

Instructional Practices - Small Group Reciprocal Questioning

Sometimes called ReQuest, Reciprocal Questioning is a variation of the Reciprocal Teaching method used to develop reading comprehension with students.

In fact, it is a good starting point for you to introduce the idea of Reciprocal Teaching, and provides the opportunity for you to model the structure and organization of Reciprocal Teaching.

In Reciprocal Questioning, the students ask the teacher questions about the text being read and the teacher answers their questions. These questions are framed around clarifying, summarizing, inferring and predicting, and deciding on the main idea and author's purpose. In Early Elementary you should try this with small groups of students who are ready, but you need to have modeled and taught students about all of the strategies beforehand. You may only focus on one or two of these strategies in the younger grades until all four can be included.

How does Reciprocal Questioning work?

The students take on the role of the teacher, and ask the teacher questions about the reading material. The teacher answers the students' questions. Questions are framed around the following aspects related to the reading material

- clarifying information;
- summarizing information;
- inferring and predicting;
- main idea and author's purpose.

Why should I use it in my classroom?

- As an introduction to reciprocal teaching to demonstrate the organization and working structure of a reciprocal teaching group.
- Students have to think about their selection of questions to the teacher, which provides them with some deeper level analysis.
- You can reinforce student's questions, or assist students develop a line of questioning that models for them how a question can assist their understanding.

The idea is to assist students build up strategies that will eventually lead to them being able to internalize their questioning, and develop a thinking about my thinking (metacognition) strategy, so that they will be able to choose from a range of strategies to assist understanding.