

**An ASCD Study Guide for  
*Reciprocal Teaching at Work:*  
*Powerful Strategies and Lessons for Improving Reading Comprehension, 3rd edition*  
by Lori D. Oczkus**

This ASCD Study Guide is meant to enhance your understanding of the concepts and practical ideas presented in *Reciprocal Teaching at Work*, an ASCD book written by Lori D. Oczkus. You are encouraged to use this study guide as you finish each chapter. The questions are designed to help you make connections between the text and your professional situations and experiences, plus apply what you learn. Although you may think about these questions and tasks on your own, you might consider pairing with a colleague or forming a study group with others who are reading *Reciprocal Teaching at Work*. The study questions and tasks provided are not meant to cover all aspects of the book but, rather, to address specific ideas for implementation and discussion.

## **Introduction**

### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Reflect on problems students experience with comprehension.** What kinds of comprehension problems do students experience when they read different types of texts? Reflect on the various comprehension problems students in your grade level exhibit, including students who

- \* Decode but do not comprehend what they've read.
- \* Are not engaged or interested in reading material.
- \* Experience problems with decoding.
- \* Can't identify main ideas and supporting details.
- \* Read two or more years below grade level.
- \* Can't find text evidence to support higher-level questions.
- \* Are overwhelmed by vocabulary.
- \* Aren't aware that they didn't comprehend text after "reading" it.

**2. Prepare to study reciprocal teaching.** Rank yourself according to the following metaphor. Are you an observer, a walker, a jogger, or a runner in your experience with reciprocal teaching? Glance over the cover, back of the book, and table of contents, and skim through the text to see how it is organized. What are you most interested in learning about reciprocal teaching? Why?

**3. Try the "powerful reading vitamin."** How is reciprocal teaching defined? How is it like a powerful reading vitamin? Outline the four strategies that make up reciprocal teaching. How does reciprocal teaching differ from other methods? How did reciprocal teaching, or the "Fab Four," begin, and how has it changed over the years? Discuss how reciprocal teaching affects the learning of all students—including English language learners and struggling readers.

### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Study the lesson format.** Which setting appeals most to you for implementing reciprocal teaching: whole class, guided groups, or literature circles/book clubs? Study the lesson format, and identify its importance, including background/description, materials, teacher modeling, student participation with partners and teams, and assessment tips.

**5. Teach and reflect on lessons.** Skim the chapters of the book and make a list of five lessons that immediately appeal to you. Then choose a minilesson that focuses on one of the Fab Four strategies (predict, question, clarify, summarize) and try it with your class. How did students respond?

## **Chapter 1.**

### **The Fab Four: Reciprocal Teaching Strategies**

#### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Know the powerful Fab Four research.** How do you use the reciprocal teaching strategies in your own reading with a variety of texts? Why is “keeping the band together” important? What do Fab Four lessons look like across grade levels and with a variety of reading materials? According to the research, what kinds of growth can you expect? What patterns do you notice in the research on pages 16–17, as well as examples from different grade levels on pages 18–19?

**2. Strengthen the Fab Four strategies with four foundations.** Outline each strategy and its contribution to the reading process. Do you have to teach them in a certain order? Why or why not? List problems students and teachers encounter with the four strategies and ways to solve them. Share the larger group of comprehension strategies that encompasses the Fab Four, and describe how to teach both sets of strategies. Identify each of the four foundations, and reflect on ways to boost the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching by embedding, think-alouds, cooperative learning, scaffolding, and metacognition.

**3. Incorporate the Fab Four with informational texts/close reading/RTI.** Outline how reciprocal teaching helps students better understand informational text in the age of standards. How does close reading with reciprocal teaching compare to other close reading and RTI models that you’ve taught?

#### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Try an informational text minilesson.** Study the 20 minilessons outlined on page 40. Choose one text feature, such as headings, and teach it with each of the Fab Four strategies. Alternatively, choose to teach different text features for each of the Fab Four. For example, teach table of contents with predicting; headings with questioning; charts, maps, and diagrams with clarifying; and photos and sketches with summarizing.

**5. Teach a close reading lesson.** Look over the close reading lessons on pages 41–43. Teach a Fab Four close reading lesson to your class. What did your students find challenging or helpful? How can you assess student progress in close reading?

## Chapter 2. Getting Started: Introducing and Reinforcing Reciprocal Teaching

### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Jump in with all students.** Why is it important to begin teaching using all four strategies as soon as possible? Discuss ways to introduce reciprocal teaching that fits your grade level. Which students should you target with reciprocal teaching? How does reciprocal teaching aide in comprehension for grades K–12 and special populations?

**2. Use the Fab Four with any reading materials and chunk the text.** Look over the chart on page 62 to discuss reciprocal teaching with a variety of reading materials. Which do you want to try first and why? Why is “chunking” the text, or dividing the text into manageable discussion segments, important? Study page 63 to consider ways to balance reading and pausing to discuss the strategies. How can you divide the text during read-alouds and shared reading? Describe practical ways to weave in technology during reciprocal teaching lessons. How might you chunk online reading material for discussions?

**3. Choose scaffolds for introducing the Fab Four.** Which of the following scaffolds do you want to try with your class? How will these scaffolds build comprehension for students?

Scaffolds	Considerations
<b>Four Door Chart</b>	How can you use this foldable tool as an informative assessment tool during lessons?
<b>Characters and Props</b>	Tell how the use of metaphors with characters and props helps students remember the strategies. What fits your teaching style, showing a photo of the characters, holding up a prop, or going all the way and acting out characters with voices?
<b>Mentor Texts</b>	Look on pages 345–350 for a list of mentor texts to introduce and reinforce the strategies at your grade level. Choose one book per strategy to read to and with your class.
<b>Gestures</b>	What gestures go with the strategies? How can this kinesthetic movement help comprehension?
<b>Visual Supports</b>	How do the wide variety of supports on pages 75–80 help build comprehension during lessons? Which appeal to you and why? Flip through the book to find other visual supports for lessons.

### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Design an introductory reciprocal teaching lesson.** Select a text to read aloud to students or one they can read with you. Choose stopping points for discussion with their partners or teams. Consider reading a high-interest article, poem, or read-aloud.

**5. Incorporate a visual support.** Teach the bookmark lesson that begins on page 91 or the characters lesson (page 97) to reinforce the strategies. Alternatively, choose any of the visual supports in the text.

## Chapter 3. Reciprocal Teaching in Whole-Class Sessions

### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Teach reciprocal teaching using whole-class texts.** What are the benefits and goals of using whole-class instruction with reciprocal teaching? Describe how you can use whole-class texts, such as content-area reading, novels, and basal texts, with the Fab Four. What is the role of talk in comprehending such texts? How will reciprocal teaching make whole-class lessons more productive and engaging?

**2. Maximize reciprocal teaching with the four foundations.** How do the four foundations (think-alouds, scaffolding, metacognition, and cooperative learning) apply to whole-class reciprocal teaching instruction? Explain why each is critical to instruction and achievement. How does the lesson “Which one do we need?” (page 142) incorporate the four foundations, especially metacognition? Why does metacognition matter?

**3. Use informal assessments to scaffold and adjust instruction.** Which informal assessments do you think you will use to assess your students' progress in reading and Fab Four use? Study the assessment suggestion on pages 129–130. How do the four door chart and Fab Four mat provide assessment opportunities? When you conduct close reading lessons, what evidence will you use to scaffold and adjust instruction? Look over the minilessons on page 221–227. How can these single-focus lessons be used to meet student needs?

### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Try table team Fab Four lessons.** Invite your students to work through the strategies in teams at their tables. Choose a chart or other visual from the book to record their responses. Alternate between modeling a strategy and asking students to turn and talk about the same strategy as they find additional examples.

**5. Teach using the four door chart.** Provide a four door chart for students to fold (pages 140–141), or ask them to make one from blank paper. Alternate modeling each of the strategies and asking students to turn and talk as they fill in each of the strategy doors. How can you use the four door chart to assess students?

## Chapter 4. Reciprocal Teaching in Guided Reading Groups

### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Plan guided reading lessons using reciprocal teaching.** How do reciprocal teaching strategies fit into guided reading lessons? How does reciprocal teaching guided reading differ from other guided reading methods? Describe how the Fab Four looks during guided reading

at a variety of grade levels. How does the intimacy of the small group aide in comprehension? What are the respective student and teacher roles during small group instruction? Tell how small group instruction with reciprocal teaching becomes an intervention strategy especially for older struggling readers. Why do you think it is effective?

**2. Organize guided reading groups.** Study the chart on page 179. What are some different ways to place students in teacher-led, small-group instruction? What materials can be used in the small-group setting? How can you assess during instruction to meet the needs of students and reorganize groupings? Describe what the rest of the class is doing while you meet with small groups. How can students participate in reciprocal teaching together and alone while you work with groups?

**3. Coach students during guided reading.** Why is coaching individual students important? What are the prompts to use for each of the strategies? Study the guidelines on page 183 to reflect on ways you can vary the strategies used during guided reading. Which of these are you ready to try with your students?

#### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Teach a Fab Four guided reading plan.** Create a Fab Four chart and teach a lesson to a small group. Record students' predictions and summaries. Use sticky notes and ask students to find and write words to clarify and questions to write. Be sure to invite students to turn and talk to partners as you model and use each of the strategies. How can you use the minilessons at the end of this chapter and throughout the text to engage students during lessons? (See the menu on page 321 for minilesson ideas from throughout the book.)

**5. Choose and try guided reading plans.** Incorporate graphic organizers for summarizing (pages 199–207) into the Fab Four chart. Invite students to work with you to fill in the chart. Try the lesson Mind Your *Qs* and *Cs* (pages 212–217) as students select whether they need to clarify or question throughout a reading. Alternatively, copy one page from a whole-class text to reread closely and mark up in a Fab Four small-group guided reading lesson.

## **Chapter 5.** **Reciprocal Teaching in Literature Circles and Book Clubs**

### Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Define the role of reciprocal teaching literature circles and book clubs.** Why is reciprocal teaching a natural method for literature circles? How do reciprocal teaching literature circles differ from other types of literature circles? What are the goals of literature circles using reciprocal teaching? Which term do you prefer to use, *literature circles* or *book clubs*, and why?

**2. Prepare your class for literature circles and book clubs.** How much exposure to the Fab Four does your class need before you can assign roles? What social skills must be in place to ensure that student-run groups will go smoothly? Study the chart on page 235 to reflect on

training in reciprocal teaching, social skills, and classroom procedures necessary for literature circles. Study the steps for getting started on page 236. Why is the discussion director a critical role? List ways you can assess students when they work in their teams.

**3. Choose lessons.** Outline at least three different ways to start literature circles. Compare and contrast the lessons in this chapter. Which one will work best with your class, and why? Which other lessons do you want to try? What texts will your students read in their literature circles? What are the advantages of using the same text or different texts with each group?

Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Teach literature circles during guided reading.** Meet with a small group during guided reading time to train students to take on literature circle roles. Make the role cards found in this chapter (pages 254–259). Guide students as they work their way through a text. Meet with each of your guided reading groups, and train them in the literature circle procedures. Invite students to make posters that explain the necessary social skills.

**5. Try rotating roles.** Using role cards and the lesson that begins on page 265, ask students to read a page or two and then pass cards to get a new job. Designate how many pages need to be read before passing the cards. Encourage students not to just take a turn and share their thoughts on each strategy but to invite other students in the group to add their ideas. Rotating roles is a student favorite for literature circles because of the rapid pace.

**Conclusion & Appendixes A–E**

Reflection/Discussion Questions for Self-Study or Groups

**1. Consider common questions about reciprocal teaching.** Identify several common questions (found on pages 288–298) that you are wondering about. Discuss the answers and elaborate on your thoughts.

**2. Promote the ultimate goal, independence.** Study the chart on page 299. What are ways to promote independence in each of these settings: whole class, guided reading, literature circles, and independent reading?

**3. Look over the resources in the appendixes.** For each appendix, study the resources and highlight how you will use them.

Appendix	Content
Appendix A. Informal Assessments	* Study the rubric for reciprocal teaching strategies. How will you use this information? * Where do most of your students fall? * Which strategy is most challenging for them? * How can the other assessment tools in this chapter be utilized to assess students and improve instruction?

	* What are some ways to show growth when using the Fab Four?
Appendix B. Strengthening Comprehension with Cross-Age Tutors and Parents	* How will you use the resources for cross-age tutor training? * How can you train students and keep the momentum going with cross-age tutors? * Why are cross age tutors effective? * How will the parent bookmark and letter be helpful?
Appendix C. Lesson Planning with the Fab Four	How can you mix and match the minilessons on the menu to create new Fab Four lessons?
Appendix D. Reciprocal Teaching Reproducibles	* How do the spinner and dial differ? * Which of the tools in this chapter appeal to you? Rank your top three.
Appendix E. Icon and Strategy Posters	* Where in your classroom can you hang these Fab Four Strategy posters? * How are the posters helpful?
Mentor Texts for Reciprocal Teaching	Look over the bibliographies for your grade level, and select a book for each of the four strategies. Why did you select these titles?

### Lesson Study to Meet Student Needs

**4. Establish big and little buddies.** Partner younger and older students to read together. Summarize the steps outlined in the lesson. What kind of training is necessary for older students to work with younger children? Why is role playing helpful? What kind of follow-up should the older students participate in?

**5. Involve parents.** Give parents the letter and bookmark (pages 316–319) during parent-teacher conferences or at a parent meeting. Demonstrate using a text or the student, if possible.

**6. Use the menu to plan a lesson.** Plan a lesson using the menu on page 321. How can using these minilessons for each of the Fab Four strategies improve achievement? Outline how the lesson plan menu can be used in every setting: whole group, guided reading group, and literature circles/book clubs.

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*Reciprocal Teaching at Work: Powerful Strategies and Lessons for Improving Reading Comprehension* (3rd edition) was written by Lori D. Oczkus. This 365-page, 8.5" x 11" book (Stock #118045; ISBN-13: 978-1-4166-2599-5) is available from ASCD for \$34.36 (ASCD member) or \$42.95 (nonmember). Copyright © 2018 by ASCD. To order a copy, visit ASCD's Online Store at <https://shop.ascd.org>.