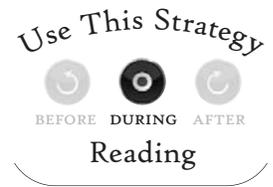

Reciprocal Questioning

Reciprocal Questioning trains students to pick main ideas, engage in metacognitive thought, and think critically while reading. Initially, it is a verbal exchange between the teacher and the students. Eventually, the students work independently in pairs following the same questioning pattern. For the students to become independent, use Reciprocal Questioning often. This strategy requires the teacher to have strong questioning skills.



STEP-BY-STEP

Teacher Prep

- Select a well-structured text for the lesson. Read it carefully. Preparing possible questions before the lesson is a necessity.
- Imagine how the questioning will go in your classroom and think about what questions the students might ask.
- Write the questions down and use them as a springboard during the lesson.

Explain

- Tell the students that today they are going to practice asking questions while they read and they will need to put on their thinking caps.
- Say that you will read the first sentence or paragraph (depending on the reading) and ask them to ask a question about it and you will answer.
- Then it will be your turn to ask a question which they will answer.

Model

- Read the first sentence or paragraph of the article orally as the students follow along in their heads.
- Tell the students to ask questions about the reading.
- Answer the student questions carefully using a Think Aloud (see page iv). Use these questions as a guideline to think aloud:
 - Did you use your background knowledge?
 - Did you know it from another text or reading?
 - Was it answered in the text?
 - Did I combine what I read in the text with something I already know?
- A Think Aloud might sound like: The answer is _____. I know this because I just read an article in the newspaper last week about _____.
- Next, ask the students a question about the sentence or paragraph. The students answer the question clarifying their thoughts as they answer.
- In the beginning, you will need to coach the students to clarify. Use questions such as,
 - Why do you think that?
 - Can you elaborate?
 - Tell me more.
 - Can you give me an example?
 - Explain how _____.



Jane Says,

“I write all my possible questions in the margin of the text to help me focus the questions and discussion. It is well worth the time to master Reciprocal Questioning as it truly trains the kids to think.”

- Why is _____ happening?
 - What if _____?
 - What conclusions can I draw about _____?
 - What is the best _____ and why?
 - How does _____ affect _____?
 - How does _____ relate to what I've learned before?
 - What is the difference between _____ and _____?
 - How are _____ and _____ similar?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of _____?
 - What is another way to look at _____?
 - What is a new example of _____?
 - What are the implications of _____?
 - Why is _____ important?
 - How does _____ apply to everyday life?
- Continue this process, moving through the article.

Guide

- It takes much practice for the students to master Reciprocal Questioning. The skills of picking main ideas, engaging in metacognitive thinking, and thinking critically cannot be mastered in a short time. Many exposures and experiences are needed.
- Once the students have had many exposures and you feel that they are beginning to grasp the strategy, pair the students to try it on their own. They are not ready to go it alone, however.
- Tell the students to read the first paragraph and have one student ask a question. The other student answers the question to the best of his or her ability. Remind the students to clarify their answers. Have the students jot down the questions.
- After the first paragraph, pull the class back together and tell students to share their questions. At this point, you are assessing the quality of the questions to know if the students are ready to continue in pairs. If they are, allow them to continue for two more paragraphs. If they are not asking good questions, continue as a class and model.
- If the students are somewhat successful, let them continue for three or four paragraphs and have the students silently read the rest of the article.

Practice

As the students get closer to mastery, allow the pairs to work through an article or text on their own.

APPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES

- Make a chart of the clarifying questions above. Post it in your room to encourage student questioning.



Mary Says,

“I use Reciprocal Questioning frequently with short articles. The students need a lot of practice and it can be tedious if it goes on too long.”

Reference

Manzo, A. (1969). The ReQuest procedure. *Journal of Reading*, 13, 123-127.
King, A. (1993). From sage on the stage to guide on the side. *College Teaching*, 41(1).
Learning Point Associates. (2004). *Reciprocal Teaching*. Retrieved on May 17, 2007 from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/atrisk/at6lk38.htm>

- You will run across the strategy Reciprocal Teaching. It is very similar to Reciprocal Questioning in that all the steps and modeling stay the same. The difference comes with the dialogue between the teacher and the students. In addition to questioning, the teacher guides the students to summarize, clarify, and predict.
- Have the students master Reciprocal Questioning before you introduce Reciprocal Teaching.