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# I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies For Adolescent Readers



## Synopsis

*I Read It, but I Don't Get It* is a practical, engaging account of how teachers can help adolescents develop new reading comprehension skills. Cris Tovani is an accomplished teacher and staff developer who writes with verve and humor about the challenges of working with students at all levels of achievement; from those who have mastered the art of 'fake reading' to college-bound juniors and seniors who struggle with the different demands of content-area textbooks and novels. Enter Cris' classroom, a place where students are continually learning new strategies for tackling difficult text. You will be taken step-by-step through practical, theory-based reading instruction that can be adapted for use in any subject area. The book features: anecdotes in each chapter about real kids with real universal problems. You will identify with these adolescents and will see how these problems can be solved; a thoughtful explanation of current theories of comprehension instruction and how they might be adapted for use with adolescents; a What Works section in each of the last seven chapters that offers simple ideas you can immediately employ in your classroom. The suggestions can be used in a variety of content areas and grade levels (6-12); teaching tips and ideas that benefit struggling readers as well as proficient and advanced readers; appendixes with reproducible materials that you can use in your classroom, including coding sheets, double entry diaries, and comprehension constructors. In a time when students need increasingly sophisticated reading skills, this book will provide support for teachers who want to incorporate comprehension instruction into their daily lesson plans without sacrificing content knowledge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is full of step-by-step approaches that can be adapted for use in any subject area. - Arizona Reading Journal You virtually watch Tovani roll up her sleeves and engage students in demanding text. --Voices from the Middle This easily read and practical book gives teaching examples and ideas for the regular classroom teacher as well as for the reading specialist. --Speaking of Reading You will be taken step-by-step through practical, theory-based reading instruction that can be adapted for use in any subject area. A resource for any teacher or adult teaching students with comprehension difficulties, regardless of subject matter. 5 out of 5 stars. --Reading for Sanity blog

Cris Tovani taught first grade to seniors for 31 years. Her entire career has been spent trying to figure out the “knowing-doing” gap. Researchers tell teachers what they should be doing but actually doing it with 125+ students is a whole new ball game. Throughout her career, Cris has tried to take reading and writing research and apply it to all levels of learners. She loves sharing her success and failures with colleagues around the world so they too, can better serve students. Cris most recently worked with secondary English language learners from a high poverty district in Colorado that was in its fourth year of turnaround. Currently, Cris is facilitating literacy labs in several different states to promote collaboration among colleagues. In addition, she has the pleasure of working with administrators to build their background knowledge on best practices so they are able to give teachers useful feedback about instruction. Cris is an internationally known consultant focusing on issues of reading, content comprehension and assessment in secondary classrooms. She has been an adjunct professor and is the author of four books: *I Read it but I Don't Get It*, *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?*, *So, What do They Really Know?* and *No More Telling as Teaching: Less Lecture, More Engaged Learning*.

I don't know how I have taught reading to high school students without discovering this book before. It speaks to my particular passion - teaching struggling older students to read, understand what they read and enjoy what they read. I am writing and highlighting all over the pages of the book and have sticky notes marking many pages. I am on Spring Break and can hardly wait to get back and try some of the ideas with my most challenging class. It is absolutely never too late. I hate hearing teachers, especially special educators or reading teachers, say that students have to learn by third

grade or they will never learn to read. That is a self-fulfilling prophecy that damages our students and creates new weapons for our legislators to use against teachers and students.

Literacy is very important in all subjects. If students don't understand what they're reading it's up to teachers to help provide tools that will help them. Tovani does a great job reaching to non English content teachers and gives great examples of how we can all help our students. My favorite take-away from this book is that reading comprehension becomes more difficult at the secondary level-that's when students need most help- ironically that's where a lot of teachers may have the "they can sink or swim" attitude. Tovani provides us with life savers in this easy to read and relate to book.

I really like Chris Tovani's works; they help me focus when I have the need to get back to basics. Those of us who grew up being excellent readers might often wonder about those who struggle to read and search for ways to help them comprehend. Her books assist in specific, targeted advice to help teachers home in on ways to allow readers to connect with the written word.

I love this book. The strategies are incredible and have helped my students. The only issue I have is that the strategies in the book are geared towards a full reading class. I teach English, my school doesn't offer a reading class for students who aren't English Language Learners. My students need to learn how to read more effectively, and it would be nice if there were more classroom tips that could be embedded in other curriculum. Most of these chapters are structured around a full lesson that builds on another.

In this book, Chris Tovani invites you into one of her high school reading workshop classes. This reading workshop class is filled with students who are fluent readers, but who are also unable to comprehend what they read. Also, they have not elected to take the course, resulting in a room full of bored expressions and bad attitudes. The book begins at day one, and as you begin to read, you start to really feel sorry for Tovani, wondering how she is ever going to reach these reluctant students and turn them into better readers. But as she takes you through the class, and you read about each of her strategies, she makes it seem almost effortless. Tovani is able to connect with her students, and it is clear that they quickly gain her respect. You also learn that she herself was a "fake reader" until her 30s! I believe that this is a major reason why she is able to teach her students so successfully; she knows exactly what they are going through, and as a result, she is able to show

them what really works. Tovani, a nationally-known reading consultant, continues to teach English and reading at the high school level because of this dedication to helping students. Comprehending what we read really is something that most of us take for granted, and it's a skill that is very difficult to teach. Oftentimes, students who struggle with comprehension will simply read the words on a page and expect the meaning to arrive automatically. Tovani also acknowledges that some students want to make their teachers responsible for their thinking. When they are confused, they think that it is the teacher's job to fix it. Tovani tells us that many times, students don't realize that they actually have the tools to change their reading habits themselves. The trick is to make them think about their reading, and in this book, she provides a variety of ways to do so. This book is divided up into three major sections. In the first part of the book, Tovani talks about "fake" readers, and she discusses some of the strategies they use to fool their teachers and pass their classes. This was eye-opening, to say the least! Tovani herself admits that for book reports, she used to select a very obscure book in the library, copy down what was in the inside flap of the cover, and then hide the book elsewhere in the library so her teacher would never find it! In the second part of the book (essentially the meat of the book), Tovani introduces various reading comprehension strategies, and she lets you take a look at how they work on real students in her reading workshop class. Some of these strategies include: setting a purpose for reading, knowing when you're stuck (and what to do when you are), making connections with unfamiliar subject matter, asking questions of the text, and making inferences. As you read the book, you get a glimpse of how students at first struggle with each of Tovani's lessons, then find success. The last section of the book contains actual tools (worksheets, diaries, etc.) you can provide to your students to aid them in their reading assignments. I would highly recommend this book to any middle or high school teacher in any subject area. It appears that too many of our students are struggling with comprehension, and it is imperative that we do all we can to make them better readers. Unfortunately, most teachers do not have the extra time it takes to teach students how to read well, and a vast amount of material must be covered in middle and high school. Yet, reading is a lifelong activity, and we must give students the tools they need to become better readers, and we need to make them responsible for their own learning. This book shows you how. It was a very quick and easy read, and even if you walk away with one new idea for your classroom, it will be well worth it--for your students and for yourselves.

While this book discusses middle/high students, the concepts were useful for me as a reading teacher.

One of the best books about reading, that I have ever read. I would highly recommend this book to any teacher, future teacher or parent that is interested in learning how to turn readers into super readers. Tovani explains her concepts and strategies in a free flowing and easy to understand manner that make this book a pleasure to read. Referring to the book as a textbook does not do it any justice. Put it in your cart now and buy it, you will not regret it.

This book was an interesting read. Reading it gave some great strategies for teachers to try out with struggling readers and/or students who do not like reading. The book seemed to be a dialogue that Tovani has with the reader about what she has done in the classroom and with her students, more than a book about what one should try in a classroom. I have been able to try a few of the strategies out on students, and they have been helpful!

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