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Reciprocal Teaching: Improving Students Reading Comprehension

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RECIPROCAL TEACHING:

IMPROVING STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION

by

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education

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Mom, Dad, and Caitlin~
Thank you for making this all possible. I would not be where I'm at today without your
support. The homemade meals and laundry service wasn't bad either ☺

Kevin~
For your words of encouragement and stickin'
with me the past two years-
Thank you.

Marcia, Kim, and Kathleen~
Thank you for the outstanding feedback and guidance throughout this process.
I couldn't ask for a more supportive team.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

"If the purpose for reading is anything other than understanding, why read at all?
-Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis

Reading has always come naturally to me. Growing up, classics like *The Rainbow Fish, Where the Wild Things Are* and *The Giving Tree* filled my shelves and I had no problem choosing to read over playing outside. I vividly remember getting lost in the storyline, imagining myself as the character and anxiously predicting what was to come. It was at this young age that I realized it was not the *act* of reading that I was attracted to, it was the *story* that came along with it.

As I began my teaching career three years ago as a naïve third grade teacher, I assumed that my students would automatically share a love for reading and the ability to understand the story like I had. Boy, was I wrong! Although I was blessed with a diverse group of learners, many performed below grade level. I was not only confused by their lack of motivation to read, but also by their lack of understanding what they read. A large portion of my class could decode and read the words beautifully, but when asked simple questions about the reading, they would stare at me blankly. I immediately felt ill equipped and confused on how to help these students comprehend. Wasn't reading comprehension

supposed to be an automatic skill? If they can read the words they should be able to recall what they read, right? This confusion and frustration led me to ask my research question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades?*

Professional Practice

When I think back on my path of becoming a teacher, there is no doubt in my mind that it all started with my student teaching experience. I was fortunate to work with second graders in a Catholic elementary school. I was so excited to jump right in and learn everything there was to learn about being a teacher.

I had the privilege of working with a wonderful and caring cooperative teacher who had many years of experience and knowledge about the profession. With that being said, I would describe her teaching style as very traditional. The 45-minute reading block consisted of reading the story from the basal as a whole group and then answering the comprehension questions at the end, also as a whole group. I persevered through the four months of student teaching truly believing that is what reading time looked like. Not only was this instruction to be whole group, but it assumed that all students understood and comprehended at the same level.

This style of teaching seemed to work for my cooperating teacher and her students at the time. They all had the ability to pass the tests at the end of the unit and move on to third grade. However, I cannot help but look back now and wonder how explicit comprehension strategy instruction would have positively affected their reading. Did simply answering literal questions allow them to acquire the proper skills to comprehend more complex text in the future? If students could read the words, does that automatically

mean they understood the content? At the time, my answers to those questions were yes, but it was soon to change.

Oddly, I left this experience feeling prepared and ready to teach. In reality, I was not prepared and ready to teach a group of diverse students whose needs were varied. Clearly, I lacked a solid foundation in teaching students to read, and more specifically, how to comprehend. The only comprehension strategy I had in my toolbox was to help students answer the questions at the end of a story. I assumed if they could read the text and answer those questions, they would be successful readers. More dangerously, I also assumed if they could read the words, the understanding portion would follow.

Will's Reading Journey

Reflecting on my past experiences, one student in particular contributed to my interest in this topic. Will was a student in my third grade class during my first year of teaching. He was a very likeable child who was the first one to throw his hand up to participate. Will loved to read and even considered himself a good reader. He had no trouble reading out loud to his classmates or myself. Because I knew he could read fluently I would volunteer him to read out loud regularly, which in return increased his confidence. I had no doubt that Will would be one of my brightest students throughout the upcoming school year.

Upon hearing Will's fluent reading I placed him in my advanced reading group. It was not until small group that I noticed the real problem. After we finished reading the leveled reader, I automatically started to ask comprehension questions. Will was up first. I asked him the simple recall question from the text. He stammered out a few random words, paused, and eventually said, "I don't know." Not only was he stumped, but I was stumped as

well. It did not make sense to me. How could Will be such a "good" reader but have no idea

what he had read? Stanovich (1986) came up with the term "word calling." This is when the

words in the text are efficiently decoded into their spoken forms without comprehension of

the passage taking place. This concept described Will perfectly. He did not understand that

reading also required thinking.

For the most part, Will had me fooled. It turned out, he lacked an extremely

important piece of the reading puzzle, like many other students. That missing piece was

comprehension. I believed he was a good reader because he could read the words fluently

with almost no errors. I have never been more wrong. It was at this moment that I realized

there are two equally important components of reading: decoding and comprehension. In

order to be a successful reader, learners must have both. As a more experienced teacher, I

now recognize that I was judging Will's reading level based on his ability to decode, not his

ability to decode *and* construct meaning from the text. Frankly, I was baffled by a student

whose understanding of the text did not come automatically.

Once I realized Will did not comprehend what he read, I began to take action.

Immediately I thought that he was choosing books that were too hard for him. Therefore,

we had countless conversations about choosing just right books, and I would check in with

him occasionally to make sure the books he chose were on his level. However, this strategy

did not solve the problem, so I taught him how to look back in the text to find answers to

the questions. We practiced over and over again going back into the text to pull out

answers. Although his comprehension increased slightly, I knew he did not grow to his full

potential.

I will never forget the day I received his results from the NESA state test. Will's reading score was one of the lowest in the class. Although I knew he struggled with comprehension, I was still shocked to see the proof. Even more difficult was trying to explain his score to his parents, who also viewed their son as a proficient reader. The worst part was that I was supposed to have the answers. After all I was the professional educator, and yet we stared at each other, not knowing what to do. I was providing the only solutions I knew to this problem and it clearly was not working.

Reflecting upon Will and similar students who have the same challenge, I am still left with the question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades?* I believe I need to find a way to support students who keep getting pushed along because they are considered good readers, but in reality lack the ability to comprehend. Reading is much more than decoding the words. It is ultimately about thinking and constructing meaning. When encountering "word callers" like Will, I strive to gain a better understanding of strategies that will improve their comprehension and understanding of the text. Ultimately I hope that my students will fall in love with the *story* of reading, like I did as a child.

<u>Conclusion</u>

As a teaching professional, it is my responsibility to prepare my students to be proficient lifelong readers. This means not only teaching them how to read the words, but also how to understand the text. In Chapter Two of this capstone project, I will provide current research on fluency and comprehension instruction as well as comprehension strategies. Additionally, my research will focus on the explicit connection between fluency and comprehension and describe reciprocal teaching, a specific comprehension strategy.

Next, Chapter Three will discuss the methodology surrounding the curriculum development unit on reciprocal teaching that I create. First of all, I will describe the learning environment and framework for the unit. Then, Chapter Four will include the curriculum I developed, including lessons to support reciprocal teaching. Finally, in Chapter Five, I will reflect on what I have learned from designing and implementing a curriculum that focuses on reciprocal teaching. I will also discuss the limitations and implications, as well as any future recommendations for this area of study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

"Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are."
-Mason Cooley

Introduction

Reading comprehension is at the heart of all reading. In the world of education today, unfortunately, some teachers disregard the importance of comprehension. Being in such a fast paced environment, it is easy for teachers to neglect the importance of comprehension strategy instruction. It can be easy to assume that fluent reading equates to understanding the meaning. Judging off past experience, that is not always the case. Tovani (2000) elaborates on the meaning of word callers and states, "Word callers have mastered decoding and, as a bonus, also choose to read. However, they don't understand that reading involves thinking" (p. 15). In addition, Gambrell and Morrow (2015) insist, "A significant number of readers who struggle with comprehension do so despite having adequate word recognition skills" (pg. 224). Therefore, it is my goal to explicitly teach comprehension strategies to fluent readers, in order for them to construct meaning from the text. This

leads me to ask the question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase*

comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades?

This chapter will begin by defining and explaining the concepts of comprehension

and fluency. In addition, it will explore what the current researchers have revealed about

comprehension and fluency instruction. Secondly, it will describe the relationship between

fluency and comprehension. This includes providing an explanation of fluency as a

predecessor of comprehension, versus the idea that fluency and comprehension are

intertwined. Finally, this chapter will examine the research on one specific comprehension

strategy, reciprocal teaching. It will explicitly discuss how to incorporate this strategy into

classroom instruction to increase students' comprehension.

Understanding Comprehension

The Webster's dictionary defines comprehension as, "The action or capability of

understanding something." Ultimately comprehension is the primary reason for reading. If

students are not able to understand what they have read, then what is the point of reading?

According to Harvey and Goudvis (2007), constructing meaning is the goal of

comprehension. They recommend that students:

- Monitor understanding

- Enhance understanding

- Acquire and actively use knowledge

- Develop insight

Initially, reading comprehension was about literal understanding of the text, but Harvey

and Goudvis (2007) explain more deeply, "True comprehension goes beyond literal

understanding and involves the reader's interaction with the text" (pg. 14). In other words,

readers should be able to comprehend what they are learning in addition to thinking about what they are reading.

Harvey (2011) continues to describe the meaning of comprehension as understanding. She contends that, "Comprehension is not about spitting out facts and filling in blanks" (pg. 117). Rather, it is encouraging students to actively think, and think deeply about issues, or concepts in order to apply this thinking to their own experiences. In the end, the reason we teach comprehension is so that students can turn this information into knowledge and actively use it.

McLaughlin (2012) reveals that meaning is constructed from text when readers connect their background knowledge (what they already know) to what they are reading (the text). This relates to the constructivist viewpoint of schema theory. Schema theory states, the more prior knowledge a student has on the topic, the easier it will be for them to make sense of the text (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Similarly, Duke and Pearson(2002) add, "Good readers draw from, compare and integrate their prior knowledge with material in the text" (pg. 107). Based on this research, comprehension takes place when readers make connections between their experiences and the material they are reading.

In the following subsections, I will describe the comprehension continuum and how it is used to guide students' comprehension. Additionally, I will explain the importance of comprehension strategy instruction. This includes an explanation of self-regulated learners and the role metacognition plays in increasing readers' comprehension.

Comprehension continuum. Harvey and Goudvis (2013) designed a continuum of comprehension, which acts as a spectrum of understanding. This includes five

comprehension practices starting from the lowest level and gradually moving towards more advanced thinking. The five practices are:

- Answering literal questions

- Retelling

- Merging thinking with content

- Acquiring knowledge

- Actively using knowledge

Answering literal questions is the least sophisticated practice of comprehension. The process does not display understanding, but rather allows students to scan for answers and pick out one that matches the question (Harvey & Goudvis, 2013). The second component of the comprehension continuum is retelling. Retelling demonstrates short-term recall and organizing events in a story. This also does not demonstrate understanding. Understanding begins once readers merge thinking with content. By engaging in questioning, synthesizing, and reacting to information, readers are beginning to construct meaning from the text. Once readers merge their thinking with the content, they can start to acquire knowledge. This means they are able to understand deeper because they are taking an active stance in their learning by truly thinking about the content. Finally, when readers actively use their knowledge they can apply it to new experiences in their daily lives and ultimately take action. These five comprehension practices serve as a tool to guide students towards higher levels of thinking and understanding.

Comprehension strategy instruction. Students who comprehend poorly need more than simply having content knowledge. They need to learn how to access this knowledge and integrate it to make meaning of the text. In other words, they need strategy instruction

(Gambrell & Morrow, 2015). According to Pilonieta and Medina (2009), "Comprehension strategies are conscious, deliberate, and flexible plans readers use and adjust while reading or when comprehension breaks down" (pg. 120). In addition, the goal of strategy instruction is for students to become self-regulated learners. Self-regulated learners not only choose from a variety of different strategies, but also are aware if one does not work. If the chosen strategy is unsuccessful, they will choose another one that is successful (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). In the same manner, Gambrell and Morrow (2015) mention the harm in teaching strategies in isolation. This causes teachers to prompt students to use the specific strategy instead of encouraging students to make their own decisions about which strategy to use. In summary, students need a variety of different strategies to choose from and must have the ability to determine particular strategies that work better than others.

Tovani (2011) elaborated on comprehension strategy by explaining, "Strategies are not about using sticky notes and highlighters. Strategies are intentional plans that readers use to construct independent thought" (pg. 180). In other words, strategies give readers a way to interact with the text. According to Tovani (2011), poor readers lose motivation when the meaning does not automatically appear. They blame it on the boring text or that they cannot read.

All readers need to know how to proceed when meaning breaks down. They need strategy instruction. Comprehension strategies do not change as students progress through the grades. Rather, the strategies become more complex and sophisticated as the text becomes more difficult (Tovani, 2011). Based on research, strategy instruction will help readers be more aware of how comprehension strategies can help them make meaning of the text.

Furthermore, Gambrell and Morrow (2015) mention the importance of students actively making decisions on their own about how to make sense of the text. This concept is called metacognition. According to VanKeer & Vanderlinde (2010), "The goal of metacognitive instruction is to help readers become more aware of their own thinking during the reading process which, ultimately, should lead to increase text comprehension" (pg. 73). In order to create metacognitive readers, one must teach them the conditions under which the strategy is used, in addition to teaching the strategy itself. In other words, students must consider where, when, and why they might use a particular strategy in order to meet their reading goal (Gambrell and Morrow, 2015).

In addition, Gambrell and Morrow (2015) emphasize the importance of teaching strategies in sets rather than individually. This helps students determine when and where they should use the strategy, how to choose from a variety of strategies, and how to recognize if their choices are helping them comprehend. In like manner, "Good readers do not use comprehension strategies one at a time as they read. Rather they orchestrate and coordinate a 'set' or 'family' of strategies to comprehend text" (Reutzel et al., 2005, p. 279). In summary, it is recommended that comprehension strategies be taught in a group so that students can use multiple strategies as they read.

Understanding Fluency

In the past, fluency was viewed as an oral reading phenomenon (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). The National Reading Panel defined reading fluency as "the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression" (NICHD, 2000, p. 3-5). This definition strictly focuses on fluency as an oral reading practice. However, new definitions have emerged that include more than just oral reading. *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary*

of Reading and Writing defined fluency as "freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 85). This definition expands on the meaning of reading fluency to include comprehension.

For many years, Rasinski (2004) has been a leading researcher in the field of fluency. He has attributed fluency as an important factor in student reading success. He defines fluency as, "The reader's ability to develop control over surface level text processing so that he or she can focus on understanding the deeper levels of meaning embedded in the text" (pg. 46). In other words, reading requires students to process the text (surface level of reading) and comprehend the text (the deeper meaning). Once students can successfully read the text, they can focus on reading for meaning.

More recently, Samuels, Ediger and Fautsch-Patridge (2005), have explored the meaning of fluency. They assert, "The essential ingredient in fluency is the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time" (2004, pg. 2). That is to say, a reader who can read accurately and with speed, but struggles to comprehend, is not considered a fluent reader. They must be able to decode and comprehend simultaneously. Samuels, Ediger and Fautsch-Patridge continue to describe the importance of implementing fluency instruction to the point of automaticity, so that readers can have the cognitive space to understand the passage (2005). Based on this definition, it is clear that fluency is not just the ability to read accurately and orally with expression, but is related to the ability to comprehend as well. In the subsection to follow, I will present research that describes the components of fluency including automaticity, prosody, and speed.

Components of fluency. According to Rasinski (2012), fluency has two major components: automaticity and prosody. Automaticity refers to the ability for readers to

recognize the words automatically or effortlessly. Prosody refers to reading with expression, which leads to comprehension. When readers can identify the words in the text automatically, they can focus their attention on comprehension. In addition, fluent readers use prosody, or expression in their voice to help convey meaning. For example, when readers emphasize a certain word in the text, it adds implied meaning. In other words, meaning that is not clearly stated. Therefore, Rasinski explains, "Prosody allows the reader to infer information that is not explicitly stated in the passage" (2012, pg. 519). He sums this up by further explaining that, automaticity is the link to word recognition whereas, prosody completes the bridge by linking fluency to comprehension (Raskinski, 2012).

As previously stated, Samuels, Ediger and Fautsch-Patridge (2005) believe fluency is the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time. They contend the other components of fluency (accuracy, speed and oral reading expression) are simply indicators. Expanding on this idea, they explain that the components of fluency are interrelated. For example, if a student is having difficulty with one component, the reading process is likely to be disrupted.

In comparison to Rasinski (2012), Samuels, Ediger and Fautsch-Patridge (2005) describe the connection between accuracy and comprehension. They suggest that if a student has difficulty with accurately reading the words, their cognitive load will increase, therefore making it difficult to retain the information read. Unlike Rasinski (2015), Samuels, Ediger and Fautsch-Patridge (2005) explain another component to fluency, which is speed. A variety of factors influence the speed of a reader including, their purpose for reading, the vocabulary and word recognition abilities, and the speed at which a reader's mind can process what they are reading (Samuels, Ediger & Fautsch-Patridge, 2005).

The final component of fluency addressed is oral reading expression. This includes pitches, voice changes, and pauses that occur in regards to punctuation. Oral reading expression is related to comprehension because it communicates what the reader is interpreting to be important and how the reader understands the text (Samuels, Ediger & Fautsch-Patridge, 2005). In conclusion, if readers possess these components of fluency, it is an indication they will be able to decode and comprehend at the same time.

Relationship Between Fluency and Comprehension

Pikulski & Chard (2005) stress that the relationship between fluency and comprehension is complex. According to the research, there is evidence to support both positions: fluency as predecessor of comprehension, as well as fluency and comprehension intertwined. In their review of fluency research, Stecker, Roser and Martinez (1998) articulate, "Fluency has been shown to have a reciprocal relationship with comprehension, with each fostering the other" (p. 300). Therefore, fluency and comprehension go hand in hand. Readers must read fluently in order to comprehend and readers must be able to comprehend in order to read fluently. Similarly, Pikulski and Chard (2005), view fluency as a large developmental process in which decoding skills will form a bridge to reading comprehension. Based on this view, fluency is directly related to comprehension. The following subsections will explain deeper this complex relationship between fluency and comprehension.

Fluency as predecessor of comprehension. According to LaBerge and Samuels (1974), human beings can attend to only one thing at a time. In order to do two things at once, we must alternate our attention between the two activities. However, in some cases, if one of the activities can be performed automatically, then humans would be able to do

more than one thing at a time. Reading requires two "activities" or processes: decoding and comprehension. When LaBerge and Samuel's idea is applied to reading, the reader would not be able to focus attention on both word decoding and comprehension at the same time. Pilulski and Chard agree with this and contend, "If attention is drained by decoding words, little or no capacity is available for the attention-demanding process of comprehending" (2005, pg. 511). Therefore, in order for comprehension to take place, the reader must be able to decode automatically. Based on this assumption, fluency would be considered a predecessor of comprehension.

Additionally, Rasinski (2012) mentions the importance of learners reading the words automatically. He expands on LaBerge and Samuel's idea of limited amount of attention or what he calls, cognitive energy. Since readers cannot use their cognitive energy towards two tasks at once, it is essential that they can read automatically so that cognitive space is available to comprehend. If students are constantly using their cognitive energy to decode words, there will be no more left to make meaning of the text. These are the same readers who would understand a story being read to them because they can solely focus on comprehending instead of decoding (Rasinski, 2012). Similarly, Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) include, if readers are not able to automatically decode the words, the efforts they use to decode will limit their ability to successfully comprehend. Therefore, increases in student fluency should result with increases in reading comprehension.

Fluency and comprehension intertwined. Other researchers believe that fluency and comprehension should be developed simultaneously. For example, Schwanenflugel (2006) insists that such skills be taught at the same time so that the reader can see the relationship between them, and in return, become incorporated into their internal monitoring systems.

If this were the case, students would realize the connection between fluency and comprehension and be able to self-monitor while reading.

On the other hand, Walczyk & Griffith-Ross (2007) believe that fluency and comprehension skills are related to the extent by which the student finds the material interesting. They assert, "More fluent readers are engaged by challenging and interesting tasks, otherwise they may read lackadaisically" (pg. 566). This research supports the idea that if fluent readers are not interested in the material and do not find it engaging, they may struggle with comprehension.

Furthermore, Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) elaborate by reporting that students who can read the words without effort may not be engaged in the text. Instead of reading for meaning or to understand, they simply fly through reading the words, allowing their mind to wander. Based on this assumption, having to struggle a little with word meaning helps students to stay engaged. Therefore, having the ability to read fluently may not be necessary in order to comprehend well.

In this section I have presented foundational research on the terms comprehension and fluency. Additionally, I have described the relationship between fluency and comprehension. This research paves the way for the question driving this capstone project: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension with fluent readers in the primary grades?* Looking forward, I will discuss reciprocal teaching and how incorporating it into instruction will improve students' comprehension.

<u>Defining Reciprocal Teaching</u>

Reciprocal teaching originated from Palincsar & Brown's (1986) idea of the adult and students taking turns assuming the role of the teacher. Whoever is assigned the

teacher is responsible for leading a discussion about a passage that students are reading. Reciprocal teaching is a version of Social Constructivism, a theory created by Lev Vygotsky. At the premise of Vygotsky's work is the belief that children learn as a result of their social interactions with others (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Based on Vygotsky's theory, reciprocal teaching is a process in which students are interacting with others, therefore maximum learning will result.

Reciprocal teaching uses four comprehension strategies: predicting, clarifying, generating questions, and summarizing to help students understand what they are reading. The process works like the following: First, the teacher introduces and models the four comprehension strategies. It is important that students learn rules to help them use the strategy and ensure they are capable with each strategy before they move on to the discussion piece (Palincsar & Brown. 1986). At the beginning, the teacher will lead the discussion, modeling how she uses the strategies while reading. Next, one of the students leads the group using the same four strategies. Then the teacher monitors and adds assistance when needed to keep the discussion on track. Finally, as students get more comfortable with the process, the role of the leader shifts to other students in the small group so that they are responsible for facilitating the discussion (Brown & Dewitz, 2014). While using these strategies, students work in small groups through discussion to construct meaning of the text (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). Kelly, Moore, and Tuck (2001) suggest the reciprocal teaching groups meet about 20 times for 30-minute sessions. Additionally, Palincsar and Brown (1984) recommend grouping heterogeneously by age or reading ability level. Doing so will allow the lower-performing students to benefit by learning from the more effective peer models.

Each comprehension strategy plays an important role in the reading process. However, Oczkus (2003) notes it is important to understand that the four reciprocal teaching strategies are part of a comprehensive reading comprehension program. This program is based on all the strategies good readers use including, making connections, monitoring, previewing, and knowing how words work.

There is not a fixed order in which to use the reciprocal teaching strategies; it depends on the text and the reader. For example, before reading a text, it would make more sense to predict instead of summarize. As stated, by engaging in reciprocal teaching, students will deepen their reading comprehension.

Rosenshine and Meister (1994) developed three core principles of reciprocal teaching. The three principles are:

- Zone of proximal development

- Proleptic teaching

- Expert scaffolding

The zone of proximal development refers to the zone of what students can accomplish independently versus with assistance. The zone of proximal development allows readers to accomplish more than they could when on their own, because of support from an adult. At the beginning, a student will need more support but, as the skill develops, less support is required (Brown & Dewitz, 2014). Proleptic teaching consists of the teacher gradually releasing the responsibility of implementing the strategy to the students. This requires the teachers to gradually remove themselves as the sole providers of information during the process. As a result, students support one another (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). Finally, during reciprocal teaching, the instruction is supported, or scaffolded. Students are able to

try out the process in a supported environment, which ultimately leads to them being able to work independently to comprehend the text. In other words, the support students receive eventually allows them to reach the next reading level and guide them through more difficult texts (Oczkus, 2003). These three principles are part of what makes reciprocal teaching a success.

More recently, Oczkus (2013) mentions four instructional foundations necessary in order to get the most out of reciprocal teaching. The four foundations are:

- Scaffolding

- Think-Alouds

- Metacognition

- Cooperative Learning

As previously mentioned, scaffolding is necessary in order to advance readers to the next level. The support students receive at the beginning, guides them through more challenging texts and reading tasks. Successful reciprocal teaching involves think-alouds. Because this strategy is based off discussion, students must talk aloud about the four strategies. Oczkus (2013) notes it is important for teachers to model the think-aloud process and encourage it to be used every time students engage in reciprocal teaching lessons. Metacognition is an essential component in reciprocal teaching because it allows students to consciously think and reflect on their strategy use (Oczkus, 2013). Finally, because reciprocal teaching is a discussion technique, cooperative learning plays a large role. Through interacting with their peers, students are able to comprehend more deeply. According to Oczkus (2013), cooperative learning also occurs when students think aloud during discussions and reflect

on their metacognitive thinking. By incorporating these four components into reciprocal teaching lessons, readers will benefit greatly.

In the following subsections, I will discuss in detail the four strategies used during reciprocal teaching: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. In addition, I will address how to use the four strategies when engaging in reciprocal teaching lessons. Finally, I will describe how reciprocal teaching uses metacognition to improve students reading comprehension.

Role of the predictor. Predicting is the first strategy used when engaging in reciprocal teaching. According to Gambrell and Morrow (2015) predicting consists of the readers thinking about what will come next in the text. While reading, students revise their previous predictions and make new ones. Oczkus (2003) elaborates by explaining that readers use information from the text and their prior knowledge to make predictions during the reading process. While predicting, readers will interact with the text. This helps them to be more motivated to read the material in addition to improving their understanding of the text. Ultimately, when students make predictions while reading, their comprehension will likely improve.

While modeling the role of the predictor for students, Oczkus (2003) suggests having a discussion of the text structure of stories with students. In fiction stories, this would include, reviewing the characters, setting, problem and resolution. Next, she advises to have students preview the cover, illustrations and title to look for clues of events that may happen in the text. When reading nonfiction stories, discuss specific text features such as headings, maps or tables. This allows students to predict what they will be reading. Oczkus (2003) also recommends using a story map or graphic organizer to provide

students with visual clues while making predictions. Additionally, the students' language while predicting consists of phrases that start with: *I think… I'll bet… I wonder if… I imagine… I suppose… I predict…* (Mowery, 1995). By using these phrases, students are able to anticipate what will come next in the text. When the prediction strategy is modeled constantly, and teachers provide support, students are ultimately able to use this strategy independently while engaging in the reciprocal teaching process.

Role of the questioner. Questioning is the second strategy used in reciprocal teaching lessons. Gambrell and Morrow (2015) assert that questioning occurs when, "Readers ask questions about the text, author's ideas, and their own thinking" (p. 253). Furthermore, Harvey and Goudvis (2007) suggest that when readers ask questions, and seek answers, they are monitoring their comprehension and constructing meaning from the text. In addition, good readers also formulate questions, which is a more difficult and complex task (Oczkus, 2003). She also contends that when readers know ahead of time that they are required to generate a question, they will read with a greater awareness of the text's important ideas. Based off this research, not only asking questions, but also formulating questions is an important strategy good readers use to help comprehend the text.

While having reciprocal teaching discussions, Oczkus (2003) suggests assigning the students to "be the teacher" while they create questions that are based off essential parts of the story. Students will begin to take ownership and develop pride while creating questions and asking one another to answer them. Modeling how to generate questions is key. Oczkus (2003) recommends starting simple by modeling how to write questions in which the answer is found within the text. Once students continue to see how questions are

formulated, the quality and depth of their questions will increase. Examples of question words students may use include: *who, what, when, where, why, how*, and *what if*. In summary, good readers use questioning to help construct meaning of the text. In reciprocal teaching lessons, students are able to create questions based on the main idea and important details, which in the end, increases their comprehension.

Role of the clarifier. Clarifying is the third strategy that reciprocal teaching uses. For some students it is a challenge to recognize unclear sentences or words. According to Oczkus (2003) the difficulties may occur because sometimes students are able to read every word in the passage, but struggle to understand the main idea. In order to assist with this task, clarifying is used. Furthermore, Oczkus (2003) explains, "Clarifying helps students monitor their own comprehension as they identify problems that they are having in comprehending portions of text or figuring out difficult words" (p. 17). In other words, when students are taught to monitor their reading and use strategies to solve problems as they arise, ultimately their comprehension will improve.

Oczkus (2003) first suggests modeling how to figure out a difficult word. During this process, teacher and students discuss word parts or "chunks" and the context around the word. They use strategies to work together to figure out the unknown words. However, some students might be hesitant to suggest words that caused them difficulty. If this is the case, Oczkus (2003) recommends asking them to find a word a younger child might find difficult. Then, the discussion can take place on how to teach this word to a younger child. The language of clarifying has two parts: identifying the problem and clarifying strategies. Identifying the problem may include the following prompts: *I didn't understand the part where... This sentence is not clear. This doesn't make sense. I can't figure out...* Clarifying

strategies may include the following prompts: *I look for parts that I know. I reread. I try to blend the sounds together. I try another word that makes sense. I read on to look for clues. I think about what I know.* In summary, clarifying is an important step of reciprocal teaching because it directly gives students strategies to use when they encounter a problem while reading. When students learn how to clarify confusing parts or difficult words in the text, they become more capable and independent readers.

Role of the summarizer. The final strategy that students use during reciprocal teaching is summarizing. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) define summarizing as, "Pulling out the most important information and putting it in our own words to remember it" (p. 179). Whereas Gambrell and Morrow (2015) state, "Summarizing is when readers think about what they have read or learned. They may focus on recalling the text, paragraphs, or sentences" (p. 253). Finally, Oczkus (2003) believes, "To summarize effectively, students must recall and arrange in order only the important events in a text" (p. 18). When reading, each new piece of information adds to the overall meaning of the text. In the end, when students are capable of not only producing their own summary, but also observing and taking part in classmates' summaries, they will become more proficient readers.

Reciprocal teaching allows students to engage in the summary process. The organization of the summary depends on the type of text, narrative or expository. When summarizing a narrative story, Oczkus (2003) suggests students use the setting, characters, problems, events and resolution to help structure their summaries. Whereas, summarizing an expository text requires students to recall important events and arrange them in a logical order. The following prompts may be used to help students guide their summaries: *The most important ideas in this text are… This part was about… This book was about…*

First,… Next,… Then,… Finally,… The main characters are… The story takes place… To conclude, when students summarize, they are able to construct an overall understanding of the text.

      <u>Reciprocal teaching and metacognition.</u> As previously mentioned, in order for readers to determine which strategy to use and when it would be most appropriate, they must be metacognically aware. In other words, be aware of their own thinking. In addition, research supports multiple strategy instruction so that students are taught how to use multiple strategies as they read. Reciprocal teaching is a process that incorporates multiple strategy instruction. Reciprocal teaching allows students to discuss their thinking and how they use the strategies of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Oczkus, 2003). Students will not only be able to use the strategies, but also determine which strategy to use based on the reading goal. By incorporating reciprocal teaching into strategy instruction, students will be using metacognition, and ultimately improve their own reading comprehension.

      Oczkus (2003) lists comments in which students are using metacognitive thinking during reciprocal teaching. For example, "Prediction helped me today because it got me interested in the reading" (pg. 23) or, "I had to reread the book to get the main idea so I could ask a question" (pg. 23). These comments demonstrate that the reader is aware of one's own thinking process. Not only are they aware of their thinking, but also are able to make decisions to help better understand the text. In addition, Oczkus (2003) articulates, "Metacognition is an integral component in reciprocal teaching because students learn to consciously think about and reflect on their strategy use" (pg. 23). In the end, students have

the ability to use the same strategies that good readers use when monitoring their reading

comprehension.

Conclusion

Harvey and Goudvis (2007) remind us that, "Comprehension instruction isn't just

one more thing. In fact, when it comes to reading, it's the most important thing" (p. 13). Too

many students are neglected because of their ability to read fluently but inability to

comprehend. A student should not be considered a proficient reader just because he or she

can read the words. I began this capstone process searching for a solution to address this

issue and I believe reciprocal teaching can provide fluent readers with the comprehension

support they need. Reciprocal teaching allows students to collaborate using the strategies

necessary to strengthen their comprehension. When students become engaged in such

meaningful learning, they will build skills in order to prepare them for the workforce and

beyond.

In this chapter, I presented a review of current research on the terms

comprehension and fluency, including the complex relationship between the two. Next, I

described the process of reciprocal teaching and how it works towards increasing

comprehension in readers. Finally, I explained in detail the four strategies used during

reciprocal teaching, predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing including how to

incorporate these strategies into reciprocal teaching discussions/lessons. The research

provided in this chapter strives to answer: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase*

comprehension with fluent readers in the primary grades?

Moving forward in Chapter Three, I will present the rationale for my curriculum

project using reciprocal teaching. In addition, the setting and participants for whom the

curriculum is being designed for will be addressed. Finally, I will describe my framework

and methodology for the reciprocal teaching curriculum that I have developed.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

"Reading is thinking guided by print."
-Lucy Calkins

As I have developed this capstone project thus far, the question guiding me is: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades?* This chapter will begin by discussing why I developed this curriculum and the process I used to develop it. Next, I will describe the participants and the type of learning environment this curriculum has been designed for. Finally, I will explain a framework for understanding the content of this curriculum.

The Rationale for Curriculum Development

My goal in designing a curriculum in reciprocal teaching was to increase comprehension skills with primary students who can read fluently. As stated in the previous chapter, reciprocal teaching can help students develop metacognitive thinking skills, which in return increases their comprehension. In addition, Oczkus (2003) mentions the importance of mixing whole-class instruction with other groupings. Therefore,

developing a curriculum that utilizes reciprocal teaching in a whole group as well as small group can be beneficial to students.

I designed this curriculum unit to support both whole group and small group settings. Initial lessons will be taught whole group to build background knowledge and introduce the four strategies of reciprocal teaching. Ideally prior knowledge of the strategies as well as cooperative learning strategies would be introduced prior to engaging with the curriculum. The following lessons will consist of a whole group lesson with that skill being reinforced in small groups of students. In the end, the goal is to have students using all four strategies simultaneously in a small group setting.

In addition, the implementation of reciprocal teaching allows teachers to teach students comprehension strategies while having a focus in a content area. For the purpose of this capstone project, I chose to use the third grade social studies standards to drive the content of the curriculum. More specifically, I focused on the history strand. This will allow teachers to meet the standards of both language arts and social studies in one class period.

The reciprocal teaching curriculum that I have designed is intended to be used in classrooms in the primary grades. The primary grades would consist of students in kindergarten through third grade. However, some strategies or lessons could be adapted and used with students in the older grades, if the appropriate modifications are made.

The Learning Environment

The school at which I work at is one of 45 elementary schools (K-8) in an urban school district where 63 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch. In addition to 45 elementary schools, the district also has seven middle schools (6-8) and eight high

schools (9-12). In total, the district serves 35,428 students during the 2016-2017 school year.

The school at which I currently work houses students in grades 3-8. The total number of students is 394 with the following demographic breakdown: 46% Caucasian, 27% Black, 19% Hispanic, 4% American Indian, 2% Asian, and less than 1% Pacific Islander. Fifty-six percent of students receive free or reduced lunch, which is slightly below the district average. The school is a community school with the majority of students living in the neighborhood.

One unique characteristic of my current position is that I work part time as an associate educator. I split my time between three third grade classrooms and provide support for teachers wherever it is needed. This means that I follow instructions from the lead teacher based on what she feels is best. This situation provides a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with the classroom teacher, but it also provides limitations of what I can or cannot do. Therefore, I plan to implement this curriculum in the 2017-2018 school year in a setting where I will be the lead teacher.

Participants

After this school year I intend to move to Omaha, Nebraska. I have begun the process of job searching, but it is too early to know what my exact position will be. Therefore, I will plan for the participants to be a typical third grade class. Ideally, the class size would be around 25 students, with an even distribution of boys to girls. All of my students will participate in the whole group and small group lessons. It would be most beneficial to comprise the small groups of no more than four students per group. I predict that I will have students who will receive special education services or reading intervention

during the literacy block, so I will have to plan accordingly in order for all students to receive instruction.

<u>Curricular Framework</u>

The curriculum that I have developed includes lessons for both whole group and small group settings. The decision to design the curriculum in such a format was inspired by Lori Oczkus (2013) including the current research on reciprocal teaching, which I presented in my Chapter Two Literature Review. Harvey and Goudvis (2011) were also inspirational in the area of reading comprehension and the importance of reading to understand. Additionally, Palincsar & Brown (1984) provided foundational research in the area of reciprocal teaching, while Oczkus (2013) elaborated by offering practical strategies to use during reciprocal teaching lessons in the classroom.

The comprehension lessons provided support the Common Core language arts standards, while the content of the lessons support the third grade social studies standards. As previously mentioned, through integration of language arts standards and content area standards, I will be more efficient in my use of classroom time. Additionally, students are learning to be strategic readers while also learning the content required of the social studies standards. The curriculum I developed contains the following components:

- Indicates whether the lesson is to be taught whole group or small group.
- Lists the social studies standard in which the content of the text will consist of the collection of standards all relate to history with different substrands.
- Identifies the purpose consisting of what students will be able to do in regards to reciprocal teaching.

- Incorporates lessons that support the gradual release of responsibility: modeled, shared, guided, and independent.

- Provides opportunities for assessment of student learning.

The unit I have created is a collection of fifteen lessons, which are either taught whole group or small group depending on the content. Some lessons can be taught multiple times during the unit, others are to be taught only once. The unit is designed to teach two-three lessons per week. Reciprocal teaching is not comprehensive enough to stand alone as a method of comprehension. Therefore, it should be taught in addition to *all* strategies necessary for students to comprehend their reading (Oczkus, 2003). I plan to implement this curriculum during the next school year and anticipate spending six weeks on the unit.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Chapter Three explained the reason behind designing a curriculum based on reciprocal teaching. Next, it discussed the learning environment and participants who would be participating in the curriculum implementation. Finally, the framework for the curriculum was described. Looking forward to Chapter Four, the reciprocal teaching curriculum will be provided that strives to answer the question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades?*

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

"You can't teach kids to think, because human beings are born thinking."
-Harvey and Goudvis

In the first three chapters of this capstone I have described my experiences, the

research and the methods that will help me to answer: *How can reciprocal teaching be used*

to increase comprehension skills with fluent readers in the primary grades? In the first

chapter I discussed how my personal experiences as a teacher sparked my interest in

supporting fluent readers who struggle with comprehension. The literature review in

Chapter Two provided current research in the areas of comprehension, fluency and

reciprocal teaching. In Chapter Three I explained the methodology, which included the

learning environment, and participants for whom the reciprocal teaching curriculum has

been designed. In this chapter, I will provide the curriculum I have developed to implement

reciprocal teaching in a typical third grade classroom.

Curriculum Development

The curriculum I have developed is composed of 15 lessons, ideally taught two-

three times per week for a total of six weeks. It is a mixture of whole group and small group

lessons depending on the content. Additionally, each lesson is aligned with a third grade

history social studies standard. Since the content of each lesson is history, this curriculum
is geared towards the use of nonfiction text. Next, each lesson lists a purpose, which is
reinforced throughout the modeled, shared, guided and independent components of the
lesson. Finally, there is an opportunity to assess student learning in order to determine
who understands the process of reciprocal teaching and who needs reteaching. Since
reciprocal teaching embeds collaboration and cooperative learning, it is essential that the
teacher pre-teaches the necessary skills for successful collaboration to take place.

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 1- Lesson 1: *Introduce Reciprocal Teaching*

Standard: 3.4.1.1.1 Reference different time periods using correct terminology, including the terms decade, century and millennium.

Purpose: To introduce students to all four reciprocal teaching strategies during a teacher think-aloud. Students will understand reciprocal teaching strategies work together while reading a text.

Model:

1. Brainstorm strategies that good readers use. Ask students what good readers do to understand what they have read. Have them discuss with a partner and list their responses on chart paper.

2. Tell your students that today you will show them four strategies that readers use to help them comprehend the text.

3. Introduce each headband and tell students what each letter stands for (*P=predicting, Q=questioning, C=clarifying, S=summarizing*).

4. As you read, model the reciprocal teaching strategies after reading a paragraph or page. Each time you use a different strategy change your headband with the appropriate letter that matches the strategy you are thinking aloud.

Shared/Guided:

1. Reflect on the strategies. Ask students what they noticed about each strategy and how the strategies helped us understand the story. How could we use these strategies to help us understand what we read? List responses on chart paper.

2. Guide your students to use the strategies themselves. Hand out cards with each letter and what it stands for. As you read another section of the text, students will hold up a card when they have a strategy to use. Have students' share/think aloud their predictions, questions, points or words to clarify, or summarize.

3. With partners, students will continue the process of reading together and holding up the card with the strategy they think-aloud.

4. Referring to the list already created, students write or discuss a reflection of how each strategy helps them understand what they have read.

Assessment:

Circulate the classroom and listen to the pairs during step 3 of the guided activity. Were they using each strategy correctly? Were they coming up with individual responses?

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

P

Prediction

Q

Question

C

Clarification

S

Summarize

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 1- Lesson 2: *Using the Four Reciprocal Teaching Strategies*

Standard: 3.4.1.2.1 Examine historical record, maps and artifacts to answer basic questions about times and events in history, both ancient and more recent.

Purpose: Students will understand that good readers use more than one strategy while reading.

Model:

1. Review the list of strategies good readers use that was generated in the previous lesson.

2. Pass out the reciprocal teaching bookmarks and explain that you will model four strategies to help them understand the text. Remind students that after demonstrating how they are used, they will have the opportunity to think aloud.

3. Make sure all students can see the text and display the bookmark on the projector.

4. Model for students using all four prompts. Be sure to use all four in multiple points throughout the text. Students should understand that all four strategies work together in order to comprehend the text. Refer to the bookmark as you think aloud.

Shared/Guided:

1. Read the next section of the text and model **one** of the strategies. Next, have students work in pairs to come up with another example (If you shared a prediction, students will work together to generate another prediction). Continue this process with all four strategies.

2. Using a four-column table with the headings "predict," "question," "clarify" and "summarize," students will begin by writing their predictions in the appropriate column as you continue to read the text (encourage them to use the bookmarks). Repeat this process using the next 3 strategies.

3. After each paragraph, students will share what they have written.

Assessment:

Circulate around the room and listen to students' discussions. Are they using the reciprocal teaching bookmark correctly? Collect students' tables and check for understanding.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Reciprocal Teaching Bookmark	Reciprocal Teaching Bookmark
Predict Use clues from the book to explain what you think will happen next. *I think………because……* *Maybe this means…………* *I think I will learn……because….* **Question** Ask questions as you read. Ask questions that begin with *who, what, when, where, why, or how.* Ask questions with answers….. • In the book • From clues + my experiences **Clarify** Look for words or ideas that are not clear. Try one of these strategies to figure it out…… • Read around the word. • Think about word chunks you know. • Does it make sense? • Reread. • Make a substitution. **Summarize** Include the main idea, not details. Explain what happened in your own words. *This part is about………..* *This text is about………..*	**Predict** Use clues from the book to explain what you think will happen next. *I think………because……* *Maybe this means…………* *I think I will learn……because….* **Question** Ask questions as you read. Ask questions that begin with *who, what, when, where, why, or how.* Ask questions with answers….. • In the book • From clues + my experiences **Clarify** Look for words or ideas that are not clear. Try one of these strategies to figure it out…… • Read around the word. • Think about word chunks you know. • Does it make sense? • Reread. • Make a substitution. **Summarize** Include the main idea, not details. Explain what happened in your own words. *This part is about………..* *This text is about………..*

Prediction	Question	Clarification	Summarize

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 1-Lesson 3: *Using Reciprocal Teaching in Cooperative Groups*

Standard: 3.4.1.2.2 Compare and contrast two different accounts of an event.

Purpose: Students will work together in small groups using one specific reciprocal teaching strategy and then share their information with the class in order to understand how the strategies work together.

Model:
1. Read aloud a portion of the text. Using a think aloud, refer to the reciprocal teaching bookmark as you model the strategies.

2. Continue to model and work on the strategies together with students.

Shared/Guided:
1. With their table groups, students will focus on one assigned strategy after you read a section of text. Students will share responses with the class.

2. Hand out a pie piece to each group. Students will read the next section of text and the 4 members of the group will use the directions on their piece to work through the strategy.

3. After all groups have finished filling in the information, they will share with the class. Discuss how all four strategies work together to help readers understand the text.

4. The group members will glue their pieces onto a poster to make a completed pie.

Assessment:
Position yourself around the classroom and listen to the responses of the groups as they work. Use the written responses from the group for a formative assessment.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Predict

__ Look through the illustrations and discuss what the book might be about.

__Use clues from the book to make a prediction of what might come next.

Our predictions are……

The clues we used are……

Question

__Look back in the text to ask questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why.

__ Be able to show where your answers are in the text.

Our questions are……
1.
2.
3.

Clarify

__Look for words or ideas that are confusing. *"I wonder what that means?"*

__Reread, read on, or ask a friend to help figure it out.

__Be aware of strategies you used to figure out difficult words or ideas.

A difficult word or idea we found….

Ways we figured the word or idea out….

Summarize

__Ask main idea questions first.

__Include the main ideas, not the details.

__Use words such as first, next, then, or finally.

__Use your own words.

Our summary……

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 2- Lesson 4: *Predicting PART I*

Standard: 3.4.1.2.3 Compare and contrast various ways that different cultures have expressed concepts of time and space.

Purpose: Students will use textual clues to make logical predictions in groups and share with the class using an inside-outside circle.

Model:
1. Ask students how good readers make predictions. Record on chart paper.

2. Using a think-aloud, model for students how to use clues from the text to make predictions.

Shared/Guided:
1. Assign pages of the text to groups of four students. Have the groups meet and write predictions using the sentence starters. Each group member will need a copy of the predictions.

2. Using the Kagan Engagement strategy, inside-outside circle, students' will form two concentric circles and exchange their predictions with a partner. When the teacher signals the outer circle to move in one direction, each student will have a new peer to talk to.

3. Continue rotating until each student has shared with at least three others.

4. Come together as a whole group and list some predictions on chart paper. Have students begin reading and confirm predictions.

Assessment:
Collect prediction sheets and check for understand. Rotate around classroom and make sure students are using text and illustration clues to make logical predictions.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Making Predictions

Title of Book:

- Based on the title I predict this will be about

  _____

  _____.

- In this book I think_____

  will happen because_____

  _____.

- After looking at the pictures I think_____

  _____.

- I wonder if _____

  because_____

  _____.

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 2- Lesson 5: *Predicting PART II*

Standard: See above

Purpose: Students will preview a nonfiction text and predict what they will read based on the table of contents, headings, and illustration clues.

Model:
1. Using a think-aloud, model how to predict by viewing the cover and illustrations.

2. Next, turn to the table of contents, read, and model how to use clues to form predictions. Page through and read the headings, and view the illustrations using a think-aloud to make predictions.

3. Using a sticky note, write at least one prediction that uses the statement, "I predict I will learn…because…" Share out loud the clues that led to your prediction.

Shared/Guided:
1. In pairs, students will use the table of contents, headings, and illustrations to generate logical predictions.

2. Using a sticky note, students will write at least one prediction that uses the statement, "I predict I will learn…because…"

3. Have pairs share their ideas and post them on a group chart.

4. Students will begin to read silently as teacher rotates reading one-on-one. After reading, encourage students to check which predictions were right and which ones changed.

Assessment:
Notice if students are using the text clues to form logical predictions. Continue to model with students who struggle during the one-on-one reading time.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 3- Lesson 6: *Questioning PART I*

Standard: 3.4.2.3.1 Explain how an invention of the past changed life at that time, including positive, negative and unintended outcomes.

Purpose: Students will use question words including, *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* to formulate questions based off a nonfiction text.

Model:
1. Model the steps for asking a variety of questions that begin with *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* using a paragraph of text.

2. Using the question spinner, formulate a question using that question word. Have a student answer it.

3. Go through a few more examples as a group, reading a paragraph, spinning the spinner, formulating a question and answering it.

Shared/Guided:
1. In pairs, students will use the question spinner to generate questions based on the text.

2. Students will take turns reading, spinning, asking a question and the other student will answer.

3. Pairs will write down questions and answers on a sheet of paper.

4. Come together as a group and share questions/answers the pairs formulated. Discuss what made a good question.
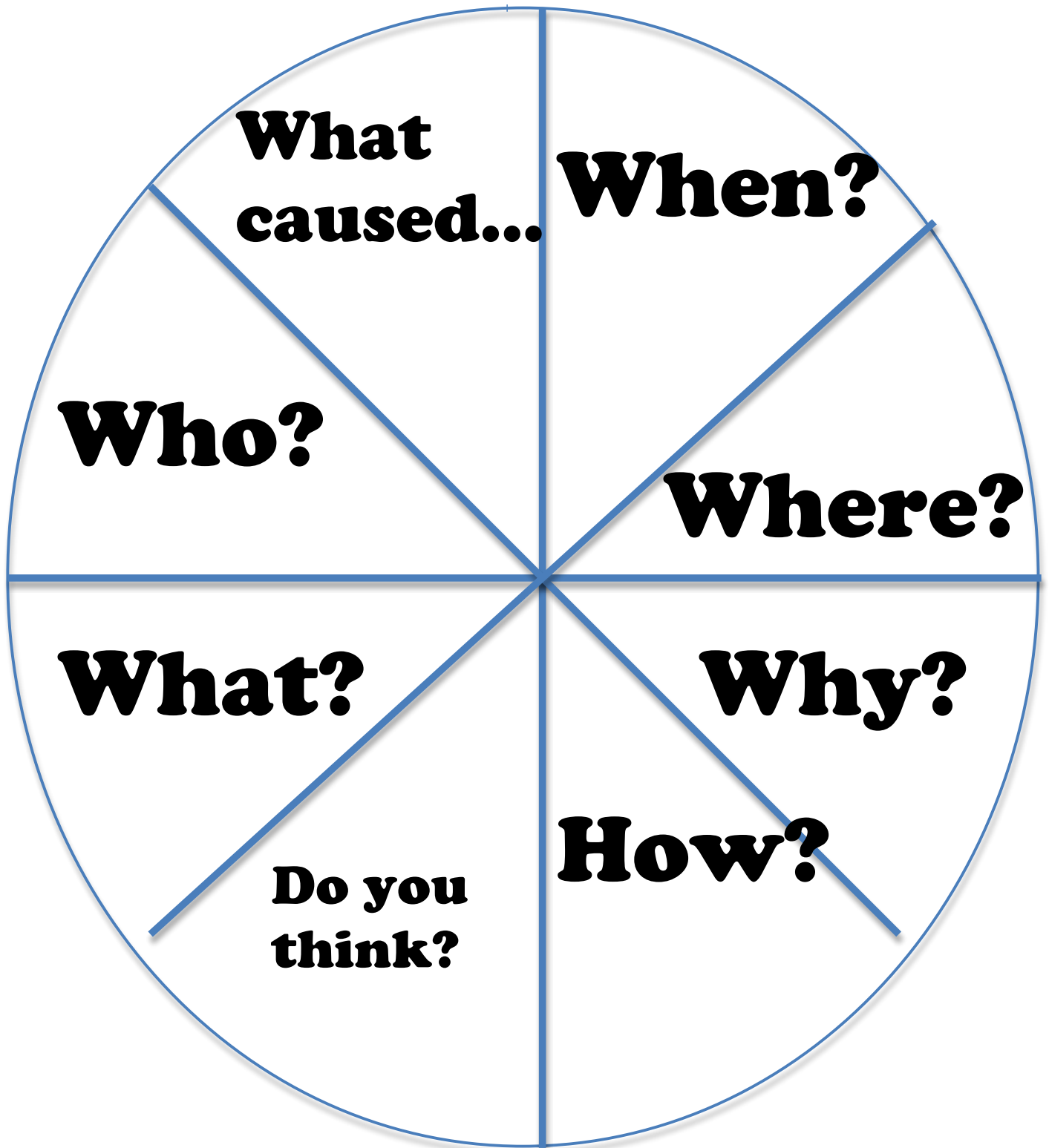
Assessment:
Collect questions and check for understanding of using question words to write their own text questions. Check to see if they can ask main idea questions as well as inferential questions.
**Note- frontloading lesson to make sure students are familiar with questioning.

Adapted from:
http://www.teacher2teacherhelp.com/reading-strategies/questioning-mini-lessons-and-practice-activities/

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 3-Lesson 7: *Questioning PART II*

Standard: See above

Purpose: Using the QAR (Question-Answer-Relationship) strategy, students will learn the four different types of questions: Right there, think and search, author and you, and on your own. Students will generate questions and answers based on QAR.

Model:
1. Explain to students that there are two ways to generate questions.
   - In the book: the answer can be found in the text.
   - In my head: the answer cannot be found in the text and must come from the reader's own experience and knowledge.

2. Display QAR poster and explain each question type noting questions found in the book (right there, think and search) and questions in my head (on my own, author and me).

3. Read aloud a section of text. Stop at various points and model how to ask each type of question. Fill out the four squares in the appropriate question type.

Shared/Guided:
1. Hand out the QAR four square and go through a few more examples as a class, explaining their reasoning.

2. In pairs, students read a section of text and generate questions for each QAR.

3. Students trade their papers with another pair and answer their questions.

4. Come together as a whole class and discuss how the QAR technique helped them to better understand the text. Talk about which questions were the easiest and which were the hardest.

Assessment:
On a scale of 1-5 have students rate how comfortable they feel with the QAR strategy. Collect QAR four squares for a formative assessment.

Adapted from:
http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/guided-comprehension-self-
        questioning-227.html?tab=4#tabs

IN THE TEXT:
Right There

Often the words used in the question are the same words found in the text.

What did…? Who did….?
What was….? How many…?
When did…?
What kind?
What does….mean?
Give one example….
List one….

IN THE TEXT:
Think & Search

Answers are gathered from several parts of the text and put together.

How do you…?
What happened to…?
What happened before…?
How many times…?
What clues…?
Where did…?
Prove…
Explain…

IN YOUR HEAD:
Author & You

You need to think about what the author has told you and what you already know about the topic.

Why did the author…?
Do you agree with…in the text?
What will happen…?
Why do you think…?
What do you picture when…?
Have you ever experienced….similar to……

IN YOUR HEAD:
On my Own

You will need to think about your own personal experiences to answer.

Have you ever….?
What do you think…?
If you were…..?
How do you feel about….?
What do you know about…?
Do you believe…?
What would you do if….?
What do you think it would be like….?

Adapted from:
http://theopendoorclassroom.blogspot.com/2013/02/question-answer-relationship-qar-freebie.html

IN THE TEXT: Right There	IN THE TEXT: Think & Search
IN YOUR HEAD: Author & You	IN YOUR HEAD: On my Own

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 3- Lesson 8: *Questioning PART III*

Standard: See above

Purpose: See above

Model:

1. Use the QAR poster to review the question types and talk about how the QAR strategy was used in the previous lesson.

2. Using a think-aloud, model how to formulate each type of question as you read. Have students answer the questions.

Shared/Guided:

1. Have students create a four square like the one used above in their notebooks.

2. Using instructional level text, students will read on their own, formulating questions and writing them in their notebooks.

3. Provide support for students who are struggling. Refer to the graphic organizer on page 51 to create the four different types of questions.

4. Encourage students to also make predictions as they read.

Assessment:

Observe students while reading/working and take anecdotal notes. Notice who needs more practice and who is confident with the strategy.
Exit ticket: Write a few sentences explaining the QAR strategy and how it helps you understand what you are reading.

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 4- Lesson 9: *Clarifying PART I*

Standard: 3.4.2.5.1 Identify examples of individuals or groups who have had an impact on world history; explain how their actions helped shape the world around them.

Purpose: Students will be able to identify words or ideas to clarify and use strategies for clarifying word meanings. Students will be able to reflect on using clarifying strategies.

Model:
1. Ask students if they have ever gotten stuck on a hard word or confusing part of the text. Provide a few examples.

2. On chart paper fill out a KWL (know, want to know, learn) chart about clarifying. Ask students what they already know about clarifying, what they want to know and at the end of the lesson fill out what they learned.

3. Choose several words from a text previously read as examples. Using the clarifying words handout, model how to decipher what those words mean by using a few of the strategies on the bookmark.

4. Choose several ideas from the text that require clarifying strategies. Model how a reader might need to clarify the confusing parts of the text even though they may know what the words mean. Make sure students are following along at the correct portion of the text.

Shared/Guided:
1. Using the clarifying words handout, choose a few more words and encourage students to decide which strategies they will use to figure out the meaning. Share and discuss.

2. Using the clarifying ideas handout, choose a few more difficult/confusing paragraphs and have students decide which strategies to use. Share and discuss.

3. In pairs, have students reread portions of the text and use the bookmark to clarify either words or ideas.

4. Revisit the KWL chart. Fill out what students learned about clarifying and how it is helpful. Which strategies did they use when and which did they find the most helpful? Encourage students to use the handout during independent reading time.

Assessment:
Coach students during independent reading time. Prompt and guide them as needed. Can students verbalize the strategies they are using?

Adapted from:

Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Clarifying **Words**	Clarifying **Ideas**

1. Identify the difficult word.
 	
The word_____ is confusing because….
 	
   a. **It was hard to pronounce it.**
   b. **I didn't know what it meant.**
   c. **I didn't know what it meant and I couldn't pronounce it.**
 	
2. Try to clarify the difficult word.
 	
I tried the following strategies to understand the word…..
 	
___Did I look at the prefix, suffix, or base word?
 	
___Did I try blending the sounds together?
 	
___Did I think of another word that looks like this word?
 	
___Did I read on to find clues?
 	
___Did I try another word that makes sense in the sentence?
 	
___Did I reread the sentence to see if the word made sense?
	1. Identify the confusing paragraph, sentence, page or chapter.
	
	A confusing part is _____
	
	_____
	
	because….
	
	   a. **I didn't understand_____.**
	   b. **It doesn't make sense.**
	   c. **I don't get_____.**
	
	2. Try to clarify the confusing part.
	
	I tried the following strategies to understand the confusing part…
	
	___Did I reread the parts that I didn't understand?
	
	___Did I read on to look for clues?
	
	___Did I think about what I already know about the topic?
	
	___Did I talk to a friend about the reading?

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 4- Lesson 10: *Clarifying PART II*

Standard: See above

Purpose: Students will be able to determine strategies to use to clarify words and ideas.

Model:
1. Make a two-column chart with the headings: Clarifying Words and Clarifying Ideas.

2. Ask students what good readers do when they need to clarify a word. Chart their responses and model several.

3. Ask students what good readers do when they need to clarify an idea. Chart their responses and model clarifying confusing ideas in paragraphs, chapters and sentences.

Shared/Guided:
1. Give students sticky notes in two different colors: one color for clarifying a word and the other color for clarifying an idea.

2. Assign a paragraph of text for students to read. As they read students will determine words/ideas that need to be clarified and write them on the appropriate color sticky note along with at least 2 strategies they used to figure it out.

3. Students will place sticky notes on the correct columns in the chart. Discuss student responses.

Assessment:
Are students using the clarifying strategies in their own reading? As students read independently, observe which students refer to the poster on clarifying.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 4- Lesson 11: *Clarifying PART III*

Standard: See above

Purpose: Students will be able to monitor their reading and use a fix-up strategy to clarify confusing words or ideas.

Model:
1. Model reading a selection of text, stopping at confusing words or parts.

2. Using a think-aloud fill out the monitor and clarify handout including the page numbers. Be sure to discuss why you choose the fix-up strategy you did and what you know now because you used that strategy.

Shared/Guided:
1. Using the monitor and clarify handout, students will read the next paragraph of the text and fill out what they don't understand, what fix-up strategy they used, and what they know now.

2. Come together as a group and discuss words/parts that were confusing and how students clarified to determine the meaning.

3. During independent reading time, students will continue to fill out the monitor and clarify handout.

Assessment:
Collect the handout and check for understanding. During independent reading time, conference with individual students and reinforce skill when necessary.

Monitor *I don't understand*	Clarify *Use a fix-up strategy*	Keep Reading *Now I know......*
Page:		
Page:		
Page:		
Page:		
Page:		
Page:		
Page:		

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 5- Lesson 12: *Summarizing PART I*

Standard: 3.4.3.7.1 Explain how the environment influenced the settlement of ancient peoples in three different regions of the world.

Purpose: Students will be able to understand how summarizing helps them understand the text. Students will be able to use vocabulary and main ideas from the text to generate a summary.

Model:

1. Describe to students that when you summarize you pull out the main ideas of the text and list them in the correct order.

2. Brainstorm with students a list of reasons why one might summarize and how it would help a reader understand the text. Provide sentence stems to help including:
   * First….
   * Next….
   * Then….
   * After that….
   * Finally….
   * A problem occurs when….
   * The most important ideas in the text are….
   * I learned that….

3. Model how to summarize a page of text by rereading for main ideas. Underline or circle key ideas or phrases to use in your summary.

4. Verbalize your summary to students explaining why you included certain parts and eliminated others.

Shared/Guided:

1. In pairs, students will take turns rereading a portion of text, underlining or circling several key words. Then they will give a verbal summary of the text.

2. Assist, guide and prompt pairs who are having difficulties.

Assessment:

Listen to the pairs as they summarize. Can they determine main ideas and vocabulary from the text? Model summarizing in small group for students who are having difficulties.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Whole Group	Small Group

Week 5- Lesson 13: *Summarizing PART II*

Standard: See above

Purpose: Students will be able to construct a summary using the main ideas from the text. Students will be able to eliminate unnecessary information from a summary.

Model:

1. Read aloud a simple, familiar text. As you read ask students to think about main ideas or points in the text. Record on chart paper.

2. Help students to identify a main idea sentence and then a sequenced list of events. Record and reread the summary.

3. "Shrink wrap" your summary by crossing out unnecessary or repetitive ideas or sentences. Continue this process until the summary is a concise as possible. Be sure to discuss reasons for including or taking out parts.

Shared/Guided:
1. Assign the next portion of text for students to read silently. When finished, have each student write a summary.

2. Pair students and have them "shrink wrap" each other's summaries taking out unnecessary sentences or parts.

3. Have students share their summaries out loud.

Assessment:
Listen to pairs as they rework their summaries. Can they determine main ideas and incorporate these into concise summaries? Model summarizing again during small group for those who are having difficulties.

Adapted from: http://www.teacher2teacherhelp.com/reading-strategies/summarizing-mini-lessons-and-practice-activities/

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 6- Lesson 14: *Comprehension Charts During Guided Reading*

Standard: 3.4.3.8.1 Identify methods of communication used by peoples living in ancient times in three different regions of the world. (Classical Traditions, Belief Systems and Giant Empires)

Purpose: Students will be able to fill out a visual representation of the reciprocal teaching strategies as they read. Students will be able to monitor their comprehension as they read.

Model:
1. Select a text to read with students. Sketch a comprehension chart. Be sure to allow the following headings: What we already know, predictions, questions, clarifications, and summaries. **See below for recommended charts.

2. Model using sticky notes making predictions of the text and connections of what I already know.

3. Students will fill out sticky notes and add to what we know and the predictions portions of the chart before reading the text.

Shared/Guided:
1. Students will read the text silently, filling out sticky notes for each question, or clarification they come up with.

2. Model the strategies one at a time. Discuss students' predictions first and ask if anyone's prediction has changed. Next, model and question and ask students to contribute their questions to the chart. Then, model a clarification and ask students to share. Finally, model a summary and have students help you summarize.

3. Discuss with students how the reciprocal teaching strategies helped them to comprehend the text.

Assessment:
When students contribute to the chart, have them write their initials on the sticky notes. This way, you can make notes and keep track of individuals' progress.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Comprehension Chart
for Guided Reading Groups

What We Know
(use background knowledge and make connections with the text)

Our Predictions	**Our Questions**
(what might the text be about?)	(who, what, when, where, why and how)

Our Words or Ideas to Clarify

Our Summary

Nonfiction Comprehension Chart
for Guided Reading Groups

What We Know About _____
(preview the text's cover, illustrations and headings)

What We Might Learn

Our Questions Before Reading

_____

Our Questions After Reading

Words or Ideas to Clarify   **Our Summary**
1.   _____

2.   _____

3.   _____

4.   _____

Whole Group	**Small Group**

Week 6-Lesson 15: *Introduce Reciprocal Teaching Role Cards*

Standard: 3.4.3.9.1 Compare and contrast daily life for people living in ancient times in at least three different regions of the world. (Post-Classical and Medieval Civilizations and Expanding Zones of Exchange)

Purpose: Students will use role cards to participate in reciprocal teaching during guided reading.

Model:
1. Tell students that they will be responsible for one of the reciprocal teaching strategies (predictor, questioner, clarifier, or summarizer) during today's lesson.

2. Use the Reciprocal Teaching Bookmark (Week 1-Lesson 2) to review all strategies with students.

3. Introduce and hand out the role cards (See below: cut out, laminate and put on a ring. Provide one set for each student).

Shared/Guided:
1. Teacher will facilitate the discussion. The predictor will go first and ask students predictions of the text. (Record on discussion sheet)

2. Next, the teacher will assign section of text to read (Decide if students will read silently, out loud or with partners.) Remind students as they read to think of questions and ideas/words to clarify and to record on discussion sheet.

3. After reading, instruct the questioner to go next. Each student with a role will share and then ask classmates to share. Repeat with clarifier and summarizer.

4. The discussion will end with the predictor predicting what will happen in the next section of text and process will begin again.

5. Teacher will coach/give feedback regarding strategy use and the flow of discussion.

Assessment:
-Observe students' use of strategies and take notes of who is having trouble. Group accordingly and reinforce using minilessons if needed.
-Students will fill out the self-evaluation (see below)
Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Reciprocal Teaching Role Cards

#1 PREDICTOR

1. Ask members to look at the cover and illustrations and discuss what you see.
2. Ask members to write their predictions. **Remember to use clues from the text to support your predictions.
3. Share your prediction first.
4. Then ask others what they predict.
   **Ask: "Does anyone else have a prediction?"

#2 QUESTIONER

1. Ask your group members to write 1-2 questions that could be answered by reading the text. **Use questions words: who, what, when, where, why and how)
2. Ask your question first. Call on members to answer.
3. Ask others what their questions are.
   **Ask: "Does anyone else have a question?"

#3 CLARIFIER

1. Ask your group members to identify words or ideas that were tricky or confusing.
2. Have members write 1-2 difficult words/ideas.
3. Share your word or idea first and strategies used to figure it out.
4. Ask members to share their words or ideas.
   Ask: "Does anyone have confusing words or parts to clarify?"
5. Discuss strategies to figure out confusing words/ideas.

#4 SUMMARIZER

1. Ask your group members to write a summary using the main ideas from the text.
2. Share your summary first.
3. Ask others to share their summaries or add to yours.
   Ask: "Would anyone like to add to my summary or share their own?"

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Reciprocal Teaching Discussion Sheet

Predict	**Question**
I predict that_____ _____ _____ _____ because_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Here are questions I can ask my group…… 1. 2. 3.
Clarify	**Summarize**
_____ is a difficult word because_____. Strategies I tried…. _____ is a confusing idea because_____. Strategies I tried….	Here is a 1-2 sentence summary.

Adapted from:
Oczkus, L.D. (2003). *Reciprocal teaching at work: Strategies for improving reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Reciprocal Teaching Self-Evaluation

M- Most of the time   **P-** Part of the time

N- Not at all

PREDICTING
_____ I preview the cover, title, illustrations and headings before reading.
_____ I stop to predict during reading.
_____ I make predictions based on clues from the text.

QUESTIONING
_____ I ask "right there" questions.
_____ I ask "think and search" questions.
_____ I ask "author and you" questions.
_____ I ask "on my own" questions.

CLARIFYING
_____ When I don't know a word I stop to figure it out.
_____ I use different strategies to figure out words. Some of them are_____.
_____ When I'm confused by an idea I stop to figure it out.
_____ I use different strategies to help understand. Some of them are_____.

SUMMARIZING
_____ I stop to summarize the main ideas as I read.
_____ My summaries are clear, short, and include only the important points.

Adapted from: http://www.teacher2teacherhelp.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Reciprocal-Teaching-Self-Evaluation.pdf

<u>Conclusion</u>

Chapter Four included the reciprocal teaching curriculum to be used in a third grade classroom. Additionally, the teacher is able to meet instructional standards in both social studies and language arts, maximizing the use of teaching time. All of the lessons presented supported the research in Chapter Two of this capstone emphasizing comprehension and the process of reciprocal teaching. The framework of the curriculum, in addition to the individual lessons contribute to my research question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension with fluent readers in the primary grades?*

I will conclude this capstone project by reflecting upon what I have learned from developing a curricular framework for implementing reciprocal teaching in a third grade classroom. Additionally, I will discuss the implications and limitations of my study. Finally, I will provide some recommendations for future research on implementing reciprocal teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

"I imagine a school system that recognizes learning is natural, that a love of learning is normal, and that real learning is passionate learning."
-Tom Peters

As an educator, it is my goal to provide students with strategies that will prepare them to be successful in their future. More specifically, I want those students who struggle with comprehension to attain the proper tools to guide them towards success. I want my students to fall in love with the story that reading provides like I did as a child. In order to do so, I need to ensure that metacognitive thinking is taking place and appropriate strategies are being used that will support them in comprehending a variety of texts. Throughout my career, I have developed a solid foundation of strategies for teaching reading comprehension. However, I recognized the need to support fluent readers in improving their comprehension. This desire led me to further explore the question: *How can reciprocal teaching be used to increase comprehension with fluent readers in the primary grades?* In this final chapter I will first consider possible implications of my findings. Next, I will discuss the limitations of this capstone project and finally I will recommend future research projects concerning reciprocal teaching.

Key Findings

By researching the areas of comprehension and fluency, I was able to broaden my understanding of those terms and recognize the effects that reading fluently has on comprehension. I especially appreciated Raskinski's (2004) research regarding fluency and the connection between fluency and comprehension. Additionally, I learned the benefits reciprocal teaching can have in order to improve comprehension of text. Lori Oczkus (2003) was very informational in her explanation of reciprocal teaching and hands on reciprocal teaching lessons. The use of reciprocal teaching in a classroom not only teaches students how to comprehend text, but also encourages students to collaborate with each other as part of a learning community.

Possible Implications

If implementing reciprocal teaching in my classroom proves to be effective, I will be able to teach more efficiently. By embedding the content of the third grade social studies standards into my language arts instruction, time will be better managed, as students will be able to apply reading strategies to learn social studies content. If my findings are correct, students will additionally benefit from collaborating with their peers. Not only are they learning the four strategies of reciprocal teaching, but also they are engaged in meaningful discussion with each other to deepen comprehension. As students are developing social skills to successfully work with others, the overall climate of the classroom should improve in a positive manner.

Since I will be implementing reciprocal teaching with the entire class, all third graders' reading comprehension should increase, not just students who can read fluently but struggle comprehending. As competent students go through the process of using the

four strategies associated with reciprocal teaching, their comprehension should continue to improve. Although the curriculum was designed specifically for students who can read fluently, but struggle to comprehend, in the end all students will benefit from receiving reciprocal teaching instruction.

By implementing this third grade reciprocal teaching curriculum, I am trusting that my work becomes contagious. I plan to share what I have created with teachers in my graduate school cohort in addition to my future teammates in hopes that they will be interested in also implementing the unit I have created. Additionally, if an opportunity to present my research and curriculum arises, I would consider it so that my colleagues and administration can understand the benefits reciprocal teaching can have on improving students' comprehension. Ultimately, I want to become an advocate and a resource for educators in the area of reciprocal teaching.

Possible Limitations

I feel very confident in implementing the unit I created as I based its development on my experiences with teaching third grade. However, there are a few limitations to consider. First, I am writing this unit during the spring for a group of potential students whom I have not yet met. As a teacher who is responsive to students' needs, I am aware that I may need to modify the curriculum based on the needs of the students in my future classroom.

Another limitation is the lack of time. With the high demands on teachers to fit everything in within a short amount of time, I am concerned that there will not be enough time to fit in an additional reciprocal teaching curriculum on top of the curriculum teachers are already required to teach. Luckily, the unit designed has social studies standards

embedded which will save some time. Since time is a limitation, teachers will have to make reciprocal teaching a priority in order for students to receive the benefits it provides.

Future Research

Although the unit I created focuses on social studies content standards, I chose foundational lessons in reciprocal teaching so that the structure could be used for other content. I am hoping in the future that the lessons could be used with science content or simply with language arts content. By creating a curriculum with universal lessons, I am confident I could use this foundation for other units of study in my classroom.

While researching the area of comprehension, I found myself interested in learning more about interactive read-alouds. Interactive read alouds consist of teachers reading aloud and using a think aloud to explain their thinking to students. I am curious to explore if interactive read alouds would contribute to improving students' comprehension. In the future, I am interested in using interactive read alouds in addition to reciprocal teaching to maximize comprehension. This way, students would be shown multiple strategies they could use to strengthen their comprehension.

With the completion of my Master's degree in Literacy Education and the K-12 Reading License, I will continue to further my studies in literacy education. For example, I plan to seek additional professional development in collaborative learning so I can encourage students to learn from each other. I also plan to further my knowledge of technology so that students can build twenty-first century literacy skills. Eventually, my plans include integrating technology into the reciprocal teaching unit I created.

Final Thoughts

As I culminate this project looking forward to the next school year. I am excited to see this unit come to life as students take on the roles of predictor, questioner, clarifier and summarizer to deepen their comprehension. Additionally, I am filled with curiosity as I wonder how this unit will work when put into practice and how students will respond. As an educator, nothing excites me more than experiencing students' growth throughout the year. By implementing this reciprocal teaching curriculum I look forward not only to celebrating my students' successes along the way, but also instilling a fondness of reading in my students so they can connect and fall in love with the story like I did as a child.

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