

## FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month



(Developed by Glass, C. & Zygouris-Coe, V., 2005)

### Rationale:

Reciprocal teaching is built on four strategies good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). In order for reciprocal teaching to be effective, certain **instructional foundations** must be in place. Teacher **scaffolding** provides readers the support they need in order to become successful at using all four strategies. Students view the teacher modeling each of the strategies, try the strategies out for themselves in a *supported* environment, and work independently using the strategies to comprehend text. At any time, students can and should receive teacher support, which helps them move through more difficult texts and reading tasks.

Reciprocal teaching was designed as a discussion technique in which **think-alouds** play an integral part. During a think-aloud, the reader talks aloud as they use each of the four strategies. Both teachers and students should conduct think-alouds each time they are engaged in reciprocal teaching lessons (Oczuks, 2003). Thinking-aloud helps students clearly see the steps to creating understanding while reading and the teacher is able to see the reading processes the students is using.

**Metacognition** is an essential component of reciprocal teaching. It is the awareness of one's own thinking processes. Using the reciprocal teaching strategies, students learn to consciously think about, monitor, and reflect on their strategy use. Throughout instruction, students should engage in reflective thinking and answer the question, "How did the reciprocal teaching strategies help me comprehend the text?"

The National Reading Panel (2000) identifies the use of **cooperative learning** as a proven way to successfully teach comprehension. Cooperative learning involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Because reciprocal teaching is intended as a discussion technique, cooperative learning is vital to its use (Oczuks, 2003). Reciprocal teaching builds on the cooperative nature of learning that causes one's reading comprehension to be deepened through social interactions.

### Reciprocal Teaching and Whole-Group Instruction

Whole group instruction can be an effective means in which to introduce and reinforce reciprocal teaching strategies (Oczuks, 2003). Using reciprocal teaching during whole-group instruction strengthens comprehension by:

- Scaffolding student learning through teacher modeling, think-alouds, metacognition, and cooperative learning;
- Modeling and practicing the four strategies as a multiple strategy package;
- Focusing on one reciprocal teaching strategy at a time through the use of mini lessons;
- Guiding students through grade level materials and/or content area materials;
- Creating an environment of community in which all students are expected to participate;
- Setting the expectation that all students will use reciprocal teaching to improve their comprehension (Oczuks, 2003).

### Reciprocal Teaching and Guided Reading Groups

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) refer to guided reading as the heart of the reading program. Guided reading is small-group instruction in which students are organized into flexible groups that change based on regular assessment. The teacher guides students through a text that may be slightly more difficult than the text that students can read on their own.

There are several ways students can be placed into guided reading groups. Students may be placed in a group because they need work on one specific reciprocal strategy. This group can be supported through the use of mini lessons or reading aides such as bookmarks. Students may be grouped based on self-selected reading material. Students may also be grouped based on ability. In these groups, students with the same reading level, based on classroom assessment, are grouped together. Materials are matched to the reading level. Finally, students may be placed in intervention groups. *Intervention occurs in addition to regular reading instruction*, typically 30-40 minutes, three to five times a week.

The goals of reciprocal teaching during guided reading instruction include:

- To model the reciprocal reading strategies and guide students as they use them;
- To guide students to use effective strategies for comprehending text before, during, and after reading;
- To allow all students to benefit from a small-group setting;
- To teach comprehension strategies for texts that the students would not be able to read and understand as easily on their own;
- To expose students to more teacher modeling of reciprocal teaching strategies;
- To group students flexibly based on regular assessment to better meet their needs;
- To guide students through interactive lessons that prepare them for literature circles and other group discussions; and
- To help students to reflect on use of the reciprocal teaching strategies (Oczuks, 2003).

Cooper, Boscheken, & McWilliams (Oczuks, 2003) used the reciprocal teaching method for their intervention model with intermediate students. The intervention model was designed on what was known about effective intervention instruction. The intervention instruction occurred daily for 40 minutes. The instruction was fast-paced and used authentic literature, both expository and narrative text. Finally, the instructional model used the reciprocal teaching strategies and graphic organizers. The following table describes the instructional components of the reading intervention (Cooper, 2005 & Oczuks, 2003).

<b>Component of Instruction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Revisiting</b> (5 minutes)	Students reread, alone or with a partner, previously read books.	This component builds fluency and develops comprehension. It also builds a connection between learning to read and independent reading
<b>Reviewing</b> (5 minutes)	Students summarize previous day's reading using graphic organizers. Also, discuss strategies used.	This component keeps students focused on the same four strategies and develops comprehension.
<b>Rehearsing</b> (10 minutes)	Students preview the text and set a purpose for reading. A graphic organizer is also introduced such as KWL chart.	This component sets a purpose for reading and builds background specifically for the text.
<b>Reading</b> (15 minutes)	Students read silently a chunk of text to verify predictions or answer questions. Following the reading, reciprocal teaching is employed with students and teacher taking turns assuming the role of teacher modeling.	This component develops students' abilities to construct meaning (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Students apply strategies and develop comprehension.
<b>Responding and Reflecting</b> (5 minutes)	Students do one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a written response</li> <li>• Complete graphic organizers</li> <li>• Reflect on strategies</li> <li>• Discuss and share</li> </ul>	This component develops the use of strategies and comprehension.

After 76 days of intervention instruction, the students in the intervention group performed significantly better than the students in the control group on measures of retelling, question answering, and reading comprehension.

### Reciprocal Teaching and Literature Circles

Literature circles provide a unique environment for boosting comprehension with reciprocal teaching strategies. Literature circles provide a natural setting where students can take turns using each of the reciprocal teaching strategies- predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Using reciprocal teaching during literature circles strengthens students' reading comprehension by

- Using a peer collaborative setting and reciprocal teaching strategies;
- Providing opportunities for students to practice the four reciprocal teaching strategies;
- Enhancing reading comprehension in nonfiction or fiction texts; and
- Guiding students in becoming metacognitive and independent in their use of reciprocal teaching strategies (Oczuks, 2003).

**How to Use the Strategy:**

**What does research have to say about strategy instruction?**

The goal of strategy instruction is to help students become self-regulated readers and learners (Almasi, 2003). In order to attain this goal, teachers must help students become knowledgeable about strategies and why they are important for them to use. Teachers must show students how to think metacognitively while they read and how to apply real-world knowledge. Through this type of instruction students should be able to employ strategies independently and flexibly.

Research into comprehension instruction has yielded several key ideas on how comprehension instruction should be taught in the classroom. Duffy (2002), Duke and Pearson (2002), and Williams (2002) all identify the following necessary components for comprehension instruction.

- The first step is direct explanation of the strategy. This entails telling and showing students when and how the strategy should be used. The teacher should explain to students that they will be introduced to four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text – predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

Predicting	Good readers predict before reading the text and while reading the text. When you make a prediction, you make a guess as to the content of the text based on clues the author provides. As you read, you will either confirm or revise your prediction. You might also make other predictions. Model how to predict for students by looking and noting the title, author, cover illustrations (if using a book), and illustrations or graphics within the text. Model for students how to use clues from the text to make predictions. "When I predict, I use what I have read or clues from the illustrations to help me figure out what I will learn or what will happen in the text."
Questioning	Good readers ask questions before reading, during reading, and after reading. Questions are asked of the author or about the content of the reading. Explain to students that asking questions helps the reader monitor and understand their reading. "When I ask a question, I ask something that can be answered as I read or after I finish reading." Model for students how to generate questions. Students can also develop questions based on the text.
Clarifying	When good readers read a word that doesn't make sense or read a confusing part of the text that doesn't makes sense, they stop and clarify. Explain to students what clarifying entails. "When I clarify, I make clear something that was confusing or that I didn't understand. For example, I came to a word I didn't know. I thought to myself, there are a couple of things I could do. First, I could read on and hopefully, the word will make sense to me after reading further. Or I could ask a friend to help me understand this word." At this point students might brainstorm ways they can clarify when the text doesn't make sense to them. Write down and hang up the brainstorming that students do so that they can refer to it later.
Summarizing	After reading a text, good readers are able to recall important points and details from what they have read. Knowledge of text and story structure will help students develop good summaries. Model for students how to identify key ideas and how to put those key ideas together to create a summary. "When I summarize, I tell in my own words the important things I have read."

- Next, the teacher models the strategy through the use of think-alouds. During this step, the students really gets to see what should be going on in their head as they read. Think-alouds make the invisible processes visible to students. Students might be given the task of taking notes while the teacher is modeling. Students can take notes on the language the teacher uses while modeling the strategy or why each strategy was used. As the teacher continues to model, students should begin assuming some of the tasks. Research has shown that both teacher and student use of think-alouds improves reading comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002)
- Next, the teacher and students should collaboratively use the strategies; I do it, you do it, we do it. The teacher must facilitate discussions in which students and/or teachers collaborate to form joint interpretations of text and explicitly discuss the mental processes and cognitive strategies involved in comprehension. Research on collaborative use of strategies indicates that students make significantly higher gains on comprehension subtests than those students who were not involved in collaborate use of the strategy (Williams, 2002).

## Reciprocal Teaching

- The final step of instruction is guided practice with students moving toward independent use of the strategies or what is better known as gradual release of responsibility. Scaffolding is the process of providing teacher support and gradually removing it until students are working independently. Scaffolding includes teacher modeling, student participation, and reflection on strategy use (Oczuks, 2003). During this step, guided reading groups are instituted.

### Ideas for Assessment:

The ideas for assessment mentioned in this section come from Reciprocal Teaching At Work (Ozucks, 2003).

## Informal Measures of Strategy Use

Teachers can assess their students' knowledge of strategies and their metacognition in an informal, one-to-one interview. Ask students to respond verbally or in writing to the following questions.

- Which of the four reciprocal teaching strategies would you like to talk about first?
- Define the strategy.
- Explain how you use the strategy to help you understand what you are reading.

In future lessons, students who have difficulty defining a particular strategy or telling how that strategy helps him or her read can be grouped for mini lessons targeting the particular strategy.

### Assessment Tips for Whole-Group Instruction

- Listen to students who respond during whole-group instruction. Are they effectively using the four reciprocal teaching strategies?
- Provide time for table groups to work cooperatively. Circulate around the room and listen to the students' interactions. If need be, teach the groups using an appropriate mini lesson.
- Have students' pair up to interact and try out the reciprocal teaching strategies. Listen for effective use of the strategies and assist pairs who are having difficulties by modeling a think-aloud using one or all of the strategies.
- You can use a form on which students fill in information on their use of the strategy. This provides a written record to guide future instruction. (See example below.)
- Lead a class discussion on each reciprocal teaching strategy. Ask your students to define each strategy and identify steps involved in using them.

### Assessment Tips for Guided Reading

- Observe your students during reciprocal teaching discussions. Listen closely as they predict, question, clarify, and summarize. You can focus on one student and their use of all 4 strategies or you can focus on one strategy and all the students' use of that strategy.
- Progress monitor student use of the strategy during independent reading of the text.
- Use brief, written responses from students during guided reading. You may have students write predictions, questions, summaries, or ways they clarified words or ideas. You can use a form that students can fill out or you can use sticky notes.

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a blank Reciprocal Teaching worksheet.)



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of an elementary example.)



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a secondary example.)

**Observation Tips for each strategy:**

Over the last two months each of the four strategies has been featured and assessment ideas have been given. Click on the strategy to see the assessment tips given in the previous Reading Strategies of the Month.

**Predicting and Questioning**

**Clarifying and Summarizing**

**Resources:**

**North Central Regional Educational Laboratory - Reciprocal Teaching** - gives a brief overview of reciprocal teaching.

**Project WebSIGHT** - this website provides lesson plans and resources for teachers.

**Reciprocal Teaching: Support for Struggling Older Readers** - An article detailing a secondary teachers use of reciprocal teaching.

**Reciprocal Teaching Bookmarks**

**Just Read Now! Reciprocal Teaching** - provides additional information on reciprocal teaching.

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Last Updated May 25, 2005  
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FOR-PD is a project of the <http://forpd.ucf.edu/index.html> College of Education and administered under a grant from the [Florida Department of Education](#) and [Just Read, Florida!](#)