

Chapter 3

CAFE Step-by-Step: The First Days of School



We both love a good recipe. When someone cooks or bakes something we like, we ask for the recipe—and then when it’s given to us, we ask for even more advice. Are there any special tips we should know for baking in our wet Seattle climate? Are there any ways the veteran chef has changed the recipe to make it even tastier?

We get as much advice as we can, in as much detail as possible, when we are first trying any new recipe. It’s a funny thing, though: we want as many details as possible for how to make the recipe work well so that we can then turn around and eventually make our own adjustments to it.

Before teachers are ready to fine-tune the use of CAFE Assessment in their own classrooms, the bulk of their questions are about how to launch the program in the first days and weeks of school. Since the launching charts for the Daily Five in our first book remain the most popular component of that book, we’ve included similar launching charts for CAFE in the appendix. In this chapter, we want to give you our recipe for success during those crucial first few days and weeks of school. We have tried to be very detailed in our description, down to the language we use with students. We don’t expect you to use the same language or even follow the order of lessons, but you’re more likely to find your own recipe for success if we’re clear about what we do and why we do it.

Preparation for CAFE can begin before school even starts, or it may begin at some point during the school year. It gets under way when we put up the bulletin board. It has to be in a space low enough for children to access it, and it has to be large enough to be added to as the school year progresses. The dimensions of the board in Joan’s room last year were 5 feet by 5 feet.

Throughout this book, we share demonstration lessons and examples of individual conferring about dozens of strategies that fall under CAFE. It’s important to realize that we don’t introduce all these strategies to students at the start of the year (or whenever we begin using CAFE). In fact, with primary students, we are most likely by the end of the year to have introduced the CAFE strategies highlighted in Figure 3.1. Intermediate students or more

The CAFE Menu bulletin board is empty when school starts, waiting for group learning to be posted.




 The Literacy CAFE Menu			
<p>Comprehension I understand what I read</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Check for understanding Back up and reread Monitor and fix up Retell the story Use prior knowledge to connect with text Make a picture or mental image Ask questions throughout the reading process Predict what will happen; use text to confirm Infer and support with evidence Use text features (titles, headings, captions, graphic features) Summarize text; include sequence of main events Use main idea and supporting details to determine importance Determine and analyze author's purpose and support with text Recognize literacy elements (genre, plot, character, setting, problem/resolution, theme) Recognize and explain cause-and-effect relationships Compare and contrast within and between text</p>	<p>Accuracy I can read the words</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Cross checking . . . Do the pictures and/or words look right? Do they sound right? Do they make sense? Use the pictures . . . Do the words and pictures match? Use beginning and ending sounds Blend sounds; stretch and reread Flip the sound Chunk letters and sounds together Skip the word, then come back Trade a word/guess a word that makes sense</p>	<p>Fluency I can read accurately, with expression, and understand what I read</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Voracious reading Read appropriate-level texts that are a good fit Reread text Practice common sight words and high-frequency words Adjust and apply different reading rates to match text Use punctuation to enhance phrasing and prosody (end marks, commas, etc.)</p>	<p>Expand Vocabulary I know, find, and use interesting words</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Voracious reading Tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in speaking and writing Use pictures, illustrations, and diagrams Use word parts to determine the meaning of words (prefixes, suffixes, origins, abbreviations, etc.) Use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning Ask someone to define the word for you Use dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries as tools</p>
<p>Behaviors That Support Reading</p> <p>Get started right away Stay in one place Work quietly Read the whole time Increase stamina Select and read good-fit books</p>			

Figure 3.1
Highlighted CAFE
Menu

advanced primary classrooms will likely have all the strategies introduced by the end of the year.

But at the start of the year, there are no strategies on the board. When students enter our classroom on the first day of school, they see the board with its bright colors and CAFE headings.

Each heading has a brief definition under it:

Comprehension: “I understand what I read”

Accuracy: “I can read the words”

Fluency: “I can read accurately, with expression, and understand what I read”

Expand Vocabulary: “I know, find, and use interesting words”

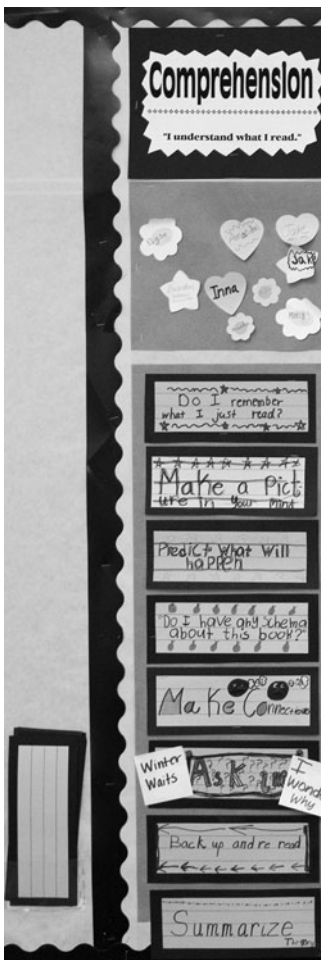
Underneath each heading is a blank rectangular sheet of paper awaiting students’ handwritten names on sticky notes. These serve as a visual



CAFE bulletin board headings are followed by definitions.

These strategy cards were filled out by students, with blank cards, on the left, ready for more strategies.

reminder of their goals as we settle into workshop routines. Below the blank rectangular sheet for goals is another, larger blank area that students will fill collaboratively throughout the year as we teach and they master new skills and strategies under each of the four headings. Next to the board is a small holder with blank multicolored, lined cards (3 by 9 inches), which we have ready for writing out each strategy and adding to the board throughout the year.



First Day: First Read-Aloud; Whole-Group Strategy Lesson One

On the first day of school, after greetings, we bring students together on the floor for our first read-aloud and lesson.

We don't talk about the CAFE board, and there is already so much that is new for children to explore and discover in the classroom that few of them notice or say anything about it. For students who have never been exposed to CAFE, we begin with a read-aloud of a picture book to teach the first strategy, Check for Understanding. This is always the first strategy we teach to all grade levels, because everything we do in reading is anchored to comprehension and monitoring the making of meaning while reading.

We launch the lesson with these words: "Girls and boys, as I read aloud to you today, I'm going to model how readers use a very important comprehension strategy, called Check for Understanding. Every book is written because the author has something they want to tell us. Sometimes it is to understand something or learn something new, or it may be to tell us a story. The secret to this strategy is remembering to think about what the author is telling us when we read and to stop often to check for understanding, which means we want to be sure we are understanding what we read."



Great First-Day Read-Alouds for Teaching Introductory Strategies

The great thing about books with short and fairly simple text is that they really help us keep our focus lesson concise. We want the text, though brief, to be a great read-aloud that captures the interest of our youngest learners. These titles often meet that need.

Title	Author
<i>Ape in a Cape; An Alphabet of Odd Animals</i>	Fritz Eichenberg
<i>Bark George</i>	Jules Feiffer
<i>Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus</i>	Mo Willems
<i>Good Night, Gorilla</i>	Peggy Rathmann
<i>How to Be</i>	Lisa Brown
<i>I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean</i>	Kevin Sherry
<i>Kitten's First Full Moon</i>	Kevin Henkes
<i>Monkey and Me</i>	Emily Gravett
<i>My Friend Is Sad</i>	Mo Willems
<i>No, David</i>	David Shannon
<i>The OK Book</i>	Amy Drouse Rosenthal
<i>Tomorrow's Alphabet</i>	George Shannon
<i>What Will Fat Cat Sit On?</i>	Jan Thomas

Picture books are a great source for modeling strategies, and we use them with all students, both primary and intermediate. Any titles in your own classroom library would work for CAFE lessons. The following are some of our favorites.

Title	Author
<i>An Egg Is Quiet</i>	Dianna Aston
<i>Bad Kitty</i>	Nick Bruel
<i>Beatrice Doesn't Want To</i>	Laura Numeroff
<i>Bertie Was a Watchdog</i>	Rick Walton
<i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i>	Natasha Anastasia Tarpley
<i>Chester</i>	Melanie Watt
<i>Cook-A-Doodle-Do!</i>	Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummell
<i>Duck & Goose</i>	Tad Hills
<i>Elizabeth's Doll</i>	Stephanie Stuve Bodeen
<i>Four Feet, Two Sandals</i>	Karen Lynn Williams

<i>Fox in Love</i>	Edward Marshall
<i>Froggy Gets Dressed</i>	Jonathan London
<i>The Garden of Abdul Gasazi</i>	Chris Van Allsburg
<i>How I Became a Pirate</i>	Melinda Long
<i>I Wanna Iguana</i>	Karen Kaufman Orloff
<i>Ish</i>	Peter Reynolds
<i>Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale</i>	Mo Willems
<i>Leonardo, the Terrible Monster</i>	Mo Willems
<i>Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains</i>	Barbara Knutson
<i>Mary Smith</i>	Andrea U'Ren
<i>Mr. Peabody's Apples **</i>	Madonna and Loren Long
<i>Mudball</i>	Matt Tavares
<i>Music for Alice **</i>	Allen Say
<i>My Dog Is as Smelly as Dirty Socks; and Other Funny Family Portraits</i>	Hanoch Piven
<i>My Lucky Day</i>	Keiko Kasza
<i>My Name Is Yoon</i>	Helen Recorvits and Gabi Swiatkowska
<i>Once upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude</i>	Kevin O'Malley, Carol Heyer, and Scott Goto
<i>Piper</i>	Emma Chichester Clark
<i>Precious and the Boo Hag</i>	Patricia C. McKissack and Onawumi Jean Moss
<i>Superhero ABC</i>	Bob McLeod
<i>Taking a Bath with the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy</i>	Scott Menchin
<i>Tops & Bottoms</i>	Janet Stevens
<i>What Do You Do with a Tail Like This?</i>	Robin Page and Steve Jenkins

***Content and/or length makes it more suitable for intermediate students.*

With every age group, we try to read aloud at least one picture book and a portion of an ongoing chapter book each day. These books provide the perfect venue for introducing and modeling strategies with both shorter and longer texts.

We select a picture book with five to eight lines of text on each page, beautiful illustrations, and a great story line. After reading a page or two, we stop and tell the students, “Before I go any further, I need to use my comprehension strategy and stop and check for understanding. I don’t want to keep reading if I don’t know what is going on in the story.” When we model Check for Understanding, we stop every few pages and talk aloud, explaining the sense we are making of the text. Other times we model that we can’t remember what we read, or that it doesn’t make sense. We believe it is just as important to model what we do when our understanding breaks down.

“Boys and girls, did you notice that when I stopped to check for understanding, I didn’t understand what was happening in the story? I can’t continue to keep reading if I don’t know what the author was just trying to tell me or I won’t understand the rest of the story. So when I don’t understand what I am reading, here is what I do: I back up and reread.” We continue with this type of modeling through the whole book.

At the end of the book, we pull out a blank strategy card from the holder next to the CAFE board. “Boys and girls, I just modeled for you one of the most important strategies readers use. Does anyone remember what words I used to describe this strategy?” Students call out “Check for Understanding,” or we share the words with them. We write the words on the strategy card in front of the students, and post them under Comprehension. This is the first strategy we post every year, because it is the most important one for most readers.

We then introduce the CAFE Menu board to them. “This is the board we’ll use all year to remind you of the reading strategies that all readers use. We put strategies up on this board so that you can look at and try many different strategies as you read. It’s a menu. How many of you have ever been to a restaurant? They hand you a menu, or you look up above the counter to see all the choices of the things you can eat.”

Most students have experience with menus, even if it’s just from a fast-food restaurant. We explain, “When you’re picking out food from a restaurant menu, you make choices depending on what sounds tasty to eat, and what will be healthy for you. When you are reading, you choose different strategies to understand different types of books. If you’re reading your favorite picture book, you might use certain strategies. If you’re reading magazines or newspapers, you might have other

ways of making sense of what you're reading. If you're reading on the Internet or gathering information on the computer, other strategies might be more effective.”

Depending on the age of the students, we adjust our language to the kinds of texts they are most likely to see and use daily.

At this point, we've introduced only one comprehension strategy. That is plenty for the first book we've read aloud and for the lesson to introduce CAFE. We will reinforce and refer to this Check for Understanding strategy repeatedly through the first days and weeks of school. We do not introduce or explain the other headings on the board at this time—it would be too much for students to observe, and they wouldn't have any concrete experiences of watching us model or discussing a book linked to the heading to anchor their learning.

The first days of school are a challenge, no matter the age of the students. After a summer at home, few have the stamina for extended reading and writing on their own. Many routines need to be introduced. After all these years, we still find the first day of school a little overwhelming, too! Because of this, we often read three or four picture books the first day of school to ease students into routines and build community. These first-day read-alouds are the perfect opportunity to reinforce Check for Understanding, as well as to introduce a couple more strategies to add to the board. We even physically touch the Check for Understanding card as we mention the strategy again on the first day, or during the first weeks of school, so it becomes anchored in the students' minds.

First Day: Second Read-Aloud; Whole-Group Strategy Lesson Two

After this first read-aloud, we move into establishing the Daily Five routines for independent work in our classroom. If you aren't using Daily Five, this is probably when you will introduce other routines and expectations for students. After students have had some time to work independently (however briefly) and explore the room a bit, we bring them back for another read-aloud and explanation of a second strategy.

This second strategy will go under a different heading on the board, so we choose something that fits under Accuracy, Fluency, or Expand Vocabulary. Which strategy you choose to introduce depends on the group of students and their needs. However, we have found in our years of working with the CAFE Menu and its strategies that we typically introduce the same ones the first few days of school.

“Boys and girls, I have a wonderful book I am going to read to you. As I read this, I am going to model again the comprehension strategy Check for Understanding.” We point again to this strategy card on the CAFE Menu. “Remember, *comprehension* means ‘I understand what I read.’”

We begin reading the book aloud, once again stopping often to check for understanding, each time pointing to that strategy card on our CAFE Menu so we anchor the modeling and conversation about this strategy to the visual organizer. In previous years, we would post many beautiful displays on our walls at the start of the year, never to refer to them again. We hoped students would look at the walls and use the information as they were reading and writing—but not surprisingly, with no anchor in experience or personal background knowledge, these lovely displays were just colorful wallpaper for students that might as well have been written in Sanskrit.

We now know that students will not refer to the walls if we aren’t constantly referring to them ourselves—not only pointing to or reading off the walls but actually moving our hands to the information that is needed.

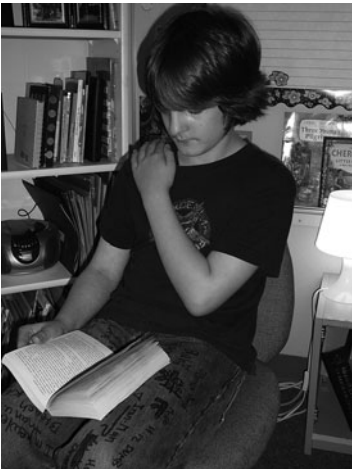
We often teach Cross Checking under the Accuracy heading as the second strategy on the second day of school.

“Boys and girls, I have already modeled a strategy readers use when they are trying to comprehend, or understand, what they read. While I read this book, I will continue to show you how readers use that strategy, but I am also going to introduce you to another very important strategy that all readers use, even adults. This next strategy is used when you are trying to read the words of a book. It is called Cross Checking and fits right here under Accuracy on our CAFE Menu. *Accuracy* means ‘I can read the words.’”

We begin reading the book, modeling the strategy previously introduced. At one point in the story, we will come to a word we don’t know and say, “I’m not sure what this word is. I think I’ll try Cross Checking. Perhaps that strategy will help me read the word.” *Cross Checking* means I need to try reading the word and then ask myself three questions: 1) “Does what I just read look right; do the letters and/or pictures match what I am saying?” (We take one arm and cross it over our body so our hand is on the opposite shoulder.); 2) “Does it sound right?” (We take the other hand and cross it over our body to the opposite shoulder so that we have a cross in front of us.); and 3) “Does it make sense?” (both arms drop down to our sides).

“Let me try it out.” We read the difficult word, thinking out loud as we model how to cross-check. We make the hand motions as well.

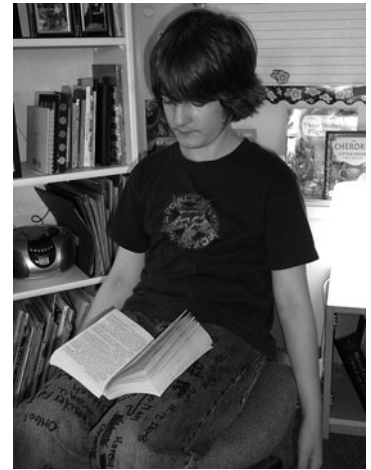
As we continue to read, we can also model this strategy by reading a word incorrectly and not stopping. Instead, we read on to the end of the



Cross Checking: “Does it look right?”



“Does it sound right?”



“Does it make sense?”

sentence, where we stop and say, “Hey, something didn’t make sense. I’m going to read it again and see if I can figure out which word I missed.”

We back up and read the sentence again, this time taking note of which word is causing problems. We repeat the same directions as above to help us figure out the incorrect word.

At the end of the story, we review. “Boys and girls, I just modeled again the comprehension strategy of Check for Understanding.” (Point it out on the CAFE board.) “You also saw a brand new strategy under Accuracy, called Cross Checking. Remember that *accuracy* means ‘I can read the words.’”

We then take out a blank strategy card, write down “Cross Checking—Do the pictures and/or words look right, sound right, and make sense?” and add it to the CAFE Menu. “Wow, we have two strategy cards up on our CAFE Menu. We’ll keep using these strategies all year long.”

First Day: Third Read-Aloud; Whole-Group Strategy Lesson Three

Because it’s the first day and routines for independent work aren’t fully in place yet, there is usually time for a third picture book at some point during the morning or afternoon. We typically introduce Tune In to Interesting Words, under the heading Expand Vocabulary next.

“Girls and boys, today I’m excited to introduce you to another one of our CAFE Menu items, Expand Vocabulary. *Expand Vocabulary* means ‘to know, find, and use interesting words.’ We want to learn more and more words so we can read them and know what they mean as well as use them in our reading and speaking. We are going to learn many interesting words this year. I can hardly wait! Today as I am reading this book, I am going to be watching for interesting words and really tune in to them, which means ‘to pay attention to them.’”

For this strategy lesson, we choose excellent children’s literature to read to students so that there are always interesting words to model tuning in to. As we read the picture book, we stop once or twice in the story, pausing to remark or comment on a word that strikes us as particularly interesting. It might sound something like this: “Did you hear the word I read? I love that word! It sounds so interesting and feels delightful as I say it. Aren’t words wonderful? Tuning in to interesting words is a great strategy for expanding our vocabulary. As we grow as readers, we want to learn many new words to expand our vocabularies.”

We find that our enthusiasm and excitement for finding and taking delight in interesting words is contagious. At this moment, we’re not as concerned about defining the words with students as we are about getting them to tune in to interesting language. This strategy will help them pull up and pause when they don’t understand an exotic word, to check for understanding. It will also help them ferret out new words they can use during writing workshop.

While we are reading this third book, we continue to model the other strategies previously introduced: Check for Understanding and Cross Checking. Each time we model these strategies, we stop, reach over, and touch the corresponding cards on the CAFE Menu board. At the completion of the read-aloud, once again we take another blank strategy card and write, “Tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in speaking and writing” on it. We post it under the Expand Vocabulary section of the board.

“Boys and girls, we have another strategy up on our CAFE Menu. It is so exciting! I just modeled for you the Expand Vocabulary strategy of Tune In to Interesting Words. It is a wonderful strategy for expanding your vocabulary, and all it takes is paying attention to words as you read! Today we have added three brand-new strategy cards to our CAFE Menu.”

We then go back and review the three strategies added to the CAFE board, each time touching the cards as we talk about the strategies and the books we used to introduce them.

Second Day: Whole-Group Strategy Lesson One

Another strategy that we find is crucial to teach within the first day or two of school is Back Up and Reread.

“Boys and girls, I am going to teach you another comprehension strategy. It is called *Back Up and Reread*. You might already know this strategy. Let me show you how I use it when I am reading. When I was reading to you and I got to the end of this section, I used the Comprehension strategy Check for Understanding. I couldn’t remember what I’d read, so now I’m going to turn back to the beginning of this section and reread it. The secret to making this strategy work is that I have to really pay attention to what I am reading. Sometimes I need to slow down and back up to read it more slowly so I can really think about the meaning.” We reread the section again, this time more slowly while enunciating the words clearly.

“Class, I just reread the section. Now I will try my other strategy of Check for Understanding to see if backing up and rereading helped me understand what I read. Let’s see, I just read that the friends were having lunch and were going to spend the night at Kelsey’s house. Wow, Back Up and Reread helped me remember what I just read.

“Think about it: I just used two of the strategies together to help me remember my reading. I started with Check for Understanding. When I couldn’t remember what I’d read, I backed up and reread the section and then checked for understanding again, and I could remember what was happening in the story.”

At this time, we reach over and grab a blank strategy card and write “Back Up and Reread” on the card.

“Boys and girls, I am going to add this strategy to our CAFE Menu right here under Comprehension. When you are reading today and you don’t remember what you read, try the strategy of Back Up and Reread and see if it will work for you.”

Though all the strategies are important, these four are ones we will refer to over and over in whole-class, small-group, and individual-conference settings. We want them introduced within the first day or two of the school year.

With each read-aloud and whole-class lesson, we’re continuing to review and model the strategies Check for Understanding, Tune In to Interesting Words, Back Up and Reread, and Cross Checking. We keep reinforcing the menu metaphor by explaining that it’s just like a menu at a restaurant: you don’t normally order just one thing. You might order a main course and a dessert or an appetizer and a beverage. We explain that

readers do the same thing as they read. They don't use just one strategy but often try out two or three when they get confused or struggle to make sense of a text until they find the one or two that work for them.

We focus on those four strategies for at least a few days, repeating them and modeling them in our first read-alouds, constantly going back and anchoring students to the CAFE Menu board as we read. We don't want to introduce too many strategies too quickly, because as you all know, we have so many other things that need our attention in the first few days of school. Even with students who have experience with the CAFE Menu, we reteach and reinforce some of these core strategies during the first few days of school.

From Whole-Class Lessons to Individual Conferences: Assessment to Instruction

After the first few days, our room is settling into a predictable routine. As a class we are learning strategies from the CAFE Menu, the kids are starting to build stamina through Daily Five, and at the same time we begin meeting with students individually to assess their reading strengths and help them declare their goals. We call this process Assessment to Instruction (see Figure 3.2).

We use seven steps to guide us from assessing a student to knowing the type of instruction they will need.

Step 1: Assess Individual Student

When we meet one-on-one with students, we administer a running record, a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or Individualized Reading

Figure 3.2
Assessment to
Instruction



Assessment to Instruction

1. Assess individual student.
2. Discuss findings with student.
3. Set goal and identify strategies with student.
4. Student declares goal on menu and in notebook.
5. Teacher fills out individual Reading Conference form.
6. Teacher fills out Strategy Groups form.
7. Instruction.

Joan assesses Inna.



Inventory (IRI), check for concepts of print for emergent readers, and do a fluency check for more advanced readers.

But regardless of the assessment you use, you can look for the same things we look for. We are trying to figure out each child's strengths as a reader, and their greatest area of need.

Step 2: Discuss Findings with Student

As we assess the children individually, they already have some background knowledge of what the CAFE Menu is and why we will be using it this year. This background knowledge may come from the students' previous experiences with the CAFE Menu, or from our work the first days of school on whole-group focus lessons and starting to build the CAFE Menu board together.

After assessing a child, we begin the discussion of what we learned from the assessment with "Tell me about yourself as a reader."

Students who have never answered this question may look at you like a deer caught in the headlights. They might say, "I like to read" or "I don't like to read," and little else.

“Tell me about yourself as a reader.”



At that point, we usually say, “Let me tell you what I noticed about you as a reader.”

“Let me tell you what I noticed about you as a reader.”



If they exhibit few skills or reading behaviors because they are very young, we can always compliment them on being good at listening to stories. With children who have more skills or experience, we might say, “I notice that you can read all the words correctly” to highlight their accuracy, or “I notice you can read accurately and with expression” to praise their fluency. Then, in front of the child, we write what we have noted as their strength in our Pensieve, under the Strengths heading on the conferring sheet for that child. Just as the class will build the CAFE Menu board together, piece by piece, we will build our notes on individual children with them, so that over time they will assume responsibility for their goals and learning.

You may notice that when we talk to children in individual conferences, the language we use matches the phrasing that defines terms like *Accuracy* and *Fluency* on the CAFE Menu. Even in our first conference with a child, we are using the language on the menu, so that it becomes the common language our classroom community uses to talk about everyone’s strengths and needs as readers.

Step 3: Set Goal and Identify Strategies with Student

Following the brief conversation regarding each child’s strengths comes honest dialogue about goals: “One of the areas I am going to help you with to become a better reader this year is . . .” And then we fill in one of the four headings (Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expand Vocabulary).


For example, if a child reads fluently but doesn’t show much understanding of what he or she has read, we might say, “I noticed you read smoothly and with expression. One of the things that will help you become a better reader this year is to understand more of what you are reading. So your goal will be comprehension.”

We then turn to that child’s section in the Pensieve, which includes a copy of the CAFE Menu (Figure 3.3) and a goal sheet. We look together with the student at the list of strategies on the CAFE Menu under Comprehension and decide together on a next step.

We know that if students are struggling with comprehension, they may need *all* of the many strategies listed under that heading; however, when goal setting, we concentrate on only one or two strategies at a time in our conferences.

At this point, some of you are reading this and hoping we’ll tell you *exactly* what strategy to pick for readers at that moment. As we confer

Figure 3.3 CAFE Menu

 The Literacy CAFE Menu			
<p>Comprehension I understand what I read</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Check for understanding Back up and reread Monitor and fix up Retell the story Use prior knowledge to connect with text Make a picture or mental image Ask questions throughout the reading process Predict what will happen; use text to confirm Infer and support with evidence Use text features (titles, headings, captions, graphic features) Summarize text; include sequence of main events Use main idea and supporting details to determine importance Determine and analyze author's purpose and support with text Recognize literacy elements (genre, plot, character, setting, problem/resolution, theme) Recognize and explain cause-and-effect relationships Compare and contrast within and between text</p>	<p>Accuracy I can read the words</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Cross checking . . . Do the pictures and/or words look right? Do they sound right? Do they make sense? Use the pictures . . . Do the words and pictures match? Use beginning and ending sounds Blend sounds; stretch and reread Flip the sound Chunk letters and sounds together Skip the word, then come back Trade a word/guess a word that makes sense</p>	<p>Fluency I can read accurately, with expression, and understand what I read</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Voracious reading Read appropriate-level texts that are a good fit Reread text Practice common sight words and high-frequency words Adjust and apply different reading rates to match text Use punctuation to enhance phrasing and prosody (end marks, commas, etc.)</p>	<p>Expand Vocabulary I know, find, and use interesting words</p> <p><i>Strategies</i> Voracious reading Tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in speaking and writing Use pictures, illustrations, and diagrams Use word parts to determine the meaning of words (prefixes, suffixes, origins, abbreviations, etc.) Use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning Ask someone to define the word for you Use dictionaries, thesauruses, and glossaries as tools</p>
<p>Behaviors That Support Reading Get started right away Stay in one place Work quietly Read the whole time Increase stamina Select and read good-fit books</p>			

with students, how we wish for someone standing over our shoulder to do exactly that for us! The truth is there are many right strategies you can choose as you confer with children. If you've completed assessments, you will have some sense of what they are struggling with and what they might need.

The good news is that you don't have to make the perfect choice, or even the best choice, every time you confer. Why do we teachers put that much pressure on ourselves when teaching is such a complex art and science?

We choose a strategy for and with the children based on our best sense at the moment of what they need. Since we will check on their success with the strategy in our next conference, we can always adjust then, if necessary. If the strategy wasn't the right one for the student (perhaps it was too difficult, or it turned out to be one they already mastered), we figure that out together and pick a new strategy. Even if we were completely off-base, we and the student have learned something about his or her reading, and we can often learn from that error to improve our conferences with other students.

The point is to pick a strategy, give it a go, and then make sure we check back in to see if it is moving the child forward as a reader. For a look at some sample needs of our students and possible strategies, see *From Assessment to Conferencing: Sample Needs and Strategies* in the appendix.

Here is another example of how it works. If we're working with a child who reads fluently but lacks some basic comprehension skills (a very common issue with our English language learner [ELL] classrooms), we might start with the Check for Understanding strategy. We introduce the strategy to the student by saying, "I think the strategy that might help you right now is Check for Understanding." Our language is explicit: "Your goal is going to be comprehension." Under the goal heading on the conferring sheet in the child's section of the Pensieve, we write "comprehension" in front of the child. We write the strategy Check for Understanding there as well.

Step 4: Student Declares Goal on Menu

The student takes a sticky note from the small basket we bring to conferences. (The notes are different colors and sizes, so that students can more easily pick out their writing on the CAFE Menu board.)

We have students write their names on sticky notes and place them under the goal heading Comprehension on the CAFE Menu board.

With older students, we also have them take out their reader's notebook or three-ring binder and have them mark their goal on their personal CAFE Menu with a highlighter and the date.

"Let's write your name on this sticky note."



Inna declares her goal by posting her name under the Comprehension heading on the CAFE Menu board.



Figure 3.4
Reading
Conference form

Reading Conference		
Strengths Accuracy and Fluency		Student Inna
Goals and Strategies Comprehension		Check for Understanding
Date Touch Point	Observation and Instruction	Next Steps to Meet Goal
Date 1-8	Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon Sounds beautiful—No comprehension Teach—Model Check for Understanding	1. Think while reading 2. Stop at ends of paragraphs 3. Practice “I just read . . . Who, what Meet tomorrow
Date 1-9	Amber Brown • Stopped at end of paragraph • Who Amber • Couldn’t answer! • Went back to sentence level and reviewed who, what.	1. Stop and think while reading 2. Who . . . what . . . at end of each paragraph Meet tomorrow
Date 1-10	Amber Brown Difficult to remember Brought picture book <i>The Incredible Adventures</i> to help support meaning.	1. Read picture book 2. Read to Someone and practice ✓ for Understanding Tomorrow
Date 1-11	Reread <i>Incredible Adventures</i> . . . was able to ✓ for understanding at end of page Partner reading is helping Keep this up!	1. Read another picture book 2. Read to Someone, ✓ for Understanding Meet tomorrow
Date 1-12	Read Amber Brown 2nd day she is getting it even with chapter book Practice	1. Read Amber Brown 2. Read to Someone and ✓ for Understanding Meet every other day
Date 1-15	Amber Brown Able to ✓ for Under. by paragraph She said Read to Someone is helpful.	1. Amber Brown 2. Read to Someone 3. Sticky note 4. Begin writing in journal 2 examples of ✓ for Understanding Meet 2 day

Step 5: Teacher Fills Out Individual Reading Conference Form

While the child is placing his or her sticky note on the menu, we flip to the child’s individual Reading Conference form (Figure 3.4). At the top of the form, we write the child’s name, strengths, and goals. This form will help us keep track of our individual conferences and coaching sessions with each child.

Step 6: Teacher Fills Out Strategy Groups Form

After filling out the individual conferring sheet, we turn to the Strategy Groups section of our Pensieve. We ask ourselves, Is there anyone else we have assessed who needs this same goal and strategy? If there isn’t, we write down “Goal: Comprehension” and

Strategy Groups and Instruction					
Goal	Fluency	Strategy	Reread Text	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-17	Model—Sel Silverstein poem—Practice as a group			Katie	3
1-19	Review poem—Review strategy—practice				
1-23	Check group for good-fit books—students share reading their own stories.			Colin	4
1-25	Bring in poetry books, each choose and practice			Zach	3, 3
1-29	Partner Read and practice				
1-31	Most are getting this—make sure they have good-fit books			Josh	4, 4, 4
2-2	Students state their purpose for using this strategy				
Goal	Accuracy	Strategy	Use Beginning and Ending Sounds	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-15	Use Jack and Jill Nursery Rhyme—recite rhyme together—frame the word j-a-c-k. Look at beginning and ending sounds, do the same with Jill.			Nadjae	
1-16	Review beginning and ending sounds. Review Jack & Jill. Point and choose <i>bill</i> to frame and stretch each sound. Use leveled books with 1 sentence on each page—read and frame.			Haley	
1-17	Use Humpty Dumpty—recite poem—frame 2 words read together focusing on beginning and ending sounds. Review books from yesterday. Choral read. Choose 2 words to focus on <i>beg. and end.</i>			Colin	
				Donita	
Goal	Vocabulary	Strategy	Tune In to Interesting Words	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-10	Introduce word collectors—purpose—how to use			Brandon	
1-17	Add 2 words a day from their reading				
1-17	Review word collectors—what do your words mean—how do you figure out the meaning			Ikman	
1-24	May need to add Use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning—review each word collector			Samuel	
2-7	Started layering on Use prior knowledge			Sandy	

Strategy Groups and Instruction					
Goal	Comprehension	Strategy	Check for Understanding	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-10	Bring read-aloud to group—Model from today's readings, all practice			Serilya	
1-11	Each practice in own book			Inna	3
1-12	I will call on each one during read-aloud to practice—How did it go?			Sandy	3, 4, 4
1-16	When do you use this strategy? Each share with group—give examples in own story			Juan	3
1-18	Partner group—practice with own stories with other person checking for understanding				
Goal	Accuracy	Strategy	Flip the Sounds	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-10	Whiteboard—Review long and short "a"—practice flipping			Jaeger	
1-11	Whiteboard—Review flipping sounds with "a"				
1-12	Whiteboard—Review long and short "i"—flip "i" and "a" words			Amarda	4, 4, 4
1-15	Whiteboard—Review "a" and "i" sounds find in own books				
1-16	Whiteboard—Review "o" sounds—flip each			Josh	
1-17	Whiteboard—Review a, i, o—flip and find in own books				
1-18	" —Review "e" sounds—flip each—practice			Haley	
1-19	" —Review a, e, i, o flip and find in books			Colin	3, 4
Goal	Comprehension	Strategy	Summarize Text; Include Sequence of Main Events	Names	Touch Points
Date	Lesson				
1-12	Define summary—model one verbally using the class read-aloud			Devon	
1-18	Sandy joined—review summarize, students share their own interpretation. I write in front of the group a summary from our read-aloud. Adding critical elements.			Brandon	
1-24	Partnered—each child tells the other a summary of their own book so far—in 4-5 sentences. Listen for main elements—Repeat back. Student writes summary from their own story—bring it back next time.			Simon	
				Sandy	

Figure 3.5 Sample Strategy Groups form

“Strategy: Check for Understanding” on the Strategy Groups form (see Figure 3.5) and start a list of students who would also benefit from this group. If this is not the first child with this goal and strategy, we merely add his or her name to the box labeled with this goal and strategy. This helps us keep track of our work with all our small groups.

Once children return from posting their names on the CAFE Menu bulletin board, we add the newly filled-out form to the Pensieve. We show students their section of the Pensieve and let them know we will be working together on their goals and strategies each time we meet with them and that this form will help us keep track of their learning. Before they leave us, we ask them to articulate their goals yet again. We are never surprised when students are unable to do this, even though they have just placed their names on the bulletin board. It may take a few times of working with and hearing their goals before they can internalize them.

Step 7: Instruction

This process is repeated with all students as we confer and set goals with them. Once we assess each child, we are ready to instruct, with the instruc-

tion truly being guided by each child's individual assessment. (For many examples of other goal-setting conferences and a more detailed explanation of the process, see Chapter 4, "Conferring with Children.")

Kids who have some background experience with the CAFE Menu may be able to articulate what they do well and sometimes what they need to work on in these first conferences. The tone and style of conferences with these more experienced CAFE-ers is a little different during the first week of school.

For example, Sebastian, who is eight years old and reads at about a fifth-grade reading level, said to Gail at his first conference of the year, "I'm really good at fluency." It was true, because he'd worked hard on fluency goals at the end of the previous school year.

Then he said, "But when I read, sometimes it doesn't make sense." Sebastian easily remembered the previous year's goals and successes, but it was hard for him to explain his needs as a reader beyond knowing he couldn't understand everything he was reading. Gail replied, "I noticed that same thing." We observed during the assessment that because he was so focused on fluency, he would read rapidly, dropping the final syllables of some words or making substitutions that made no sense just to keep up a rapid pace.

We explained that his goal would be accuracy, with Cross Checking as a strategy. What he was reading wasn't matching the words, and it wasn't making sense. Because Sebastian knew how the CAFE Menu worked, he independently wrote down his name on a sticky note and added it to the board under Accuracy.

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