a strategy they're teaching. Until kids can read on their own, strategy lessons are used with read-alouds.

This book is the chronicle of our journey toward a classroom in which every student thinks deeply and purposefully about what and how he or she is reading. It explains how to empower kids with the language and skills to make their thinking visible—and ultimately improve their reading comprehension and engagement. We hope that what we've presented in this book makes as much of a difference in the reading lives of you and your students as it has in ours.

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