

Research-Based Practice: Reciprocal Teaching

Reference:

Palinscar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 2, 117–175.

Description: Reciprocal teaching is a method of instruction that teaches cognitive strategies to help students improve their reading comprehension skills. The teacher models four main strategies (predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing) through think-aloud activities and explicit instruction. Gradually the teacher involves the students in the use of the four strategies eventually getting to the place where students are having reciprocal conversations with the teacher and one another as they use the four strategies. The focus is on having students take active roles in their reading comprehension activities as opposed to only having students answer questions generated by the teacher. The four strategies are explained below:

1. **Predicting:** Students make predictions about what a text may be about and what will happen next as they are reading. They should confirm or reject their predictions when they find out more by reading on.
2. **Clarifying:** When students are unsure about the meaning of a word or selection, they ask questions to the teacher and/or peers to clarify.
3. **Questioning:** Students learn how to generate questions related to the text. They can either answer their own questions or the questions generated by peers. There are different types of questions such as:
 - a. **Right There Questions:** These are literal comprehension questions in which the answers are “right there” in the text.
 - b. **Think and Search Questions:** These are inferential questions that require students to think about what they read to make inferences and draw conclusions.
 - c. **On My Own:** These questions require students to connect their own knowledge and experiences to the themes within the text.
 - d. **Author and Me:** These are questions that require students to think from the perspective of the author (e.g. Why do you think the author chose to _____”)
4. **Summarizing:** Students learn how to identify the most important parts and themes from the text and summarize them in sequential order without retelling everything they read.

Note: To enhance the use of reciprocal teaching, teachers should consider using any of the following strategies when implementing the four main strategies:

- Explicit instruction
- Think-alouds
- Modeling/request imitation
- Most-to-least prompting (scaffolding)
- Visual supports
- Self-monitoring
- Positive reinforcement
- Peer-mediated interventions