

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

F OCUS on

RECOGNIZING
CAUSE AND EFFECT





A Research-based Reading Series

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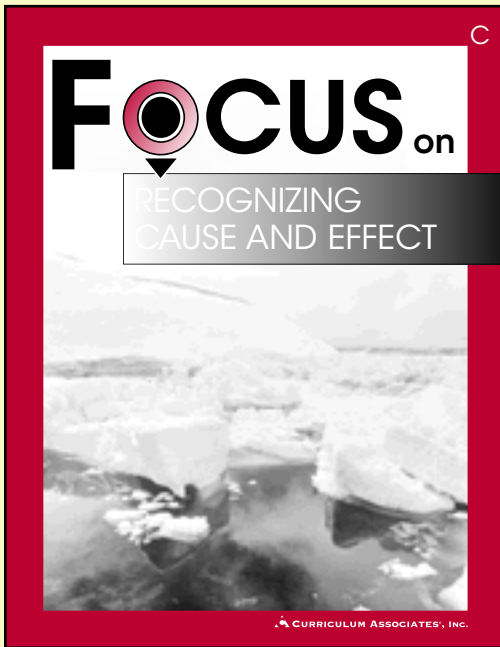
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Introduction to the Series



FOCUS is a series designed for on-level readers who need repeated practice, for struggling readers, and for English-language learners (ELL). This reading-strategy series provides practice for students who are reading at 1.0–8.9 reading levels. **FOCUS** centers on brief instruction and concentrated practice with targeted reading strategies. The series focuses on the higher-order reading strategies with which struggling readers need extensive practice. The selections in the series span curriculum content areas. Each student book has twenty reading selections with which students can practice a specific reading strategy. Each selection is followed by comprehension questions that require students to apply the focused reading strategy. In addition, students can further their comprehension experience by responding to a constructed-response question that also follows the selection.

The design of the reading selections and the comprehension questions is based on research from several areas. **FOCUS** is supported by current research regarding reading instruction of English-language readers and struggling readers.

How Is FOCUS Supported by Research on Struggling Readers, Including English-Language Learners?

Much of the research on effective instruction for struggling readers parallels the National Reading Panel instructional recommendations. Practice in activating prior knowledge, self-monitoring, and the use of graphic elements (Siegel, 2001) are also supported by research-based recommendations for struggling readers. **FOCUS** also includes additional research-based instructional strategies for struggling readers. Researchers have shown that struggling readers have need a for extensive practice with reading strategies. “Almost 40 percent of fourth graders read below the basic level” (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 2005).

Is ELL Instruction Relevant to Your Classroom?

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 1 in 12 students receive special assistance to learn English.
- The population of English-language learners has grown over 86% since 1992, while general K-12 enrollment has grown only 11%.

Why are English-language learners considered struggling readers? National test results explain why: “Hispanic students as a whole, including English-proficient children

in the second generation and beyond, score significantly lower in reading than other students.

SKILL RANGES of STRUGGLING and EFFECTIVE Readers		
Comprehension	▶	Narrow
Vocabulary	▶	Undeveloped
Fluency	▶	Disjointed
Word Identification	▶	Limited
		▶
		Expansive
		Proficient
		Effortless
		Automatic

(Dickson, 2005)

On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Grigg, Daane, Jin, & Campbell, 2003), which excludes children with the lowest levels of English proficiency from testing, only 44% of Latino fourth graders scored at or above the ‘basic’ level, in comparison to 75% of Anglo students. Only 15% of Latino fourth graders scored at ‘proficient’ or better compared to 41% of Anglos (Slavin & Cheung, 2003, p. 1).

While ELL students face obvious challenges to improve their reading scores, research-based teaching instructions are available. “[W]ith allowances for the language issues themselves, effective reading instruction for English language learners may be similar to effective instruction for English-proficient children, whether the ELLs are first taught in their native language or in English” (Slavin & Cheung, 2003, p. 30).

FOCUS is a program that is comprehensive in its use of effective learning and teaching strategies for on-level and struggling readers.

Explicit Instruction	Extensive Reading and Genre Exposure
Scaffolded Instruction	Cooperative Learning
Previewing	Clue Word Instruction
Graphic Organizers	

Learn About

Recognizing Cause and Effect


Cause and effect tells *what* happens and *why* it happens.

Why something happens is the **cause**. It is the reason that something happens.

What happens is the **effect**. The effect happens because of the **cause**. It is a result of the cause.

Read this paragraph to find out what happened to the Pilgrims and why.

In 1620, the Pilgrims left Europe. They sailed across the sea to America. They were the first settlers from Europe to live in Massachusetts. They needed to build homes there. But the Pilgrims had no bricks to build their homes. So they built their homes out of wood.



Cause (Why?) The Pilgrims had no bricks to build their homes.	→	Effect (What?) They built their homes out of wood.
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Researchers have proven that struggling students succeed with tightly written, well-organized instructional text.

Explicit Instruction

FOCUS uses explicit instruction in the teaching of the reading strategies. The explicit instruction occurs in the Learn About section and the Lesson Preview section of each book. Researchers Manset-Williamson and Nelson (2005) explain, “. . . explicit instruction involves the overt,

teacher-directed instruction of strategies, including direct explanation, modeling, and guided practice in the application of strategies” (p. 62). “The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (modeling and careful scaffolding is key)” (Abadiano & Turner, 2003, p. 76). Through the Lesson Preview section, students receive explicit instruction consisting of a definition, a short example passage, clue words if appropriate, and a usage rule for the reading strategy.



Why something happens is the cause. What happens is the effect.

The Remember box is a point of reference for students as they attend to each lesson.

Additionally, **FOCUS** is a perfect vehicle for struggling readers because it does not overwhelm students with the presentation of information. “[B]rief, well-organized, tightly written texts are used to introduce the strategy, because readers are more capable of using the strategy initially with ‘small segments of well-organized text that contain explicit ideas and relations’ ” (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1996, p. 615). In the Learn About section, students initially experience the reading strategy in a short paragraph, usually three to seven sentences long. The Remember box is a text feature that provides a point of reference for students to use while attending to lessons. The Remember box is consistently placed in each book of the series. Struggling or novice readers usually skip or gloss over text features, which are valuable comprehension tools. With repeated exposure and external prompting by the teacher, students learn to pay attention to text features.

Lesson 7

Read this story about Ricky. He has a lot of people telling him what to do. As you read, think about what happens and why. Look for clue words.

Too Many Mothers

Ricky sat straight up in bed. “This is it!” he hooted. “Today is the first day of summer vacation, and I’m free for two whole months!”

When Ricky came down for breakfast, he discovered that his mother had already left for work. She’d also left him a list of tasks to complete that morning. Ricky sighed because now he couldn’t meet his friends until noon.

Ricky was getting ready to eat some leftover pizza for breakfast when he heard his grandmother say, “Ricardo Luis Ramirez! Pizza is no kind of breakfast for a growing boy. Sit! I will make you a real breakfast.” And with that, she snatched the pizza from the table. Ricky sank low in his chair.

Ricky’s sister wheeled herself into the kitchen. “Ricky,” announced CC, “you shouldn’t sit like that. It’s bad for your back. Sit up straight!”

Ricky straightened up a bit. After breakfast, Gram asked Ricky to run to the store for some bread. Ricky then glanced at his mother’s list in alarm. He got on his bike and pedaled wildly towards the corner market.

On the way, Ricky passed his Aunt Inez, who was sweeping the area around her doorway. “Ricky,” she called, “could you help me out? Our washer is broken, so your uncle is at the cleaners around the corner. I’ve got another bag of clothes. Could you drop it with him on your way? He’ll know what to do.”

So Ricky grabbed the bag, darted to the cleaners, gave the bag to his uncle, raced back to the market, picked up the bread, and sped home.

When he arrived at his front steps, Ricky saw his pal Ray waiting for him. Ricky gave Ray an account of the things he had to do for his family. “Everyone tells me what to do!” he exclaimed. “I have too many mothers!”

Ray just shook his head and said, “I’d love a big family like yours!”

That made Ricky think about all the fun times he’d had with his family. “They are pretty great, I guess,” Ricky agreed. “Do you want to help me with my mom’s list so we can play street hockey sooner?”

“Sure,” Ray said. “Did your grandmother make any cookies today?”

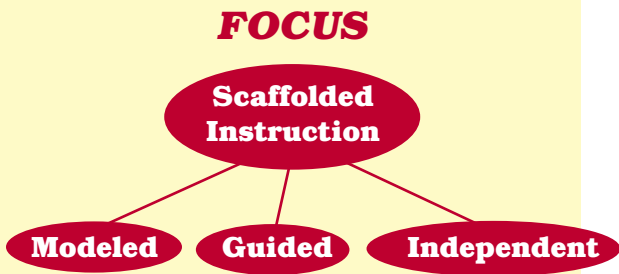
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Extensive Reading and Genre Exposure

Throughout the **FOCUS** series, students have the opportunity to read 960 reading selections, which include both nonfiction and fiction genres. In **FOCUS**, students, especially in the early grades, are exposed to genres that they typically don’t encounter. “When students reach the fourth grade, they are generally expected to begin to read, comprehend, and write informational text, often with no regard for the fact that their primary grade experiences likely included little or no exposure to such texts (Duke, 2000; Christie, 1987)” (Tower, 2003, p. 15). The practice of reading fiction and nonfiction genres and their related text structure benefits students’ comprehension. “Introducing young

*Students have the opportunity to read 960 passages throughout the **FOCUS** series.*

readers to a variety of texts prepares them to deal with more complex texts (and complex issues) in the future (Fisher, Flood, & Lapp, 1999; Snow et al., 1998)” (Barton & Sawyer, 2003, p. 2). “Looking for and using text structure helps students to study and think more deeply about ideas encountered during reading” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 391). Repeated practice with each genre and its text structure ensures that students will internalize the genre’s characteristics. As students become more proficient in comprehending a genre and text structure, they also become more fluent readers. “Schools also need to be aware that text availability, in a variety of genres and on a variety of reading levels, is essential to meeting students’ varied needs” (Ash, 2002).



Scaffolded Instruction

Scaffolded instruction benefits all students, including ELL students. The instructional goal in any curriculum classroom is to develop independent learners. “Yet, many students in today’s diverse classrooms have trouble handling the conceptual demands inherent in text material when left to their own devices to learn . . . In a nutshell, instructional scaffolding allows teachers to support students’ efforts to make sense of texts while showing them how to use strategies that will, over time, lead to independent learning” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 25). Scaffolded instruction is the basic organizational framework of the FOCUS series.

Modeled Instruction and Guided Practice

According to Ash (2002) and Flood & Lapp (1990), modeled instruction and guided reading are effective teaching strategies for struggling students. Students who need extensive teacher support benefit from the teacher-directed Learn About section and the Lesson Preview section. In the Lesson Preview section, students learn how to progress through the lesson by one of a variety of methods: teacher-directed, small group, or one-on-one discourse with a teacher or student. Teachers may employ a think-aloud strategy as a means of aiding struggling readers. “In think-alouds, teachers make their thinking explicit by verbalizing their thoughts while reading orally” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 83). Students then experience text-guided instruction as they respond to the reading-strategy questions that

Look at the answer choices for each question. Read why each answer choice is correct or not correct.

<p>1. What happened because John Chapman planted many apple seeds?</p> <p>Ⓐ He never wore shoes, even in winter. This answer is not correct because the passage never tells about John Chapman going without shoes.</p> <p>● People named him Johnny Applesseed. This answer is correct because the first paragraph of the passage states that this is why Johnny Applesseed got his name.</p> <p>Ⓒ Apples were a rare gift out West. This answer is not correct because the passage never states that it was because of John Chapman that apples were rare out West.</p> <p>Ⓓ No apple trees grew in the East. This answer is not correct because the passage does not give any information about apple trees in the East.</p>	<p>2. Many apple trees grew in the West because</p> <p>Ⓐ apples can be eaten fresh or dried. This answer is not correct because this is the reason why people liked apples, not the reason why there were many apple trees out West.</p> <p>Ⓑ Johnny Applesseed grew trees in the West. This answer is not correct because the second paragraph states that Johnny did not go to the West to grow trees.</p> <p>● John Chapman planted many seeds. This answer is correct because the passage states this cause in the last paragraph.</p> <p>Ⓒ there had always been many apple trees in the West. This answer is not correct because the passage states that out West apples had been a rare gift.</p>
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Modeled and guided practice are hallmarks of effective teaching strategies for struggling students.



ELL students gain motivation, confidence, and experience in hearing and speaking English among peers.

follow the reading selection. This guided practice provides experience with the strategy and gives students a feeling of control over the strategy before they work with a group or independently. As an offshoot of the think-aloud reading strategy, guided practice also makes explicit the reasoning of each answer choice.

Another form of guided practice is the use of cooperative learning, including paired and group work. “English language learners have been found to benefit from instruction in comprehensive reform programs using systematic phonics, one-to-one or small group tutoring programs, cooperative learning programs, and programs emphasizing extensive reading” (Slavin & Cheung, 2003, p. 2). “Because of the potential value of collaborative student interactions, we underscore the invaluable contribution of cooperative learning in diverse classrooms” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 150). In **FOCUS**, students are encouraged to work independently at first as they read and answer the questions. Students then meet with partners, or in a small group or a large group of students to discuss their responses. This engagement with peers stimulates learning through multiple senses (speaking, listening, reading, writing), which is a necessity when accommodating the multiple learning styles that exist in a classroom.

Independent Practice

With twenty selections through which to practice a reading strategy, students become independent learners during the course of completing a book. With the help of self-regulation, students will recognize when they have mastered a strategy and then move to a higher reading level of the same strategy or to a different strategy. “Practice gives children opportunities to evaluate their own performances, make corrections, and increase skills” (Morrow, 2003, p. 861). Scaffolded instruction of each reading strategy in the **FOCUS** series provides one of the most effective ways for students to learn and practice the reading strategies.

Previewing

Each **FOCUS** book previews its targeted reading strategy before students begin to work independently. “Students

Lesson

Preview

Read this sample passage about an American folk hero, Johnny Appleseed. As you read, think about the things that happen and why they happen. Look for clue words.

Johnny Appleseed

Long ago, John Chapman left home. He had a plan. He would plant apple trees across the West. He pictured miles of apple trees dotting the land. Out West, apples were a rare gift. They could be eaten fresh. They could even be dried. People could eat them in winter. Chapman planted many apple seeds, so people named him Johnny Appleseed.

But Johnny didn't go all the way to the West to grow trees. Instead, he found some good land. There he planted apple seeds. He cared for them. Then he sold or gave away the baby trees. Families going out West planted the baby trees and grew them.

Many apple trees grew across the West because Johnny Appleseed planted so many seeds.

1. What happened because John Chapman planted many apple seeds?

- Ⓐ He never wore shoes, even in winter.
- Ⓑ People named him Johnny Appleseed.
- Ⓒ Apples were a rare gift out West.
- Ⓓ No apple trees grew in the East.

2. Many apple trees grew in the West because

- Ⓐ apples can be eaten fresh or dried.
- Ⓑ Johnny Appleseed grew trees in the West.
- Ⓒ John Chapman planted many seeds.
- Ⓓ there had always been many apple trees in the West.

who listen to the previews before reading the text often significantly outperform students who do not have previews on several measures of comprehension (Cheney, 1990; Mastropieri, Leinart, & Scruggs, 1999). Previewing is also an effective reading and comprehension strategy for use with English language learners (Chen & Graves, 1998)” (Flood, Lapp, & Fisher, 2003, p. 963).

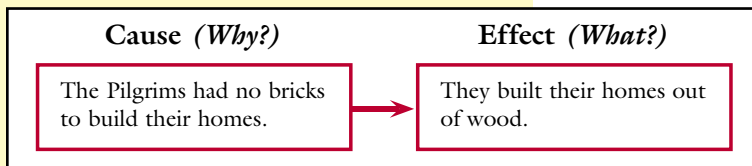
Each **FOCUS** student book begins with a preview of the targeted reading strategy. Here, teachers model expected responses. This Lesson Preview section also provides guided practice, which demonstrates the thinking process for answering the two selected-response questions. Additionally, teachers may model the previews of each lesson’s content by reading aloud from the direction box. This direction box in each student book lesson gives students a reading-strategy reminder.

Clue Word Instruction

Clue word instruction is a valuable learning tool for students of all abilities. Clue words help students process the organization of a text. “Important text elements [clue words] are learned and remembered better because of the additional attention they receive” (Spires, 1992, p. 308). “Ideas marked by . . . the occurrence of signal words and phrases are processed longer and recalled better than unsignaled information” (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000, p. 317). Being able to recognize clue words helps students recognize abstract text patterns. “Authors often showcase text patterns by giving readers clues or signals to help them figure out the structure being used. . . . A signal may be a word or a phrase that helps the reader follow the writer’s thoughts” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 398). The following works provide clue word instructions: **Focus on Understanding Sequence**, **Recognizing Cause and Effect**, and **Comparing and Contrasting**. This information appears in the Learn About section of each of these book. Students are given a list of clue words, which they will see in context in the lessons. Explicit and direct instruction of clue words will promote students’ abilities to achieve mastery of the particular reading strategy.

Clue words can signal cause and effect. Here are some cause-effect clue words: *so, so that, since, because, if, reason,* and *as a result*.

Clue words help students process the organization of a text.



Graphic organizers aid in comprehension because they are concrete, memorable representations of abstract thinking processes.

Graphic Organizers

Another means of identifying text structures, and therefore comprehending the reading strategy that students should use to comprehend that text structure, is the use of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers can be used to visually present the pattern of information in a text. This pattern of information reflects the text structure of a selection. “Visual structures are powerful tools for comprehension instruction because they offer concrete, memorable representations of abstract thinking processes (Alvermann & Boothby, 1986; Calfee & Patrick, 1995; Norton, 1992)” (Barton & Sawyer, 2003).

Each **FOCUS** book provides a graphic organizer that represents the text structure specific to the targeted reading strategy. Graphic organizers are helpful because they “. . . are visual and spatial displays designed to facilitate the teaching and learning of textual material through the ‘use of lines, arrows, and a spatial arrangement that describe text content, structure, and key conceptual relationships’ ” (Darch & Eaves, 1986, p. 310). They can be used to illuminate the reading strategy for the students.

Reading Strategy	Book A (1.0-1.9)	Book B (2.0-2.9)	Book C (3.0-3.9)	Book D (4.0-4.9)	Book E (5.0-5.9)	Book F (6.0-6.9)	Book G (7.0-7.9)	Book H (8.0-8.9)
Understanding Main Idea and Details	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understanding Sequence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognizing Cause and Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comparing and Contrasting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Making Predictions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

“When students are shown how to see relationships among concepts and bits of essential information, they are in a better position to respond to meaning and to distinguish important from less important ideas” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 393).

Why Are These Reading Strategies Important for Reading Comprehension?

FOCUS provides practice with reading strategies because these strategies are the core reading tools that students need in order to make sense of what they are reading. “. . . [M]any students have demonstrated difficulties with skills that are central to reading comprehension (i.e., identifying main topics, significant supporting information, and relations between a text’s main topics” (Seidenberg, 1989). The reading strategies or the skills involved in the reading strategies of Understanding Main Idea and Details, Understanding Sequence, Recognizing Cause and Effect, Comparing and Contrasting, Making Predictions, and Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences may be difficult for some students to master because the thinking processes involved in applying the strategies are abstract in nature. These reading strategies represent the unseen text structure

Literal

FOCUS

Abstract

of a reading passage. “When students are shown how to see relationships among concepts and bits of essential information, they are in a better position to respond to meaning and to distinguish important from less important ideas” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 393). **FOCUS** instructs and reinforces the text structures that students encounter in and outside of school.

FOCUS covers essential reading strategies that pertain to text structures. Learning how to understand main ideas and details has considerable research support. Kameenui & Simmons (1998) provide an extensive overview of main idea research: “The ability to identify main topics, significant supporting information, and interrelations among a text’s main ideas are processes that appear central to comprehension” (Lorch & Lorch, cited in Seidenberg, 1989; Miller & Kintsch, cited in Seidenberg, 1989). “Textbook main idea studies suggest instruction in techniques for locating main ideas to be valuable for improved textbook comprehension, especially in dealing with difficult passages” (O’Hear & Aikman, 1996). Warren and Fitzgerald (1997) summarize the importance of main idea reading instruction: It is commonly believed that identification or generation of main ideas and supporting details is crucial to making meaning while reading and to recall after reading (Hare & Milligan, 1984; Memory, 1983). There is evidence of a clear positive relationship between main-idea knowledge and overall understanding from reading (Baumann, 1984; Winograd, 1984). However, many poorer readers do not configure main ideas and details well (Bridge, Belmore, Moskow, Cohen, & Matthews, 1984; Brown & Day, 1983; Winograd, 1984). Such students might profit from help from others in identifying and generating main ideas and details in expository text. Several intervention approaches, such as direct instruction in getting main ideas, have been shown to enhance fifth graders’ through college students’ ability to get main ideas when reading (Alvermann, 1982; Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Baumann, 1984; Bridge, Belmore, Moskow, Cohen, & Matthews, 1984; Guri-Rozenblit, 1989; Memory, 1983; Moore & Cunningham, 1984; Williams, 1986).

READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

The clue word *so* signals an effect: the Pilgrims built their homes out of wood.

Recognizing cause and effect helps you understand relationships in fiction and nonfiction. Science and social studies books contain many cause and effect relationships.
Because of erosion, shorelines change over time. The settlers wanted their own farms so they traveled west.

Learn About
Recognizing Cause and Effect

Cause and effect only relationships and effect happens. Effect happens because of the cause. In the example text, the effect happens because of the cause. It is caused by the cause.

Read this paragraph to find out what happened in the Pilgrims' lives.

In 1620, the Pilgrims left Europe. They sailed across the ocean to North America. They had to travel through a stormy sea. They had to travel through a stormy sea. They had to travel through a stormy sea. They had to travel through a stormy sea.

Cause (What?) Effect (What?)
The Pilgrims had to travel through a stormy sea. They had their own farms.

In a passage, you can read a cause first or an effect first, but in any situation, the cause always happens first, before the effect.
(Effect) *I went to the library early (Cause) because I needed that book.*
(Cause) *Because I needed that book, (Effect) I went to the library early.*
No matter how it's written, the cause (needing that book) happened before the effect (going to the library early).

Clue Words: "Authors often showcase text patterns by giving readers clues or signals to help them figure out the structure being used. . . . A signal may be a word or a phrase that helps the reader follow the writer's thoughts." (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 398).

Definitions: "The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (modeling and careful scaffolding is key)." (Abadiano & Turner, 2003, p. 76).

Abadiano, H. R., & Turner, J. (2003). The RAND report: Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program to reading comprehension. *San Diego: Reading Assessment Journal*, 10(2), 76-79.

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Reading Strategy Tips for Teachers provides additional support for reading-strategy instruction.

In another literature review, Kameenui & Simmons (1998, p. 255) offer the following reasons why understanding sequence, cause and effect, and comparing and contrasting are critical for reading comprehension. “Student awareness of structural patterns in expository writing (e.g., sequence, causation, comparison/contrast) facilitated recall of not only more text information, but more theses or main ideas” (Seidenberg, 1989). The drawing conclusions and making inferences involve abstract inferencing reading strategies and are more difficult to teach. “Inferencing is a natural part of language use, usually based on children’s knowledge of the world (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). To get children to be better able to make inferences during reading may involve little more than encouraging them to do so. Hansen (1981) found that increasing the percentage of inferential questions asked during a lesson was just as effective as a direct instruction inference training program in improving children’s ability to answer inference questions” (Stahl, 1998, p. 44). Researchers have proven that these core reading strategies are essential in gaining reading comprehension. **FOCUS** presents the necessary learning tools and practice opportunities to insure that students experience success in reading comprehension.

Self-Assessment 2
Lessons 6-10
FOCUS on Recognizing Cause and Effect, Book C

Name _____ Date _____

1. Rate your work in Lessons 6-10. Circle your answer.
successful somewhat successful needs improvement

2. Did any of the questions or reading passages give you trouble? _____
If so, what kind of trouble did you have?

Is this the same kind of trouble you had in Lessons 1-5? _____

3. Did you find the questions or reading passages easier or more difficult than those in Lessons 1-5? _____

Self-Assessment 3
Lessons 11-15
FOCUS on Recognizing Cause and Effect, Book C

Name _____ Date _____

1. Rate your work in Lessons 11-15. Circle your answer.
successful somewhat successful needs improvement

2. Did any of the questions or reading passages give you trouble? _____
If so, what kind of trouble did you have?

Is this the same kind of trouble you had in Lessons 6-10? _____

3. Did you find the questions or reading passages easier or more difficult than those in Lessons 6-10? _____

Self-Assessment 4
Lessons 16-20
FOCUS on Recognizing Cause and Effect, Book C

Name _____ Date _____

1. Rate your work in Lessons 16-20. Circle your answer.
successful somewhat successful needs improvement

2. Did any of the questions or reading passages give you trouble? _____
If so, what kind of trouble did you have?

Is this the same kind of trouble you had in Lessons 11-15? _____

3. Did you find the questions or reading passages easier or more difficult than those in Lessons 11-15? _____

Self-Assessment 5
Lessons 1-20
FOCUS on Making Predictions, Book C

Name _____ Date _____

1. Rate your work in Lessons 1-20. Circle your answer.
successful somewhat successful needs improvement

2. Complete this sentence. *I did well in this book because*

3. Complete this sentence. *I could have done even better in this book if*

How Does Research Support the Assessments Found in FOCUS?

FOCUS is a flexible instructional classroom tool to use because of the formative assessments teachers use in the series: student self-assessment and teacher assessment through conferencing, as well as selected and constructed assessments. Research supports the use of these types of assessments because they are significant in increasing a student’s self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is “people’s judgement of their abilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance” (p. 391). When a student’s self-efficacy is raised, so is his or her willingness to engage in that activity. Both struggling and on-level readers benefit from increased self-efficacy.

Students gain reading confidence and motivation to succeed through self-monitoring.

Student Self-Assessment

Student self-assessment is not only a motivational tool but also one that encourages students to take on more responsibility for their learning. Giving students more control over their learning is an empowering instructional tool. “Students need to play a role in the assessment of their own literacy products and processes” (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 49). Once students are actively engaged in their learning, their self-efficacy is boosted. “When made explicit to the student, the realization of increased skill should increase efficacy for future reading tasks. This realization by the student that one is becoming a better reader could begin a positive motivational cycle where increases in reading efficacy would lead to increases in reading activity and the reading of more difficult material, which would further develop reading skill” (Quirk & Schwanenflugel, 2004, p. 8). The Self-Assessments and Tracking Chart are designed to give students immediate feedback on their performance. The Tracking Chart is a visual tool students can use to discuss their progress with the teacher. The Self-Assessments bring in self-regulation and monitoring. The Self-Assessment questions make students’ thoughts explicit to themselves so that they may make conscious decisions about their learning progress.

Tracking Chart

FOCUS on Making Predictions, Book C

After you have completed each lesson, write the date on the chart. After the questions have been corrected, fill in the number that you answered correctly. When you have finished a group of five lessons, complete the Self-Assessment.

Name _____

Lesson	Date Completed	Questions Correct	Lesson	Date Completed	Questions Correct
1		/5	11		/5
2		/5	12		/5
3		/5	13		/5
4		/5	14		/5
5		/5	15		/5

Now complete Self-Assessment 1 on page 48. Now complete Self-Assessment 3 on page 50.

Lesson	Date Completed	Questions Correct	Lesson	Date Completed	Questions Correct
6		/5	16		/5
7		/5	17		/5
8		/5	18		/5
9		/5	19		/5
10		/5	20		/5

Now complete Self-Assessment 2 on page 49. Now complete Self-Assessment 4 on page 51.

Tracking Chart

Teacher Assessments through Teacher Conferencing

Teachers are encouraged to meet and discuss with students their progress as they proceed through a **FOCUS** book. Students use their Self-Assessments as a guidepost for their learning, which they may use as a point of discussion with their teacher. Schunk (1991) points out “. . . perhaps the most efficient way for supplemental programs to address reading efficacy issues would be to incorporate a few minutes each day (for small group formats) or each week (for one-on-one programs) where the teacher meets with students individually to discuss progress toward self-set reading goals, including specific examples of observable increases in reading skill.

Teacher Assessment 1 (See Teacher Assessment 1 on page 6 of this teacher guide.)

Student's Name: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

Group 1: Lessons 1-5	Number Correct Responses	Percent Correct Responses
Lesson 1	/5	%
Lesson 2	/5	%
Lesson 3	/5	%
Lesson 4	/5	%
Lesson 5	/5	%
Group 1 Total	/25	%

Group 2: Lessons 6-10	Number Correct Responses	Percent Correct Responses
Lesson 6	/5	%
Lesson 7	/5	%
Lesson 8	/5	%
Lesson 9	/5	%
Lesson 10	/5	%
Group 2 Total	/25	%

Group 3: Lessons 11-15	Number Correct Responses	Percent Correct Responses
Lesson 11	/5	%
Lesson 12	/5	%
Lesson 13	/5	%
Lesson 14	/5	%
Lesson 15	/5	%
Group 3 Total	/25	%

Group 4: Lessons 16-20	Number Correct Responses	Percent Correct Responses
Lesson 16	/5	%
Lesson 17	/5	%
Lesson 18	/5	%
Lesson 19	/5	%
Lesson 20	/5	%
Group 4 Total	/25	%

Whole Book Total	Number Correct Responses /200	Percent Correct Responses

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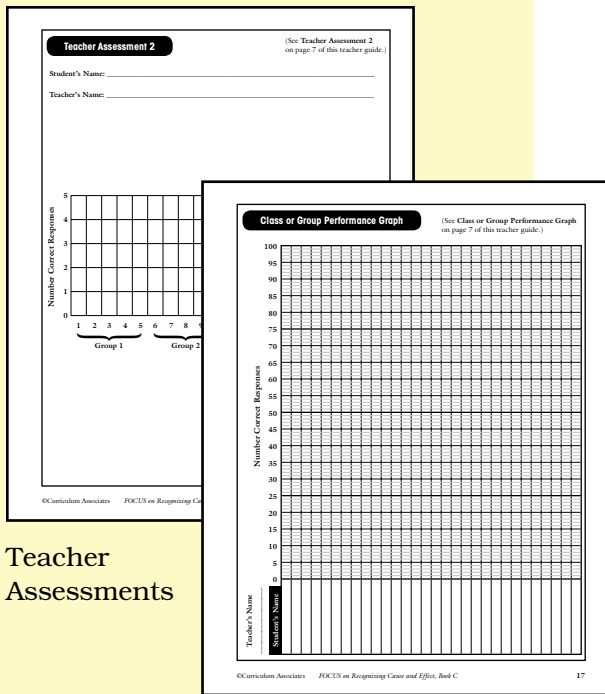
Teacher Assessments

Teacher Assessment 2 (See Teacher Assessment 2 on page 7 of this teacher guide.)

Student's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

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Teacher Assessments

These discussions would make students more aware of individual progress toward their reading goals and support a growing belief that with effort they are capable of improving.” Through **FOCUS**, students engage in several types of assessments. Along with teacher interaction and guidance, these assessments foster positive results for students in terms of personal fulfillment and academic achievement.

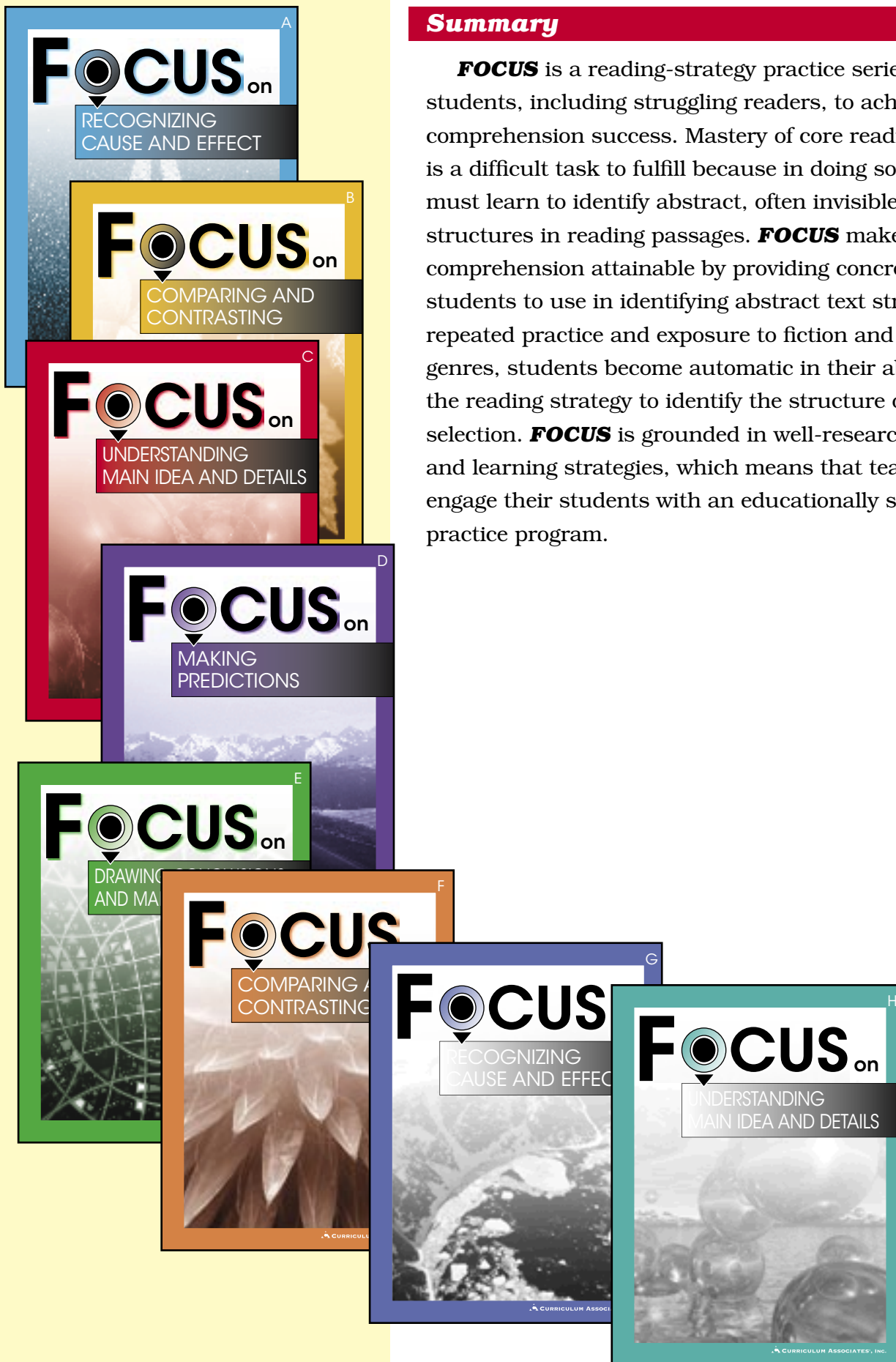
Students benefit from teacher interaction as they progress through the FOCUS program.

Selected-Response and Constructed-Response Questioning

FOCUS is a reading-practice series that incorporates question formats that reflect those found on national and state standardized tests. The practice of answering questions in a testing format bridges a testing gap students may have. By providing practice with test-question formats, **FOCUS** may reduce test anxiety in students. “Students of all levels of academic achievement and intellectual abilities can be affected by test anxiety (Sarason, Davidson, Lighthall, Waite, & Ruebush, 1960)” (Supon, 2004, p. 292). Supon and other researchers suggest that one method of alleviating test anxiety is to provide practice with test-question formats. With practice, students become comfortable with the question formats that are connected with high-stakes testing. This is significant because “cognitive test anxiety exerts a significant stable and negative impact on academic performance measures” (Cassady & Johnson, 2002, p. 294). **FOCUS** provides students with the opportunity not only to master each reading strategy but also to overcome any testing anxiety they may have.



Selected-Response and Constructed-Response Questioning



Summary

FOCUS is a reading-strategy practice series that aids all students, including struggling readers, to achieve reading comprehension success. Mastery of core reading strategies is a difficult task to fulfill because in doing so, students must learn to identify abstract, often invisible, text structures in reading passages. **FOCUS** makes reading comprehension attainable by providing concrete tools for students to use in identifying abstract text structures. With repeated practice and exposure to fiction and nonfiction genres, students become automatic in their ability to use the reading strategy to identify the structure of a reading selection. **FOCUS** is grounded in well-researched teaching and learning strategies, which means that teachers will engage their students with an educationally sound reading-practice program.

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