

## PART I



# The Metacognitive Teaching Framework in Your Classroom

**T**oday, most teachers focus some time each day on teaching reading comprehension strategies. There are many strategy resources available, and teachers tell us they feel more comfortable with strategy instruction. Yet, simply teaching strategies is not enough. Students often fail to transfer this knowledge to independent application. The Metacognitive Teaching Framework (MTF) provides a vehicle for you to gradually release responsibility for strategy application to students through a consistent

series of learning structures that rely on the use of discussion to help make thinking visible and take the silence out of reading.

The chapters in this section explain the specifics of the MTF, including how classroom environment and teaching practices can enhance metacognition. We also provide a detailed account of how to launch the MTF during the first six weeks of the school year, including suggested activities. For ease of use, we chose to cite the broader Common Core State Standards (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010a) for alignment to these activities rather than drilling down to the actual grade level. For example, if the activity supports prediction, we cite RL.1, the first Anchor Standard for Reading Literature, which falls within the Key Ideas and Details section: “Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text” (p. 10). Laying the foundation in the first six weeks of school pays off because students are then completely ready to improve their use of metacognitive reading strategies. More importantly, as students advance through the MTF, they begin to apply those strategies in all of their reading.

## CHAPTER 1

# Introducing the Metacognitive Teaching Framework

*A teacher and student sit at the reading table doing an informal reading inventory. During the fluency portion of the test, the student reads quickly, not noticing or correcting miscues. When it's time to respond to comprehension prompts, it's apparent that she only picked up a few details from the reading. When asked which reading strategies she used, the student replies that she sounds out a word when she doesn't know it. When asked what she would like to improve on, she says she wants to read faster and read longer books. Although she can read most of the words in the text correctly and pick up some information from what's read, this student clearly lacks the metacognitive reading strategies necessary to be a truly proficient reader.*

Being aware of mistakes and self-correcting is essential for effective reading. Flavell (1987) defines *metacognition* as active monitoring and regulation of cognitive processes. *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing* (Harris & Hodges, 1995) describes *metacognition* as “an awareness and knowledge of one’s mental processes such that one can monitor, regulate and direct them toward a desired end; self-mediation” (p. 153). Students who effectively self-monitor take the time to stop and correct miscues and any misunderstandings that occur as they read. They read for meaning, and when this breaks down, they notice and repair meaning. Research indicates that the best college students use cognitive and metacognitive strategies while reading texts (Bain, 2012), and the ability of the learner to be adaptive with their thinking is critical to learning success (Martin, Petrosino, Rivale, & Diller, 2006).

When we wrote the first edition of this book, most researchers focused on the self-monitoring aspect of metacognition. Our work helped us realize its full potential, including students’ regulation and control of cognitive processes as they read. Being aware of mistakes isn’t enough; to become advanced readers, students need to have quick access to a variety of strategies as they tackle more complicated texts. Anchor Standard 10 of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for literature and informational texts places emphasis on teaching students to comprehend complex text. Our focus in this book and its predecessor is deepening comprehension of those same types of texts. The lessons in this book include tried-and-true ways to help students take action to improve their own understanding of what they read.

Additionally, in order for students to notice their errors and then repair mistakes, they must reflect on their performance (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000), yet most cannot reflect on something they know little about. We learned this early on when we asked students to self-assess their use of strategies and then write a plan on how they could improve their strategy use. They were unsuccessful. Not only was reflection a new concept, but students also lacked knowledge of strategies, and most were unaware that they used strategies while reading. Although nowadays our students come to us with more strategy knowledge, they still lack the critical skills of self-reflecting and setting goals. This occurs even though learning scales are being mandated in many school districts as a monitoring tool for both teachers and students. For students to use these scales to support reflection, they must understand the scale and the purpose for using one and take ownership of their self-assessment. By habitually monitoring their growth in metacognitive strategy use throughout the unit, students begin to guide their own learning long before they get to the formal self-assessment and goal-setting portion of the Metacognitive Teaching Framework (MTF).

## Assessing Metacognitive Awareness

Because “metacognition is crucial to effective thinking and problem solving and is one of the hallmarks of expertise in specific areas of knowledge and skill” (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001, p. 4), you might think that all good readers are metacognitive. But, that isn’t always the case. Many of our students know about strategies but lack awareness of their own strategy use. Even many of the preservice teachers we work with do not realize what they’re thinking while they’re reading. Therefore, you will need to first determine your students’ level of metacognitive knowledge. There are a variety of existing tools that can assist you in assessing metacognitive awareness. We have used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) 4–8 as pre- and post-performance tasks (Beaver & Carter, 2000) and adapted some inventories and interview formats to best reflect what we want to know about children’s metacognitive abilities (see the Attitude and Metacognitive Survey on the CD). We describe how to use these in Chapter 2. Additionally, conferring with students about their reading can provide valuable information about their strategic knowledge and use. In Chapter 4, we describe our independent reading structure, R<sup>5</sup>. We include conference forms designed to elicit students’ strategic use and understanding of strategies.

Harvey and Goudvis (2007) distinguished four levels of metacognitive knowledge that can assist you in determining to what extent readers understand and use strategies:

1. Tacit learners/readers lack awareness of their thinking as they read.
2. Aware learners/readers know when meaning breaks down but do not have the strategies to repair meaning.
3. Strategic learners/readers know when meaning breaks down and are able to use a strategy or strategies to fix meaning.

4. Reflective learners/readers reflect on their reading and intentionally apply a strategy, not only when meaning is lost but also to deepen understanding.

Our lofty goal is to create reflective learners/readers who are engaged in their learning and reading. Because metacognition is an internal conversation, students must make their thinking external so we can direct instruction based on their needs. For them to do this, we must provide them with an environment where they feel free to talk about the cognitive processes that occur as they read. At the end of this chapter and in Chapters 2 and 3, we elaborate on how to accomplish this in your classroom.

**Think and Discuss.** Review Harvey and Goudvis's four levels of metacognitive knowledge. How can teachers develop reflective learners/readers?

## Successful Metacognitive Teaching Practices

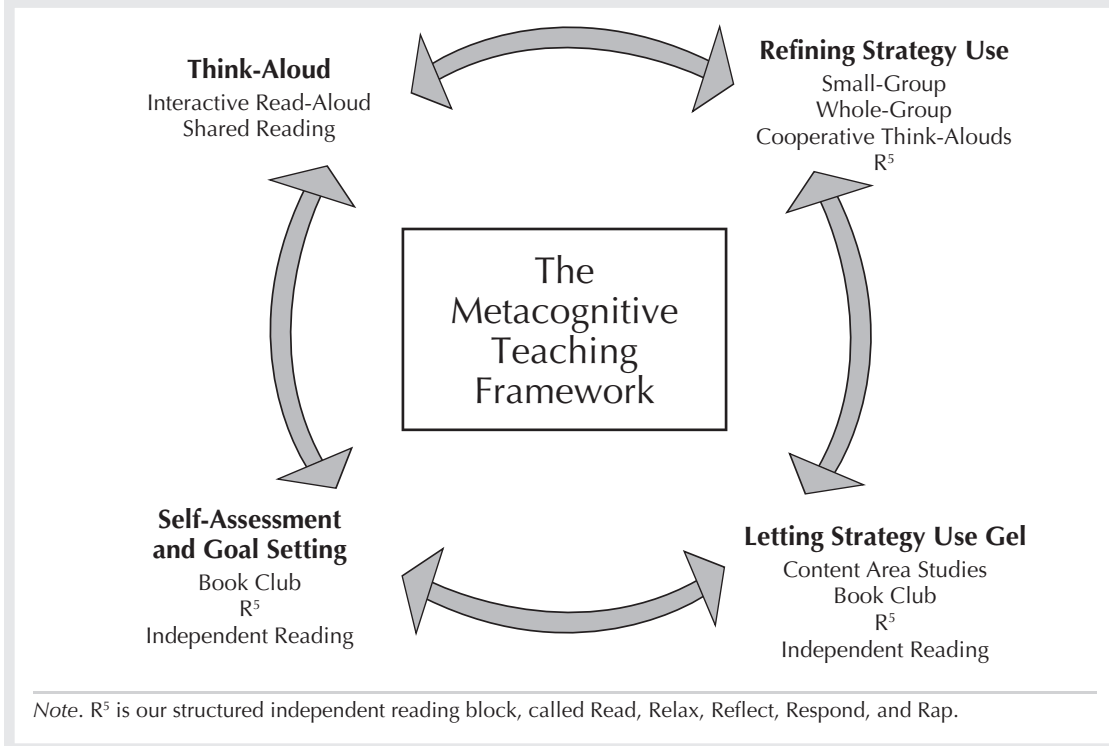
The good news is that metacognition can be taught (Pellegrino et al., 2001). Perkins (1995) identifies three types of intelligence: (1) neural, or what we are born with; (2) experiential, which includes the specialized knowledge we acquire via immersion; and (3) reflective, which combines knowledge, understanding, and strategic ability. It is this reflective intelligence that we can manipulate. Perkins suggests that reflective intelligence is increased through instruction that nurtures metacognition and develops strategies and attitudes that result in thoughtful thinking. But because metacognition occurs in one's head, the teacher must employ techniques to make thinking visible. Although direct, explicit teaching of a strategy is necessary, instruction must also include class discussions, peer interactions, and coaching, with the goal of students' self-regulation and independence (Bransford et al., 2000). In addition, research has demonstrated that metacognitive activities must be integrated into subject matter to increase the degree to which students will transfer their new learning to other settings (White & Frederiksen, 1998). The MTF builds on this research.

**Think and Discuss.** How do we know students are independently applying the strategies that we have taught them? What are some ways that teachers can provide students with the opportunity to practice the skills, strategies, and processes that we have taught them?

## An Overview of the MTF

The MTF is an apprenticeship comprehension model that allows you, the teacher, to introduce a strategy by first modeling its use (see Figure 1.1). Although the MTF is cyclical in nature, we separate it into four phases: think-aloud, refining strategy use, letting strategy use gel, and self-assessment and goal setting. The time spent in each phase will differ depending on your students' needs and your instructional goals. We also focus on five cognitive strategies: predicting, making connections, questioning, visualizing, and summarizing.

**FIGURE 1.1**  
**The Metacognitive Teaching Framework**



Each cognitive strategy unit is launched during a think-aloud, where you, as an expert reader, stop to identify the mental strategies that you're using as you read (Wilhelm, 2001). The mental strategies you model are the components that make up the particular strategy being taught. For example, in the predicting unit, one of the components is using the title, subtitle, or chapter heading to predict what you're going to read. During the think-aloud, you would talk out loud, demonstrating how you use the title, subtitle, or chapter heading to predict what you're going to read. This continues as you explicitly model how you use other strategy components.

Gradually, in subsequent whole-group lessons, the responsibility is passed from teacher to student (M.F. Graves & Graves, 2003; Marzano, 2007; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Pearson & Hoffman, 2011) as students join in and help you identify strategy use. Students use the strategy components and then refine their strategy use through a series of small- and whole-group reading lessons. Once strategy use has begun to gel, the majority of the mental work shifts to the students, with you and peers serving as coaches during book clubs and our structured independent reading block, called Read, Relax, Reflect, Respond, and Rap (R<sup>5</sup>).

After several weeks of immersion in the strategy unit, each student self-reflects and writes a plan based on one component of the strategy that he or she would like to improve on. During R<sup>5</sup>, the teacher provides support through on-the-spot coaching and reading conferences, designed to monitor students' use of their metacognitive strategy goals as they read independently.

Originally, we implemented five units of study in a school year, as described in Chapters 5–9 of this book. What we’ve learned since is that every school year is different because our students are unique; they come to us with a different set of skills and strategic knowledge. Therefore, in some school years, we may only teach three units of study, or some units may only take a few weeks to implement while others may take months.

## How the MTF Differs From Other Reading Comprehension Models

Although many comprehension programs include work in the areas of predicting, making connections, questioning, visualizing, and summarizing, the focus is sometimes on an activity, not necessarily the strategy, and rarely on how the strategy will assist students when reading. Even when reading programs do concentrate on a strategy, they usually fail to support students to independence, such as that provided during R<sup>5</sup>. The teaching of comprehension strategies alone does not promote thoughtful literacy (Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009).

In one widely used basal series, a fifth-grade teacher’s edition includes six prereading, 30 during-reading, and 12 postreading activities for only 14 pages of text. Many of these activities are mundane. The tasks are primarily designed to assess understanding, and rarely is there any discussion of strategy use and application while reading. Allington (2006) refers to these as assign-and-assess materials because there is little to no instruction provided by the teacher, and students are left to self-discover useful comprehension strategies. Although there are valuable tasks included, they can easily be lost as the teacher sifts through and chooses instructional activities.

Teaching reading comprehension strategies is not enough. It is important to explicitly tell students the goals of an activity or strategy. Even with a well-established learning structure such as K–W–L (what you know, what you want to know, and what you learned; Ogle, 1986), teachers must take the time to focus students on learning goals and desired outcomes. Otherwise, many students will fill in information without really thinking, just to finish the assignment and make the teacher happy. K–W–L is a great strategy because students activate prior knowledge, make connections, set a purpose for reading, question what they are going to read, answer questions posed, and summarize what they have learned. However, without a clearly stated purpose, is it realistic to think students will apply a K–W–L strategy—or the thinking process behind this type of strategy—independently?

The goal of teaching is to shape students into independent, self-reliant learners. The goal of comprehension instruction should be “on the development of transferable strategies that [promote the] independent use of effective thinking while reading” (Allington, 2006, p. 120). Teachers model, scaffold, and guide students in the use of strategies, such as K–W–L, but the question remains, How do we ensure students apply these strategies independently? Even programs that focus on one strategy at a time fail to break each strategy into fundamental components that students practice and apply independently. This is what led us to develop the MTF. We wanted kids to become thoughtful readers who can repair meaning when it breaks down and apply strategies adeptly. This book

provides the background knowledge for each strategy that can support students as they use strategies independently and take them to new depths of reading comprehension.

The MTF is crafted to support students as they gain a deeper understanding of what, how, and when they predict, make connections, question, visualize, and summarize, but it goes far beyond that. The framework allows you to help students improve comprehension by first defining, then recognizing, and finally purposefully applying various strategy components to enhance comprehension. To help students break down a strategy into smaller steps, we've identified several components for each strategy. We've also designed a tally sheet of the components, related think sheets to support small- and whole-group strategy instruction, and a self-assessment/goal-setting sheet to ensure independence during R<sup>5</sup> and other reading times.

## How the MTF Fits With the CCSS

Close, analytical reading is a hallmark of the CCSS (Fisher & Frey, 2012). The MTF requires students to engage in this type of reading, which leads to deeper comprehension. Further, the framework's components for each strategy are rooted in the CCSS. For example, one of the components for predicting is to "ask questions to help me predict." This component engages students in Anchor Standard 1 for Reading, which requires students to ask and answer questions to demonstrate their understanding of a text and when drawing inferences. We elaborate on these connections in Chapters 5–9, within each of the strategy units. The lessons we designed engage students in these components and, therefore, will help your students meet the demands of the CCSS. Table 1.1 provides an overview of how the strategies fit within the CCSS globally and the grade-level standards more specifically to tie the strategies to the Standards.

## Developing a Common Language

Our children participate in a variety of sports that involve specialized vocabulary. Knowing the terms *libero* and *crease* was necessary for us to understand volleyball and lacrosse. Just as sports have specialized vocabularies, so does the act of developing metacognitive readers. What follows is a listing of terms, concepts, and learning structures that you will read about throughout this book. We'll delve into these more deeply in each strategy chapter.

**Professional Learning Activity.** *Common Terms Sort: The Metacognitive Teaching Framework's Common Language Terms and Definitions:* Creating a common language of the terms discussed throughout this book will optimize discussions. This sort (available on the CD) includes definitions of key terms, cognitive strategies, and instructional methods highlighted in this book. Match these terms to their definitions. Then, verify the definitions after reading this chapter and discuss how each of these terms relates to teaching comprehension and the MTF.



**T A B L E 1.1**  
**How the Metacognitive Teaching Framework’s Strategies Complement the Common Core State Standards**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Strand</b>	<b>Substrand</b>	<b>Anchor Standard</b>
Predicting	Reading	Key ideas and details	1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. <sup>a</sup>
		Craft and structure	5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. <sup>a</sup>
		Key ideas and details	3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. <sup>a</sup>
Making connections	Reading	Craft and structure	5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. <sup>a</sup>
		Integration of knowledge and ideas	9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. <sup>a</sup>
		Key ideas and details	1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. <sup>a</sup>
Questioning	Reading	Craft and structure	4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. <sup>a</sup>
		Integration of knowledge and ideas	5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. <sup>a</sup>
		Speaking and Listening	9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. <sup>a</sup> 3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. <sup>b</sup>

(continued)

**T A B L E 1.1**  
**How the Metacognitive Teaching Framework’s Strategies Complement the Common Core State Standards (continued)**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Strand</b>	<b>Substrand</b>	<b>Anchor Standard</b>
Visualizing	Reading	Integration of knowledge and ideas	7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. <sup>a</sup>
Summarizing	Reading	Key ideas and details	2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. <sup>a</sup>
		Craft and structure	3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. <sup>a</sup>
			5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. <sup>a</sup>
			6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. <sup>a</sup>
		Integration of knowledge and ideas	8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. <sup>a</sup>
	Speaking and Listening	Comprehension and collaboration	2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. <sup>b</sup>
		Presentation of knowledge and ideas	3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. <sup>b</sup>
			4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>From *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (p. 10), by National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a, Washington, DC: Authors.

<sup>b</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

## Cognitive Strategies

In this book, we refer to six strategies that readers use to help them make meaning as they read. For five of these, we developed units of study (Chapters 5–9). A large number of researchers have pointed to these strategies as useful in enhancing student comprehension (Duke, Pressley, & Hilden, 2004; Paris & Paris, 2007; Pressley, 2006). For this second edition, we also defined *clarifying* because students will use all of the cognitive strategies to help them clarify. Before we delve into the strategy units, we help students see what it means to clarify and tell them that they will use the five other strategies (predicting, making connections, questioning, visualizing, and summarizing) to clarify what they read. In Chapter 2, we explain how to introduce these strategies to students. At the beginning of the school year, we recommend posting a visual of the strategies in your classroom so students can easily use them to frame their thinking as they read and discuss texts (see Figure 1.2). Our definitions for these strategies are as follows:

- *Clarifying*: This is an umbrella term for the cognitive strategies that students may use when monitoring to fix up or repair meaning when it breaks down.
- *Predicting*: Readers use clues from the text and their own background knowledge to forecast what will happen or what information the text will contain. While reading, students confirm, reject, and adjust their thinking based on what they're reading (Beers, 2003), textual evidence, and their own experiences.
- *Making connections*: Readers relate something in the text to something they've experienced, read about, or seen through other media. Lay the groundwork by having students notice three general forms of connections—text to self, text to text, and text to world (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997)—then delve deeply to help students understand just how these connections help them understand texts.
- *Questioning*: Readers ask questions and read on for answers to help them comprehend the text as they read. Questions are posed before, during, and after reading to help students actively wonder about and interrogate a text (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004).

FIGURE 1.2  
Metacognitive Flags



- *Visualizing*: Readers use their senses to experience something in the text vicariously. When students visualize, they evoke images while reading, including being able to picture, smell, taste, hear, or feel something in the text (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Wilhelm, 2001).
- *Summarizing*: Readers glean the essence of the text and report only the most essential parts (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997), identifying the main idea and supporting details from the text being read.

## ***Strategy Components***

For each unit, we've identified fundamental components that represent the ways a reader might use a particular strategy. The components for each strategy are listed on a tally chart. We use the components as a basis for think-alouds and strategy lessons. Students notice their use of these components and purposefully work toward using them. In this edition, we added a generic Metacognitive Strategy Scale (available on the CD) for students to assess their progress toward strategy acquisition. The scale can be used by students to gauge whether they are making progress toward ownership of a strategy. Although the scale is generic enough to use with each strategy, students will be assessing their use of the specific components in each unit. These components also serve as the foundation for the self-assessment/goal-setting plans that students write to help them more effectively use each strategy independently.

## ***Timeline and Structures for Teaching***

Each strategy is taught over the course of a unit, and each unit can last up to six weeks or sometimes longer. Although it is possible to complete all of the units within one school year, benefits can also be reaped by choosing to focus on only those strategies for which your students demonstrate a need. You can determine your students' needs by using an assessment tool to evaluate metacognitive awareness, such as those described in Chapter 2.

Each strategy is taught throughout an integrated literacy block, using a variety of proven instructional structures. You can employ these methods to scaffold strategy use depending on your students' needs. At first, this will be direct and explicit instruction, but as students become more skilled in each strategy, you will release this responsibility to them (M.F. Graves & Graves, 2003; Pearson & Hoffman, 2011). The structures used to teach each strategy include those discussed next.

### **Think-Aloud**

Traditionally, the teacher reads a piece of text to students, pausing to verbally model the thought processes of a skilled reader as he or she interacts with a text (Wilhelm, 2001). A think-aloud is a method of inquiry that encourages student interaction with the text and promotes comprehension (Kucan & Beck, 1997). In the MTF, you describe your use of strategy components as you read a text. Most think-alouds should be highly focused, explicit, and well planned so both you and your students know what they are supposed to glean from the experience. If the students aren't oriented to the fact that you are modeling your thinking, that you have a specific learning goal in mind for them, and that they have a responsibility to take that skill and use it in their own reading, then the results may be random at best. This is further illustrated later in this chapter and in the strategy chapters where you will read transcripts of Nicki doing a think-aloud on each strategy with her students.

### **Shared Reading and Cooperative Think-Aloud**

When you do a think-aloud as a shared reading, you should also communicate your thought processes as you move through a text. Shared reading contributes to student

vocabulary and overall comprehension (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2008; Kesler, 2010). Students more actively participate in shared reading, though, because they have access to the same text you're using as you model (Stahl, 2012). Students may be able to jump in and share their own thinking as they read along. This evolves into cooperative think-alouds as the students begin to take ownership of strategy components. Cooperative think-alouds continue throughout a strategy unit because students often work in pairs, sharing their thinking as they work through chunks of texts in a variety of subjects.

## **Read-Aloud**

A read-aloud should be a part of every teacher's school day. In contrast to a think-aloud, in a read-aloud, you read to students for the sheer pleasure of bonding over a well-written piece of text. Spontaneous learning occurs as students continue to learn the language of texts, including exposure to advanced vocabulary (Elley, 1989); gain an appreciation for a variety of genres, authors, and titles; and discuss with interest their thoughts on what is being read (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011).

## **Interactive Read-Aloud**

Many teachers use a read-aloud for more impromptu teaching opportunities, different from a think-aloud. Beck and McKeown (2001) suggest that teachers specify the learning goals when using interactive read-aloud. These are times when you may pause at significant points, invite discussion, or ask for student comments (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) to promote student interaction with the text versus serving solely as a model for strategy application (Maloch & Beutel, 2010). We believe these pauses should be done judiciously so as not to interrupt the flow of the reading. We also recommend you include only one or two strategy quips per read-aloud session, as the focus of the read-aloud is primarily on enjoyment. Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004) point to the need for the teacher to practice the interactive read-aloud prior to presenting it to students.

## **Guided Reading**

Guided reading is when you work with a small group on specific skills, using a text at the students' instructional reading levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). You should purposefully guide students' learning by helping them navigate the text. In the MTF, guided reading is used to help students more deeply understand strategy components using an appropriately leveled text. Each guided-reading group might focus on the same strategy component, but the level of scaffolding and text will vary depending on the needs of each group. Again, like the previous structures, there is a lot of social interaction to promote engagement in each strategy and, more importantly, to enhance comprehension.

## **Student-Led Book Clubs: Literature Circles and Textbook Circles**

The hallmarks of traditional literature circles are student-selected texts and student-driven discussions about those texts. The purpose is for students to read and enjoy a text they are interested in and then deepen their understanding of what is being read through a student-led peer discussion (Berne & Clark, 2008; Ketch, 2005). Your role in literature circles is to teach students how to think about what they are reading and how to have a quality

conversation about a text. You should group circle members according to text selection and group dynamics. You also must select an appealing, discussion-inspiring set of texts for students to choose from, and coach students as they engage in the process (Daniels, 2002).

Textbook circles also feature student-led discussions but may involve a teacher-selected expository text such as a section in a content area textbook, article, or student periodical. The groups for textbook circles aren't organized according to text selection but, rather, to facilitate peer scaffolding of the content in the text (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; Kucan & Beck, 2003).

Literature circles and textbook circles provide opportunities for peer-supported application of the strategies students are learning. Chapter 3 explains the role of discussion as it relates to the MTF and the attainment of the CCSS for Speaking and Listening, especially during literature circles and textbook circles, by providing recommendations for promoting and implementing talk with and among your students.

## R<sup>5</sup>

Read, Relax, Reflect, Respond, and Rap, or R<sup>5</sup>, is a structured independent reading time that allows students to practice their reading strategies independently, with the added benefit of teacher and peer scaffolding (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006). The time is broken into three phases: Read and Relax, Reflect and Respond, and Rap. During the Read and Relax portion of R<sup>5</sup>, students read independently while you record what they are reading on a status-of-the-class log. Students continue reading as you confer with one or two of them individually. During conferences, you can evaluate a student's metacognitive strategy use, provide support and counseling in strategy use, and monitor the student's reading habits.

During Reflect and Respond, students think about any strategies they used while reading and then record their thoughts, the book title, and the pages they read on an individual log. What follows is Rap, when students share their strategy use with a partner, and then partners share their discussions with the whole group as you facilitate the discussion. We believe reading is a social process, and readers create meaning through these interactions (Durkin, 1993; Rosenblatt, 1978). Both literature circles and R<sup>5</sup> promote this interaction and further support readers as they become independent strategy users. R<sup>5</sup> is further described in Chapter 4 and in great detail in our 2008 e-book *R<sup>5</sup> in Your Classroom: A Guide to Differentiating Independent Reading and Developing Avid Readers* (available at [www.reading.org/general/Publications/Books/BK684.aspx](http://www.reading.org/general/Publications/Books/BK684.aspx)).

## Learning Centers

Learning centers complement the concept being taught by the classroom teacher (Ford & Opitz, 2002). Each center has an activity related to the concept being taught or previously taught in the classroom. Centers are usually supplemental to the direct teaching, and their specific use depends on the teacher's preferences and learning goals for the students (Diller, 2003).

**Think and Discuss.** Differentiate between a read-aloud, an interactive read-aloud, and a think-aloud. How are they alike, and how are they different?

## Digging Deeper Into the MTF

### *Think-Aloud*

A strategy unit is kicked off with a preplanned think-aloud by the teacher. The goal of our think-aloud process is to have students take an active role in their attainment of strategies through a process that includes explanation, demonstration, and guided practice (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2011; Roehler & Duffy, 1984). In a think-aloud, text matters. With the CCSS emphasis on text complexity and informational text for both reading and writing, we find it beneficial to prepare our think-alouds using nonfiction text. Although Appendix B of the CCSS offers text exemplars that could be used for think-alouds, these texts are only provided as examples. To get the most bang for your buck, we recommend using text that integrates with your content area studies. Our think-aloud approach is broken into four phases. The length of time you spend in each phase depends on your students' needs. If they catch on quickly, they might begin to jump in with their own examples during the think-aloud.

1. Introduce, explain, and define the strategy components for students.
2. Apply the strategy components while you read aloud.
3. Have students figure out which strategy component you're using.
3. Clarify the purpose of the strategy or a specific strategy component for students.

Depending on the grade level, your students' schema for a particular strategy, and their stamina for a lesson, you may choose to teach the components during one session or break instruction into as many sessions as needed to ensure students aren't overwhelmed by the number and complexity of the components. For example, you may only accomplish phase 1 in one lesson and then follow up with phases 2–4 in another lesson.

Additionally, we recommend that you review the components for a specific strategy and think about your students' needs and abilities to determine which components are developmentally appropriate. You can modify the tally charts depending on this review and your curricular goals. When we engage in professional development with grade-level teams, this is one of the first tasks we accomplish: reviewing a strategy's components to develop a consistent instructional focus. For example, third-grade teachers might eliminate components related to text structure.

### **Phase 1: Introduce, Explain, and Define the Strategy Components**

Hang a poster-size, laminated class tally chart at the front of the room (see Figure 1.3) to show students a list of the components for the strategy being taught. Each student should keep a personal copy of the components on an individual tally sheet (available on the CD for each strategy), which becomes a personal data collection device and mirrors the class chart. Students will later use this to document their application of strategy components as they read. As the unit progresses and students begin to notice their use of strategy components, they'll begin to record on this sheet by tallying marks that represent the components they are using.

Prior to the think-aloud, have students read through the list of components on the class tally chart and briefly discuss with a partner what they think each component

means. Then, in a whole-class lesson, explain and define each strategy component on the tally sheet, providing examples from specific texts the class has read to illustrate or demonstrate what each component means and how to apply it when reading.

### Phase 2: Apply the Strategy Components While You Read Aloud

After students have been introduced to the strategy and its components, it's time for you to model component use as you read aloud. Beforehand, you will have preselected a text and thought about places where you will pause to share your use of components. (One technique we've used successfully is putting sticky notes in the text where we'll stop to talk about our mental processing. See Figure 1.4 for an example.) A student assistant uses a water-based marker to tally strategy use on the laminated class chart during the think-aloud lesson. At the start, you may be the only one in the room identifying components from the tally sheet, but usually by the end of the lesson, students will be ready to jump in and tell which component is being modeled. During tallying, you can clarify student thinking as students attempt to use and identify components.

### Phase 3: Have Students Figure Out What Strategy Component You're Using

This occurs when students are asked to identify the strategy component being modeled. Sometimes students begin to do this during phase 2 when you are initially applying the strategy components while reading. Students will also begin to notice strategy components without prompting.

**FIGURE 1.3**  
Predicting Tally Sheet: Class Example

Think Aloud: This Prediction Uses...	Tally
title/chapter headings.	III IIII III
the front and back cover.	III II
pictures and captions.	III IIII
questions that might be answered as I read.	IIII
what I already know about the topic.	III II
what I know about the genre or series.	IIII
what I know about text structure.	III
what has happened so far in the book.	III III III III
meaningful connections.	IIII
what I know about a character.	III III III

**FIGURE 1.4**  
Think-Aloud Sticky Notes: Teacher Sample



## Phase 4: Clarify the Purpose of the Strategy or a Specific Strategy Component for Students

In this final phase of the think-aloud, wrap up the introductory lesson (or lessons) by restating the purpose of the think-aloud and clarifying the strategy's purpose. This is an important phase of the think-aloud and the MTF because students often mimic or give the appearance of strategy use at this point. Because students are making approximations of strategy use, their attempts must be celebrated, but you should also redirect any missteps. During this phase, you want to be clear and direct to avoid misconceptions. Begin noting the components that students seem to be confused about so you can address these components more thoroughly in follow-up lessons to refine strategy use.

**Professional Learning Activity.** *Create your own think-aloud:* Because a think-aloud isn't a natural technique for teachers, it's helpful to experiment with a think-aloud with peers before doing it with students. See the Think-Aloud Guide Sheet on the CD for specific guidance on this process. Identify a children's book you want to use for a think-aloud. The directions on the guide sheet will scaffold the process of creating a think aloud.

## Refining Strategy Use

Display the class chart prominently in the classroom and refer to it continually as you and students identify and record strategy use during subsequent small- and whole-group lessons over the next few weeks. Students will individually collect data of their own strategy use on their personal tally sheets, giving them a basis for completing the self-assessment and goal-setting sheet toward the end of each unit.

Soon after introducing the strategy components, you should introduce or revisit the generic Metacognitive Strategy Scale (see Figure 1.5; available on the CD). Because

**FIGURE 1.5**  
Metacognitive Strategy Scale

Level	Criteria
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can explain many ways to use this strategy with different texts.</li><li>• I use this strategy in new ways that I wasn't taught.</li><li>• I use this strategy with a variety of texts.</li><li>• I use this strategy to help me connect to the text or draw background knowledge from two or more related texts.</li><li>• I apply a plan for improving my use of this strategy.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can explain a few ways to use this strategy with a text.</li><li>• I use this reading strategy even when my teacher doesn't tell me to.</li><li>• I use this strategy with a variety of texts (both fiction and nonfiction genres).</li><li>• I have a plan for improving my use of this strategy.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can explain how to use this strategy.</li><li>• I use this strategy when my teacher tells me to.</li><li>• I use this strategy with one or two types of text.</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can't always use this strategy.</li><li>• I can't use the strategy even with teacher help.</li></ul>

your goal will be for each student to get to at least a level 3, start by going over the level 3 criteria and explain each indicator. From here, explain the criteria for levels 4, 2, and 1, pausing to clarify as needed. When you're done, and periodically throughout the unit, have students look at the scale and decide what level they're at. You can have them record the level or show you by holding up the number. Don't be surprised if students rate themselves higher than you expect in the beginning. As you clarify and they become familiar with the scale, they'll be more accurate. Students can begin reflecting on their learning right away, and some find it helpful to highlight the criteria they're missing in order to get to the next level. They can make a simple plan to attain those highlighted criteria and begin working right away.

You may need to do another whole-group, shared-reading lesson to help students become familiar with the strategy components, or you may be ready to pull them into small groups for some up-close practice and modeling. The lessons in this book are not text specific, so you can use basals, trade books, content area texts, or supplemental materials such as periodicals for think-alouds, shared reading, and other whole- and small-group lessons. We highly recommend using nonfiction text for many of these lessons.

Some lessons occur during shared reading, when you ask students to bring their tally sheets to the reading area. During shared reading, you should pause to think aloud and ask students to identify the component being modeled. This type of instruction also occurs during strategic small- and whole-group lessons, which are designed to teach one specific component in more depth. One example from the unit on predicting is a lesson on text organization and structure. Students work with partners to analyze the organization and structure of question-and-answer books (see the Expository Text Investigation activity in Chapter 5). This helps students understand the component of using "what I know about text organization and structure" to predict.

Most lessons can be done in both small and whole groups, depending on the needs of the class. Because many of the components may be new concepts, a combination of both is usually needed to ensure understanding. In each of the strategy chapters, we include think sheets for use in small- and whole-group lessons. These can help you focus learning on the desired strategy.

### ***Letting Strategy Use Gel***

At first, students will identify strategy use on a superficial level. For example, a student may predict that a book is about hurricanes based on its title but may not pull in background knowledge and coordinate other information, such as the cover photograph and summary, to make a more detailed prediction about the book's content. Because the purpose of the MTF is to move students beyond simply noticing strategy use into purposeful and then automatic application, it's important to give them time and support as they work toward these ends. As students gain familiarity with strategy components, encourage them to use their tally sheets and notice when they use various components during content area reading, independent reading, and guided reading. Continue to guide students in more structured whole- and small-group lessons. The extra time to notice and reflect on strategy use leads to a richer, fuller understanding.

**FIGURE 1.6**  
**Students Charting Their Progress on Their Personal Tally Sheets**



### ***Self-Assessment and Goal Setting***

During a strategy unit, students use their personal tally sheet to chart their progress (see Figure 1.6). After several weeks of collecting personal data on their tally sheets and becoming more comfortable with strategy use, students are ready to reflect on their use of the various strategy components. In a whole-group lesson, guide students through the process of looking at their completed tally sheets and noticing which components they use a lot and which components they rarely use. On the self-assessment and goal-setting sheet, students check off what they do well and highlight components they need to work on. With your guidance, students identify their own goals by choosing one area to enhance, and then write a workable, multistep plan to improve in that area.

At this point, teacher scaffolding is minimized. Remind students to use their plans when reading during R<sup>5</sup>, literature circles, and (for those who still need more teacher support) small-group work. You and student peers serve as coaches, weaving discourse on strategy throughout the day. Furthermore, during R<sup>5</sup> conferences, you'll monitor students' progress toward meeting their specific strategy goals. Each strategy chapter in Part III of this book describes self-assessment and goal-setting in more depth. Additionally, in this second edition, we provide scales and rubrics for various strategies.

### **Benefits of Using the MTF**

The MTF has some distinct advantages for both teachers and students:

- It promotes discussion. Every aspect of the MTF encourages and often scaffolds meaningful talk centered on text.

- It makes strategy use explicit to teachers and students. The MTF breaks down each strategy into well-defined components, allowing teachers to teach thoroughly.
- It provides a routine that helps students make connections and helps teachers be more efficient. Students quickly understand that the phases of the MTF are part of a learning sequence that can be applied to each of the strategies, and they begin to anticipate the tally sheets, think-alouds, and other structures and tools for learning used in the MTF.
- It provides a common language for discussing metacognition. Students begin to use framework and strategy vocabulary in their discussions and written reflections.
- It scaffolds think-alouds for teachers and students. Although the think-aloud is a well-known structure, it is often implemented haphazardly. The MTF offers a structure and purpose to the think-aloud process.
- It develops reflective intelligence. The use of the tally sheet and the self-assessment and goal-setting process leads students through reflection. In addition, students reflect every time they engage in R<sup>5</sup>.
- It is inquiry based. The teacher and students become coresearchers as they learn about and apply each strategy with different texts.
- It uses best practices in literacy instruction. The structures used in the MTF have been identified in research as assisting in the development of effective readers.
- It is not text dependent. You can use literature, trade books, basals, student periodicals, or even content area textbooks to teach strategies in the context of the MTF.
- It helps *all* readers comprehend better. Below-, on-, and above-grade-level readers have all demonstrated growth when exposed to the MTF.
- It develops a bonded community of literacy learners. The structure and language of the MTF foster the development of a culture that focuses on reading and learning.

**Think and Discuss.** How does the MTF ensure students use cognitive strategies when they read independently?

## The Importance of the Classroom Environment

You should be thoughtful about the atmosphere you create. Effective teachers know their students, create a supportive climate, and establish relationships that enhance learning (Stronge, 2002). And although most of your school day is spent interacting with students about academics, teachers who create opportunities for social interaction cultivate a positive, caring learning environment (Good & Brophy, 1997). Engaging students in purposeful talk within a nurturing environment builds trust and respect. In addition, teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm for learning contribute to student motivation and promote student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

**FIGURE 1.7**  
**Students Appreciate a Cozy Place to Read**



## ***The Classroom Layout***

The physical layout of a classroom should be inviting. You want a designated area for coming together as a community of readers and writers. This area should include places where students feel relaxed and comfortable enough to enjoy reading. You might have a couch, a chair, large pillows, and even lawn chairs available for students to use while they read (see Figure 1.7). Some students will be happy sitting at their desks, whereas others may find their own niche against a file cabinet or wall. The classroom walls should demonstrate a passion for books, with posters, book jackets, student responses to reading, and so forth. You might have

your recent reads or new purchases prominently displayed to entice students. Wherever students choose to read, you want the space to cry, “We are serious about reading and writing in this room!”

## ***The Classroom Library***

Access and appeal are important. If the classroom library is used exclusively for independent reading, it’s recommended that the teacher have 10–12 titles per student (Neuman, 2000). If you use the library to support content area studies, guided reading, shared reading, and read-alouds, the library size should range from 1,500 to 2,000 titles (Reutzel & Fawson, 2002). In addition, these books should range in levels and genres. Be sure to include a healthy number of nonfiction books, as some students crave this genre, and the CCSS emphasize the importance of informational text to reading development. If your students have access to e-readers, you should include e-books as well. You’ll also want to include series books in your collection. Series such as *The 39 Clues* by a collaboration of authors, *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson, Jeff Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan, *My Weird School* by Dan Gutman, Gordon Korman’s *On the Run*, and Garth Nix’s *Seventh Tower* hook readers through compelling characters and story development, which serve as a support for readers, especially reluctant ones, as they devour one book after another. You’ll also want to include titles from the most loved children’s and young adult authors, including Ron Roy, Gary Paulsen, Carl Hiaasen, and Kate DiCamillo. And be sure to stock your own favorites! Table 1.2 lists some of our favorite series and authors.

Be picky. A library full of boring or unattractive titles isn’t going to tempt anyone, so make sure the books in your classroom library are appealing. You might use a group of students to weed out books with torn or unappealing covers and have them organize the classroom library to make it accessible to students. Books should be at eye level and

**TABLE 1.2**  
**Authors and Series You Need to Know**

<b>Authors and Genres</b>	<b>For Developing Readers</b>	<b>For Advancing Readers</b>
Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judy Blume</li> <li>• Beverly Cleary</li> <li>• Dan Gutman</li> <li>• Lois Lowry</li> <li>• Ron Roy</li> <li>• Mary Pope Osborne</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kate DiCamillo</li> <li>• Carl Hiaasen</li> <li>• Gordon Korman</li> <li>• Gary Paulsen</li> <li>• Gary D. Schmidt</li> <li>• Roland Smith</li> <li>• Jerry Spinelli</li> </ul>
Adventure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidnapped by Gordon Korman</li> <li>• On the Run by Gordon Korman</li> <li>• Shadow Children by Margaret Peterson Haddix</li> </ul>
Biography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DK Biography by various authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who Was...? by various authors</li> </ul>
Fantasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beast Quest by Adam Blade</li> <li>• Geronimo Stilton and Thea Stilton by Elisabetta Dami (but credited on the books to the main character of each)</li> <li>• Magic Tree House by Mary Pope Osborne</li> <li>• The Secrets of Droon by Tony Abbott</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer</li> <li>• The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis</li> <li>• Percy Jackson and the Olympians by Rick Riordan</li> <li>• The Sisters Grimm by Michael Buckley</li> </ul>
Historical fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magic Tree House by Mary Pope Osborne</li> <li>• My America by various authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Girl by various authors</li> <li>• Dear America by various authors</li> <li>• I Survived by Lauren Tarshis</li> </ul>
Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captain Underpants by Dav Pilkey</li> <li>• My Weird School by Dan Gutman</li> <li>• Pete the Cat by Eric Litwin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide To... by Tommy Greenwald</li> </ul>
Informational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science by various authors</li> <li>• Pocket Genius by DK Publishing</li> <li>• Scholastic News Nonfiction Readers by various authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's True Stories by various authors</li> <li>• Fact Finders by various authors</li> <li>• Royal Diaries by Kristiana Gregory</li> <li>• Scholastic Question and Answer National Geographic Kids chapters by various authors</li> </ul>
Mystery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A to Z Mysteries by Ron Roy</li> <li>• Capital Mysteries by Ron Roy</li> <li>• Mostly Ghostly by R.L. Stine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sammy Keyes by Wendelin Van Draanen</li> <li>• The 39 Clues by a collaboration of authors</li> </ul>
Realistic fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bailey School Kids by Marcia T. Jones and Debbie Dadey</li> <li>• Fancy Nancy by Jane O'Connor</li> <li>• Just Grace by Charise Mericle Harper</li> <li>• Katie Kazoo, Switcheroo by Nancy Krulik</li> <li>• Pinkalicious by Victoria Kann</li> <li>• Sassy by Sharon M. Draper</li> <li>• Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs by Sharon M. Draper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney</li> <li>• Dork Diaries by Rachel Renee Russell</li> <li>• The Popularity Papers by Amy Ignatow</li> </ul>
Science fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DK Star Wars by various authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark Life by Kat Falls</li> <li>• Kingdom Keepers by Ridley Pearson</li> <li>• Maximum Ride by James Patterson</li> <li>• Michael Vey by Richard Paul Evans</li> <li>• The Missing by Margaret Peterson Haddix</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1.3**  
**Where to Find Good Books**

Website	Annotation
American Library Association: ALA Recommended Print/Media List ( <a href="http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/browse/rlist">www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/browse/rlist</a> )	This webpage links to award-winning books by award, such as Best Fiction for Young Adults and Notable Children’s Books. The information provided about the authors, illustrators, and children’s book awards are most helpful if you’re trying to identify books to purchase for your classroom library.
Teenreads ( <a href="http://www.teenreads.com">www.teenreads.com</a> )	Designed to share good reads, this website includes author interviews, book reviews, reading lists, and other gems.
National Science Teachers Association: Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12 ( <a href="http://www.nsta.org/ostbc">www.nsta.org/ostbc</a> )	This list is annotated and organized under the eight science content standards. It’s a great resource for integrating nonfiction into your classroom library and instruction.
National Council for the Social Studies: Notable Tradebooks for Young People ( <a href="http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable">www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable</a> )	Each year, the National Council for the Social Studies creates a bibliography of books for grades K–8 organized under the 10 social studies standards. You can access the previous year’s annotations for free, but you must be a member to access the current year’s list.
The Best Children’s Books ( <a href="http://www.the-best-childrens-books.org">www.the-best-childrens-books.org</a> )	This site was created by and for teachers and has links to quality books by content strand (e.g., math, science, American history), series, and major award winners.
The Horn Book: Boston Globe–Horn Book Awards ( <a href="http://www.hbook.com/bghb">www.hbook.com/bghb</a> )	Besides the award winners for excellence in children’s literature, this webpage also offers an extensive searchable database of children’s and young adult titles.
National Council of Teachers of English: NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children ( <a href="http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbis/pictus">www.ncte.org/awards/orbis/pictus</a> )	This webpage lists the current winner as well as the honor and recommended books. It also links to the same lists back to 1990.

below and categorized by author, genre, series, or reading levels. You might even have the class determine how the books should be organized, which can familiarize students with what’s available and instill a sense of ownership in the classroom library (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006).

Sources for identifying good titles include newspaper or magazine reviews, the annual Teachers’ Choices and Children’s Choices reading lists in *The Reading Teacher*, trade publications such as *School Library Journal* and *Curriculum Connections*, the shelves of your local library or bookstore, and the advice of fellow teachers and students. There are also many online resources for finding good books (see Table 1.3).

### ***Creating a Culture of Avid Readers***

Although too much manipulation of students can have unintended consequences, no one can argue with a few well-intentioned ploys in the name of literacy! As the head reading cheerleader, you should lead impromptu book pep rallies on a regular basis.

Enthusiastically talk about the winning qualities of your favorite new kids' titles or walk into the room with a bookstore bag full of selections chosen to appeal to your students. Create a little competitive tension by having kids vie for the first chance at a book endorsed by you. One way to do this is to designate a special place in your classroom where you put new books after completing a book talk. Kids will naturally congregate in this area every chance they get to look over the new titles and snag up the one that appeals to them (see Figure 1.8).

For your most reluctant readers, use the information on their Interest and Wide Reading Inventory sheets (available on the CD) to choose new books that they'll be sure to like. Do a book talk (described next) and then let these kids have the first shot at reading the book. You can also introduce kids to the online book trailers at popular sites such as Book Trailers for Readers ([www.booktrailersforreaders.com](http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com)) and SlimeKids ([www.slimekids.com/book-trailers](http://www.slimekids.com/book-trailers)). Write little notes and put the books you talked up or ones the class saw in book trailers on the students' desks before they come to class. They'll dig right into their new treasures as soon as they arrive.

Most importantly, show your students that you value books and reading. Share interesting magazine and newspaper clippings. Tell the class about the interesting plot twists or characters in the books you read for pleasure. Show them your enthusiasm. It's contagious!

Book talks are a way to hook even the most reluctant readers. By giving students just a taste of what a book is about, usually by sharing a compelling passage from the book, you'll create anticipation for the text. Students will want to read your copy of the book, check out a copy from the library, or go home and beg their parents to buy them a copy. If you carefully write or select a book talk based on what your students are interested in, you will ensure they eagerly anticipate their next read.

Furthermore, having students create their own book talks gives them another purpose for at-home reading and promotes the reading-writing connection. Book talks range in formality, from the formally prepared graded report to the quick quip about a new book in the classroom collection to the snippets heard about each book during the Rap portion of R<sup>5</sup>. They can also take on a variety of formats, such as jackdaws, online posters, or a collection of shared Internet images of an author, setting, or items from a book. We developed our Book Talk Rubric (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; available on the CD) with CCSS connections and included a student sample of a book talk (see Figure 1.9). Be





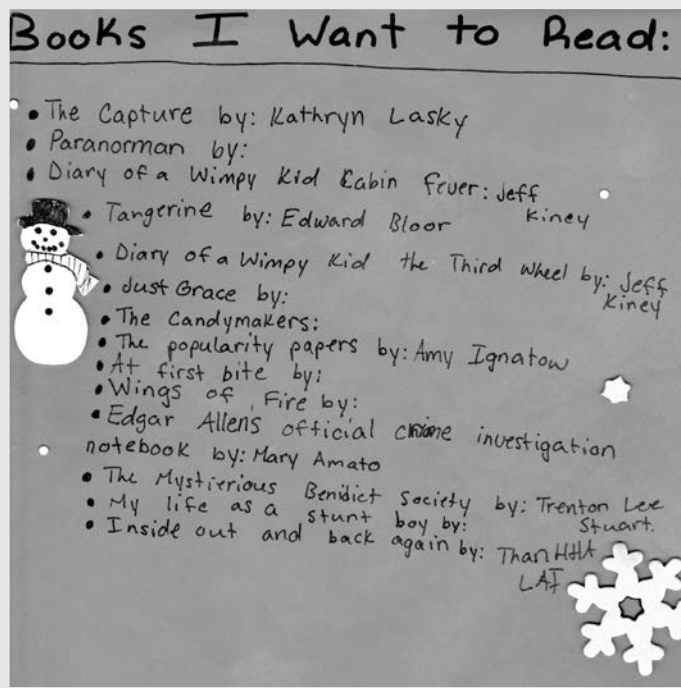
FIGURE 1.9  
Book Talk: Student Example About *At First Bite* by Ruth Ames<sup>a</sup>

## *At First Bite*

Does fresh, steamy blood scare you? If so, you might not want to read this horror fantasy book by Ruth Ames. *At First Bite's* main character, Ashlee Lambert is a normal girl until she turns into a vampire. On top of turning into a vampire she moves to "sunny" L.A. where she discovers some vampires, well lets just say they don't drink sanga the blood substitute. At her new school, Ashlee realizes that her new best friend's brother, mother, and father are all vampires. It's a good thing they are vampires because someone has been attacking kids at her new school and she will need some help to stop it. I think Tally Chamelin would like this book because I know she has a taste for fantasy, horror, and mystery. I also think she would like this book because she enjoys books about vampires.

<sup>a</sup>Ames, R. (2011). *At first bite*. New York: Scholastic.

FIGURE 1.10  
Books I Want to Read: Student Example



careful, though, because you'll want book talks only on those books that can deliver—in other words, books that hold students' interest and are written on an attainable reading level. Your students *will* want to read the books you share. But, if they're consistently disappointed because the books are too difficult or just not that good, they'll either lose faith in you or lose interest in reading for pleasure.

As students become more excited about reading during their free time, invite them to keep track of books they want to read in their R<sup>5</sup> folders (see Figure 1.10). This will allow quick access to the next title when they finish a book.

**Think and Discuss.** Identify the qualities of a positive, literacy-rich learning environment. What aspects are especially supportive to metacognitive learning?