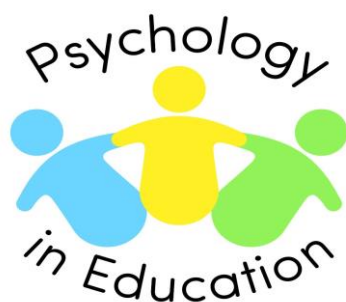


# RECIPROCAL TEACHING

## How To Guide



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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

The overall purpose of the Reciprocal Teaching (RT) course and 'How To' guide is to increase reading comprehension across the school. As such, awareness of the four processes in Reciprocal Teaching can be very effective. The course therefore provides information on the theoretical foundations of the approach and illustrates how the processes can be used in the classroom as well as on a more individual basis. The use of RT with parents can also be very effective, for example in a reading workshop, and this is also outlined. **This guide** is designed to accompany the short video on Reciprocal Teaching (RT).

**The Purpose of this Guide** is to support the person who is leading the training session which we assume is either a Senior Lead or a SENDCo, although you could also be an experienced Teaching Assistant (TA) or Class Teacher (CT). Please read pages 1 to 4 before you start the course to make sure you have everything ready.

## INTENDED AUDIENCE

For a SENDCo or School Leader the guide and video may be used to increase awareness of RT for:

- A group of Class Teachers (CT) in KS1, KS2 or KS3 and KS4
- A group of TAs working with older struggling readers in KS2 or KS3/4
- Whole staff development in a staff meeting where increasing reading comprehension is the focus
- Individual members of staff such as NQTs or staff members who missed out on group training. In those situations, we highly recommend having at least two people watching the video together and going through the discussion points with a Learning Partner.
- A group of parents as part of a workshop on supporting literacy at home. If this is the case then a shorter section of the video may be selected.
- Staff members can also be directed to watch the video and consider the Pause Points individually but we then also recommend that people are paired up and watch it together with a Learning Partner. Alternatively, there can be a meeting with the whole group of e.g., TAs, after they have watched the video, to discuss how the principles can be implemented in the school.

**The material is very flexible and can be used in a number of ways to fit your specific school context.**

## USE OF THE COURSE IN WHOLE SCHOOL STAFF MEETINGS

The video is only 10 minutes in length and is intended to act as a tool to stimulate thought and discussion. If shown in a whole staff meeting, it can be seen as a starting point for discussion about how well the school currently supports and develops staff awareness of the importance of reading comprehension across the year groups.

You may still want to pause the video at certain points depending on how much time you have allocated. You may want to pick out one or two Pause Points that may be particularly relevant to your context.

Although you could do this in one meeting, we would strongly recommend that you encourage staff to plan how they will go on to use the material followed by a scheduled review meeting to share experiences.

**NB** Research is very clear that unless there is a follow up, people rarely put the new knowledge into practice due to time pressures and other more urgent issues. We recommend you agree diary dates to increase the likelihood of meetings being held.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

It is anticipated that watching the video and having the discussions can all be done in one session of about 1 hour and, at the end, people can make plans for how they will implement the information to use with the children they are working with.

The next step would be for adults to actually assess or informally screen the children they are working with and then meet again to discuss further implementations in more detail. This second meeting would likely also need an hour or so in time.

We also recommend that schools keep the momentum up with regular shorter meetings or check-in sessions every half term or so and we suggest you put in diary dates to ensure these take place.

## **MATERIAL INCLUDED**

To help you deliver the course we have provided guidance on how to use the video and you will also find some Hand Outs in the Appendices that are accompanying this Guide that provide suggestions on some questions that can be used to guide the processes in the classroom or group.

### **A list of the included material:**

- Reciprocal Teaching Video
- This 'How To: Guide'
- APPENDIX 1: Pause Points for participants in sessions
- HAND OUT 1: Aide memoire for CTs in the classroom
- HAND OUT 2: The Reading Pyramid for parents
- HAND OUT 3: Aide Memoire for Parents of the 4 processes

## **PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

Prior to the meeting, ensure staff have access to the materials, which in this case are the Pause Points which can be found in Appendix 1. There are also some additional hand outs in the appendices, including a summary or an Aide Memoire for CTs. See above.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

### Part 1: Theory and Script

Part 1 of this guide outlines the role that RT has in terms of improving reading comprehension. It follows broadly the script to the video with some further details. It can also be read without reference to the video. There is a fair amount of theory in this part but we feel that most people benefit from knowing the background theory so people can also make their own interpretations and come up with their own ideas of how to implement the theoretical concepts. **However, it is not necessary to read all the theory in order to be able to use the approach.** We know that school staff are generally short of time, so you can still benefit from using RT without reading the theoretical underpinnings.

There is also a separate section on how to **use RT with struggling readers**.

At the end of this section there is a section on how to **use RT with parents** in a reading workshop.

### Part 2: Pause Points

Part 2 assumes that you're watching or have access to the video and the Pause Points in Appendix 1 outlines where we would suggest that you pause the video and consider the reflection points/exercises ideally together with a Learning Partner, if you're not doing this as part of a group in school.

## ONGOING SUPPORT

We have made separate videos on Phonological Awareness, Rapid Automatic Naming, Paired Reading, Precision Teaching and Metacognition so contact us at [support@psychologyineducation.co.uk](mailto:support@psychologyineducation.co.uk) for more information.

We also offer problem solving consultation sessions for difficult situations where children don't make the expected progress so contact us for more information and feedback at [support@psychologyineducation.co.uk](mailto:support@psychologyineducation.co.uk) We are always keen to hear what else you might want input in or how we could improve the content.

## Part 1: Theory/Script

### Reciprocal Teaching: What is it:

Reciprocal Teaching (RT) is basically a structured discussion technique to enhance reading comprehension. It can be used for a wide range of class texts, shared reading as well as for small group discussions. Once students have been taught to use the steps involved, they can also be encouraged to use this knowledge to enhance reading comprehension for their own individual reading. It draws its theoretical underpinnings from metacognitive thinking techniques and is also underpinned by good scaffolding techniques.

Good readers tend to monitor their reading as they go along and if their minds drift off, as minds tend to do, they notice this, and employ strategies to correct it, usually re-reading the passage, perhaps more slowly. This **comprehension monitoring** is one of the key metacognitive reading skills we can use. The Reciprocal Teaching framework employs further direct strategies, to help us monitor our comprehension more effectively.

It makes use of 4 strategies that most good readers will apply automatically but that many other readers will not adopt without direct instruction. As a teacher or TA, you will perhaps be intuitively using and combining the 4 elements that, combined, make the technique so effective, on and off without realising it.

As it is based in the practices that **good** readers engage in naturally and often unconsciously, by making the steps in the process explicit and clear, the techniques can then be of benefit to **all** readers.

RT is not new; it's been around for 40 years since Palinscar and Brown put it together in 1984. Its name derives from the original formulation where the students would take turns going through the 4 processes, hence the term 'Reciprocal' as they would in effect take turns to be the 'teacher' or guide.

Although the overall focus on reading development in today's educational world may be on phonics, we need to keep in mind that although phonics is an essential part of learning to read, it is not the **only** part and we need to be mindful about what happens after the students have mastered the basics. However, in order for Reciprocal Teaching to be at its most effective it is assumed that students have adequate decoding skills for the text they are reading. However, RT have also been used very successfully with struggling readers, (see separate section below) but it then focuses on listening comprehension as the main focus, as the text can be read aloud by a more able peer, and the struggling reader can then participate in the discussions that follow as part of the rest of the group.

### How well do students engage with the texts they're reading?

Often students say they can't remember what they've read, and this is where a technique like RT can really push students on and make them **engage** with the material in a fun and lively way. Even worse, many struggling readers are often 'pretend reading' during independent reading without knowing what to do and in those situations RT can really make a difference.

## Why use it?

RT is a discussion technique and not a writing task so it is often **popular** with students and as it also involves a lot of **peer discussion** and peer interaction. Students rarely complain when they're told they're going to be using RT.

For those reasons it is also particularly helpful for those struggling readers who may not be able to access the text independently, which makes it a very **inclusive technique**.

It is also particularly advantageous for children who have **English as an Additional Language** as it targets vocabulary development and listening comprehension.

It's helpful too for those students who find it difficult to maintain **attention** when reading independently.

## Research Evidence

There have been two meta-analyses of RT that together include 38 studies; one by Rosenshine and Meister (1994) who found an overall effect size of .74 and Galloway (2003, cited in Oczkus, 2018) who found the same effect size of .74 which meant that John Hattie, who many of you will be familiar with, rates RT as one of *the* top and most effective interventions (Fisher, Frey & Hattie, 2016). An effect size of .74 translates roughly to just under two years of progress in one year and John Hattie rates it as one of the 10 most effective teaching techniques there are, out of the 138 practices he looked at!

Research suggests that reading comprehension can increase quickly when RT is used. In one study where the reading comprehension was around 30%, after one month of using RT for 3 times/week it had increased from 30% to 70 – 80% and further research has shown that this gain was maintained when tested over a year later.

Further evidence has also come from its effectiveness for **struggling readers** including many dyslexic pupils. It is also used successfully with **ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder)** students who may be hyperlexic, meaning that they read very well in terms of decoding but struggle to process the meaning of what they read.

It has also been found to **improve long-term retention** of the information, which is likely to relate to deeper engagement with the material that the process encourages.

Here in the UK, **the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** also endorses the exact steps involved with the addition of 'Activating prior knowledge' in their 'Improving Literacy in KS1' report from 2020 so the effectiveness of the steps involved should not be in doubt.

## How would you use it?

RT can be used at all levels, including whole class, small group, and individual reading by both CTs and TAs. Or to use different terminology, at Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3. At Tier 1 it can be seen as a good quality first teaching technique and if the whole class becomes familiar with using it, the students that go on to use it in Tier 2 or Tier 3 will then already be familiar with the basic concepts, promoting consistency and generalisation. Some specific examples are below:

1. As a CT you can demonstrate and use the 4 steps explicitly with the whole class through Think Alouds. It can be used collectively to have whole class discussions. You would teach the steps involved using whole class teaching initially.



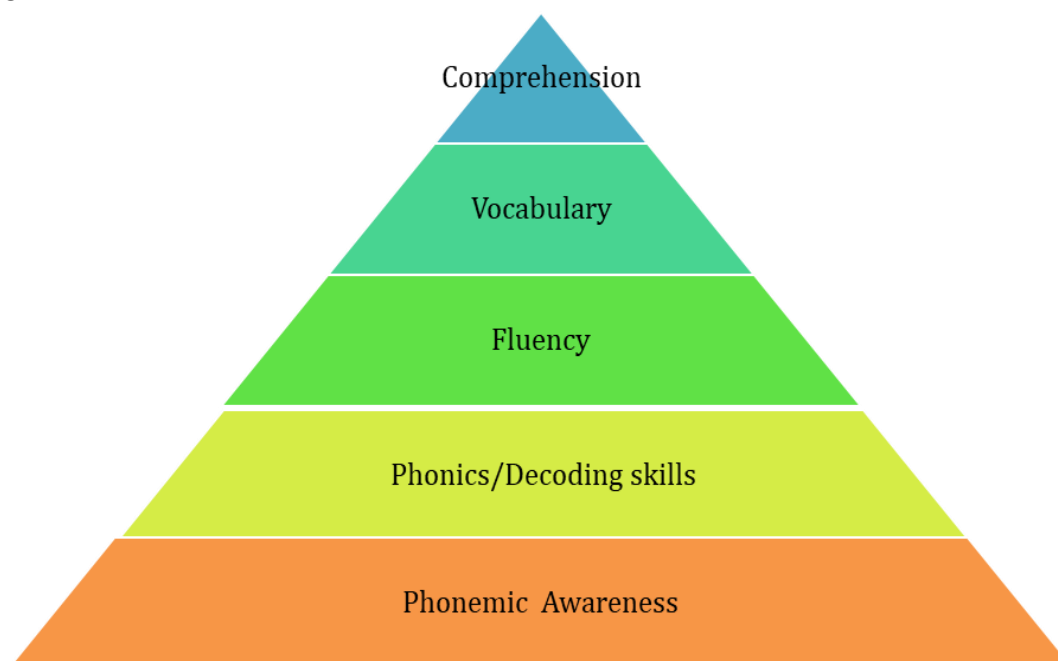
2. As a CT you can encourage the students to use it in small groups using shared texts and provide guidance to the whole class initially so in effect training the whole class in the processes (5 minutes on each step, for example, before moving on to the next). You can guide the groups through the processes.
3. As a TA when doing Paired Reading/any Partner reading/whole class or small group reading this process is also very helpful. Even very young children can use this method with support
4. In individual reading, students can be encouraged to habitually stop at the end of a page/paragraph or chapter in their independent reading to use the acronym **PQCS** Predict, Question, Clarify and Summarise

### Who is it for?

RT can be used for any age range from KS1 – up to Post 16. It can be used with any kind of texts such as fiction and non-fiction or subject specific textbooks. It is thus a universally effective method that can be used for any age and any kind of text and can be modified to suit many different reading situations

### So what is it then?

Well, it's been likened by Lori Oczkus (Oczkus, 2018) a researcher in this field to a 'Reading Vitamin Pill' in the sense that it complements and adds to a comprehensive Core reading strategy. The Core Reading Strategy programme would normally include Phonics, Sight Vocabulary, Reading Fluency development and then Reciprocal Teaching in order to target the various aspects of reading that all need to be developed together, referred to as the Big 5:





RT is primarily focusing on the top of the pyramid, the reading comprehension part, although for struggling readers, if used wisely, it can also help to support the other levels, as outlined below. It can also be particularly helpful for developing students' vocabulary through the emphasis on discussing concepts with peers.

RT contains 4 distinct processes and each one should be employed on each occasion but they can initially be taught separately and with practice you may be able to decide at what point you would need to employ each of the strategies, but usually they come together.

Oczkus refers to them as the "Fab Four" which is terminology that may be easier to access rather than the more formal sounding RT (If you're old enough to remember the Beatles of course). She makes the simile with the Beatles (the Fab Four) who had successful individual careers *after* the Beatles but they were never as powerful as when they all collaborated. It was the synergy between them and the cumulative effect of their talents that made them. So the Fab Four are: **Prediction, Question, Clarify and Summarise**. Ideally, they are used in that order to start with but you can then circle in and out of them as required.

## 1. PREDICTION

This can start before reading takes place and the focus is on what the student can get from looking at the book; guess what they think it might be about and predict what they might learn from the book. Once they've started reading, they can continue the process by predicting what they think will happen or come next.

So the student makes predictions from the text; 'guesses' what is going to happen next by previewing pictures, text, headings:

'I think this is about.....because.....' or

'I think this will happen because.....' or

'I think I will learn.....because.....' or

'I wonder if..... because..... ' or

'I imagine if....because....'

It's useful to encourage students to always include a '**because**' as it teaches them to think about justifying why they think something is going to happen and this is a useful thinking process to carry through life.

They can be encouraged to consider the purpose of the author or book and how the book can be used.

Once they have understood the concept of prediction they should be encouraged to always start with the book and, rather than just guess wildly at what might happen, be encouraged to take time to justify why they think something is going to happen or what the book is about. This brings back the focus on the actual book and its contents in a meaningful way.

This can best be done via Teacher Modelling and Think Alouds so that they get to hear how one might think about a book. The adult's role is to consistently scaffold and support the students' predictions so as to add sophistication to their predictions by making the thinking as explicit as possible.

## 2. QUESTIONING

Good readers tend to ask themselves questions throughout the reading process naturally but it can be difficult to formulate questions if you're not used to doing this. Struggling readers often become lost in the text as so much effort is spent on decoding the words. They are then unable to generate questions, as they can't process the text at the same time as they are reading it, but if students learn that they are reading with the purpose of generating (and answering) questions, research suggests that one reads in a deeper, more meaningful way. So, if students are given questions to think about before they start reading, it will most likely help them to process the information in a deeper way and they will also read in a more active, purposeful way.

Students can ask each other questions and enjoy being 'the teacher' by asking questions and props like a microphone can also be useful for younger students to make it more playful. **'Who...What...Why...Where...When ...Why do you think' ....**are question stems students should habitually ask themselves about the texts they are reading.

It can be useful to teach students to ask 'I wonder...' at regular intervals throughout their reading to keep tabs on their own predictions.

## 3. CLARIFYING

Monitoring our reading comprehension involves keeping track of one's understanding of the text to become aware of when one is losing concentration or not understanding and continuing to 'read' anyway. I'm sure we all notice sometimes when we're reading that our minds can drift off and we can then find ourselves having 'read' a big chunk that we have not taken in, as we've been thinking about something else. This step is particularly important for students who struggle with maintaining focus and is closely linked to the concept of mindfulness, that is, noticing what is going on in our minds and if our thoughts have wandered, guiding them back to the present moment. In relation to reading, this is to be aware of when one's mind is no longer focused on the reading and has drifted off to daydreaming for example or worrying.

So, we all need to be able to identify when we might have lost focus or when we have got stuck on a word or idea and figure out how to remedy the situation. In essence this stage is about extracting meaning from the text and if something is not clear, seeking clarification, or the overall meaning may be lost.

For younger students the metaphor of a car that's broken down can be helpful with a focus on taking part in pulling out the right 'tools' to help fix it. We can 'run the car' and stop it where the 'break down' happens.

Tools to pull out include:

- a 're-reader' to go over tricky passages again and see if it makes it clearer
- a torch to skip ahead and look at what comes along to see if it makes it clearer
- a 'word chopper' to break difficult words down into parts
- a pair of glasses to make students try to visualise what is going on and make pictures in their head.

A good strategy is to ask the student for a passage that *they* figured out but that they think might be difficult for a younger student to cope with. This distances the students from the problems and may lead to more awareness as there is less need to be defensive or worry about looking stupid in front of peers.

**Modelling** and **Think Alouds** may include demonstrating how one might re-read a tricky passage, making sure one understands all the words and vocabulary and if not, finding out how we can get the meaning, or reading on to see if that helps to make sense of the text.

Examples of questions to ask oneself here may be:

- 'I didn't get the sentence.....so I.....'
- 'I wasn't sure about....but then I.....'
- 'I didn't understand this bit.....so I.....'

If the more competent readers can model what they are doing in order to extract meaning from the text, it will help those who are not so skilled at doing this, so **student modelling** can be a particularly effective tool to make light of the underlying processes.

#### 4. SUMMARISING

This is something students often find difficult but it's an essential learning task. It is also a well-documented task to improve reading comprehension in its own right. It involves:

- Recalling details
- Sequencing events,
- Paraphrasing
- Using synonyms and different vocabulary to describe what's taken place in one's own words.

Students and teachers can take turns to summarise sections and pull out the most important or most interesting parts from the texts and share them. They can place them in order and think about a beginning, middle and end.

If you're reading a class or group text you can stop at various points to get them to think about what has happened so far, what have the most important parts been, and so on, to make sure they are processing as you go along and keeping tabs on events and actions.

The students benefit from being exposed to other students' ideas and from creating their own, making them, overall, more effective and proficient readers.

Phrases and Sentence Stems to help **scaffold** their thinking with summarising can be:

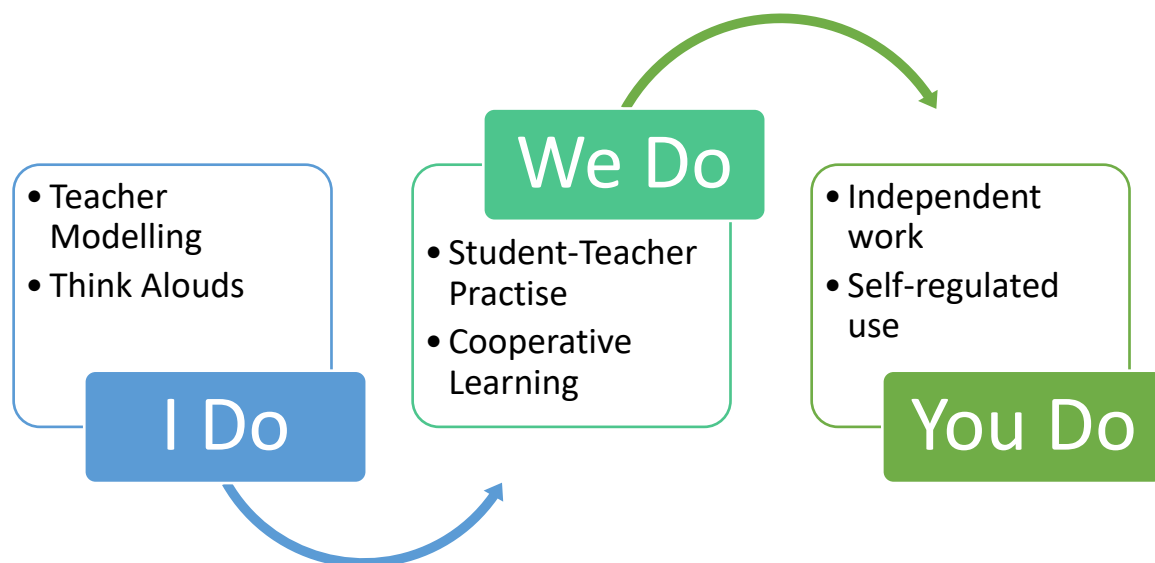
- 'The most important ideas in this section were....'
- This part was mainly about...
- I thought the most interesting part was....
- First....Next....Then....Finally.....
- In the beginning...Then.... and ...at the End.....

## Theoretical Foundations

The ultimate aim is to get students to **internalise** the 4 Strategies and in order to do that we need to **model** to students and **scaffold** the process.

They need plenty of opportunity to practise these skills and understand the concepts involved. It is not enough to simply run through the stages and expect them to do it independently. The concept of **Gradual Release** should underlie any form of teaching or learning.

This can be thought of as comprising the following stages:



As the adult we have to work through these stages and we may need to circle back and do a bit more 'we do' after having expected some independent steps. As the adult you have to judge how ready the students are to move on to independence or if they require more joint work in the form of Think Alouds or Cooperative Learning for example. Through the process the students will be receiving helpful feedback either from you as the adult or from their peers if they're working in groups. This will all help to move them on.

### So how do we support students through these steps as a teacher/adult?

There are 4 processes or theoretical frameworks that are essential which are independently validated as well and may be familiar to you.

These are:

Scaffolding

Think Alouds

Metacognition

Cooperative Learning

**Scaffolding:** Is a difficult but essential part of teaching. It requires very careful judgement of where the students are developmentally to match the right level of support to their needs. Provide too *much* support and the student does not learn as much as they could, too *little* support and the risk is that students give up and switch off as the task is beyond their capability. The actual amount that is required is at the very heart of good teaching and is the bit of teaching that can be difficult to quantify and which may rely more on your intuition and knowledge of the needs and skills of the student/s. As an adult you may need to be prepared to constantly revise the amount of support you're providing, depending on how the students are progressing.

It may involve visual support and posters with the processes and prompts on the walls, teachers modelling by doing, and teachers observing students doing and spelling out the specifics like 'I just saw how you did a wonderful summary there by picking out the main events and pulling it all together at the end'. It will also involve feeding back to them about their performance in relation to the process.

**Think Aloud** is when the teacher thinks aloud and thereby demonstrates the process by giving examples as well as getting students to Think Aloud with their partner and their textbook.

The teacher can say things like 'When I read this I predict....' 'Watch how I summarise the text' and so on.

The teacher should give clear examples of how *exactly* the thinking process takes place as for many students this is not at all clear. The Think Aloud process spells out ***precisely*** how a good reader may be thinking about the reading material while reading it.

**Metacognition:** There is a lot of interest in the concept of metacognition at the moment, particularly as the EEF has found it an effective method of supporting learners in a wide range of contexts. It refers to the awareness one has about the thinking or cognitive processes we employ.

It goes very well together with the Think Aloud as one can think of it as verbalising the thinking process. In other words, we are observing the thinking processes and laying them open to be discussed aloud. It may involve **planning** what we will do, **monitoring** how it is going as we do it, and then **evaluating** how it all went and where and how it might be improved. Students learn to evaluate which part of the process was most helpful or not so helpful.

Sometimes they find this process difficult so simply asking students which process or which task they **enjoyed** most can be helpful, as this is often a less loaded question.

Gradually students become more able at talking and thinking about their own thinking process and can begin to think about how they used Prediction, Questions, Clarifying and Summarising. In other words, over time with repeated guidance, their thinking processes become more sophisticated. We have developed a separate video and How To Guide on metacognition if you want further information about this topic.

**Cooperative or Collaborative Learning** encourages deeper processing, as when students work in pairs or in groups, they tend to process the material at a deeper level. There may be several reasons for this but one is likely to relate to the social activity as a factor to encourage a higher level of engagement and a deeper form of processing. As many students also consider it more 'fun' to work with peers rather than on their own, this may also further enhance engagement and motivation.

As it is a discussion technique collaboration is key to the whole process and we believe very firmly that talking about learning and being actively engaged in the process is to be encouraged. This is also one strategy that's often cited to help dyslexic pupils as well as ASD pupils or pupils with concentration difficulties.

## So why is it so effective?

Well, the components of the “multivitamin tablet” may be the 4 processes we outlined initially (Prediction Questioning Clarifying & Summarising) but the underlying reasons for *why* they work are outlined in the theoretical processes just outlined, all of which combine and create the synergy of effective learning.

Lori Oczkus suggests that the theoretical processes work together in the following ways in a lesson, for example:

1. The Teacher models using constant Think Alouds
2. Students work in Cooperative Pairs or teams to practise on their own
3. The adult provides the right amount of Scaffolding which might include a language frame or prompt ‘I didn’t get...so I ...’
4. The lesson starts and ends with a metacognitive discussion about which strategies and steps were involved and evaluate which were most helpful.

This may be following the Plan – Monitor – Review stages of metacognitive thinking.:

- **Plan:** what am I going to do here, which strategies will be most helpful?
- **Monitor:** ‘Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing? Am I focusing on the text?’
- **Review:** ‘How did it work? Which was most helpful? What did not work so well?’

Modelling, Support and Feedback are all integral parts of the Reciprocal Teaching model and if delivered consciously, on an on-going basis, within day-to-day classroom practice, help children to internalise effective learning and study strategies that may propel them to the next level of learning.

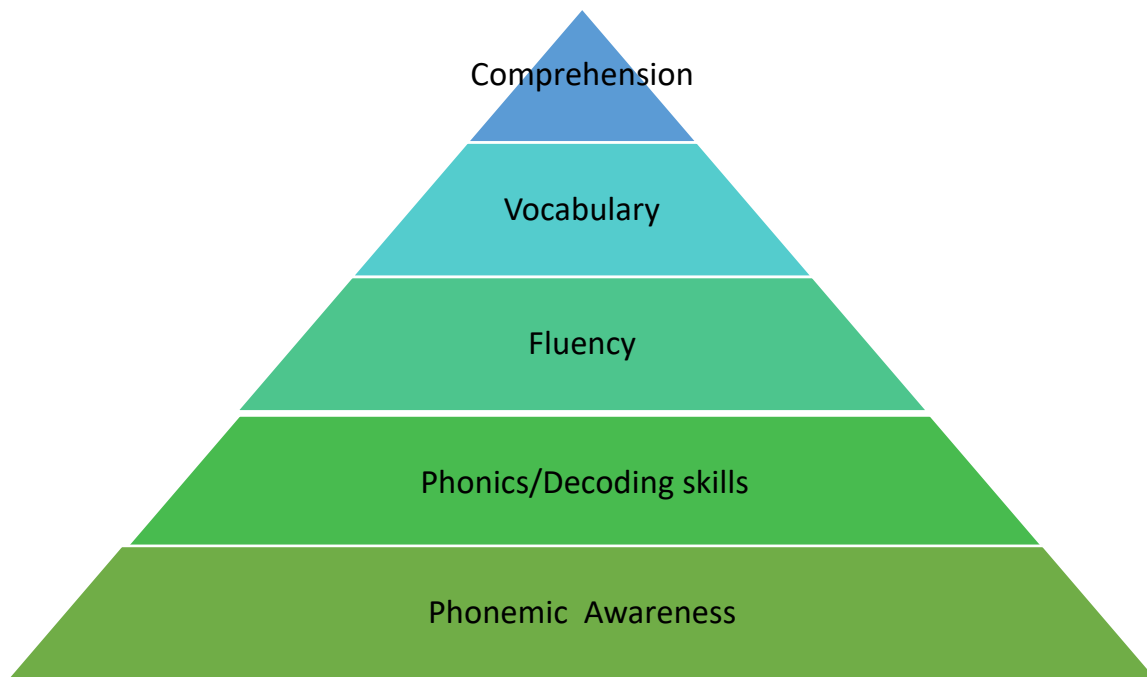
## How to use Reciprocal Teaching with Struggling Readers

As we all know reading requires many different interrelated skills. Although most emphasis is on developing reading skills in terms of decoding, many struggling readers whilst having learnt the basic phonics, may still be struggling with actually processing what it is they are reading. Far too many struggling readers often ‘pretend read’ but have very little awareness of the content of the texts and may not even be aware of the fact that they are not processing the meaning. Reciprocal Teaching was initially used by Palinscar and Brown specifically with struggling readers in a paragraph-by-paragraph system using the 4 processes after each paragraph. They then noticed that it was beneficial for all students and its use was expanded to whole class teaching.

RT can have very quick and strong effects particularly on the confidence level of struggling readers as it provides them with a system and a ‘what to do’ approach in situations where before they didn’t know what to do.

The Reading Pyramid or Reading Hierarchy can be a useful framework when we consider all the various skills that make up effective reading. It is sometimes referred to as the ‘Big 5’ and it is generally accepted that there are 5 major areas of reading instruction that are required for effective reading development.





The emphasis in the early years is on Phonological Awareness, with the Phonemic Awareness (awareness of individual sounds in words) and Phonics and gradually moving on to Fluency as these skills become more automatic. Vocabulary becomes more important as the language demand of the reading material increases in complexity and Reading Comprehension thus becomes the next skill to be mastered, interleaving all the previous, earlier skills. An effective reading programme will need to include all the elements and struggling readers may need to have continuous and intensive input into the earlier stages, as well as focusing on Fluency, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension.

We argue that RT can be helpful for struggling readers and targets the development of all these skills. Reading through the text helps with decoding as the less competent reader hears a more able peer reading the text. Through discussion around Clarification the student can also pick up on both decoding problems and vocabulary issues as words that are unclear are discussed in the group. Implicitly, fluency may also be improved through RT as often a piece of text may be read through several times, including at whole class level and then again in the groups, which provides the struggling reader with repetition and hearing the text read with good fluency and accuracy from both the teacher and peers.

As such, RT can offer a very positive experience for the struggling reader if the CT or TA is sensitive about how the groups are organised and with whom the student is paired. If the struggling reader is paired up with a competent peer who reads the text aloud, the pressure is off the struggling reader to decode the words and they can use their full attention on talking about the text and looking at the words and absorbing the meaning. All this discretely and sensitively supports their reading skills as they are not singled out or made to stand out from their peers. It's good inclusive practice.

As it is peer supported learning, the struggling reader is part of the group and this can be particularly helpful for those students who may have very good language and comprehension skills but struggle with decoding the words.

So, RT can be used very successfully at Tier 1 (whole class), Tier 2 (intervention groups) and Tier 3 (individual support) with struggling readers.

Below are some specific guidelines to bear in mind:

### **Tier 1 Whole Class Input**

One key part is to actually teach the 4 processes of Predicting, Clarifying, Questioning and Summarising initially so that everybody is familiar with them and the best way to do this is to carry out frequent Think Alouds to constantly model the thinking and the questions that one may use at each stage.

Struggling readers may require more repetition and may also require more visual support but all students will benefit from having displays of the processes with some sentence stems/question stems attached so they can glance at them as they are working through the process.

It is very important to pair the struggling reader with a sympathetic, socially accomplished, and popular peer. If the class has many struggling readers, it is probably best to spread them out in different groups so that there are not too many struggling readers in the same group, in order to facilitate the peer tutoring element.

As the adult circulates the room it may be appropriate to 'check in' with some struggling readers to make sure they are able to decode the words, and if not, to give them a quick rundown of their 'tricky' words and pre-teach any words that you know will be difficult. The purpose is not to use this as an assessment, so provide and give the words rather than see if they can read them independently to encourage their motivation.

### **Tier 2 Small Group Support**

If RT is used in small intervention reading groups, 4 students would be ideal as each one can then be 'in charge' of one of the processes but 3 – 6 students would be quite doable.

It may be best if the adult does the reading of the text initially as we don't want them to get stuck on the text. It may also be good to do some word level work i.e., to review some phonics or some tricky sound combinations that crop up in the text, and as always it is good to check in with the Clarifying process, what words they may be stuck on in terms of vocabulary (understanding meaning), not just decoding the words. Do they know what the words mean? If not, what can they do?

### **Tier 3 Individual Teaching/tuition**

The students in this category are likely to have more significant and long-standing needs and it may be very necessary to read the text, possibly using paired reading approaches, but definitely using a finger to point at each word as you read a paragraph and then perhaps

pause to go through the processes. If the adult is reading the text, the student can choose more interesting books and magazines that they may not be able to access independently and this can be a huge help with motivation.

You may want to read only a short part of the text, like a paragraph and really engage with the words, the phonics, the word recognition and the fluency to make sure the student knows the meaning of the words and is able to read them after you have worked on the text.

Introduce the 4 processes as and when needed so start with **Predicting** before you start reading by looking at the book, the pictures etc and discuss what it might be about. After your first read through, work through the **Clarifying** stage as outlined above using phonics, sight recognition and vocabulary clarification, before you go on to **Questioning** about what you have just read and go through some questions about the content, before moving on to **Summarising**. Throughout the process you are modelling your own thinking to start with until the student is able to continue independently, which may take some time but, in the meantime, you are developing all aspects of the reading process.

## How To Use Reciprocal Teaching With Parents

RT can also be used as part of a wider reading workshop with parents to encourage them to increase the effectiveness of the reading they do at home. Parents can be encouraged to read with or to their child on a regular basis and, by setting a regular time and place for it, they can help to make it a part of the daily routine.

The child can choose the book and the parent can read it. It can be used in conjunction with Paired Reading which we have a separate course on and which outlines the process in more detail but in order to get the advantage of Reciprocal Teaching the child does not have to read themselves. The purpose here is to get them to think about the book and increase their vocabulary and listening comprehension (if you are reading for them). The primary purpose is not to increase their phonic or decoding skills but if the parents are pointing at the words as they read, they also increase the sight memory for high frequency words.

If you're using the video in a workshop with parents, you may only want to show them the practical aspects of RT and in the video, this is really between the minutes of 1.15 (you can skip our introduction and do your own) and up to about 6 minutes into it, as this is where the questioning process is outlined. The later part of the video goes through the theoretical background which may not be so relevant for parents. We have produced a sheet with the processes on which you can find in the Hand Out 3 and give to parents as an aide memoire. We are also providing a copy of the Reading Pyramid (Hand Out 2) that you can give to parents in the session as it is important to stress the multifaceted aspect of reading instruction and that all sessions should not be on 'sounding out' the words and that when doing RT, the focus is not on phonics but on the higher-level comprehension aspect, so the emphasis for the child may be to listen to the text and then discuss it. This is important for motivation and engagement as the child can listen to books that they may not be able to read independently but still gain a lot from them in terms of reading skills. To listen to a book being read also helps concentration and language skills so parents should not feel that

their child is 'too old' to be read to, as this is still a valuable activity even with older children and also helps to strengthen the emotional bond between parent and child.

## **Part 2 Leader Guide Notes:**

### **Use of Pause Points:**

The Pause Points below refer to time points in the video where it might be a good time to stop the video to discuss some of the points with the participants. If you are running the session, you are probably a SENDCo or a SMT member but it could also be run and cascaded down by a Class teacher or HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant). Ideally you may have some experience of Reciprocal Teaching or at least with the processes involved. You know your school and you know your participants so you will also know which points are relevant to your context so feel free to experiment and adapt so the content fits your context. Suitable points for discussion may differ depending on if it's a group of TAs or a group of teachers who is your audience.

At the end of this section there are some Handouts, including an Appendix that can be printed off and given to the participants so they have them at the session and can see the points for discussion (Appendix 1; Pause Points).

Although we recommend using the video in a group forum, individual staff members can also watch the video and guide themselves through the following points. If that is the case, we strongly recommend at least having two staff members working together as Learning Partners.

### **Planning Ahead:**

The points below may be particularly pertinent to raise if you're showing the video in a staff meeting with the whole teaching staff. You can also pick out one or two Pause Points to stop in a whole staff forum. You know which ones would be most pertinent to your context.

- If you are a teacher, think about when you might try out this technique. You may already be using it. If so, can you pair up with someone who has not used it and discuss how you have implemented it? Can you use it in a different way, or different context? What works best in your experience?
- If you are a teacher who has not tried it; think about how you would modify the content and types of questions. With which subjects or books would you use it first? What do you think might come in the way of you trying it out? Could you plan a lesson jointly with a colleague to see how it goes?

It could also be shown to a whole group of TAs and the specific questions for them, could be:

- If you are a TA, could you use this technique in some of your groups? Could you practice and use RT when you are reading with an individual child? Could you discuss with a colleague when and how you might try it out?

It could also be used for parents/carers:

- If you are a parent/carer or grandparent, could you use parts of this technique with your own children/grandchildren next time you will be reading with them? Are you already using these kinds of questions?

## REFERENCES:

- Educational Endowment Foundation (2020) 'Improving Literacy in KS2'
- Fisher, D, Fry, N & Hattie, J (2016) 'Visible Learning For Literacy: implementing the practices that work best to accelerate student learning' Corwin
- Oczkus, L D (2018) 'Reciprocal Teaching At Work: Powerful Strategies and Lessons for Improving Reading Comprehension' 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed ASCD
- Rosenshine, B., & Meister, C. (1994). Reciprocal teaching: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 64(4), 479–530. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1170585>

## APPENDICES:

**APPENDIX 1: Pause Points for participants in sessions**

**HAND OUT 1: Aide memoire for CTs in the classroom**

**HAND OUT 2: The Reading Pyramid for parents**

**HAND OUT 3: Aide memoire for Parents of the 4 processes**

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **Pause Points:**

#### **Pause Point 1: 2.21**

##### **Predict as a Process:**

The video makes the point that it's a good habit to get into always having a 'because' when we explain something or state our opinions. How often do you think you use this with the children you are working with and would it be possible or desirable to increase how much you use this in your own life as well? This of course applies to all of us, not just to children.

#### **Pause Point 2: 3.18**

##### **Question as a Process**

What, Who, Why? The video suggests giving the students the questions in advance so that they can read the text in a more active and engaged way. Can you see any problems with this way of reading or with doing this?

'I wonder' is also a really helpful way to start conversations with children as it allows you to state your opinions without steering the child too much. Are you using this in your interactions with the children you teach?

#### **Pause Point 3: 4.43**

##### **Clarify as a process**

Props like glasses, dolls and colours, can be very useful for younger students but perhaps less so for older ones. What could you say or use instead for the older age groups to help them become aware of what they might need to do to clarify points they may be unclear about?

Some suggestions may be: Underline/highlight as they go along, reading actively and stopping at regular intervals to make sure they are clear about what they are reading, discussing with a partner/their table the areas they struggled with are some suggestions. What else can you think of to help?

#### **Pause Point 4: 5.32**

##### **Summarise as a process**

First – Next – Then – and Finally is a suggested structure.

This can also provide a helpful structure for the students to base their written work around. In what other ways may you help your students to summarise?

**Pause Point 5: 7.00****Why does it work so well?****Theoretical Underpinnings of Reciprocal Teaching****The Process of Gradual Release**

Is that a familiar concept to you? It might sound complex but it is simply referring to the fact that we gradually expect the student to take over more and more of the learning process.

So first of all, we show them, then we do it together with them and then we expect them to do it independently.

This is of course the very essence of Scaffolding, which you are probably very familiar with.

Other theoretical underpinnings are:

- **Think Alouds**
- **Metacognition**
- **Cooperative/Collaborative Learning**

How familiar are you or the members in your group with these concepts?

If you're not familiar, could you go away and do some research and bring it back to the group once you have tried RT out?

How do you think you can use RT in your interaction with students of different ages?

If you are a TA to older students, you can introduce them to the process and encourage them to use it when you do small group work? Remember that it is a discussion technique although the same thinking process can of course help students when writing too.

How familiar are you with Think Alouds?

How familiar are you with Metacognition?

We have a separate video that outlines the principles of Metacognition that you might find interesting and a hand-out that illustrates the Think Aloud concepts is also included in the Metacognition course. You can find out more at [www.psychologyineducation.co.uk](http://www.psychologyineducation.co.uk)

We are also preparing a course on Cooperative Learning and Peer Tutoring. Let us know if you would like to be informed when it becomes available.



## HAND OUT 1:

### Reciprocal Teaching; Aide Memoire for Class Teachers

- This method works best if you can have 4 children at each table but if this is not possible, you can pair up some children to share a specific role. It is very important to have the tables set up into mixed abilities. The struggling readers cannot all sit at one table and need to be included at tables with more able peers who can read the text aloud on the table and the struggling reader (and others at the table) can follow along.
- Remember that one of the theoretical bases of RT is Collaborative Learning or Peer Assisted Learning and each group should have people responsible for leading on each of the 4 processes. If there are more than 4 students, they can work in pairs, but each person/pair takes on one of the processes, so we will have a Predictor, a Clarifier, a Questioner and a Summariser at each table.
- Start by introducing the notion that the purpose of reading is to understand what message the author is trying to get across to us. It's not just to get to the end of the page. This may be obvious to most older children but many younger children and struggling readers do not always see this point. The purpose of reading it is to **THINK** about what we have read and what it might mean. What message is the writer trying to get across to us?
- Use **Think Alouds** to demonstrate how good readers are constantly monitoring their reading and become aware when they have got lost. For example, you might want to demonstrate how you are reading along and suddenly realise that you're thinking about something exciting you're going to do after school and you have read a whole paragraph without actually taking anything in. This 'mind wandering' is something totally normal and something that happens to us all. The trick is to become aware of when it happens and then do something about it. This **Comprehension Monitoring** is the key to reading comprehension strategies and something that most good readers do automatically but many of us don't do consistently. It is a metacognitive strategy that we should all use in order to read more effectively.
- Reciprocal Teaching is a staged process that breaks down Comprehension Monitoring into 4 distinct strategies and helps us to become aware of what good readers do automatically and gradually internalise these processes into how we read independently. This will help most children (and adults too) become more effective readers.

The 4 processes are as below:



Predicting



Clarifying



Questioning



Summarising

### 1. PREDICTING

This takes place before reading starts but can also be done after a paragraph or section to discuss or question and we can then predict what we think will happen next. This process may include questions like:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What do we already know about this subject that might link to it?
- What can we see from the cover/pictures?
- Do we think we will like it or not? Why not?
- I think I will learn.....because.....
- I think .... will happen... because.....

It is good to provide sentence stems with the 'because' bit added as it is good practice to always think about justifications for why we believe certain things will or will not happen.

### 2. QUESTIONING

This can take place at various points in the text. Advanced readers tend to do this throughout the reading but many other readers may need explicit tuition in adopting this strategy. Students can also be given questions in advance in order to read more actively as once they have learnt the technique of having to generate questions, this too becomes a habit and they tend to read with a mind to look for ways to create questions. For younger readers, we might want to stop after each paragraph and think about some questions but for more advanced readers it may be enough to stop after a longer section or even a complete chapter. Questions may include:

- Who?
- What?

- When?
- Why?
- Where?

Although the 'Who' and 'What' questions may be easier to answer than 'Why do you think...' questions, students quickly get used to asking these more sophisticated questions and to go beyond the very fact-based questions and move into predictions and making inferences from the texts.

### 3. CLARIFYING

Clarifying can be seen as the very essence of comprehension monitoring as it is through constantly self-checking and clarifying our own understanding of the material that we become aware of any uncertainties or aspects that may need further elaboration. At the very basic level it may simply be to clarify which words are not understood and need clarification but it can also mean that we are honest with ourselves and are clear about where we got lost in the text or what idea we don't quite get the gist of.

Clarifying can be thought of as involving two steps;

1. Is to identify where one is stuck (or where one lost concentration)
2. Is to know how to fix it and what we can do about it.

'Fix it' strategies are usually related to either finding out the meaning of specific words from the peer group or teacher or re-reading a text much more slowly. One can visualise the text as one reads or re-reads again aloud, saying it out loud as we read again together with a peer, and hopefully discuss it at the table, and come up with some solutions.

### 4. SUMMARISING

This is often seen as the most difficult task but also the most important out of the 4 processes as it is really getting to the gist of the text. It should ideally involve everyone at the table, chipping in their own ideas. Sentence stems can again be given in advance and depending on the type of material they may include:

- The most important idea was.....
- The author was trying to suggest that....
- The book/chapter/paragraph was really about.....
- First – Then – and Finally
- The main character was trying to....
- Clarifying
- The conclusion suggested that.....

Have fun and experiment. Don't always feel you have to use the processes as outlined. They are all useful in isolation but as suggested the magic may happen when used together but don't feel it's too restricted. RT is a very flexible, broadly applicable, set of principles.

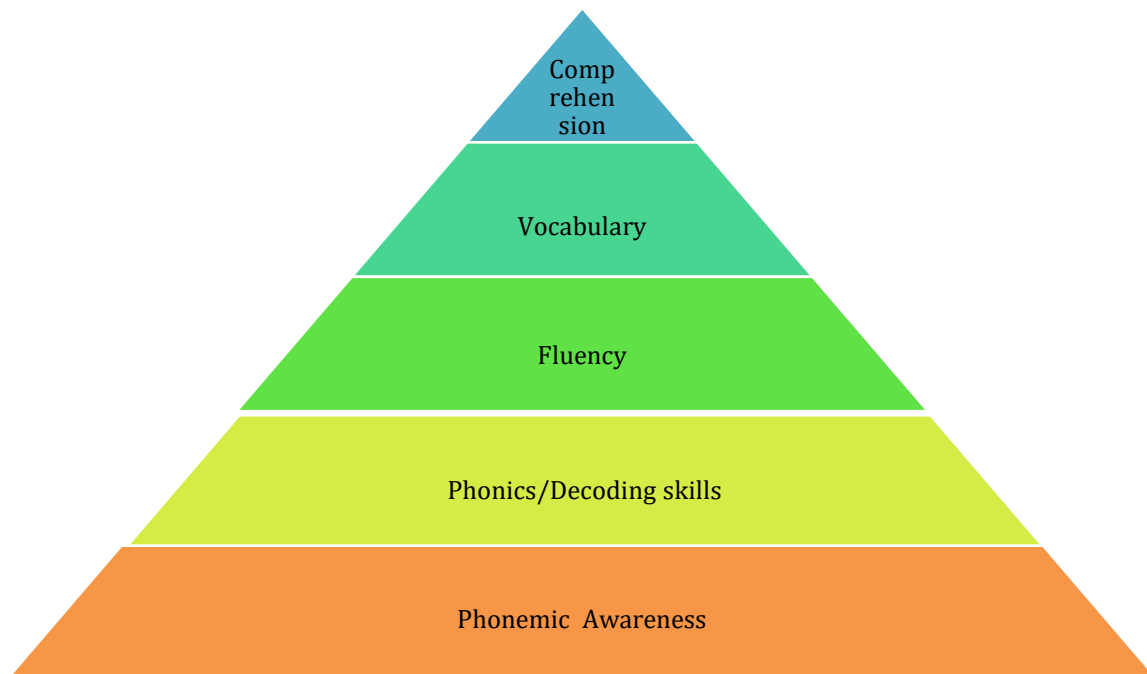
## HAND OUT 2: The Reading Pyramid for Parents

Reading consists of many different kinds of skills and parts. When we're using the 4 processes from Reciprocal Teaching we are primarily focusing on the top of the pyramid: Reading (or Listening) Comprehension as well as developing vocabulary.

If your child is not a confident reader you can read to them and still use the questions. If they are happy to read, let them read and you can stop them at certain points and think about some of the questions.

If possible, allow them to choose the book. This can have a boost on motivation and it can generate a love of books that may be harder to do if they can only rely on their own reading skills.

If they struggle with reading some words just give them the words in this case as the focus is not on developing phonics or decoding skills but on fostering enjoyment of the story and getting pleasure from reading together. They still see the text, develop their thinking skills, and improve their vocabulary so it is a very worthwhile exercise for any level of reading ability.



### HAND OUT 3: Reciprocal Teaching for Parents: Aide Memoire

#### **Predicting:**

Look at the book before you start reading. 'What do you think this book will be about?'

Stop reading periodically and ask: 'What do you think will happen next?' Ask why they think this will happen? This helps your child create a logical sequence.

- I think....because....
- I wonder if....because....
- I imagine that....because....

#### **Questioning:**

Encourage your child to ask questions about the story throughout.

Stop reading at times and ask your child:

- Why do you think....
- Who do you think....
- What do you think would have happened if....
- How could....
- I wonder if....

#### **Clarifying:**

This is about checking the understanding of the text, picking up where things break down and fixing it. Questions may be about what is going on in the story:

- checking that the child understands individual words and can decode the words if they're reading independently

'Tricks to Fix' may be to re-read sections, slow down and read very slowly, look at difficult words together

#### **Summarising:**

This is often a difficult process and requires remembering important events, the order of the actions and using new vocabulary.

Help your child by providing questions like:

- What happened first - then - at the end?
- This story was really about....
- The main character was.....
- The most important event was....