

**Think-aloud**

## Reciprocal Teaching Session

### Small Group Reciprocal Teaching

#### General Planning Format for Sessions

This general session format provides you with a starting point to introduce Reciprocal Teaching (RT) to your class.

#### Materials

Choose a well-structured text for introducing RT and something your students can read independently. An article from a magazine or newspaper, or a short chapter of a book would be suitable. If you select a social studies or science subject, choose an article that will provoke discussion, such as 'saving endangered animals'. Selections should include the types of material a student is expected to read in a variety of curriculum areas. Have a copy of the material for each student.

Narrative text can also be used, with the focus on the elements of story grammar, setting, characters, plot, problem, and solution.

#### Teaching Steps

1. Explain to the group that you are going to demonstrate the four reading strategies (predicting, clarifying, questioning, summarizing).
2. Predict what it is about and explain why you think that.
3. Read the first section of the text out loud so that the students can hear and follow the text. Work through the section, thinking out loud to the group as you go. For example, you may notice something that confirms your prediction or note a word you are not sure of or wonder about something in the text.
4. Provide time for the students to discuss anything they may have been thinking about, or to ask questions or comment on what you were thinking aloud.
5. Have students predict what will come next then read the next section of the text, assigning one student to lead the discussion and outline the thinking through the analysis.
6. Provide time for group discussion using the strategies prediction, clarifying, questioning and summarizing.
7. Move through the remainder of the text in a similar manner, and assign various students to lead sections.
8. Encourage discussion in the group both during and after each student leads a section.
9. Have students reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies used, and how they would apply them in future reading.

#### How might this look in a sample session?

Let's assume that the students have been given an article from the newspaper, which talks about children's use of mobile phones and the connection to brain tumors. The suggestion by the author relates to parents being over indulgent with their children thus adding to this problem.

## Think-aloud

**Model Session: Reciprocal Teaching**

**Science Topic:** *Tumors and the Mobile Phone Revolution*

**Materials:** Newspaper article - Hand out copies of the article to the students.

**Background**

This article looks at the current increase of use of cell phones in teenage children. It links scientific data on the increase in brain tumors in teenage children, with the increasing use of cell phones in the younger population. The author takes on the parent's role as guardian in this issue, and has a view that protecting the interest of children is paramount. Peer group pressure is also a sub issue in the article.

**Model the strategies with the first part of the article**

Read aloud the first part of the article to your students while they follow by reading their own copies. Have them highlight any word or idea they do not understand.

**1. Predicting**

Predict what the article is about, using the heading as a guide. Read the first sentence to confirm or revise your prediction and point out that the first sentence or paragraph in an article often indicates what it will be about.

Continue reading up to a suitable part, then pause and discuss what has been read so far. If it's a short article, you may read all of it.

Confirm or revise your predictions, identifying anything in the text that supports your ideas.

**2. Clarifying**

Model the idea of clarifying by selecting a word or phrase that is important for the total meaning to be clear. Ask questions, such as

*What does .....mean? Is there another word for that?*

*What is a .....?*

*What do you understand by....?*

Model how you figure out the meaning of the word using the context or prior knowledge. Clarifying is important for students who have difficulty comprehending. Many students can read the words, but cannot translate that into meaning. When asked to clarify the text, they see other reasons why the text might be difficult to understand - technical words, new words, difficult concepts. They can be shown how to self-monitor their reading and to take steps that will assist their meaning, such as rereading a section, reading on, asking others, etc.

**3. Questioning**

Model questioning by asking genuine questions that readers might ask themselves, such as

*What is the article about so far?*

*What do we know about...?*

*Why do you think.....?*

*Why did ..... happen?*

*What is the author's point of view?*

Questioning helps students identify information that will help them understand the text. They can then test that understanding through their use of a question and ascertain if their thinking is correct. Questions can also relate to inference, supporting detail and

**Think-aloud**

simple detail and can support students in their self-monitoring as they think through answers, and try other steps like rereading, to assist them find meaning.

**4. Summarizing**

Model how to summarize, explaining why you are selecting some information but not other.

*What is the main idea of this paragraph?*

*What is the article about?*

*What is the most important information?*

Summarizing gives your students the opportunity to integrate the most important information in the text. Summaries can be made across sentences, paragraphs, or the entire article.

Your aim is to assist students to become proficient at making summaries across paragraphs and entire articles.

5. Follow up with the remainder of this article or another similar article for your students to try together. Select someone to be the leader. They will lead the discussion in a similar way to the above sample.

**An Alternative**

As your students become more proficient with the routine, you could vary the roles within the group. Task cards could be issued with a strategy written on them, and the student who has a particular card responds to the text in the manner stated on the card.

**For example**

- Card 1: Make a prediction and support it with information
- Card 2: Clarify something you didn't understand
- Card 3: Clarify the meaning of a word
- Card 4: Ask the writer: Think of a question that you might ask the writer
- Card 5: Ask a deep question
- Card 6: Ask something you are wondering about
- Card 7: Confirm or revise the prediction with evidence
- Card 8: Make a summary of the first paragraph / section.

From: Snowball, Diane. Teaching Comprehension: An interactive professional development course (CD-ROM Level 3-6). NY, AUSSIE Interactive, 2005. Available in Canada from Thomson Nelson.