



FEATURING
40 NEW LESSONS

LORI D. OCZKUS

RECIPROCAL TEACHING

AT WORK

*Powerful
Strategies
and Lessons*

*for Improving Reading
Comprehension*

3RD EDITION



FOREWORD BY
JOHN HATTIE

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Introduction

An Alarming Need for Reciprocal Teaching

Problems with reading comprehension continue to plague our students and schools. Teachers everywhere are concerned about their students' reading comprehension. In today's culture—where critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity matter—our classrooms need to grow learners who are college and career ready. Students are bombarded by online texts that require close, critical reading. Standards call for more rigor and complex materials in both literary and informational texts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). In recent years, an alarming 64 percent of 4th graders and 66 percent of 8th graders read below the proficient reading level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Many educators complain that students are not engaged and can't remember what they've read. As I work in classrooms across the United States and with educators around the world, I hear some of the same concerns about reading comprehension.

Do any of the following problems with comprehension sound familiar to you? Students often

- Decode text fluently but don't remember what they've read.
- Are not interested or engaged in the reading material.
- Read two or more years below grade level.
- Experience difficulty comprehending informational text.
- Are unable to figure out challenging words.

- Are challenged to find text evidence that supports higher-level questions.
- Are overwhelmed by vocabulary (especially struggling readers or English language learners).
- Cannot identify or discriminate between main ideas and supporting details.
- Are not aware that they didn't comprehend text after "reading" it.

The Powerful Reading Vitamin: Reciprocal Teaching

Reading research suggests an urgent need for educators to teach comprehension strategies at all grade levels—from the very youngest children to high school students (Block, Parris, & Whiteley, 2008; Kincade & Beach, 1996; Pearson & Duke, 2002). Many of our students could definitely use a "reading vitamin boost" to give them the energy, stamina, and power to attack any text they encounter! With that in mind, what proven strategies deliver the "high-yield, low-prep" results that educators today are searching for? Reciprocal teaching is a research-based comprehension technique that has enjoyed over 30 years of success in dramatically improving reading comprehension (Palincsar & Brown, 1986). This technique consistently produces results of .74 growth per year (Hattie, 2008), which translates to just under two years' worth of growth in just one year. The stunning and widely respected research of Dr. John Hattie (2008, 2015) ranks reciprocal teaching as one of the 10 most effective teaching techniques (out of 138 practices).

Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that is built on four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Students take turns discussing all four strategies with a given portion of text, and the teacher models ways to extend and deepen comprehension using the four strategies. Although reciprocal teaching was introduced in reading journals during the 1980s, this research-proven technique for teaching multiple comprehension strategies is now more widely recognized and implemented due to Hattie's meta-analysis.

Today's version of reciprocal teaching has grown and developed. It's "not your grandmother's reciprocal teaching," yet the goal of improved comprehension remains. In the original model, reciprocal teaching lessons involved reading text paragraph by paragraph with a team of students who would take turns running through each of the four strategies. They would essentially "be the

teacher.” Since the original protocol was developed, however, various researchers have field tested other protocols and lesson ideas that built on the original intent of reciprocal teaching (e.g., Cooper, Boschken, McWilliams, & Pistochini, 2000; Eggleton, 2007; Lubliner, 2001; Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015).

I have given the reciprocal teaching strategies a more student-friendly nickname—The Fab Four—which teachers and students seem to enjoy using. Today, teachers incorporate many rich and varied scaffolds to enrich the technique, including the use of technology, student book club discussions, close-reading lessons, small-group guided reading, and hands-on supports such as posters, realia, bookmarks, dials, and nonlinguistic representations with gestures, drama, and art (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone, 2012).

This book includes dozens of creative proven classroom ideas for actively engaging students in The Fab Four to improve their reading. Reciprocal teaching allows the teacher and students to scaffold and construct meaning in a social setting by using modeling, think-alouds, and discussion. The goals of reciprocal teaching are as follows:

- Improve students’ reading comprehension using four comprehension strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.
- Scaffold the four strategies by modeling, guiding, and applying the strategies while reading.
- Guide students to become metacognitive and reflective in their strategy use.
- Help students monitor their reading comprehension using the four strategies.
- Use the social nature of learning to improve and scaffold reading comprehension.
- Strengthen instruction in a variety of classroom settings: whole-class sessions, guided reading groups, and literature circles.
- Be part of the broader framework of comprehension strategies that includes previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating.

My Journey with Reciprocal Teaching

What do you know about reciprocal teaching? When I work with teachers, I use an exercise metaphor to help them categorize themselves according to their level of knowledge about reciprocal teaching. Are you a bystander? If so, you’ve heard about reciprocal teaching but haven’t tried it. Are you a walker? Walkers

have only dabbled in using the four reciprocal teaching strategies. Maybe you're a jogger, and you've actually used reciprocal teaching full force for some time. Or perhaps you're a runner or someone who has years of experience using reciprocal teaching. When I work with audiences around the country and abroad, the experience levels I see varies. Once I define the strategy, more heads begin to nod with familiarity, but many teachers admit to having little direct experience with reciprocal teaching.

I enjoy sharing my own experiences with reciprocal teaching because it has revolutionized my teaching and constantly reinforces the knowledge that I can affect student achievement in any setting. Speaking, consulting in schools, and writing books on the topic has provided me with even more opportunities to help more than 100,000 teachers dramatically improve comprehension in their classrooms. Countless others have benefitted from the work of staff developers whom I've never met but have shared my spin on reciprocal teaching in their own settings.

My interest in reciprocal teaching was first awakened while I was serving as a literacy coach and consultant in an urban school in Berkeley, California, where the staff and I used the technique as part of an intervention for struggling readers (Cooper, Boschken, McWilliams, & Pistochini, 2001). Many of the intermediate students in our intervention read two or three years below grade level. Although they could decode words, they were severely lacking in reading comprehension skills. After just three months of using the reciprocal teaching strategies with these students three times per week, we witnessed dramatic results. Many of the struggling students had jumped one or two grade levels in reading ability. We also saw their attitudes change from reluctant and negative to more confident and assured. We witnessed students who had previously struggled and were now learning to love reading. I was hooked!

I asked myself, if reciprocal teaching yields such promising longitudinal results in an intervention group, why not weave this strategy into the fabric of classroom reading instruction so all students could benefit from it? So began my journey. I found research to support student growth in reading comprehension in a variety of settings—not just with struggling readers (e.g., Carter, 1997; Hattie, 2008; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Palincsar, Brown, & Campione, 1989; Palincsar & Klenk, 1991, 1992; Takala, 2006).

As a literacy consultant and coach in many schools in the San Francisco Bay area and around the United States, I began sharing reciprocal teaching with thousands of teachers in myriad classrooms and at a variety of grade levels. As

I continued using reciprocal teaching with struggling readers, their teachers reported that within a few weeks, the below-level readers became more confident and motivated readers. After further results revealed that students had improved by one to two entire grade levels, I began to wonder if reciprocal teaching could be applied to other teaching contexts.

Many of the schools in which I work also have large English language learner (ELL) populations, and we saw growth with these students as well. At one school in the Chicago area, test scores among students of Hispanic heritage (across all grades) rose significantly after reciprocal teaching was introduced. I began to experiment with reciprocal teaching in my own teaching during whole-class sessions, guided reading groups, and literature circles. Although it took time to introduce, model, and reinforce the reciprocal teaching strategies, the lessons were worth the effort; my students' use of reading comprehension strategies and their understanding improved dramatically.

Because most students already had some experience with predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, I built on that knowledge by presenting the four strategies as a package. I have since implemented the Fab Four for over 25 years—in many different grade levels and settings. In every case, students show growth in just a few months and continue to improve their reading all year long. In my project schools today, we continue to use reciprocal teaching in every possible way to strengthen students' comprehension. We teach the strategies—predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing—to the whole class through read alouds, content-area textbooks, novels, and short newspaper and magazine articles (e.g., *Time for Kids*, *Scholastic News*, *Newsela*).

Reciprocal teaching can be employed in a variety of literacy lessons and groupings, including close reading, guided reading, and with cross-age tutors. When close reading made its debut along with the most recent standards, we naturally gravitated to the Fab Four as an engaging way of actively involving students in rereading text; they marked their questions, words to clarify, and ideas to summarize. I worked with Dr. Tim Rasinski to develop a close reading protocol that also incorporates fluency work for even more reading benefits (Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015). Close reading requires that students reread text, which naturally promotes fluency. When students use the Fab Four, they reread text at least three or four times and focus on each of four strategies. The power of reciprocal teaching is in its simple, consistent lesson format that can be used at any grade level during guided reading. For example, during book clubs, students take on the roles of the predictor, questioner, clarifier, and summarizer

as they work together to construct the meaning of a text while deepening their understanding of the four strategies. Cross-age buddies—older and younger children paired together—also focus on reciprocal teaching strategies as they read and discuss picture books together. By employing these strategies in a variety of settings, you too can provide your students with many opportunities to use the strategies to dramatically improve their reading comprehension!

What's New in the Third Edition

The literacy demands of our modern world made a third edition of *Reciprocal Teaching at Work* a necessity, and it was my pleasure to step up to the challenge and responsibility of updating what has become a classic text on the topic of reciprocal teaching! Fortunately, I constantly work side by side with educators in schools and couldn't wait to share our exciting lessons and results. Although, pedagogically, the second edition still makes sense, I desperately felt compelled to share fresh new lessons and expanded thinking from the past seven years in schools. Think about the changes brought on by the Common Core State Standards (regardless of whether your state embraces them or not), the increased role of technology in our lives, the demands of massive amounts of informational text, and the increasing deluge of online reading material that might be real or "fake." Our world is changing and the need for reciprocal teaching is becoming ever more urgent. We must be able to give our students the tools they need to truly be literate in today's world.

Here are some of the lessons, ideas, and features I am excited to share with you in this book. This third edition includes

- **Many rich suggestions for informational texts and the Fab Four.** Reciprocal teaching and informational text is a match made in literacy heaven! Good readers naturally flow through the four strategies as they work to discover meaning in informational texts. Suggestions throughout every chapter reinforce teaching students how to use text evidence as they think critically and navigate text with text structures and features unique to informational texts.
- **New research and results to support your work.** I've made a concerted effort to include the most important, relevant, and promising new research, encompassing many educators who've shared their stunning formal and informal data and results.

- **A close reading lesson format and close reading lessons in every chapter.** On top of a proven and reliable “generic” close reading protocol for fiction or informational texts, the whole-class, guided reading, and whole-group chapters include exciting and engaging ways to teach students to use the Fab Four.
- **Over 40 new and updated lessons.** Between the 20 informational text minilessons, the 16 refreshed minilessons, and the close reading lessons sprinkled throughout the book, the book has 40 new lessons for you to use and enjoy. All lessons have been updated where necessary to reflect current thinking!
- **New photos of charts and students in action.** Lots of new photo supports help you envision reciprocal teaching in your classroom.
- **Suggestions for “chunking” text for effective lessons.** Learn how to select texts and how to divide them for truly effective lessons.
- **Exciting mentor text suggestions.** Which texts work to help students internalize the strategies at their grade level?
- **New gestures.** I’ve suggested additional gestures for reciprocal teaching that make a difference when providing text evidence.
- **New and newly designed reproducibles.** New and redesigned favorites include the Fab Four Puzzle, Fab Four Dice, and Reciprocal Teaching Role Cards.
- **ELL and struggling reader suggestions.** Additional tips are included for reaching ELLs and struggling readers.
- **Suggestions for incorporating technology.** Fresh, classroom-proven ways to practically use technology support all reciprocal teaching discussions.
- **Behavior indicators for every lesson.** Behavior indicators provide ideal checklists for assessing and reporting student progress.
- **Guidelines for facilitating talk and promoting the use of academic language.** Students need to be taught the social skills required to be 21st-century learners. You will find suggestions for strengthening those social skills and helping students grow their ideas through better discussions.
- **Parent letter and bookmark.** Parents will appreciate some guidelines and practical suggestions for home use of reciprocal teaching discussions.
- **End-of-chapter discussion prompts.** Every chapter includes a summary and questions to use in group or individual self-study.
- **Online study guide.** The new *Reciprocal Teaching At Work* study guide that accompanies this book (available at www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/Oczkus118045.pdf) includes a plan for a staff book club complete with

outlines for meetings. Whether you have 10 minutes at a staff meeting or a longer PD day, you'll find detailed plans for facilitating trainings around each chapter of the book. The guide includes Read and Discuss, Try Reciprocal Teaching in Your Room, Professional Development Breakout Groups, Teacher as Reader, and Before the Next Meeting.

Overview of the Third Edition

The chapters of this book are organized around classroom settings and can be read in any order to suit the needs of your students and teaching style. However, I recommend reading Chapter 1 first, because it covers the rationale and important understandings central to reciprocal teaching, outlines the four reciprocal teaching strategies, and provides research behind the staggering results that reciprocal teaching can deliver. Whether you implement reciprocal teaching during whole-class lessons, guided reading groups, or literature circles, the principles of this multiple-strategy approach are the same. However, the teaching method varies slightly in each of these settings, and you will also need to make adjustments for your grade level (Figure 0.1).

Chapter 1 includes many critical foundational ideas to help you begin using reciprocal teaching with your class and keep it going all year long. Each of the four strategies—predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing—is

FIGURE 0.1

Reciprocal Teaching in Different Classroom Settings

Classroom Setting	Why Use Reciprocal Teaching in This Setting?
Whole-Class Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the class to reciprocal teaching strategies. • Continually model the four strategies for students in teacher think-alouds. • Establish common academic language and terms. • Provide reinforcement in core required reading and content-area reading throughout the school day.
Guided Reading Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce or introduce reciprocal teaching strategies in a teacher-led, small-group setting. • Provide extra support or intervention to students who struggle or to English language learners (ELLs). • Differentiate instruction based on informal assessments and students' needs. • Provide a Response to Intervention (RTI).
Literature Circle / Book Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release responsibility to students for reciprocal teaching strategies. • Reinforce and strengthen student use of reciprocal teaching strategies.

described in detail, with ideas for prompting students to use the language unique to it. Suggestions for incorporating reciprocal teaching into a broader list of comprehension strategies are outlined. Twenty brand-new minilessons using informational text features—super short lessons you can teach on the fly and then repeat with different texts—are included in a handy chart. A close reading protocol for use with any text is also outlined.

Because teachers sometimes encounter obstacles when implementing reciprocal teaching, Chapter 1 also includes practical ways to overcome such difficulties and information about the four foundations necessary for getting the most from reciprocal teaching: scaffolding, thinking aloud, thinking metacognitively, and learning cooperatively. The critical role of gradual release of responsibility is outlined for the reader as well. Teaching students to discuss using reciprocal teaching is truly an art that requires knowing when to model and when to let students do the work on their own. Guidelines for providing the right dose of student support are given. Models for using reciprocal teaching as a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan are also outlined with suggestions for using the strategies during each tier of instruction.

Chapter 2 is loaded with many practical ways to introduce reciprocal teaching in your classroom. How to use reciprocal teaching to meet the needs of students at primary, intermediate, and secondary grades are shared. The many ways to start reciprocal teaching that are modeled in this chapter are not just for the start of the school year. You might also try a variety of these lessons throughout the year to continue deepening your students' understanding of the strategies. The chapter also addresses which texts to use and how to "chunk" or divide those texts. Introductory lesson ideas include sharing the Fab Four using read-alouds and poetry, incorporating characters to represent each strategy, and using hand gestures to cue the strategies. New gestures for the word *because* plus one for clarifying with synonyms add additional scaffolding to lessons. Icons, posters, and bookmarks provide support for students as they work in pairs and teams to practice the strategies. A discussion of texts and materials to use during reciprocal teaching lessons is provided.

Chapter 3 offers engaging lessons that introduce the whole class to the four reciprocal teaching strategies by depicting each strategy as a character, modeling the use of a variety of resources, and scaffolding with collaborative and partner activities. The Four Door Chart (see Figure 3.1 on page 139), popular with students and teachers, serves as a useful discussion guide and progress monitoring assessment. The close reading lesson Read it Again Sammy!

engages students in rereading to better understand text. Practical lessons assist students in remembering and internalizing reciprocal teaching strategies for eventual independent use.

Chapter 4 provides many new ideas for leading students in reciprocal teaching discussions in guided reading groups. Lessons for use with fiction and informational text are outlined. These teacher-led, small-group lessons can be the training ground for students' transfer to literature circles. Guidelines for developing discussion skills are also outlined. This chapter includes a variety of suggestions for using graphic organizers and charts, learning cooperatively, rereading closely, and teaching word analysis. In addition, intervention lesson ideas for struggling students are provided, along with suggestions for the effective use of coaching prompts during guided reading. Practical ideas for keeping the rest of the class busy during guided reading are outlined. Ties to the popular Daily Five (Boushey & Moser, 2014) and Café (Boushey & Moser, 2009) are outlined.

Chapter 5 explores reciprocal teaching in literature circles, which is an excellent way to continue to provide students with opportunities to strengthen their use of reciprocal teaching strategies as they become more independent. Even young children can learn to run their own book clubs! Middle school and high school students naturally enjoy talking with one another and gravitate to the ease of reciprocal teaching discussions. Lessons for introducing the roles of predictor, questioner, clarifier, and summarizer are provided. This chapter also outlines a special discussion director role that rounds out the literature circle with prompts for connecting students' background knowledge and questions to the text. Many innovative tools, such as role sheets, a discussion spinner, and minilessons on each of the four strategies, are included. Easy options for getting started with literature circles are included, as are suggestions for teaching students literature circle social skills. Finally, this chapter offers literature circle assessment tools for both students and teachers.

The Conclusion summarizes the main points about reciprocal teaching as an effective method for teaching reading comprehension, and it offers a quick reference for readers who have specific questions about how or why reciprocal teaching should be part of their classroom agenda. In this section, teachers' common questions about reciprocal teaching are addressed in a practical question-and-answer format.

The appendixes in this book are loaded with useful tools to support reciprocal teaching in the classroom:

- Appendix A: Informal Assessments
- Appendix B: Strengthening Comprehension with Cross-Age Tutors and Parents
- Appendix C: Lesson Planning With the Fab Four
- Appendix D: Reciprocal Teaching Reproducibles

Special Features in This Book

The lessons in Chapters 2 through 5 all follow a similar format:

Background and Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughts and reflections on and experiences from using the lesson.• Brief description of the lesson.• Emphasis on reciprocal teaching strategies (along with what else may be needed).
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplies needed for the lesson.
Teacher Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scaffolded instruction.• Strategies modeled for students as think-alouds.
Student Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steps toward a gradual release of responsibility for using the strategies with partners, in collaborative teams, and independently.
Assessment Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-lesson assessments of understanding.

Minilessons that focus on individual reciprocal teaching strategies are found near the end of each chapter and can be used when students need reinforcement for a particular strategy. The minilessons follow the same format as the longer lessons. Keep in mind that reciprocal teaching strategies should be taught in concert with one another, so if you focus on only one strategy during a minilesson, let your students know how that strategy fits back into the larger framework of all four reciprocal teaching strategies used to comprehend text. Remind students that readers rarely use one strategy at a time while reading; instead, they use the four strategies together as they make their way through a text.

Throughout this book you will also find the Classroom Story feature, which includes detailed accounts of reciprocal teaching lessons taken from classrooms across the United States. Some of these stories focus on the strategies specifically, whereas others show you what the strategies look like at a variety of grade levels. You will also find many classroom examples throughout each chapter to give you a better idea of what reciprocal teaching looks like at a variety of grade levels. So as you read, you'll find dozens of classroom examples to provide you with a variety of examples of reciprocal teaching in action!

This book extends the successful research of those who have so generously shared their reciprocal teaching ideas. The chapters are organized in a practical manner to make it easy for you to implement this instructional method in your own classroom. In addition to the many chapter features previously described, each chapter contains ready-to-use reproducible forms that will help students understand the reciprocal teaching strategies and the texts they are reading. The goal of this book is to provide you with the practical, motivating tools you need to improve the reading comprehension of all students by using reciprocal teaching strategies.



The Fab Four: Reciprocal Teaching Strategies 1



Fab Four Classroom Poster (photo courtesy of Kara Collins)

Prediction is when you say what you think is going to happen in the book and you look at all the clues like the cover, pictures, and chapter headings.

—Rachael, 4th grade

Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded, or supported, discussion technique that incorporates four main strategies—predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing—that good readers use together to comprehend text. Think about how you use these strategies in your own reading as an adult. For example, when you read an article in a newspaper, in a magazine, or on the Internet, you probably first look at the visuals and skim as you predict what the piece is about. Then, as you read, you alternate between clarifying ideas and words by rereading and using other strategies such as asking questions or wondering about something you don't understand. You summarize throughout your reading and predict what will come next along the way. Good readers do all of this naturally every time they read.

I refer to the reciprocal teaching strategies as the Fab Four (or Be the Teacher strategies) because students can relate to and understand these terms. When I work with educators, I share a metaphor using the original Fab Four—The Beatles—as an example. Although each member of The Beatles built a successful solo career, they are still widely known for their work as a group. Likewise, the reciprocal teaching strategies each enjoy very separate, distinct, and important roles as research-based reading strategies. However, when we “keep the band together,” their effect is even more powerful! I often model and explain how I use these four strategies in concert during reading to make the point that all readers use the Fab Four as they engage with text. By explicitly naming each of the reciprocal teaching strategies as we use them, we teach students to draw on them throughout the reading process. Research supports the direct instruction of comprehension strategies for students of all ages and skill levels (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Hattie, 2008; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). Let's take a peek inside some classrooms to see what reciprocal teaching looks like across grade levels.

Reciprocal teaching fits with any grade-level lesson using fiction or informational text. Following are just a few examples of how all four strategies can be used in lessons at a variety of grade levels ranging from K to 12:

- A group of 1st graders gather on the rug as Mrs. Chang reads aloud the picture book *Into the A, B, Sea* by Deborah Lee Rose, which she also projects on the interactive whiteboard. Mrs. Chang pauses periodically throughout the reading for students to make hand gestures that represent each of the strategies: predict, question, clarify, and summarize. (See gestures on page 72.) The text is loaded with rich, lyrical vocabulary such as

barnacles cling and *kelp forests sway*, and as Mrs. Chang pauses, partners turn to each other and use the strategies to share their thoughts. Together, the class makes a list of new words to clarify and strategies they can use for figuring out their meanings. Students also create gestures to go with this new vocabulary.

- Down the hall, the 5th graders in Mr. Erickson's class read the class novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan in their book clubs. Each student takes on a different role—discussion director, predictor, clarifier, questioner, summarizer—as they work their way through the chapters together and use the reciprocal teaching strategies. The discussion director leads the group members in a lively exchange as they predict, question, clarify, and summarize the novel. Mr. Erickson rotates among the groups to coach their efforts and model using examples from the text. After the book clubs finish reading and discussing the day's chapter, they each create a poster with a 25-word summary and a drawing to share with the class.
- Across town at the high school, 9th graders form discussion circles to dive into the stories of Edgar Allan Poe. They each jot down a quick-write prior to the discussion and then fill in their four door charts in their notebooks as they record their ideas for each of the four reciprocal teaching strategies (see page 139). Students turn their desks to work in groups of four as they share their brief predictions, questions, words and ideas to clarify, and summaries. They also share a "Why do you think . . ." discussion starter and informally run through the reciprocal teaching strategies as they naturally come up in conversation. Students use text evidence in their responses.

This foundational chapter offers an overview of the research behind reciprocal teaching and the staggering results that point to growth at all grade levels K–12. Reciprocal teaching is an effective protocol for close reading (Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015), and I've included a generic model for you to use with any text! Also included are descriptions of each of the four strategies, the research that drives them, and ways the Fab Four fit into broader reading programs. The role of gradual release of responsibility is included to illustrate ways to help students become independent in their strategy use (Pearson & Gallagher, 1993). Tied to this, I've included steps for conducting engaging think-alouds, ways to scaffold the Fab Four, ideas for increasing student independence and

metacognition, examples of cooperative learning, practical ideas for using reciprocal teaching with informational texts, and ideas for intervention and other schoolwide applications. Finally, this chapter also explores some of the obstacles that educators encounter as students implement the Fab Four.

What the Research Says About Reciprocal Teaching

Palincsar and Brown (1984, 1986), the creators of reciprocal teaching, found that when the strategies were used with a group of students for just 15–20 days, assessments of students' reading comprehension increased from 30 percent to 70–80 percent. According to a study by Palincsar and Klenk (1991), students not only improved their comprehension skills almost immediately but also maintained their improved comprehension skills when tested a year later. More recently, Hattie's research (2008) points to the consistent success of reciprocal teaching and its promise of .74 growth—or almost two years in just one school year! Hattie's reporting of reciprocal teaching is significant because he looked at over 800 studies and 138 different practices and their effect sizes. Hattie ranks practices according to their effectiveness in yielding results with students, and reciprocal teaching ranks ninth (out of 138 practices) for its power to yield results! These exciting results, drawn from 15 years of studies, point to reciprocal teaching as a proven teaching strategy that has a strong effect on student achievement.

In addition, Rosenshine and Meister (1994) reviewed 16 studies of reciprocal teaching and concluded that reciprocal teaching is a technique that improves reading comprehension. Reciprocal teaching techniques are especially effective when incorporated into intervention programs for struggling readers (Cooper et al., 2000) and when used with low-performing students in urban settings (Carter, 1997). Although originally designed for small-group instruction with struggling middle school students, reciprocal teaching has been shown to yield positive and consistent results with primary and upper-grade elementary students taught in large-group, teacher-led settings and in peer groups (e.g., Coley, DePinto, Craig, & Gardner, 1993; Cooper et al., 2000; Kelly, Moore, & Tuck, 1994; Myers, 2005; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Palincsar & Klenk, 1991, 1992).

Reciprocal teaching also yields positive growth in reading comprehension for ELL students who often experience problems with comprehension due to vocabulary load and background experiences (Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore,

2003; Hashey & Connors, 2003; Sollars & Pumfrey, 1999). Additionally, researchers have credited ELL students' success to reciprocal teaching instruction that utilizes students' native languages in tandem with collaborative learning opportunities with peers and cross-age tutors (Klingner & Vaughn, 1996).

Students who engage in and benefit from reciprocal teaching not only improve their reading level but also retain more of the material covered in the text (Reutzel, Smith, & Fawson, 2005). With the addition of more informational texts in classrooms, this is good news even for our most gifted readers! The information load for all readers is increasing, and reciprocal teaching can be scaffolded so readers at all levels have access to more rigorous texts. Indeed, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (part of the National Institutes of Health) concluded that reciprocal teaching is an effective practice that is recommended to improve reading comprehension with all types of texts (NICHD, 2000).

Lubliner (2001) also points out that reciprocal teaching is an effective teaching technique that can improve the kind of reading comprehension necessary not only for improved test scores but also for life in the Information Age. There is a growing need for students to learn sophisticated reading skills they can employ in both the workforce and a world bursting with data. Students should be prepared to comprehend and evaluate a wide variety of complicated texts—from printed books to electronic sources—and reciprocal teaching strategies can help them achieve that goal.

Exciting Results from Educators

In my travels to schools and conferences in the United States and abroad, I have met many educators who eagerly shared dramatic results using reciprocal teaching. Following are some of the inspiring success stories that teachers around the world experience after using the Fab Four with their students. Note that student growth in reading is usually consistent with Hattie's findings of .74 in one year (2008), but sometimes students jump as much as several levels in three to six months! In my project schools—where I work with teachers throughout the year and across the country—we experience similar results. Keep in mind that, just like a diet, once a week for the method is not enough to make a difference in student achievement. Success stories and student growth are based on students participating in reciprocal teaching lessons two or more times per week.

You'll find a few classroom stories here to whet your appetite. Other success stories are sprinkled throughout the book in a text feature called Classroom Snapshots and Results. Appendix A also contains two success stories. Thanks to all the colleagues who eagerly shared their wonderful data so other students may benefit.

Oakland, Illinois: 2nd–5th Grade

Improved comprehension and overall reading level across the entire school. Melissa Wheeler from Lake Crest Elementary, a rural school with a high free-and-reduced-price lunch population, reports significant gains in reading growth using running records and observations.

Melissa shares, "During the 2015–16 school year, we assessed 76 children, or all the students in grades 2–5, including those with IEPs, to measure reading level growth. Eighty-two percent of our students showed one year's growth or more. Even more astounding is that 60 percent of the students in our school posted a growth of 1.5–4 years!

"Those results swept the range of students. Some of our lowest readers showed 3–4 years' growth, which allowed them to catch up and even surpass their grade levels. Readers who were on or above grade level also showed a significant improvement.

"Reciprocal teaching has changed both the way we teach reading in our district and the way our students analyze and monitor their own comprehension."

Queens, New York: 6th Grade ELL Students

Improved comprehension, oral language, writing, and reader self-perception. Dr. Virginia Russell (2011) of Hunter College designed a study in an urban school with ELL students who spoke 14 different languages. After just 20 days of reciprocal teaching instruction, the experimental group dramatically improved their oral language proficiency with an effect size of +1.09 and their general reading progress with an effect size of .66. Reciprocal teaching also showed statistically significant improvement in the writing proficiency of the students (Russell & McCormack, 2014).

Melrose Park, Illinois: 4th–12th Grade

Improved motivation, comprehension, and engagement during independent reading. Karen Walker, Ed.D., from Rockford University, reports

positive results using reciprocal teaching with 4th–8th graders by extending the strategies from whole-class and small-group instruction to independent daily reading time (IDR). Before the project began, at least 50 percent of the students were observed participating in “fake reading” while exhibiting low comprehension during conferences with the teacher. After applying the reciprocal teaching strategies during individual conferences—and instructing students in them—student engagement during IDR increased to 80 percent, comprehension improved during independent conferences, and group discussions became more lively and vibrant. Dr. Walker also found reciprocal teaching to be an effective method to improve comprehension and reading motivation during individual tutoring sessions with high school students.

How Reciprocal Teaching Fits Into the Literacy Program

It is important to understand how the Fab Four strategies fit into an entire comprehensive plan for teaching reading comprehension. I like to think of reciprocal teaching as a “powerful reading vitamin” that ensures reading success and strengthens overall comprehension. The core reading program provides a healthy diet of comprehension from a broader list of strategies, but when students also benefit from at least two weekly doses of reciprocal teaching, they become stronger readers. In short, reciprocal teaching complements core reading instruction. In the schools in which I consult, reciprocal teaching is delivered alongside the other essential comprehension strategies.

Keep in mind that reciprocal teaching is a subset of a larger group of comprehension strategies. Reading is a complex, multifaceted process, and reciprocal teaching is designed to focus on only four of the most important strategies that good readers use to comprehend text (i.e., predict, question, clarify, summarize). Many researchers and educators provide a broader framework for teaching comprehension that includes the following eight strategies, which are necessary for teaching students to understand what they read (e.g., Harvey & Goudvis, 2017; McLaughlin & Allen, 2002; Oczkus, 2004; Pearson & Duke, 2002):

1. Previewing: activating prior knowledge, predicting, and setting a purpose.
2. Self-questioning: generating questions to guide reading.
3. Making connections: relating reading to self, text, and world.
4. Visualizing: creating mental pictures.

5. Knowing how words work: understanding words through strategic vocabulary development, including the use of graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cueing systems.
6. Monitoring: asking whether a text makes sense and clarifying by adapting strategic processes.
7. Summarizing: synthesizing important ideas.
8. Evaluating: making judgments.

Although the names and total number may differ slightly, these strategies are founded on the same strong research base used to develop reading curriculum and standards. In my project schools, I work with the staff to teach one of the comprehension strategies from the broader list of eight strategies each week. We focus on that strategy during whole-class and small-group instruction and call it the “focus strategy of the week.” Then the teachers select a regular time for students to employ the four reciprocal teaching strategies so they can experience the power of multiple-strategy instruction. The kid-friendly term I use for the broader list of comprehension strategies is the “Super Six,” which include making connections, predicting/infering, questioning, monitoring/clarifying, summarizing/synthesizing, and evaluating (Oczkus, 2004, 2009). By combining predicting and infering and synthesizing and summarizing, I’ve narrowed the list to a more manageable number of strategies. Note that visualizing is included in the clarifying step since good readers pause to clarify words by picturing the meanings in their heads.

The Super Six and Fab Four work together in the context of literacy instruction. The broader list of comprehension strategies provides a comprehensive framework for the entire literacy program. Textbook publishers often build programs around the list of 6–8 strategies and suggest teaching one per week. The Fab Four is a subset of strategies that provides a framework or protocol for classroom discussions. All four strategies are used in concert with one another at least several times per week as a multiple strategy technique. For example, in Mrs. Langham’s 5th grade classroom, she posts the Super Six comprehension strategies on the wall and teaches one strategy each week with her basal reader and social studies text. The Fab Four is posted beside that list and is arranged in a circle, which demonstrates that these four strategies are a subset of the longer list and can be experienced in any order. Her students also enjoy the analogy that the Fab Four is a vitamin pill to boost reading skills, and the circular shape helps keep the metaphor alive. Mrs. Langham’s students follow

the Fab Four as a discussion protocol during literature circles with novels twice during the week.

A 1st grade teacher, Mr. Romero, displays the strategies in the same way. However, he uses a character for each of the reciprocal teaching strategies and displays props to represent and prompt each one. His students understand that when it is time to read with the Fab Four, they should employ all four strategies in the same lesson—which usually occurs during a read-aloud or partner reading. In this way, students benefit from ongoing instruction in all of the comprehension strategies as well as the Fab Four.

The Fab Four, though extremely effective, is not an entire literacy program. Students need more than just reciprocal teaching strategies. A 6th grade teacher at one of my schools recently announced, “Since my students are so needy and read well below grade level, I am abandoning everything else and only focusing on the Fab Four!” This teacher understood the research on reciprocal teaching and figured it was the lifeline his students so desperately needed. Even though his conclusion made sense, his students still need a wide variety of literacy experiences. With that in mind, I encouraged him to continue using the district-adopted materials that incorporate multiple reading skills and strategies and to use reciprocal teaching during guided reading and literature circles. This way, his students would benefit from many rich strategies and texts. (See Figure 1.1 for a list of resources on incorporating reciprocal teaching into your lessons.)

FIGURE 1.1

Resources on Lessons That Strengthen Reciprocal Teaching

Cooper, J. D., Boschken, I., McWilliams, J., & Pistochini, L. (2001). *Soar to success: The intermediate intervention program*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Oczkus, L. D. (2008). *The fabulous four: Reading comprehension puppets*. Berkeley, CA: Primary Concepts.

Oczkus, L. D., & Rasinski, T. (2015) *Close reading with paired texts (K–5 series)*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education.

Taylor, B. M. (2011). *Catching readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The Fab Four: A Powerful Package for the Age of Standards

Reciprocal teaching strategies help educators effectively implement the type of close, evidence-based reading called for in any standards-based curriculum, including the Common Core State Standards. With an increase in both informational texts and more rigorous reading material, students need reciprocal

teaching now more than ever to help them comprehend. Since reciprocal teaching is a discussion technique, many listening and speaking standards are naturally met. Each of the four strategies plays an important role in meeting a variety of standards:

- **Predict:** Students make predictions using evidence from the text, such as text features. Students also predict the author's purpose and text organization.
- **Question:** Students cite textual evidence and draw on multiple sources to ask and answer questions in order to understand the text better.
- **Clarify:** Students apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills to decode new and unfamiliar words. They rely on context to confirm, self-correct, and reread when necessary. They also analyze how parts of the text fit together and clarify by rereading or reading on to figure out confusing points, words, or phrases.
- **Summarize:** Students identify main ideas and details and compare and contrast the structure of a text to determine themes and summarize narrative text. They also integrate and evaluate information from the text and support their claims with text evidence.

Reciprocal teaching is considered a multiple strategy approach since all four strategies need to be included in each session to yield the best results. Research indicates that strong readers employ more than one strategy at a time as they read (Reutzel et al., 2005). However, each of the four strategies comes with its own legacy of research and rigor that affects reading achievement. Once you've introduced reciprocal teaching to your students, it's possible to teach minilessons that focus on strengthening them independently.

Let's take a look at each of the strategies to see what they bring to the comprehension equation.

Predicting

Many students have been exposed to this popular strategy. Students often define predicting as a form of guessing, and they seem to enjoy making predictions. However, predicting goes beyond merely guessing and involves previewing the text to anticipate what may happen next. Readers can use text evidence and information from the text along with their prior knowledge to make logical predictions before and during reading (Pearson & Duke, 2002). The actual process of predicting differs when reading fiction or informational text (Figure 1.2). When reading fiction, students may consider the theme and characters'

FIGURE 1.2

Predicting with Fiction and Informational Text

Predicting with Fiction	Predicting with Informational Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview cover art, title, author, and illustrations. • Flip through the text to preview visuals. • Preview to consider text structure, setting, characters, problem, characters' feelings and motives, events, and theme. • Consider whether the author's purpose is to entertain, inform, or persuade. • Return to predictions both during and after reading to confirm or revise them. • Use the sentence frame "I think this is about _____ because _____" or "I think _____ will happen because _____." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview cover art, title, author, and illustrations. • Flip through text for clues and text features, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – headings – maps – tables, charts, diagrams, graphs – photos, drawings, captions – table of contents, index, glossary • Preview to determine text structure, sequence of events, main idea and details, or cause-effect relationships. • Consider whether the author's purpose is to inform, entertain, or persuade. • Return to predictions both during and after reading to confirm or revise them. • Use the sentence frame "I think I will learn _____ because _____."

motives and feelings; when reading informational text, they need to pay attention to text features and the author's purpose.

Many students experience problems with predicting because they share "bland" or simplistic predictions, such as "I think it is about a frog." After studying the title and cover of a book, students should first try to figure out if the author's purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain. They can then make a stronger prediction based on that, such as "I think it is about how frogs are becoming endangered because . . ." They should also be able to provide information and clues from the text to support their more detailed predictions. Teacher modeling is essential, as is the use of sentence or strategy frames that students use to help guide their own thinking and discussion.

For both fiction and informational texts, it's important to stop periodically during the reading and ask students to gather clues to make predictions for the next portion of the text. Students need to understand that they can—and should—confirm or change their predictions while they read and gather new information from a text. Giving students the opportunity to preview what they read by discussing text features and using graphic organizers (such as a story map or Venn diagram) provides them with visual clues for predicting.

The language that students should use when making predictions includes the following phrases (Mowery, 1995; Oczkus, 2009). The word *because* is

included so students will include text evidence and their own inferences as they predict:

- I think . . . because . . .
- I'll bet . . . because . . .
- I wonder if . . . because . . .
- I imagine . . . because . . .
- I suppose . . . because . . .
- I predict . . . because . . .
- I think I will learn . . . because . . .
- I think . . . will happen because . . .

Predicting is a strategy that helps students set a purpose for reading and monitor their reading comprehension. It allows students to interact with the text, and it makes them more likely to become interested in the reading material while simultaneously improving their understanding (Duffy, 2009; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011; Fielding, Anderson, & Pearson, 1990). In my experience, students seem to enjoy predicting, and they do so with exuberance. The key is to scaffold the discussion so students will make logical and increasingly sophisticated predictions.

Questioning

Good readers ask questions throughout the reading process (Brigham, Berkeley, Simpkins, & Brigham, 2007; Cooper, 1993; Palincsar & Brown, 1986), but formulating questions is a difficult and complex task. Poor readers often become so lost they can't even begin to ask a question about the text, let alone answer a teacher's question. Questioning is an integral part of reciprocal teaching. Students pause throughout the reading to address questions that come up. There are many types of questions that are important for students to know how to ask and answer—from text-dependent questions, to wondering and hypothesizing about the topic, to asking author questions.

I often bring in a toy microphone to serve as a metaphor for questioning. During reading, we ask "game show questions" that can be answered or inferred using text clues. Many students begin by asking questions about unimportant details. However, as I continue to model question formulation and students share their own questions with the class, the quality and depth of their questions increase. I also model how to ask questions based on inferences and main points in a text. Finally, I model how to ask thinking or discussion-type

questions, such as “Why do you think . . . ?” or “How do you think . . . ?” These question stems motivate students to discuss the text with one another, and questioning in general motivates students to interview, quiz, and challenge one another to think deeply about a text.

Younger students naturally wonder and ask questions about the world around them. When students are encouraged and taught to ask questions as they read, their comprehension deepens (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007). When students know—prior to reading—that they need to think of a question about the text, they read with an awareness of the text’s important ideas. They automatically increase their reading comprehension when they read and generate questions (Lubliner, 2001).

Students also enjoy the opportunity to “be the teacher” and ask questions during reciprocal teaching discussions. For example, during guided reading sessions, try giving each student a sticky note to mark a portion of text that he or she wants to turn into a question. Then have students share their questions with one another and the larger group. Students need modeling to improve the quality and depth of their questions, but with practice, students learn to generate questions about main idea and details and their textual inferences. I’ve found that questioning often becomes the favored strategy of many students.

- Who . . . ?
- What . . . ?
- Why . . . ?
- Where . . . ?
- When . . . ?
- How . . . ?
- What/How/Why do you think . . . ?

Younger students and ELL students sometimes struggle with question formulation, so make a point of giving these students longer question starters or stems. For example, instead of inviting students to ask a question with just the word *why*, provide a longer stem for students to complete, such as “On page 10, why did the . . . ?” (See Figure 1.3 for how the actual process of questioning differs when reading fiction or informational text.)

Clarifying

Clarifying—or monitoring comprehension—involves more than just figuring out difficult words in a text (see Figure 1.4). A broader definition

FIGURE 1.3

Questioning with Fiction and Informational Text

Questioning with Fiction	Questioning with Informational Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask, “I wonder” questions before reading and while previewing the cover, title, and text. Base these “wonderings” on the art and by skimming the text. • Ask “I wonder” questions throughout reading. • Formulate thinking questions about the setting, characters, problem, events, resolution, and theme. • Ask thinking questions about whether you agree or disagree with the characters actions or the author’s choices in words and storyline. • Ask text-dependent questions, such as “What examples does the author include?” and “Why did the author use the word ____?” • Ask thinking questions about whether you agree or disagree with the author’s choice of story line, vocabulary, or organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask “I wonder” questions before reading and while previewing the cover, title, and text. Base these “wonderings” on the art and by skimming the text. • Use text features (e.g., headings, maps, tables, charts, photos) to formulate questions. • Ask questions about the text using the text structure, sequence of events, main idea and details, or cause-effect relationships. • Ask thinking questions about whether you agree or disagree with the author’s choice of words, text features, or ideas. • Ask text-dependent questions about choices the author made, such as “What examples does the author include?” and “How does the heading/map/etc. help you understand . . . ?”

of clarifying includes keeping track of one’s comprehension of the text and employing fix-up strategies to maintain meaning during reading. Research clearly indicates that monitoring is an important strategy that distinguishes strong readers (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Unfortunately, many young readers don’t recognize when meaning has broken down as they read (Routman, 2003). I once observed a creative 2nd grade teacher use a toy car and tool belt to help explain this concept to her students. She placed the toy car under a poem she had printed on a chart. Then, while she read it aloud, she pretended the car got stuck as she stopped at a difficult word or sentence to clarify. She wore a toy tool belt and pulled out various gadgets to help her clarify, including a pointer or “rereader” to go over confusing passages or words, a different pointer to read ahead for clues to figure out unfamiliar words, a word chopper for breaking words into known parts, and a glittery pair of glasses to help students visualize and make pictures in their minds. What a great metaphor for what it means to clarify while reading!

Clarifying helps students monitor their comprehension as they identify problems, misunderstandings, and the meaning of new and unfamiliar words (Allington, 2001). It’s also a complex strategy that involves two basic steps: (1) identifying or admitting that one is stuck on a word or idea, and (2) figuring out how to remedy the situation. Most students can easily identify words

with which they need help deciphering, yet many are reluctant and embarrassed to admit that vocabulary or larger portions of text have caused them problems. A go-to strategy is to ask them to find a word (or part of a text) that they figured out but might be difficult for a younger student. Then ask them to describe how they would teach the word or passage to that younger reader. This is one of my favorite tried-and-true “tricks” for getting kids to open up and identify potential difficulties with a text. This works because students feel like they’re doing it for someone else!

Although students can be taught to identify difficult words and work through them, it is far more difficult for some students to recognize unclear sentences, passages, or chapters. Perhaps these difficulties occur because, even though students can read every word in a given portion of text, they still do not understand the main idea of the reading. During reciprocal teaching, the teacher and students have an opportunity to share fix-up strategies that will help them construct meaning. I find it extremely helpful to model this approach using the strategy frame “I didn’t get the sentence . . . so I . . .” Modeling with a document camera or interactive whiteboard, I then highlight an entire sentence and model how to reread, read on, and clarify meaning. Next, I ask students to find another sentence that is tricky and mark it using a sticky note. Using the strategy frame prompt encourages students and gives struggling readers and ELLs concrete language on which they can rely. Stephanie Tanner and Laurie Lawrence—two educators in Ohio—came up with a nice way to give their students “a bit of grace” with the frame “I wasn’t sure about . . . but then I . . .”

Educators often wonder where the strategy of visualizing fits into the reciprocal teaching protocol. In my project schools, we weave sensory images into the clarifying step quite naturally. Think about what happens when you’re reading and suddenly realize you’re merely looking at the words; you’re not really reading. You’ve stopped visualizing. This happens all the time! You quickly reread to get yourself back on track as you make a picture in your head. I ask students to use the clarify stem “I didn’t get the part where . . . so I reread and visualized” (or smelled, tasted, felt, etc.).

Summarizing

Summarizing is a challenging strategy, so it’s no wonder that students (and teachers) often moan and groan when we say, “Time to summarize!” Teaching students to summarize is a research-based, effective way to improve overall

FIGURE 1.4

Clarifying with Fiction and Informational Text**Identifying the problem or breakdown in meaning:**

- I didn't get [the word, sentence, part, visual, chapter], so I [used fix-up strategies, reread, read on, broke the word into parts, visualized, skipped it, asked a friend, thought about my connections].
- I wasn't sure about . . . , but then I . . .
- I didn't understand the part where . . .
- This [sentence, paragraph, page, chapter] is not clear. This doesn't make sense, so I . . .
- I can't figure out . . .
- This is a tricky word because . . .
- I am having trouble pronouncing . . .
- This is a hard or tricky word for a . . . grader.

Clarifying an idea/part/sentence/phrase:

- I reread the parts that I don't understand.
- I read on to look for context clues.
- I checked the pictures, visuals, or text features.
- I thought about other words that mean the same thing.
- I thought about what I know.
- I talked to a friend.

Clarifying a word:

- I reread.
- I looked for word parts that I know.
- I tried to blend the sounds together.
- I thought of another word that looks like this word.
- I read on to find clues.
- I replaced the word with another word or synonym that makes sense.
- I looked up the word in the index or dictionary.

Clarifying to visualize or use other senses:

- I reread to get a picture in my head.
- I looked for key words that helped me make pictures in my head.
- I looked for key words or phrases that helped me experience senses while reading.

comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Reciprocal teaching provides students with many opportunities to exercise their summarizing muscles as they formulate frequent verbal summaries throughout the reading of a text. Summarizing is a complex process that requires the orchestration of various skills and strategies, including recalling important events and details, sequencing, paraphrasing, and using synonyms or selecting vocabulary. When summarizing a story, students may use the setting, characters, problem, events, and resolution to guide their summaries. By contrast, informational text requires students to

determine important points or categories of information and arrange them in a logical order.

There are many creative ways you can engage students in summarizing. To provide more practice and improve students' abilities to summarize, try stopping more frequently throughout a text to allow students to share verbal summaries or dramatize text. You might ask them to select a favorite part of a chapter and sketch a quick drawing to represent that scene (Oczkus, 2009). Other students in the group can then share their favorite parts, and the group can place those scenes in order and practice putting together a group summary. Alternatively, students can write down five key points from an informational text and make up hand motions for each to be used in a physical, hand motion summary. The main point to remember is that summary practice doesn't have to be boring!

During reciprocal teaching, the teacher and students should take turns summarizing different parts of a text. Students may use the following prompts to guide their summaries:

- The most important ideas in this text are . . .
- This part was mostly about . . .
- This book was about . . .
- First . . .
- Next . . .
- Then . . .
- Finally . . .
- The story takes place . . .
- The main characters are . . .
- A problem occurs when . . .
- In the beginning/middle/end . . .

Summarizing is extremely important because strong evidence exists that practice in summarizing improves students' reading comprehension of fiction and informational text alike, helping them construct an overall understanding of a text, story, chapter, or article (Rinehart, Stahl, & Erickson, 1986; Taylor, 1982). In reciprocal teaching lessons, students are provided with frequent opportunities to benefit from others' summaries and participate in creating their own, which helps them become more proficient readers. (See Figure 1.5 for how the actual process of summarizing differs when reading fiction or informational text.)

FIGURE 1.5

Summarizing with Fiction and Informational Text

Summarizing with Fiction	Summarizing with Informational Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use text structure to summarize the text. • Use chapter headings and visuals to help summarize. • Tell the events in order and include the characters, problem, events, and resolution. • Share the theme of the story or novel. • Talk about characters' feelings and motivations and share text evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use text structure to summarize the main idea and details, sequence, causes and effects, and problem and solution. • Use text features (e.g., table of contents, headings, visuals) to summarize.

Essential Lesson Foundations and Gradual Release

Simply running through the mechanics of the four reciprocal teaching strategies is not enough to yield maximum growth in reading comprehension. In order to ensure that students internalize the Fab Four and use the strategies on their own, a strong gradual release model is essential (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Gradual release of responsibility is a research-based proven process that begins with teacher modeling and think-alouds, is followed by guided cooperative practice with feedback from the teacher and peers, and ends with independent practice and reflection (Fisher & Frey, 2007). The goal is to provide just the right dose of teacher support and know when to let up gradually so students become metacognitive and eventually able to employ the strategies on their own.

Regie Routman (2008) calls the gradual release model “I do. We do. You do. ” We might increase our modeling with more challenging texts and include two “I dos” or increase the guided practice with a few more “we dos.” Reciprocal teaching offers opportunities for providing students with plenty of meaningful feedback in every part of the lesson (Hattie, 2008). While modeling, students should talk to partners briefly and discuss their responses. During the guided practice and independent steps, the teacher and other students talk about the text and give one another feedback on ideas and strategy use. The landmark work of famous psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) also supports reciprocal teaching discussions. His ideas focus on the importance of learning and social interaction. His well-known quote reinforces what we know about gradual release: “What a child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow.”

Gradual release applies to anything you're learning. For example, I attend yoga and carefully observe the teacher as she demonstrates various pretzel-like positions. Then, while I try to copy her models, she talks the class through each move. She circulates during guided practice and gives pointers or pushes a participant's limb further down or up as part of her coaching moves. Finally, we try practicing on our own while she continues circulating to provide feedback or corrections. After each sequence, I reflect on how well—or poorly, which is more often the case—I executed the poses. After a while, I notice that my joint pain is relieved if I attend twice a week. Think of reciprocal teaching like you would any sport or activity. You'll see more improvement the more you practice, especially when someone is giving you meaningful feedback and guidance! Gradual release applies to any learning situation where we watch, receive coaching, and practice on our own.

To provide teachers with concrete tools for building gradual release with reciprocal teaching, we incorporate the following four instructional foundations (Figure 1.6):

- Scaffolding
- Think-alouds
- Metacognition
- Cooperative learning

In my project schools, we study these four foundations to improve our coaching sessions after classroom demonstrations or observations. When we strengthen the foundations, our lessons go from good to great and student growth soars. Sometimes, just a small adjustment to the lesson delivery makes an enormous difference. Here are some examples of situations where I worked with teachers to improve their lessons using the four foundations.

One 4th grade teacher did a great job scaffolding her lessons during guided reading groups by providing teacher modeling and giving time to reflect. She posted the strategies and stems for students to see during the lesson. However, she rarely if ever provided opportunities for students to speak to one another. When we discussed her lesson, she realized she was missing the cooperative learning piece and was just calling on individuals. In a later lesson, I observed her asking students to turn and talk to one another to find examples of the strategies in the text. She also taught basic group discussion rules such as making eye contact, taking turns, and piggybacking. Her 4th graders' reading scores shot up, with most jumping two grade levels in just five months! Discussion

FIGURE 1.6

Overview of the Essential Lesson Foundations

Scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the students experience teacher modeling before guided practice? • Is there supported guided practice with peers? • Are grade level–appropriate visuals and supports (e.g., posters, charts, bookmarks, gestures, strategy starters, prompts) available to cue students to use the strategies? • Does the teacher observe students using the reciprocal teaching strategies and give specific feedback to individuals and the group? • Does the teacher adjust and plan instruction based on students' needs? • Is the text appropriate for the instruction? Is another needed?
Think-alouds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the teacher conduct one or more think-alouds and read aloud from the text? • Did the teacher give a specific example(s) of one or more of the strategies and demonstrate his or her thinking? • Did the teacher truly model and not just assign the strategies? • Were students engaged during the think aloud? Did they follow along in their copy of the text? Did they talk to partners about the example or annotate the text?
Metacognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the lesson open with a quick review of the reciprocal teaching strategies and their definitions? • Did the lesson end with a discussion of how the strategies helped students comprehend the text that day? Did students reflect on their strategy use? • During reading, did the teacher and students discuss the “how to” steps for each of the strategies?
Cooperative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did students work in pairs or groups to discuss the Fab Four? • Were students required to participate and record their individual responses for accountability, or did they respond as partners or in teams? • Did students follow the protocol for discussions, including making eye contact, taking turns, and adding on to one another's comments?

really does promote comprehension (Lapp, Flood, Ranck-Buhr, Van Dyke, & Spacek, 1997).

An 8th grade science teacher put students into teams to read articles and textbook chapters together while taking on the roles of predictor, questioner, clarifier, and summarizer. She had complained that students were “stuck” and seemed bored with the process. After observing, I suggested that she model for three to five minutes at the beginning of class using a challenging example and applying one of strategies. Then I told her to check in after the groups met to discuss student examples of the same strategy. Besides making group posters and presentations, each student filled in a four door chart for the chapter or article and used the Fab Four bookmarks to guide their responses and discussions. By providing more explicit teacher modeling while tightening scaffolding and accountability, students participated with more enthusiasm and urgency.

Keep these building blocks in mind when introducing and extending reciprocal teaching lessons in any setting—from whole-class groupings to literature circles. The four foundations work together in the following ways to make lessons successful:

- The teacher models using constant think-alouds.
- Students work in cooperative pairs or teams to practice on their own.
- The teacher provides the right amount of scaffolding, which might include a language frame or prompt (e.g., “I didn’t get . . . so I . . .”).
- The lesson includes a sufficient amount of metacognition so students and the teacher can discuss the steps involved in each strategy and identify which one was most helpful.

When I demonstrate and coach lessons, I ask teachers to watch carefully for each of the foundations that support students as they employ reciprocal teaching strategies. Please note that for each of the four foundations, I’ve included a classroom example to show how it enhances the reciprocal teaching lessons and—ultimately—comprehension.

Scaffolding is the Art of Teaching

Scaffolding is often considered the skilled “art” of teaching. Before any instruction takes place, we must consider students’ strengths and needs. Then we study the required text and standards and consider how to scaffold the lesson to create multiple ways for students to access the material. Scaffolding reading instruction is similar to teaching a child how to ride a bicycle. He or she begins by watching other people ride bicycles to get the idea and motivation. Then a parent or other adult holds on to the bicycle’s seat and guides the child for a time. Eventually, the adult lets go of the seat but remains nearby (possibly even running next to the bicycle) in case support is needed. Finally, the child pedals away on his or her own.

During reciprocal teaching, instruction is clearly scaffolded, or supported. Students see models of the four strategies, experience some “seat holding” as they try out reciprocal teaching in a supported environment, and finally work independently as they read and use reciprocal teaching strategies to help them comprehend the text. Every time students are engaged in reciprocal teaching, they have the opportunity to participate in scaffolded instruction. Modeling, support, and feedback are integral steps of the reciprocal teaching model.

Therefore, students are propelled to the next reading level as the support they receive guides them through more difficult texts and reading tasks.

Concrete scaffolds support students as they try out the strategies. Optional supports, such as characters, props, or hand motions, represent each strategy. Visual scaffolds include icons, bookmarks, and posters with relevant language clearly displayed so students can refer to it as they use the strategies with peers and on their own. These tools also provide you with ways to prompt students as they practice the reciprocal teaching strategies in a variety of texts.

Classroom Example. Mrs. Valentino reads aloud from a 2nd grade basal text and stops to model her predictions after reading the first page. She uses the strategy frame “I think . . . because . . .” and bases her prediction on the events that just occurred in the text. She explains the rationale or evidence for her prediction by rereading a portion of the text and then asks students to turn to a partner and use the frame to discuss predictions and text evidence. She continues modeling, using the strategy frames for clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. When partners work together to practice the strategies, they use their bookmarks and a classroom poster with icons and strategy frames to guide their discussions. (These materials will be discussed in Chapter 2.)



Scaffolding the Reciprocal Teaching Discussion During Guided Reading (*Animal Architects* [2012] by Timothy Bradley used with permission from Teacher Created Materials.)

Think-Alouds Make Comprehension Visible

Reciprocal teaching was designed as a discussion technique in which think-alouds play an integral part. Think-alouds are a research-based method of improving comprehension (Baumann, Jones, & Seifert-Kessel, 1993; Wilhelm, 2001). Think-alouds show students what a good reader is thinking while reading, which again provides scaffolding toward developing good reading comprehension. In reciprocal teaching lessons, both students and teacher participate in thinking aloud.

The steps to reading comprehension are less tangible than, say, the steps to solve a math problem, so this type of instruction may be new to teachers and students alike. Successful reciprocal teaching gives students ongoing opportunities to witness and conduct think-alouds using the four strategies. Teacher modeling in the form of think-alouds should occur every time students engage in reciprocal teaching lessons and should be conducted by the teacher and students, who can take turns verbalizing the use of the strategies. This method allows students to see more clearly the steps to create understanding while reading. Figure 1.7 shows the steps to good think-alouds (Oczkus, 2009).

Classroom Example. Mr. Clark's 5th graders pull out their weekly news magazines and prepare to read about earthquakes. Mr. Clark reads aloud the first column of the page-long article and pauses to model his thinking. After asking his students what they know about summarizing, he rereads the text,

FIGURE 1.7
Think-Aloud Steps

1. Introduce the strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students what they know about the strategy and how it helps them. • Define the strategy (e.g., "Questioning is when . . .") and its importance. • Use a prop, such as a toy microphone, for questioning.
2. Model each strategy with an interactive think-aloud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think aloud using a specific example from the reading material (e.g., "When I read this, I [predict, question, clarify, summarize]" or "Watch me as I summarize the chapter so far."). • Use strategy prompts.
3. Provide support and guided practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide students to work together on an example of the strategy in the text. • Have pairs or teams of students turn and talk and find examples. • Circulate to assist and lead a class discussion to share.
4. Provide independent practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students look for examples to share later with their pairs or groups.
5. Wrap up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students what they learned about the reading and which strategy helped them the most as they read, predicted, questioned, summarized, and clarified.

tells how he selects the important key points, summarizes, and asks students to turn and share a summary with their partner. Mr. Clark continues alternating between modeling aloud and allowing partners to turn and chat about the remaining three strategies: predict, question, and clarify. The students read the rest of the article independently and share questions, words, or sentences to clarify with their partners. To end the lesson, Mr. Clark asks his students to reflect on which strategy helped them the most in understanding earthquakes.

Build a Metacognitive Sandwich

Metacognition is the awareness of one's own thinking processes (Brown, 1980). The think-aloud process goes hand in hand with metacognition, as students talk about their thinking and how they use predictions, questions, clarifications, and summaries. As the teacher, you can lead your students by sharing how the strategies have helped you comprehend a given text. Think of comprehension lessons as "metacognitive sandwiches," because you begin the lesson with an objective—such as a minilesson on predicting—and end with a student-led review of how the strategy helped them.

I find that most students can name the strategy that helped them most during the lesson but find it difficult to describe how or why. When you first ask students to explain how a particular strategy helped them, you will need to provide explanations and assistance. For example, when a student replies that predicting helped him most but can't explain why, you might add, "Predicting helps us stay interested in the text so we keep on reading to see what happens next." Eventually, students will begin to explain their strategy use without as much prompting.

Another technique I really like to use, especially with elementary-aged students, is to ask, "Which strategy did you like using the most today?" Students tend to answer this one with zeal. For example, one 1st grader told me she liked questioning because we used the toy microphone, it was fun, and it made her feel smart. What could be better than that?

A discussion rich with metacognitive thinking will include student comments such as these:

- Prediction helped me the most today because it got me interested in the reading.
- Clarifying helped me figure out the word *citizen*. I thought of the word *city*, and I reread the sentence to see what made sense.

- Summarizing helped me remember all of the important events in the story.
- I had to reread the book to get the main idea so I could ask a question.

Metacognition is an integral component in reciprocal teaching, because students learn to consciously think about and reflect on their strategy use. Ultimately, all students are trained to employ the same strategies good readers use when monitoring their reading comprehension.

Classroom Example. The students in Mrs. Carr's 4th grade class finish reading a social studies lesson on the California Gold Rush. She asks students to reflect on how the Fab Four helped them understand the text. Sammy says that summarizing several times throughout the reading helped him remember the main points. Kadeem felt that clarifying using the frame "I didn't get the sentence, so I . . ." helped him reread to make sure he understood the hardest concepts. Questioning was fun for Sara as she stumped her group members, who were forced to reread and infer to answer her question. Kendra enjoyed scanning the text and studying the pictures and captions before reading to make predictions.

Cooperative Learning: Discussion is the Key

Because reciprocal teaching is intended to be a discussion technique, cooperative learning is an essential part of what makes the technique work. When students engage in purposeful talk with one another, they expand their thinking about a text (Fisher & Frey, 2008), and cooperative learning serves as a way for students to deepen their reading comprehension, especially in content-area texts (Armbruster et al., 2001). Cooperative learning also provides opportunities for struggling readers and ELLs to participate in discussions, even when the text may be above their reading level. This instructional foundation may include "turn and talk" opportunities with partners, triads, and table groups. Although in this book I show how to make quick-write tools, such as sticky notes or a four door foldable (that students use to record their ideas for each of the strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing), keep in mind that the positive research results were achieved with reciprocal teaching as an oral discussion technique—not with lengthy writing assignments. If you wish to achieve positive growth in your students' comprehension, it's imperative to provide time for cooperative discussions using reciprocal teaching. Keep the writing to a minimum with the purpose of prompting discussions.

The cooperative nature of reciprocal teaching is an important part of the scaffolded instruction, think-alouds, and metacognition inherent to the approach. Even when I teach whole-class lessons, I incorporate quick activities that require students to turn to a partner and engage in more cooperative learning practices, which occurs when students and teachers think aloud and give voice to their metacognition. According to Kagan (1989), cooperative learning needs to encompass positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction. When students participate in reciprocal teaching lessons, they are held accountable for their role and have ample opportunities to participate.

If the class is reading a social studies text, I may model a summary of a portion of it and ask partners to work together to create a summary for the next section. When reading a novel as a class, groups of students may be assigned a strategy to report on to the class. Even during guided reading group sessions, I might have pairs ask each other their questions after reading. Cooperative learning is, of course, already in place during literature circles when students work together to construct a recording sheet that includes their group members' collaborative efforts for predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.

Classroom Example. After each two-page spread of the 6th grade science text, Mrs. Fox pauses to model the use of the Fab Four. She selects one of the four strategies to model with a think-aloud and then asks students to turn and talk to partners as they work their way through a verbal summary, quiz questions, and words and ideas to clarify. They also take a quick look to predict what the next pages will cover. Mrs. Fox circulates around the room to assist and prompt each group as students work cooperatively. Each student records a question, a word to clarify, a prediction, and a one-sentence summary on a four door chart

Informational Text and Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is an ideal technique to strengthen comprehension with any text—but especially informational texts. Researchers have found that reciprocal teaching not only strengthens student comprehension but also helps students retain content-area material (Reutzel et al., 2005). In schools where reciprocal teaching is unfamiliar to the staff, we often begin with informational texts because the strategies make content-area reading more engaging and accessible to students. Teachers are constantly searching for ways to strengthen comprehension



Cooperative Discussions Are Key to Comprehension

of informational texts, and the Common Core State Standards have affected the quantity and rigorous quality of the informational texts in our classrooms.

The reciprocal teaching strategies naturally fit the way strong readers think as they process informational text. When readers encounter an informational text, they skim and scan the headings, visuals, and text to take in the big picture and predict what they will learn from the reading. They also draw on their prior knowledge as it applies to the topic. Then, as they begin reading the text, they naturally encounter challenging words and sentences that need to be clarified. All kinds of questions pop up—from possible test questions to “I wonders” and text-dependent questions that require evidence from the reading.

Throughout, summarizing is necessary to digest and process the material. A focus on text organization helps students comprehend and summarize better. In my project schools, we utilize the text features and structures unique to informational text to design interactive lessons. Throughout this book, you will find many lessons and suggestions for teaching informational text using the Fab Four. Figure 1.8 includes some examples of how to use text features with each of the Fab Four strategies and informational text.

FIGURE 1.8

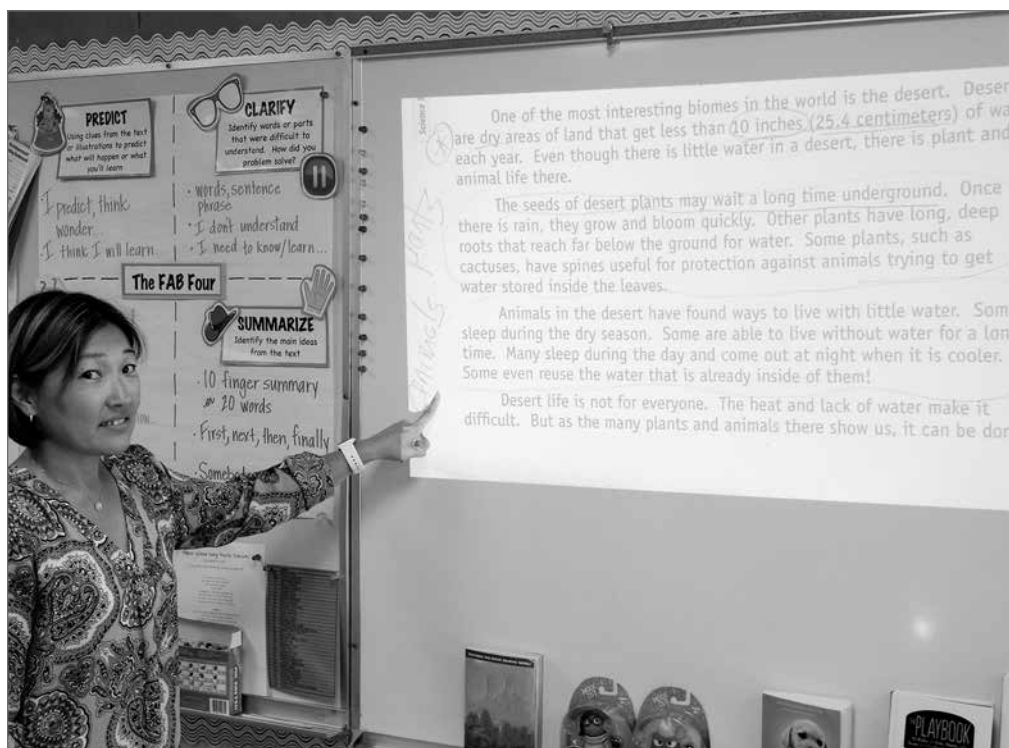
The Fab Four and Informational Text: 20 Miniliesson Ideas

	Table of Contents	Headings	Photos, Sketches	Charts, Maps, Diagrams	Index. Glossary
Predict <i>I think I will learn . . .</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the table of contents. Page through the text and return to the table of contents to predict what you will learn in each chapter. Discuss. Which chapters look most interesting? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a text walk with a partner or small group and use the headings to predict what you will learn. Use sentence frames to help you discuss headings: <i>This heading says . . . I think I will learn . . .</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look over the pictures and captions in the text with a partner. Tell what you think you will learn from the visuals. Sketch your favorite visual. Determine whether the visuals will be important to the text. Why or why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preview the charts, maps, and diagrams in the text to make logical predictions about what you will learn. Share with partners and small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skim the index and glossary before taking a text walk. Keep the words in mind as you preview the text. Identify glossary or index words you already know and want to know.
Question <i>Who, what, when, where, why, how, I wonder</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before reading, write "I wonder" questions on sticky notes and place them next to the chapter titles in the table of contents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn headings into questions to quiz yourself and a partner. Divide the headings in a text so each pair or group takes one or two and creates a question to go with it. Share. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask and answer questions about the pictures/visuals. Think about what the visuals make you wonder. Think of questions that might be on a test. Quiz a partner using information found in the visuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask and answer questions using the maps, charts, and diagrams. Discuss your questions with partners or small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the glossary and index to help you review important words from the text. Ask and answer questions about the words.
Clarify <i>I don't understand . . . so I will . . .</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to the table of contents in the middle of reading the text. How is it keeping you on track? Are you confused? Do you need to reread or discuss the text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a section of text, and then return to the heading. Why do you think the author chose it? Does the heading make sense to you? Determine if you are on track, if you need to talk to someone, or if you should reread? How can headings help you stay on track? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the pictures and captions as you read. Think about whether the visuals help you understand the text better. How? Identify any visuals that are confusing? Why were they so? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the map, chart, or diagram to someone else. Identify parts that are confusing. Reread and clarify. Determine why the author included this visual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look up words in the glossary as you read to help you clarify what they mean.
Summarize <i>I learned . . .</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go back to the chapter titles after reading, and either dramatize or draw what you learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns with a partner. Read a heading and tell what you remember. Reread if you are not sure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss your favorite visuals from the text with a partner. Why are they favorites? Use the visuals in the text to help you summarize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw a replica of your favorite map, chart, or diagram. Share with others. Tell why you like it or why it is important. Summarize the text and tell how the visuals support the information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reread the text to identify 5–10 important words. Use those words in a summary with a partner or small group. Sketch or dramatize the most important words.

Close Reading and Reciprocal Teaching

Is close reading the new black? Just like the trusty little black dress or black blazer that have become reliable staples in our wardrobes, close reading plays an important role in literacy instruction (Oczkus, 2016). Close reading is called upon when students (or the teacher) identify a challenging text or portion of text that requires multiple rereadings to fully comprehend. Close reading involves rereading to highlight and underline key ideas, asking and answering questions, determining author's purpose and word choice, developing fluency, and discussing the text with others (Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015). The unfortunate truth is that too many students are tempted to skip entire sections of text rather than make sense of it (Fisher & Frey, 2012). With so much text bombarding students today, they desperately need a toolkit of strategies to help them learn how and when to read closely.

Teachers also complain that close reading lessons can be boring as students and teachers alike dread rereading assigned passages. In the hunt for a more lively close reading protocol, reciprocal teaching—with its four



Teacher Modeling During Close Reading Lessons (text from [Oczkus 2014; Oczkus & Rasinski 2015]. Printed with permission from Shell Educational Publishing, a division of Teacher Created Materials)

distinct strategies—emerged as an engaging option. For a number of years, I relied on reciprocal teaching as a way to actively engage students in rereading texts. I then worked with Dr. Timothy Rasinski to further develop a research-based model for repeated close readings using reciprocal teaching (Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015). We incorporated rereadings of paired fiction and informational texts centered around the reciprocal teaching strategies. Since close reading involves repeated readings—and because repeated readings build fluency (Samuels, 1979)—a focus on reading fluency is a natural bonus objective to the lessons. Close reading with reciprocal teaching works with practically any text and at any grade level! The key is to have students skim a text to make predictions and then reread the same text three times to clarify, question, and summarize. Between rereadings, students discuss their findings with partners or small groups, which improves engagement and comprehension.

Here are some practical examples of close reading with reciprocal teaching across the grade levels:

- Eleventh graders write about Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as they circle sections of text with dialogue and idioms to clarify, box key sections to create discussion questions, and star main parts to include in a summary.
- Eighth graders read several online articles about “fake news,” using close reading techniques as they mark and underline words and challenging portions of text to clarify. They also write down questions to ask and identify main ideas and details to contrast and summarize.
- Fourth graders read and mark up a poem about Arbor Day by underlining descriptive passages to clarify and circling the most important key words to include in their summaries.
- First graders, in preparation to meet a guide dog that will visit the school, listen to relevant texts read aloud by the teacher. The teacher makes a copy of one text for students to read closely and identify questions to ask one another, words to clarify, and key points to summarize. Students use different colored crayons to mark each of the Fab Four strategies.

Figure 1.9 includes a generic lesson plan that can work with any text (fiction or informational text) and at any grade level.

FIGURE 1.9

Fab Four Close Reading Lesson Outline**Lesson Notes:**

Make copies of the text for students to mark or annotate. Be sure to also project a copy so you can model and students can easily follow along. Have students use different colored pencils, crayons, or markers as they reread and mark up their texts. Use symbols such as brackets, boxes, stars, circles, and underlining to interact with the text. Allow students to discuss their markings and thoughts between rereadings. Select a text that is challenging or thought-provoking and worthy of rereading.

Materials:

sticky notes, writing utensils in different colors, copies of text for students

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will reread a text multiple times to apply each of the reciprocal teaching strategies, including predict, clarify, question, and summarize.
- Students will participate in partner, team, and class discussions.

Meeting the Needs of ELL Students and Struggling Readers:

- Use sentence frames for each of the four strategies to scaffold academic vocabulary.
- Discuss vocabulary that students may not know. Create gestures, visuals, and/or drawings for the words.
- Use a variety of rereading techniques, such as echo reading and partner reading, to build fluency.
- Send passages students have read closely home for rereading practice. Have them perform in small groups.

Predict: Students skim and scan the text, glancing at the topic, text organization, theme, tone, story elements, and author's purpose. They briefly turn to partners and share predictions.

Read: Students read silently and mark or circle tricky or interesting words. The teacher reads the passage again aloud while students follow along.

Reread to Clarify: Students reread to find more tricky words or sentences to mark and then discuss with partners or small groups.

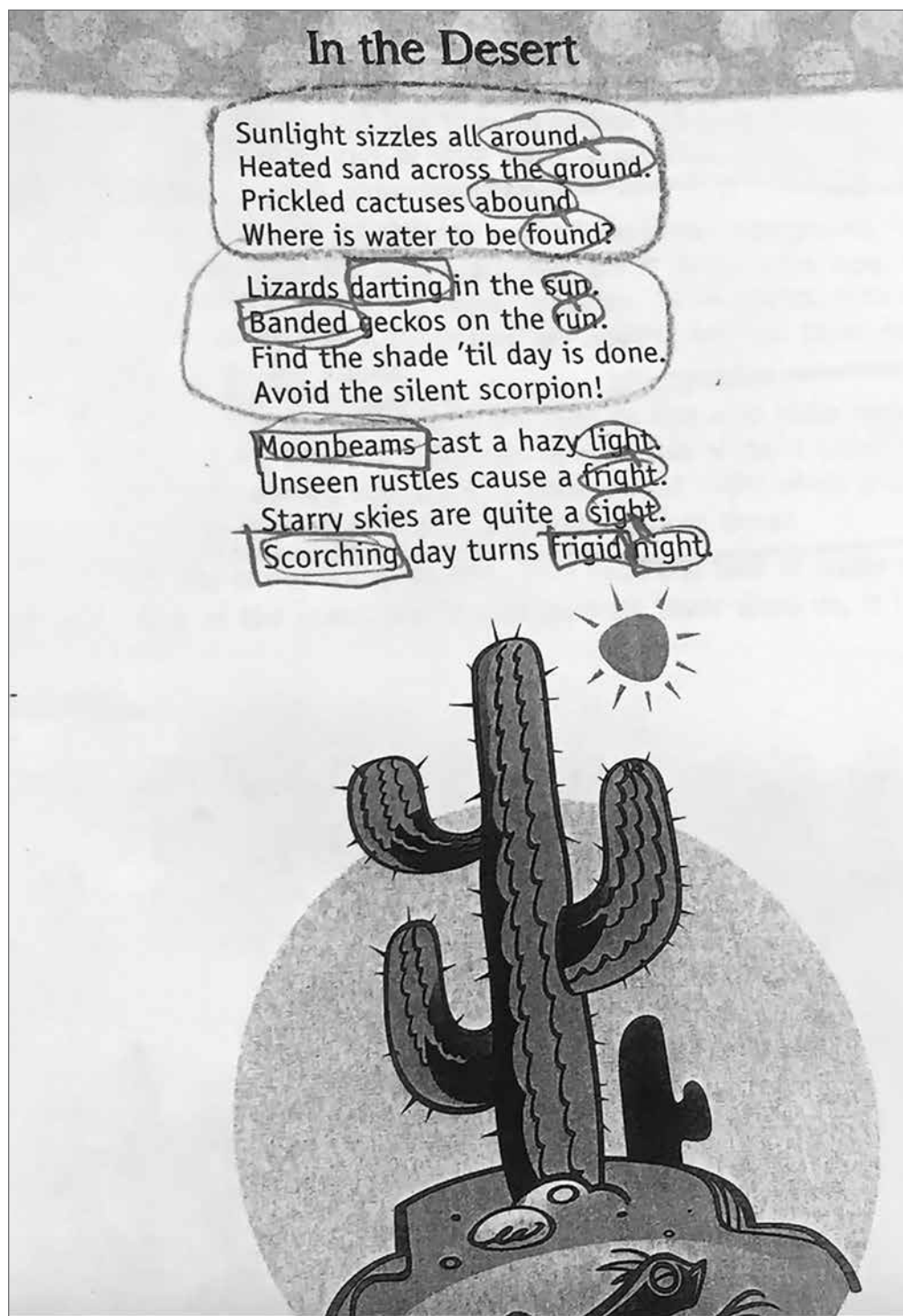
Reread to Question: Students reread to ask and answer questions. They write questions directly on the text or on a sticky note placed on the relevant paragraph or page. They should also underline answers and text evidence.

Reread to Summarize: Students summarize verbally in pairs or small groups. They underline, box, circle, and star main ideas, details, and favorite parts.

Source: Adapted from *Close Reading with Paired Texts: Series K–8*, by L. D. Oczkus and T. Rasinski, 2015, Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Publishing. Copyright 2015 by Shell Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

Overcoming Obstacles When Implementing Reciprocal Teaching

It's clear that students benefit from instruction using reciprocal teaching, but teachers may still encounter some common problems when implementing the strategies in their classrooms. Figure 1.10 lists some of these problems and their possible solutions. Teachers also can anticipate difficulties with a specific reciprocal teaching strategy and overcome them with the suggestions provided in Figure 1.11. These tables are adapted from the work of Hacker and Tenen (2002).



Close Reading with Paired Texts (Oczkus & Rasinski, 2015). Printed with permission from Shell Educational Publishing, a division of Teacher Created Materials.

FIGURE 1.10

Potential Problems with Reciprocal Teaching and Suggested Solutions

Problem	Solution
You can't fit all four strategies into your lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is critical for all four strategies to be present in a reciprocal teaching lesson to yield higher results. One student can be the "checker" and check off each of the strategies as the group works through each one. • Don't provide full-blown teacher models for all four strategies every lesson. • Model one strategy, and then have students participate in the other three with peers. • Take away any writing that may slow down the lesson. • Allow students to turn and talk to a partner instead of participating in a whole-class discussion. • Spend more time discussing the strategy students need most, and whip through the rest, calling it a "quick Fab Four." • Read a designated portion of the text using reciprocal teaching, and then have students read the rest independently or with partners.
Your students have trouble using the four strategies in longer texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by using small chunks of text, such as a few paragraphs, and try to gradually increase the chunks used during reciprocal teaching lessons to pages, lessons, and eventually entire chapters.
You are not sure how to assess your students' progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe students' verbal responses. Jot down notes. Date and compare findings. • Call on any student in the group to share, or collect written responses. • Watch for growth on district and other reading comprehension assessments. • Use the Showing Growth with The Fab Four chart on page 307.
Even with teacher modeling, your students are not employing the strategies on their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use teacher modeling to introduce reciprocal teaching. Frequent teacher modeling is necessary. Model using different kinds of fiction and informational texts. • Ask students to verbalize why each strategy is important. Metacognition will help them use the strategies when they read on their own. • Ask students at the start of a lesson to share examples of how they used the Fab Four in their reading at home or on their own. Encourage specific examples. • Bring in your reading material from home and demonstrate a think-aloud using a brief excerpt. Tell how you use the Fab Four strategies. • Have students work with cross-age buddies. When older students have to "teach" a younger child to use the strategies, the strategies are internalized.

(continued)

FIGURE 1.10

Potential Problems with Reciprocal Teaching and Suggested Solutions (*continued*)

Problem	Solution
The classroom is sometimes noisy during reciprocal teaching lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct students on how to work together quietly. Reciprocal teaching does require discussion and a certain amount of noise, but teach “six-inch voices” whereby students speak at a level heard by a partner six inches away—but no farther. • Circulate around the room to observe and listen in on groups. Call on groups to perform for the class and model quiet discussions. • Have one group at a time meet in a designated spot in the classroom to discuss a text using the reciprocal teaching strategies. This works well during stations or independent work time while you teach a guided reading group. • Have pairs of students work through the strategies while reading a text.
You feel that you do not have enough time for reciprocal teaching in your curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find time by weaving the strategies throughout the day into your core reading and content-area lessons. Once students are familiar with the four strategies, you can fit them into lessons you are already teaching. • Use the Fab Four in close reading lessons with short articles, the weekly news, or poetry. Do so at least twice a week. • Only use reciprocal teaching in discussions without writing to save time and increase opportunities for practice. • Once students are familiar with all four strategies, select just one or two per lesson to model in a think-aloud. Students should talk about the other strategies in pairs. • Use reciprocal teaching at least two or three times per week in any combination of settings in order to see results. Once might be with a poem, and a second time might be with part of a social studies chapter.
Your struggling readers and ELL students have trouble using reciprocal teaching strategies with peers in grade-level material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet individually with struggling students or ELL students to select a chunk of grade-level text to work through using the strategies. Then have them work with the class in heterogeneous teams. • Meet as an intervention group twice a week to discuss a variety of texts. • Keep modeling each of the strategies! Provide sentence frames to scaffold the discussions. • Allow ELL students to practice the reciprocal teaching strategies in their first language. Use this as a bridge to help them learn the thinking involved. • Use reciprocal teaching as a Tier II Response to Intervention plan for struggling readers. Monitor and assess weekly. Move students into Tier III lessons with fewer students in the group and even easier text.
Reciprocal teaching has become boring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use teacher-led lessons all the time. Let students select reading material, and group by interest. Bring in high-interest articles and books to read. • Use the lesson ideas for each strategy found in this book. Try something fun with one of the four strategies in each lesson. • Use reciprocal teaching with high-interest texts. Provide student choice in texts.

FIGURE 1.11

Overcoming Difficulties Students Experience with Reciprocal Teaching Strategies

Common Problems	Suggestion Solutions
Predicting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making imaginative predictions that are not based on textual clues. • Making wild predictions that don't relate to the text. • Making simple, surface-level predictions. • Not returning to predictions after reading to check accuracy. • Not predicting using prior events in fiction. • Predicting awkwardly with informational text. • Not using text features to predict in informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model predictions by using think-alouds and textual clues. • Model surface-level predictions and below-the-surface predictions (e.g., theme, characters' feelings). • Invite the discussion director of small reciprocal teaching groups to return to predictions after reading to check accuracy. • Periodically stop and summarize what has happened so far. Add "Now I think . . . because . . ." and use text evidence to support ideas. • Take text walks using text features, such as table of contents, headings, visuals, index, and glossary. • Require students to use the word <i>because</i> at the end of all predictions and showing in the text what inspires their thinking. • Have students tell how their background knowledge affected their predictions.
Questioning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking only literal or superficial questions. • Asking silly, trivia type questions. • Not asking inferential questions. • Not understanding what a question entails. • Needing more practice asking questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model how to formulate different types of questions, including higher-level, inferential, and critical thinking questions. • Ask students to reflect: How does this question help us understand the text? • Provide question starters, such as "Why do you think . . . ?" • Give students three-word question starters such as "How did the . . . ?" • Use a toy microphone to prompt questioning. • Ask students to read the material and write several questions before meeting with a group. • Ask students to "flip" sentences and parts of a text into questions. • Ask partners to alternate roles—one student reads aloud and the other asks a question. • Have students first read the material silently while hunting for questions, then read the material aloud before writing questions to discuss.
Clarifying	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skipping the clarifying step altogether because they think there is nothing to clarify. • Clarifying words—not ideas. • Letting the teacher do all the clarifying. • Confusing clarifying and questioning. • Using little variety in ways to clarify. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model words and ideas to clarify. • Use the prompt "I didn't get the [word, idea, chapter] so I . . ." • Require that every student provides an example. If they have nothing to clarify, they should select a word or an idea a younger student might have trouble reading. • Have students hunt for places in the text where they visualized or had difficulty visualizing and reread. Sketch a drawing of what they "see." • Provide copies of one page of a text and have students underline words to clarify in one color and sentences to clarify in another. • Model and teach the difference between questioning and clarifying. • Remind students that questions start with question words. • Model how to clarify idioms, similes, metaphors, and literary devices to bring a level of sophistication to discussions. • Keep an ongoing list of ways to clarify, such as using synonyms, rereading, reading on, chunking words into parts, using context, using background knowledge.

(continued)

FIGURE 1.11

Overcoming Difficulties Students Experience with Reciprocal Teaching Strategies (*continued*)

Common Problems	Suggestion Solutions
Summarizing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving summaries that are word-by-word retellings of the text. • Providing summaries that miss main points or that are too long or too short. • Rarely including main themes in summaries. • Disliking summarizing because it is difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students work in groups on other strategies but as a class to contribute to a teacher-guided shared summary. • Ask groups to write a summary to share with the class for comments and feedback, and then have students rewrite to share again on large posters. • Have groups write and share summaries, and ask the class to vote for the strongest summary (from a rubric). • Get at deeper themes by asking students to write letters to you or a classmate telling what they learned from the text. • Use graphic organizers to capture main ideas, details, and text structure. • Use text features to guide summaries. • Try engaging ways to summarize, including hand motion summaries (gestures for key vocabulary) and pantomimes. • Have students sketch favorite parts and put them in order.

Reciprocal Teaching as an Intervention or RTI Model

RTI, or Response to Intervention, is “a process of implementing high-quality, scientifically validated instructional practices based on learner needs, monitoring student progress, and adjusting instruction based on the student’s response” (Bender & Shores, 2007, p. 7). The goal of RTI is to help struggling students catch up and avoid special education by providing intense, research-based levels of assessment, instruction, and interventions (Howard, 2009). RTI is often included in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which is more comprehensive and focuses on providing all students with equitable access and opportunities to achieve. Reciprocal teaching and its promise of results makes a sensible strategy to use not only in the regular classroom but also in an RTI model.

Typically, RTI is organized around three tiers of high-quality instruction. In many ways, RTI is what good teachers have always done as they adjust instruction to meet the needs of struggling students. In Tier I, all students are exposed to high-quality literature, varied grouping formats, and assessments (including an initial screening). Students who have difficulties, in spite of this well-designed instruction, are assessed further and receive additional and more intense Tier II small-group instruction. The reading specialist or classroom teacher delivers Tier II lessons and continually assesses struggling students. If the target students do not respond to this intensive small-group model, a Tier III

plan is administered, which includes lessons delivered in an even smaller group or one on one by a reading teacher or literacy specialist. Frequent assessments inform instruction throughout all tiers (Cooper, Kiger, & Robinson, 2011).

Reciprocal teaching strategies can be incorporated as the basis of instruction in all three tiers of an RTI plan. In my work in schools, I've witnessed many strong models using reciprocal teaching as an intervention for struggling students. In every instance, whether it was an in-class model or an after-school small-group intervention, students have shown improvement in comprehension after the extra dose of strategies.

The following are some examples of successful intervention models with reciprocal teaching:

- The intermediate teachers at diverse Randall School taught whole-class and literature circle reciprocal teaching lessons with district-adopted texts. The teachers assessed and identified struggling readers and met with them briefly during class at least three times per week in small guided reading groups to provide more intensive reciprocal teaching instruction. The teachers monitored the target students' progress using informal weekly observations, running records, and administration of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) three times over the year.
- At Washington School, an inner-city site, educators documented dramatic growth on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) by teaching an after-school intervention using leveled texts and reciprocal teaching three times per week. In class, students employed the same strategies during whole-group and cooperative lessons as well as in a cross-age tutoring program. Most of the students read on or near grade level after just three months of instruction. The 4th graders, who had been reading on a 2nd grade level, went up two grade levels in just three months!
- Cypress School, a rural site, designed an innovative intervention for primary students using informational texts and reciprocal teaching during guided reading for improved comprehension and reading scores.
- Cooper and colleagues (2000) found that after just 76 days of instruction, students in their research group performed significantly better than the control group on measures of retelling, answering, and reading comprehension. The students in the research group also read at a higher level. Since this initial study, many schools across the United States use their method and materials as an intervention. (This program is called Soar to Success.)

Although there are other important comprehension strategies, researcher Barbara Taylor (2008) suggests that because instructional time is limited, teachers implementing RTI should focus on the strategies that many studies support. The most effective strategies include the following:

- Predicting by using graphic organizers with fiction and informational text.
- Asking and answering questions using text evidence.
- Comprehension monitoring.
- Summarizing.

According to studies (e.g., Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2008), these strategies improve student comprehension when taught explicitly. It's also suggested that teachers incorporate cooperative learning, a foundation of reciprocal teaching, to improve student comprehension. Most important, we must pay attention to the research that supports teaching students to use multiple strategies in small-group discussions and other natural contexts (NICHD, 2000; Pressley, 2006). Because reciprocal teaching is a multiple-strategy approach that invites students to use all four recommended strategies along with cooperative learning, it is a solid and effective option for providing research-based instruction to students in all three tiers of an RTI plan.

When reinforced in all three tiers, students receive the same powerful strategies with varying levels of intensity. In Figure 1.12, you will find an outline of ideas for using reciprocal teaching in each of the tiers, along with assessments to monitor student progress.

Tier I

Tier I revolves around high-quality classroom teaching using proven research-based methods and rich literature with all students. During Tier I instruction, teachers vary the grouping methods and materials to differentiate instruction for all learners. After an initial screening, such as the Benchmark Assessment System (Fountas & Pinnell, 2007a, 2007b), the teacher continues to assess student progress during instruction to determine which students need more instruction or intervention. Throughout Tier I, students are exposed to a variety of rich literature and explicit teacher modeling. Allington (2009) suggests that we provide all students with easy access to a wide range of interesting texts they enjoy reading. He tells us that the single most important factor that determines the success of an intervention for struggling readers is matching students to texts they can read fluently, accurately, and with comprehension.

FIGURE 1.12

Reciprocal Teaching with Response to Intervention

Characteristics	Ideas for Using Reciprocal Teaching	Ongoing Assessment Tools
Tier I <i>(high-quality instruction for all students)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to rich and varied reading materials. • A variety of groupings for differentiating instruction in whole-class, small-group, and independent structures. • Mix of heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings; flexible groupings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach all four reciprocal teaching strategies together as a multiple-strategy package: predict, question, clarify, summarize. • Use tools to model reciprocal teaching strategies: teacher think-alouds, posters, bookmarks, spinners. • Incorporate reciprocal teaching in a variety of grouping formats, based on need (e.g., whole group, small groups, teacher led). • Provide targeted instruction through minilessons on predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. • Use reciprocal teaching with reading materials at instructional and independent reading levels for both fiction and informational text. • Incorporate reciprocal teaching in read-alouds, shared reading, small groups, partner reading, and independent reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer overall screening device several times per school year (e.g., Fountas & Pinnell, 2016). • Provide frequent informal ongoing assessments for all students (e.g., retelling, running records, observations rubric page). • Ask students to give predictions, identify words or points to clarify, ask questions, and make summaries (record observations). • Administer more frequent assessments for struggling students (once a week or more). • Use a four door chart (page 139) for students to record their responses. • Ensure high-quality instruction and fidelity by making sure all lessons are built on the four foundations of reciprocal teaching: modeling and think-alouds, cooperative learning, metacognition, and scaffolding.
Tier II <i>(targeted small-group instruction)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller groups of 3–6 students. • Meets daily or several times per week. • Taught by classroom teacher or specialist. • More frequent assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with target students and provide small-group instruction using all four reciprocal teaching strategies and texts at the group's instructional reading level. • Teach quick minilessons based on student needs and the four strategies: predict, question, clarify, summarize. • Provide extra word work and support in phonics and phonemic awareness after reading texts using the Fab Four. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach students daily during guided reading and record observations. • Give frequent running records and retelling assessments (once per week).
Tier III <i>(intensive one-on-one instruction)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets daily with classroom teacher or reading specialist. • One on one or small group of two or three. • Daily assessments and observations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more direct instruction at the student's instructional level using all four reciprocal teaching strategies. • Continue to provide the specific word work needed based on observations. • Provide minilessons on each of the strategies when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach each student daily during guided reading using all four strategies, and provide prompts. • Give daily running records and retelling assessments. • Provide necessary additional word work to target specific needs.

Tier I includes strong whole-group instruction and guided reading groups with reciprocal teaching. Literature circles and cross-age tutoring with “little buddies” might also be part of Tier I instruction with the Fab Four strategies. Students can be grouped heterogeneously or homogeneously based on need. Targeted minilessons on each of the four strategies may be taught to strengthen their use. Informal observations as well as written responses provide glimpses into students’ thinking. It is especially important that instruction in reciprocal teaching be scaffolded and grounded with think-alouds, metacognition, and cooperative learning to promote maximum gains and success. Teachers may want to observe one another or work with a literacy specialist to ensure they are teaching all four strategies using the foundations throughout all lessons.

Tier II

Second-level, or Tier II, instruction also takes place in the regular classroom and usually involves providing small-group instruction with students of similar needs grouped together. Either the classroom teacher or the reading specialist may provide this extra dose of targeted instruction. Studies have shown that the schools using the most small-group instruction consistently make more gains in reading (e.g., Taylor, 2008). The teacher uses frequent—usually weekly or even daily—assessments to document struggling students’ progress and needs. Please note that small-group instruction is also part of Tier I. However, Tier II involves targeting struggling students and placing them in even smaller groups that meet daily if possible.

In Tier II, students work with reciprocal teaching using all four strategies but in a smaller group of only three to six students. The students meet daily or several times a week for an additional dose of reciprocal teaching that is delivered by either the reading specialist or classroom teacher, using easier-to-read texts. Constant assessment in the form of running records and retellings or commercial assessments provides valuable information on the students’ progress. Minilessons in each of the four strategies may be delivered when students show a need for targeted instruction. Intensive word work around phonics and phonemic awareness elements found in the texts may follow the reciprocal teaching comprehension lessons. If students do not respond with enough growth with this intensive small-group version of reciprocal teaching, a Tier III intervention may be necessary.

Tier III

If a student still struggles after Tier II instruction, then it may be determined that he or she needs a Tier III intervention or an even more intensive dose of instruction—this time in a very small group of students (two or three) or even one on one. It is best if the Tier III instruction is provided daily by either a literacy specialist or a highly trained teacher who employs frequent assessments to monitor progress.

Tier III instruction using reciprocal teaching involves working with a small group of just one to three students. Daily assessments and observations are necessary to guide instruction at this level. When reciprocal teaching is used across all three tiers of instruction, students benefit from the consistent but varied exposure to the comprehension strategies that make the biggest difference in their achievement.

Chapter 1 Wrap-Up and Reflection

- Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique based on the four strategies all strong readers use: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. These strategies (the Fab Four) are used flexibly and in any order.
- Reciprocal teaching can be used with any reading material, fiction or informational text, in grades K–12 or even with adults.
- Reciprocal teaching is supported by solid research.
- Struggling readers and ELL students grow one or two years or more in one school year when they use reciprocal teaching strategies. Stronger readers benefit as well. Readers of all ages K–12 (and beyond) show growth in reading comprehension and reading levels with these strategies.
- Good readers use text structure, clues from the text, and their own experiences to make logical predictions. Questioning is important because strong readers self-question before, during, and after reading. Clarifying helps students identify problems or areas of confusion as they read and offers ways to solve problems. Summarizing is a complex skill that requires students to select and arrange in order only the most important points from a text.
- The Fab Four strategies may be used with fiction or informational texts.

- The essential foundations, or building blocks, to successful reciprocal teaching instruction are scaffolded instruction, think-alouds, metacognition, and cooperative learning.
- The Fab Four strategies are part of a larger comprehensive reading program that is based on all of the strategies that good readers use, such as previewing, self-questioning, visualizing, making connections, monitoring, knowing how words work, summarizing, and evaluating.
- When implementing reciprocal teaching, teachers and students may face obstacles and difficulties.
- Reciprocal teaching makes for an effective, research-based strategy to incorporate into all three tiers of an RTI plan.

Reflect and Discuss

- In what settings and with which students does reciprocal teaching yield results? Why do you think it is so effective?
- How do the four foundations strengthen instruction? Reflect on a particular lesson you've taught and share how each foundation was used in the lesson. Discuss ways you can strengthen your lessons with each of the foundations.
- List ways you want to try reciprocal teaching in your classroom to help students better comprehend texts. What students? What texts? How often?





About the Author



Lori D. Oczkus is a literacy coach, author, and popular speaker across the United States. Tens of thousands of teachers have attended her motivating, fast-paced workshops and read her practical, research-based professional books. Lori has extensive experience as a bilingual elementary teacher, intervention specialist working with struggling readers, staff developer, and literacy coach. She works regularly with students in classrooms and really knows the challenges that teachers face in

teaching students to read! Lori was inducted into the California Reading Hall of Fame by the California Reading Association for her contributions to the field of reading in California and throughout the United States.

This is the third edition of Lori's best-selling book *Reciprocal Teaching at Work*. Lori's other popular titles include *Just the Facts! Close Reading and Comprehension of Informational Text* (Shell, 2014), *Literacy Strong All Year Long* (ASCD/ILA, 2018), *Best Ever Literacy Survival Tips: 72 Lessons You Can't Teach Without* (ILA, 2012), *Interactive Think-Aloud Lessons: 25 Surefire Ways to Engage Students and Improve Comprehension* (Scholastic & International Reading Association, 2009), *The Fabulous Four Reading Comprehension Puppets* (Primary Concepts, 2008), *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results* (Heinemann, 2007), and *Super Six Comprehension Strategies: 35 Lessons and More for Reading Success* (Christopher-Gordon, 2004). Lori is also a coauthor on a variety of reading materials and programs, including *Close Reading with Paired Texts* Grades

K–5 Series (Shell/TCM, 2015), *Talk About Books Guided Reading Program K–3* (Mondo, 2017), and *Exploring Reading Program K–8* (TCM, 2017–2018).

Lori resides in northern California with her husband Mark and Charley their multi-poo. They have three wonderful young adult children who sometimes move back in for awhile! She enjoys spending time with family and close friends, taking photos, traveling anywhere by any means, reading historical fiction, hiking and walking, swimming and snorkeling, in fresh or salt water.

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