

# ding & thinking

should be in four columns, one column for each of the marks.

5. Then ask students to turn to their partner and discuss their chart. They can share with each other: What knowledge was confirmed? What beliefs were disconfirmed? What new information they encountered? What questions do they still have?

**Reciprocal teaching:** Reciprocal teaching is a cooperative learning activity in which students learn how to apply four strategies systematically to text segments as they read: 1. Summarizing, questioning, clarifying difficult or confusing parts, and predicting what will be discussed next.

The teacher first demonstrates and models how to deal with each step. Then the teacher coaches students as they carry out each step, giving them feedback on their performance. Gradually the teacher 'fades', letting the students take over all four steps.

This sequence of modelling, coaching, and fading is central to the 'cognitive apprenticeship' approach to teaching. In this, students learn how to perform complex mental tasks when there is an authentic need to do so and when they are allowed to participate in the whole task even before they can carry out the entire procedure independently. Reciprocal teaching also enables all students to experience the role of a teacher in leading others through the text.

Here are the steps to follow in conducting a reciprocal teaching lesson:

1. Divide the passage that has to be read into segments, from a few paragraphs to several pages in length depending on the difficulty and load of the text and the age and experience of the students.

2. Have students read the first segment.

3. Model the four steps: summarize the section briefly; ask one or two words questions to be answered by anyone in the group; clarify a difficult part by explaining in your own words, giving an example, comparing the concept to something more familiar, drawing a diagram, or some other clarifying procedure; and predict what the next segment might be about or what information it might contain.

4. Repeat the four steps until students know what to do. Then students begin undertaking each step, perhaps working with a partner the first few times. Students should try one step at a time, with plenty of teacher guidance, until students can perform all four steps.

**Directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA):** a predicting strategy with fiction. This is a group comprehension activity in which students predict what might happen in a story before reading, read to prove or modify their predictions, and use

and experience with stories to develop their alternative hypotheses. Before reading and at selected points in the story, students are encouraged to predict possible outcomes based on their prior information and what they have come to know so far in the story. A DRTA can increase children's motivation to read because it arouses their curiosity and involves them actively in discussing it, rather than simply answering a teacher's questions about the story.

Here are the steps to follow in conducting a group DRTA on fiction:

1. Show or read the title, first illustrations, or opening part of the story. Ask questions like "what might this story be about?" or "what might happen in the story?" to elicit first predictions. Accept each prediction neutrally, without indicating which predictions you think are 'better' than others. Jot them down on the board. When you have several different ideas, direct students to read silently to the first stopping point (selected beforehand) to see if any predictions are confirmed.

2. During silent reading help the children with difficult words. As they reach the stopping point they should close or turn over book and not read ahead.

3. Ask volunteers to summarize the portion just read and to point out any parts that confirmed early predictions. Those predictions that no longer seem likely may be erased, others changed. Avoid terms like 'wrong', 'right', or 'true'; instead use terms like 'possible' or 'likely'. Elicit predictions about what might happen next, and read the next portion.

4. Repeat the predict-read-prove cycle till the story's end.

5. When the story is completed, ask volunteers to summarize the story, put events in order, discuss the characters' motives and feelings, and review the ways the class used story clues to predict what might happen. Add any comprehension questions or follow-up activities you wish.

**K-W-L — a predicting strategy for nonfiction:** With nonfiction we would not ask readers to predict what might happen next, because nonfiction is organized differently than fiction. Instead we want children to practice recalling and organizing what they may already know about a topic, which is referred to as prior information, and predicting what information a passage may contain. Calling up and using prior information to relate to new information is one of the most important reading strategies effective readers use.

A teaching method called K-W-L (Ogle, 1986) stands for the three questions readers are to ask themselves: What is this topic?

What do I want (or expect) to find out as I read this? What did I learn from reading this?

Here are the steps to follow in conducting K-W-L on nonfiction:

1. Draw a K-W-L study guide on the board in the form of a table with three columns, one for each question. Ask students to draw it in their copy.

2. Ask them to verbalize what they already know or think they know about the topic to be read about and note these items of background information on the board. Press students to explain and justify their background knowledge with probing questions like "how do you know that?" or "where did you learn about that?". Students may fill in the K (or 'know') column of the study guide during this stage.

3. When background information has been shared and explored, set the expectations about the content of the reading passage by asking students to consider the second question: "What do I want or expect to learn?" This information may be written in the middle column.

4. Ask students to read the passage silently in order to confirm or modify their prior information and their expectations or predictions about what the passage will contain. Information gained from the reading may be noted in the column L (or 'what I have learnt') of the study guide.

5. Since the information students expected to find might not be contained in the passage, often the question "what do I still need to find out?" is included in the post-reading discussion. This is a useful way of demonstrating to students that any one passage may not answer all their questions, and that further reading of other sources may be necessary. Questions that remained unanswered may also be noted in column 'L' of the study guide.

**Here is the answer, where is the question?:** This activity reverses the typical business of teachers, making up questions for students to answer. Students read the text to formulate questions to the answers provided by the teacher. It develops in students the habit of asking questions from the text while reading, which is a mark of all good readers. Here are the steps to follow in conducting the activity:

1. Select a text (or part of a chapter) to carry out the activity.

2. Write down on the board single word or phrases that are the answers to the questions that the pupils then have to make.

3. Assign the reading. The students formulate questions whose answers are already given. ■

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