



All About Adolescent Literacy

Reciprocal Teaching

What it is...

Reciprocal teaching is a reading strategy that asks students and teachers to share the role of teacher by allowing both to lead the discussion about a given reading. Reciprocal teaching involves four strategies that guide the discussion: predicting, question generating, summarizing and clarifying.

Why it's so great...

Reciprocal teaching is a great way to teach students how to determine important ideas from a reading while discussing vocabulary, developing ideas and questions, and summarizing information. It can be used across several content areas; it works particularly well with textbooks and non-fiction text.

How to use it...

Break the classroom into mixed-ability small groups. Designate one student as the "teacher" within each small group. This student will help keep their small group on task and ensure they move through each of the four steps as they read material that has already been divided it into smaller chunks by you. Next, you will read the first chunk to all the small groups, modeling the following four steps of reciprocal teaching.

1. Prediction
 - a. Ask students to predict what they think the reading may be about. Get them to think about what is going to happen by asking questions like a detective might do.
2. Question as you go
 - a. Remind students to generate questions as they listen and read. Remind them of the three levels of questions:
 - i. Right-There questions (answer in the text)
 - ii. Between-the-lines questions (inference needed)
 - iii. Critical Thought questions (require their opinion)
3. Clarify
 - a. As students listen and read remind them to ask themselves what words and phrases are unclear to them. These clarifications may take the form of the following questions.
 - i. How do you pronounce that?
 - ii. What does the word mean?
 - iii. I think the author is saying...
 - iv. I'm guessing 'pie-in-the-sky' means...
4. Summarize
 - a. Students summarize verbally, within pairs, and then share with their assigned small group or record their summary and read it aloud to their small group.
 - b. Each small group could create a semantic map with major points of significance shared by each group member.

After you have modeled the previous steps, students may continue working in their small groups by silently or orally reading the next sections of the reading while conducting the four-step process.

What its look like...

Download a Reciprocal Teaching [handout](#)

To see examples of reciprocal teaching within specific content areas see:

Fisher, D., and Frey, N. (2004). *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Strategies at Work*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Palincsar, A. S. & Brown, A. (1984). *Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension Monitoring Activities*. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1(2), pp. 117-175.

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