EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Reciprocal Teaching Tip Sheet

Grade 1 Language and Literacy Project

Updated April 2019

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Comprehension is improved when readers are able to use active strategies to enhance understanding and repair a breakdown in their understanding. Successful use of active processing strategies, such as those in Reciprocal Teaching, have been found to support learners to think about their own comprehension and take steps to better understand texts. (Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

What is Reciprocal Teaching?

Reciprocal Teaching is an evidence-based instructional strategy which helps students develop their reading and comprehension of text (Palinscar & Brown, 1984). While it was originally conceived to be implemented in the higher grades as a student-led activity, reciprocal teaching has proven to be an effective teacher-led reading comprehension strategy in the early grades, that enables the whole class to engage actively in a read-aloud activity. Even young children can use information to make predictions, ask and answer questions, and begin to retell the main points of a story that they have heard. Reciprocal Teaching strategies incorporated through read-alouds support oral language comprehension and the development of skills that are linked to effective reading (Myers 2005).

The students learn to use four main strategies when interacting with the text:

- **Predicting** – This strategy helps the students activate their prior knowledge when they share their prediction of what the book might be about when they look at the cover, the title, or images. It can also be used at other points in the book and encourages students to listen with a purpose.

- **Questioning** – This strategy enhances a student's understanding and provides them with a mechanism to seek relevant information when they realize that they need additional details. When a teacher model generating questions (*who, what, when, where, why, and how)* it provides good examples for students to deepen their comprehension when they engage in reading text.

- **Clarifying** – This strategy helps students understand words that are tricky and ask questions that would help them better comprehend aspects of the story. It affords teachers an avenue to explicitly teach vocabulary words or concepts needed to promote deeper engagement with the text.

- **Summarizing** – This strategy helps students gather and state the main points in the story in a cohesive manner. It also helps them to recall any important details, and provide mini summaries during the reading.

Effective Implementation of Reciprocal Teaching

- Teach each strategy (*predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing*) explicitly to students
- Use props or puppets to create a framework for presenting each strategy
- Model each strategy to help students understand how to begin to use them independently
- Introduce specific hand gestures for each of the strategies
- Give opportunities for students to take on the role of the predictor, clarifier, questioner and summarizer
- Provide visual information in the classroom (e.g. sentence starters "I predict, I think that..")
- Allow time for discussions where students express their understanding of the text
- Extend to small group centers once students have mastered the strategies.

References

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