

RT

RECIPROCAL TEACHING

**Teaching Students Four Basic Comprehension
Strategies**

What is it?

Annemarie Palincsar and Ann Brown developed RT as an instructional procedure designed to enhance students' reading comprehension. It is best described as a dialogue between teacher and students. The term "reciprocal" describes the nature of the interactions: each person acts in response to the other(s). This dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: questioning, summarizing, predicting, and clarifying. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of dialogue leader.

Why use it?

This strategy:

- helps students actively bring meaning to the written word;
- provides opportunities for students to learn to monitor their own learning and thinking; and
- stimulates deeper thinking and understanding.

How to teach it?

Teachers need to keep in mind the following three ideas whenever they want to teach a strategy to independence:

The zone of proximal development:

Will this child or the children in my class be able to gain control of this strategy or parts of this strategy if given assistance?

Palincsar and Brown state that students of different age levels benefit from different amounts and types of RT instruction. Students prior to second grade seem to respond best when RT instruction is provided through read alouds and is always teacher led. From second grade on students can receive RT instruction through teacher led small group instruction, which can lead to student led small group instruction. RT can be used less effectively using whole group instruction.

The gradual release of responsibility:

How will I release the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student?

The easiest way to describe this is by using Jeff Wilhelm's model of show me, help me, let me. First, the teacher models the desired behavior. In this case, the desired behavior is reading an expository text reciprocally. Then, the teacher guides students as they practice the desired behavior, gradually releasing the responsibility for learning to them. Finally, the teacher provides opportunities for the students to try the strategy on their own as he/she observes and evaluates student performance to inform future instruction.

Metacognition:

How do I increase the likelihood that my students will independently use the strategies I teach?

Students need to be explicitly taught the answers to these four questions to increase the likelihood of independent strategy use:

- What is the strategy?
- How do you perform the strategy?
- When would you use the strategy?
- Why would you use the strategy?

The first two are literal and the second two are metacognitive. The answers to all four questions should be explicitly taught at the same time as the strategy is explicitly taught. The answers are taught as think alouds during instruction.

Steps to teaching Reciprocal Teaching?

The first four days are spent explaining to the students what RT is and how to perform the four comprehension strategies. The next 8 days of RT instruction must be consecutive. Thirteen more days must be devoted to RT instruction but they do not need to be consecutive. After 25 days of RT instruction the procedure becomes internalized.

Use the following guide sheets (printed back to back) to help students learn the RT procedure.

You Are the Leader

Choose someone to read

Tell them how much to read

My First question is...

- A "right there" or "search and locate"

My second question is...

- A "author and me" or "on my own"

Does anyone have a question they would like to ask?

My summary is...

Does anyone want to add to my summary?

My prediction is...

Does anyone have a different prediction?

I don't understand... (word, phrase or idea you need clarified)

Does anyone need any words, phrases or ideas clarified?

Choose a new leader

Question and Prompt Stems

Level 1

Right There

On the line

Who is...
What is...
When did...
What does...
Where is...
Define...
Name...
List...

Level 2

Search and Locate

On several lines

Give the reasons why...
How do you make...
How did...
Why does...
Explain...
Compare...
Provide support for...

Level 3

Author and Me

Between the lines

What do you think...
Why...
I wonder...
What if...
Predict and substantiate...

Level 4

On My Own

Beyond the lines

What do you do when...
What can be exciting about...
What do you already know about...
What would you do if...

