

Will Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals Increase the Comprehension of My Struggling Seventh Grade Students?



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Abstract: *The purpose of my study was to determine whether Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals would increase the comprehension of my seventh grade students. The study was conducted over four weeks in a regular classroom setting. Each reading strategy was introduced and modeled extensively by the teacher before the students were required to perform them in a group setting or individually. Their progress was monitored by observations, graphic organizers, reading journals, and pre- and post-tests. The pre- and post- test data showed that there was an increase in students' comprehension. Students' Stanford 10 Assessment revealed the class made 150% growth over a nine month period. The students not only made gains in their comprehension, but in their ability to work in groups, discuss literature, and motivation.*

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Introduction

As a teacher I have had the unique opportunity of working with my current seventh grade students for the past year and a half. In this extended amount of time, I have been able to learn in depth about their individual strengths and weaknesses in reading. In September of our second year together I administered the Stanford 10 Assessment which determines students' reading skills according to grade level. The results indicated that on average my seventh graders were reading at a sixth grade level. Based on my observations, I attributed these low scores to the fact that my students have difficulty in picking out main ideas, recalling what they have read, and making inferences. My students are good "word callers", but have few solid and reliable comprehension strategies that they use. Most students use the "hunt and peck" method of answering comprehension questions, they finish reading and then go back and hunt for the answers in the reading. These seventh graders do have great communication skills and enjoy having class discussion. I wanted to find reading strategies that would not only aid them in improving their reading comprehension but that would incorporate their conversational strengths.

Like most middle schools students, my students enjoy working together. I decided that Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) would be a perfect strategy to use with my seventh graders. Reciprocal Teaching is a cooperative learning approach that isolates and allows students to practice specific reading comprehension skills. I have used Reciprocal Teaching in the past and have found it to be a great strategy for teaching students to think while reading; additionally, it gives students the opportunity to work in cooperative learning groups. While Reciprocal Teaching seemed like an ideal strategy to build on my students' collaborative conversation skills. I also wanted to find a strategy that forced students to interact with the text individually. My research led me to Double Entry Journals (Berthoff, 1981), an instructional approach that uses independent journaling and shared reflections to initiate class discussion over an assigned text. The reflections used in Double Entry Journals are also used during reciprocal teaching, they just have different names. My goal in undertaking this project was to determine if using Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals would improve the reading comprehension of my seventh grade students.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Constructivist theories of learning emphasize the importance of new knowledge being integrated into existing knowledge. This integration cannot occur unless the learner is actively engaged in the learning process. *Metacognition* is the process of thinking about one's own thinking (Tracey & Mandel Morrow, 2006) and therefore the type of active engagement deemed necessary by constructivists. Metacognition is an integral aspect of both Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals, because in both strategies students learn to become aware of their thinking while they are reading. When students use these two strategies, they learn to think about and monitor their own reading (Reciprocal Teaching, 2005).

The writings of Lev S. Vygotsky (1978) have inspired educators to look more carefully at the social aspects of learning. Vygotsky focused on the ways in which children learn as a result of social interactions with one another and “expert others”(e.g. adults). A key idea of Vygotsky's is the *Zone of Proximal Development*, which describes the social space in which student learning can be facilitated through interactions with others that are more knowledgeable (Tracey & Mandel Morrow, 2006). Reciprocal teaching acknowledges this approach by requiring a teacher to give the students guidance and support within their Zone of Proximal Development. The teacher explicitly models the reading comprehension strategies until the students can successfully perform the strategies on their own (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009; Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

Proleptic teaching is a form of scaffolding, another key aspect of Vygotsky's social constructivist ideas about learning. Scaffolding refers to the amount of support students have while learning from adults or more competent peers (Tracey & Mandel Morrow, 2006). *Proleptic Teaching* occurs when the teacher anticipates when the student will be able to use a strategy competently. When beginning both Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals , the teacher is the leader and facilitator of all aspects of the strategy. The teacher slowly gives more and more responsibility to the students, eventually removing him/herself and allowing the students to support each other and themselves (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009).

What is Reciprocal Teaching?

Reciprocal Teaching is a reading intervention designed to increase students' reading comprehension by teaching them to monitor their understanding while reading. The purpose is to bridge the gap between students' ability to decode and comprehend text (Palinscar & Herrenkohl, 2002). Reciprocal Teaching emphasizes the importance of four reading strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Reciprocal Teaching, 1986). Pilonieta and Medina (2009) indicate that proficient readers use a variety of reading strategies to make sense of text while struggling readers use very few. In order for struggling readers to make gains in

their comprehension, they need to learn and apply a variety of strategies (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). Reciprocal Teaching encourages active discussion, enhances learning and understanding of the text, improves self-monitoring, and improves motivation (Allen, 2003).

What does Reciprocal Teaching look like?

Reciprocal teaching is a versatile instructional practice that can be used from grades Kindergarten to post high school. The strategy can be used as whole class instruction or in small intervention groups. The most important aspect of reciprocal teaching is the scaffolding that is provided by the teacher. When the strategy is first introduced, the teacher is the expert and models all aspects of the strategy while reading with the students (Reciprocal Teaching, 2005). Each strategy must be explicitly taught in order to ensure student understanding (Slater & Horstman, 2002). When students gain more confidence, the teacher allows students to try the strategies out for themselves in a supportive environment. Eventually the teacher puts students into cooperative learning groups, assigning each group member a strategy and allowing the students to try the strategies out for themselves. The teacher serves as the facilitator and monitors student progress. When students are working in independent groups, teachers can provide them with cue cards, scripts, or graphic organizers to give them support (Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). While Reciprocal Teaching draws on the strengths of group interaction, it is important to also give students opportunities to increase comprehension within more independent contexts.

"To learn, to make knowledge their own, students must reflect on, interact with, and react to the materials presented to them,"
(Hughes, Kooy, & Kanevsky, 1997).

What are Double Entry Journals?

Like Reciprocal Teaching, Double Entry Journals are an intervention designed to facilitate engagement with a text. Double Entry Journals engage students by allowing them to respond and reflect independently *and* collaboratively upon their understanding of the text (Double Entry Diary, 2010). The intervention encourages students to use strategies that aid comprehension such as: making connections, making inferences, asking questions, and clarifying confusion (Buehl, 2001). Double Entry Journals connect the reading process with writing, allowing the students to "think aloud" on paper (L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2007). They create a connection between reading and writing because students are able to "talk" to the author when they write their reflections (Double-Entry Journals, 2010). Double entry journals allow students to use their independently written dialogue to increase class discussion. This class discussion allows students to monitor their ideas and reshape them as a result of their exposure to others' thoughts and understandings. "To learn, to make knowledge their own, students must reflect on, interact with, and react to the materials presented to them" (Hughes, Kooy, & Kanevsky, 1997, p. 187).

Methodology

Participants

In my four years of teaching at an urban charter school, I have encountered a growing trend: by the time my students get to middle school, they are two or more years below their grade level in reading. The seventh grade class I studied for this project was no exception. Being a relatively new teacher, I struggled with trying to find ways to help my students to become competent readers. I soon realized that my students' difficulties were not in being unable to read the words; rather their difficulties were in understanding what they read. I vowed to incorporate teaching strategies in my classroom to help my students achieve greater comprehension, which brought me to Otterbein to pursue my Master of Arts in Reading Education.

I teach at Whitehall Preparatory and Fitness Academy, a small charter school in Columbus, Ohio. My seventh grade class is made up of fourteen students; seven girls and seven boys. Eight out of the fourteen are on free and reduced lunch. One student is on an Individualized Education Plan and two students are on a 504 plan (See Table 1). All three of the students have been diagnosed with ADHD. One additional student has been identified as gifted. The class has a wide variety of abilities and educational needs that must be met; however, it is clear that the majority of the seventh grade class can be categorized as struggling readers. For the purposes of this study, I will define struggling readers as students who can only make literal interpretations and connections to the text and are unable to make inferences and think critically about a text.

Individualized Education Plan	504 Plan
<p>An IEP (Individualized Education Plan) is a document developed by a public school for a student who is eligible to receive special education. The IEP is developed by a team and is reviewed at least once a year. An IEP is designed to meet the unique needs of each child who qualifies. It guarantees that the child will be provided with support and services detailed in the IEP (Baumel, 2010).</p>	<p>A 504 plan is a document developed for a child that has a disability; the plan ensures that the child's needs are met as well as the needs of their non-disabled peers. An individual with a disability defined by law is, "An individual with a disability means any person who: (i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment" (Durheim, 2010).</p>

Table 1: Definitions of IEP and 504 Plans

Procedures

I chose two interventions to increase the comprehension of my seventh grade students, Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals. During the interventions the class was reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960). The students were given a choice of novels to read and chose *To Kill a Mockingbird* based on recommendations from parents and older students in the middle school. The students made so much progress through the year that I felt confident that the book would both challenge and engage them. I thought that the two interventions would serve as a great support for this text, which I predicted would be somewhat difficult for them. Prior to introducing *To Kill a Mockingbird* and implementing the interventions, I taught a unit on the Civil Rights movement to build background knowledge for the novel. I taught the strategies over a four week period, four days a week, alternating the two interventions every other week. The interventions took place as part of normal classroom practice.

Reciprocal Teaching

The first reading intervention that I used was Reciprocal Teaching. I was more confident using this strategy because I have experience using it. I used it last year with my Language Arts classes prior to the start of this project and found it to be a very useful intervention. I began the Reciprocal Teaching intervention on February 23, 2010, by explicitly explaining the four strategies: *predicting*, *questioning*, *clarifying*, and *summarizing*. Although it is not a formal component of Reciprocal Teaching, I also reviewed the concept of main ideas with students because they have had trouble identifying the main ideas in stories (See Table 2). As we read through a chapter of the book as a large group, I modeled how to use the Reciprocal Teaching strategies using the think-aloud method. Students were given a graphic organizer to enable them to follow along easily with the strategy (Reciprocal Teaching, 2005).

On days two and three of the intervention, I reviewed the different strategies of Reciprocal Teaching and then assigned each student one of the five strategies to try. These assignments were made purposefully, because I wanted to ensure that each student had the opportunity to try all the strategies during the intervention. As a class we began reading the text, and I stopped students halfway through to encourage them to work on the strategy they were assigned. I stopped them halfway through the chapter because they were not used to actively reading. By prompting them in a structured way at a designated point during the reading I ensured that all students were using the intervention in the way it was intended. As students were working on their assigned strategy, I walked around and observed their progress. If I noticed a student was struggling because they looked confused or if they asked a question, I would help them complete their assigned strategies. Students then shared with the class what they came up with while doing their job. As a class we continued reading the text and at the end of the chapter we stopped and the students attempted to do their jobs again. Once again, students had the opportunity to share their results with the class.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Reading Type	Teacher Read Aloud	Teacher Read Aloud	Teacher Read Aloud	Students read in groups
Explicit Teaching Definitions	<p>Predicting-“When we make predictions we make them based on what we already know.”</p> <p>Questioning-“When questioning, make sure that you are asking others to identify the main ideas in the story. Clarifying-“Look for phrases or words you don’t know, more than likely your group members won’t know them either. Use context clues to help determine the meaning.”</p> <p>Summarizing-“When we are summarizing, we want to make sure that we include all the important events in our summaries.”</p> <p>Main ideas-“Remember the main ideas are the most important events in the story. They are the events that have the biggest effect on the characters.” (Hashey & Connors, 2003 & (Reciprocal Teaching, 1986).</p>	<p>Predicting-“When we make predictions we make them based on what we already know.”</p> <p>Questioning-“When questioning, make sure that you are asking others to identify the main ideas in the story. Clarifying-“Look for phrases or words you don’t know, more than likely your group members won’t know them either. Use context clues to help determine the meaning.”</p> <p>Summarizing-“When we are summarizing, we want to make sure that we include all the important events in our summaries.”</p> <p>Main ideas-“Remember the main ideas are the most important events in the story. They are the events that have the biggest effect on the characters.” (Hashey & Connors, 2003 & (Reciprocal Teaching, 1986).</p>	<p>Predicting-“When we make predictions we make them based on what we already know.”</p> <p>Questioning-“When questioning, make sure that you are asking others to identify the main ideas in the story. Clarifying-“Look for phrases or words you don’t know, more than likely your group members won’t know them either. Use context clues to help determine the meaning.”</p> <p>Summarizing-“When we are summarizing, we want to make sure that we include all the important events in our summaries.”</p> <p>Main ideas-“Remember the main ideas are the most important events in the story. They are the events that have the biggest effect on the characters.” (Hashey & Connors, 2003 & (Reciprocal Teaching, 1986).</p>	<p>Predicting-“When we make predictions we make them based on what we already know.”</p> <p>Questioning-“When questioning, make sure that you are asking others to identify the main ideas in the story. Clarifying-“Look for phrases or words you don’t know, more than likely your group members won’t know them either. Use context clues to help determine the meaning.”</p> <p>Summarizing-“When we are summarizing, we want to make sure that we include all the important events in our summaries.”</p> <p>Main ideas-“Remember the main ideas are the most important events in the story. They are the events that have the biggest effect on the characters.” (Hashey & Connors, 2003 & (Reciprocal Teaching, 1986).</p>
Think Aloud	“As I read I am going to model for you how to use the strategies out loud. For example, I predict that Atticus is going to have to shoot the dog because Heck Tate won’t do it.”	“As I read I am going to model for you how to use the strategies out loud. For example, I predict that Atticus is going to have to shoot the dog because Heck Tate won’t do it.”	“As I read I am going to model for you how to use the strategies out loud. For example, I predict that Atticus is going to have to shoot the dog because Heck Tate won’t do it.”	
Guiding Student Use Of Strategies (Whole Class)	“Now I am going to read aloud, as I read look for examples of your strategy.”	“Now I am going to read aloud, as I read look for examples of your strategy.”	“Now I am going to read aloud, as I read look for examples of your strategy.”	
Student Group’s Use of Strategies				“Each of you will be assigned a strategy. Read the chapter with your group members. Stop halfway through the chapter and write down examples of your strategy then share with your group. Finish reading the chapter, do your strategy and then share results with your group members.”
Students share results	“I will assign each of you a strategy to try while I am reading aloud to the class. As I read write down examples of your strategy. We will share these answers halfway through the chapter and at the end”	“I will assign each of you a strategy to try while I am reading aloud to the class. As I read write down examples of your strategy. We will share these answers halfway through the chapter and at the end”	“I will assign each of you a strategy to try while I am reading aloud to the class. As I read write down examples of your strategy. We will share these answers halfway through the chapter and at the end”	

Table 2. Examples of Teaching Interventions

On the fourth day of the intervention, I placed students in mixed ability groups and assigned them a strategy they had not yet had a chance to practice. I assigned students a page number in

the chapter on which to stop, at which point they were to begin doing their jobs. This was done to encourage students to read actively, because the idea of Reciprocal Teaching is that students automatically will use these strategies while reading throughout the text, and this was an opportunity to practice doing that in a small group setting. When they were finished reading the assigned section, they were expected to share their results with the group. Students were also encouraged to discuss the novel, clear up any misunderstandings anyone was having, and give suggestions to their group mates about their jobs. Students were then told to stop at the end of the chapter and complete their jobs before sharing their results with their group members. Once again they were given the opportunity to discuss the novel, clear up any misunderstandings, and give suggestions to group-mates. As the students were reading and discussing, I was circulating from group to group and monitoring their progress by observing the groups' interactions with each other and the text.

Double Entry Journals

The first time I taught Double Entry Journals to students, I explained that good readers interact directly with their reading. In other words, as they are reading, good readers have a “conversation” with the text, and these “conversations” allow them to become more active participants when reading (Double Entry Diary, 2010). To use double entry journals, students must divide their paper in half vertically; on the left side they write a quote from the reading along with the page number and on the right they write a reflection about the quote (Adolescent Literacy-Double-Entry Journals, 2010; Tovani, 2000). Types of reflections students are encouraged to make are: questions or confusion, appreciation or disagreement, connections, observations, speculations or predictions, and the significance or importance of a quote (Double Entry Diary, 2010).

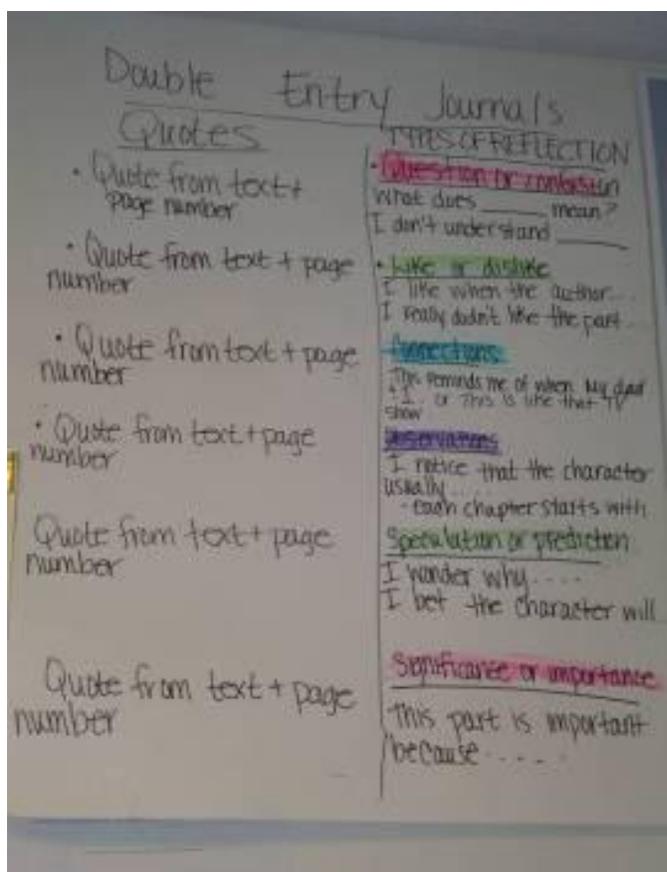


Figure 3. Double Entry Journal Prompts

To help students create more meaningful reflections, I provided prompts they could use while writing the different reflections and then made a poster to hang in the classroom to serve as a guide (see figure 3).

The procedure with students, using the think-aloud method, by reading with them and then picking out quotes from the chapter. Once I picked out a quote, I would verbally reflect on it

using the prompts I had given them, and then would write them on the overhead. I made sure to use all six types of reflections while we did our reading. Toward the end of the modeling section, I allowed students to “help” me make reflections on the quotes I had chosen. As a class, we then chose one quote and talked about how it was important to the story and whether or not we could make any other reflections about the quote.

On days two and three of the intervention, I started the class by reviewing the possible types of reflections and the prompts they could use to help them make their reflections. I then assigned each student a different type of reflection to do as I read aloud. To give students the practice they needed, I stopped them halfway through the reading and encouraged the students to choose their quotes and write their reflections. After they were finished writing their reflections, I encouraged students to share their reflections with the class. As a class we then discussed the reflections to see if there were any more reflections that we could make about the selected quote. We then began reading once again and stopped at the end of the chapter to pick out more quotes and reflect on them. As a class we chose our favorite quotes and tried to produce different reflections about each of the quotes.

On day four, students read alone and chose four different quotes out of the reading, then applied four different types of reflections to the quotes of their choice. They were then put into multiple-ability groups where students chose one quote and a corresponding reflection to share with the group. The group then chose one quote and reflection they thought would be good for a whole class discussion and put that quote on the board. When all groups had quotes on the board, we discussed each and collaboratively expanded on the reflections about each quote.

Assessments

In September, students were given the Stanford 10 test to assess their grade level ability in reading. The students were given the Stanford 10 test once again in May to determine their growth in reading over the year. Before I began teaching the interventions, I gave the students the Buckle Down Test Form A to serve as a baseline comprehension assessment. The Buckle Down Test Form A is designed to serve as a baseline for instruction and give students test taking practice. After I had concluded the intervention I gave the Buckle Down Test Form B to help me determine the students’ growth over the intervention. The Buckle Down Test Form B is designed to test students’ retention. The Buckle Down tests were created by the Ohio Department of Education to help teachers facilitate student practice for Ohio Achievement Assessments and determine whether or not a student needs intervention in reading. The Buckle Down tests assesses the students in their vocabulary skills, the reading process, informational text, and literary text.

In addition to the test data, during the Reciprocal Teaching intervention, students were given graphic organizers to support and document their strategy use while reading. These graphic organizers were a tool I used to determine any misunderstandings and successes the students experienced during the intervention. During the Double Entry Journal interventions students used reading journals in which they wrote their reflections. These reading journals allowed me to assess students’ understandings and identify their confusions.

Results and Conclusions

As noted in the introduction, the Stanford 10 test in September indicated that the seventh grade class was reading on a level of 6.1: sixth grade, first month. When the students were tested again in May, the data showed that the students made 150% growth in reading over the year, moving from a 6.1 grade level of reading to 7.3 grade level in reading. The students were also given the Buckle Down Form A test to serve as a baseline for research and then given the Buckle Down Form B test to ascertain the growth they had made as a result of the intervention. On the Buckle Down Form A test the students' average score was 29.8 out of 54 points, while the average score on the Buckle Down Form B test was 30.6 out of 54 points. Based on these numbers the students did not show much growth over the intervention period and a t-test showed no significant difference from the pre- to post- test.

The Buckle Down Ohio Achievement 7 Reading test allows the scorer to break the test into four different sections so that teachers can see their students' strengths and weaknesses. While overall scores did not increase significantly, a breakdown of scores by skill area showed that students' scores improved in the Reading Process section. Reading Process measures students' concepts of print, reading comprehension, and self-monitoring strategies (Buckle Down Ohio Achievement 7 Reading, 2nd Ed., 2009). When analyzing the results, I noted that students' scores went from a 7.43 on the pre-test to a 10.43 on the post-test, a three point difference from the pre to the post tests (Figure 4). I completed a paired t-test on the pre and post tests of "reading process" sub scores, and found that the difference in the means was significant ($t = 2.06$, $p < 0.01$) with an effect size of 1.7. I believe that student' scores increased because these types of questions were related to comprehension and summarizing. Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals teach students to look for the main ideas in their reading and focus on how to summarize information. Therefore, it appears that direct instruction of these two strategies had a positive impact on student learning.

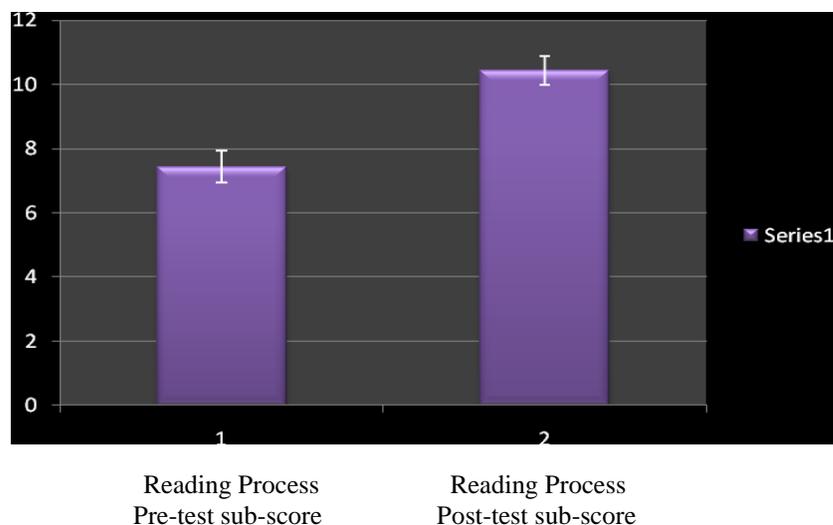


Figure 4. Class Means on the Reading Process sub-score component of the Buckle Down Ohio Achievement 7 Reading Assessment

Reciprocal Teaching

Interactions with text. In addition to quantitative test data, an examination of student work indicates that the Reciprocal Teaching strategy had a positive impact on how students interacted with text. For example, whereas students struggled with the main idea at the beginning of the intervention, they made gains as the intervention went on. At the beginning of the intervention, students would write one line examples of main ideas with little detail, but by the end of the intervention students' main ideas were more detailed and showed greater understanding of the material (See Figure 5). Students no longer listed unrelated events in the novel; they were able to identify the main ideas more effectively.

When we first began the intervention, I told students that good readers use multiple comprehension strategies *during* reading, yet when we first began the intervention, most students would stop at the assigned page and then do their jobs (e.g., use the strategies to document responses). As the students became more familiar with the intervention and the concepts, many began to use the strategies on their own while they were reading. In fact, after the first week I had many students asking me if they were allowed to do their “jobs” while they were reading, rather than wait for the pre-designated “stop” page. Many said they were better able to remember important details in the chapter if they were allowed to stop and write down their thoughts. Overall, I found reciprocal teaching a worthwhile instructional strategy. It gave students a space in which to have a conversation about their reading, while teaching them what is important for them to focus on while they are reading.

<p>Week One</p> <p>Francis and Scout get into a fight, Uncle Jack whooped Scout, Francis called Scout a bad name, Uncle Jack tells Scout not to say bad words, and Scout tells Uncle Jack not to tell Atticus about the fight. (BP)</p>	<p>Response Level</p> <p>The student does not include the main ideas and there is little detail. The student picks out random events that happened in the chapter that have little relevance to the story.</p>
<p>Week Two</p> <p>Mrs. Radley died and the kids ask if Atticus saw Boo, It snows for the first time since 1885, they built a snowman out of mud that looks like Mr. Avery, Ms. Maudie's house burns down, and Boo Radley put a blanket on Scout when she was standing outside of the house during the fire.(ZH)</p>	<p>Response Level</p> <p>The student correctly identifies the majority of the main ideas in the chapter. He uses detail to show further understanding of the events in the chapter.</p>

Figure 5. Examples of Students' Conceptions of “main ideas”

Interactions with each other. While not directly the goal of my study, there was a significant improvement in students' ability to work in cooperative groups. As Slavin (1999) states, "the opportunity for students to discuss, to argue, to present and hear one another's viewpoints is the critical element of cooperative learning with respect to student achievement." Initially, students would often do their "jobs" and then pass the sheets around copying from each other. I was able to put a stop to this by explaining to students that the strategies were not the only thing that were tools for them, but that their group members were also tools to help them understand the reading better. By week two, I had to intervene less often. In fact, the class had a debate going on about what was the best way to use Reciprocal Teaching. Half the class believed that they learned more and it was faster to do Reciprocal Teaching correctly than it was to copy off each other. The class wanted to have a competition where one group did Reciprocal Teaching the proper way and the other group just copied off each other to see who was finished first, and they wanted a quiz to be given to each group to see who learned the most. Unfortunately, we never got to do this because of time constraints. This debate caused many students to think about which method was more effective and more students began to talk about their strategies with their group instead of just copying. While not as popular with the students as Reciprocal Teaching, Double Entry Journals also yielded improvements.

Double Entry Journals

The students had a hard time understanding how to use Double Entry Journals effectively at the beginning of the intervention. They were confused about everything from which side to write the quote and reflection, and to picking out quality quotes and making detailed reflections about the quotes. At the beginning of the intervention, students grew frustrated very quickly because they did not understand how to pick out important quotes and make good detailed reflections about the quotes. During the first week of the intervention, most students chose meaningless quotes from the book that had little to nothing to do with the main idea or main events in the story (Figure 6). Their reflections were very basic and often times were simply attempts at restating the quote. At first students chose to do the types of reflections they felt more comfortable with, such as predictions, speculations, importance, and connections.

Although students still struggled with using Double Entry Journals, they began to make noticeable gains in the second week of the intervention. In the second week, the majority of the students chose longer quotes that were either directly related to the main ideas in the reading or to important events. Their reflections were longer and contained more detail from the story. To alleviate the frustration from the first week of the intervention, I tried to make Tuesdays and Wednesdays more motivating by rewarding students whose quotes and reflections were shared with the class. The students were given a Dragon Dollar if their quote was selected to be written on the board. The Dragon Dollars are a part of a positive reinforcement plan implemented by the school in which students can earn Dragon Dollars and then buy treats with them. This gave the students an added incentive and they started trying harder because they wanted to be rewarded. I believe the challenge days allowed the students to gain more confidence in the intervention which in turn resulted in higher achievement.

The Double-Entry Journal intervention initially caused a lot of confusion for both the students and the teacher; however, I believe the students learned a lot from it. Since the intervention, they have had an easier time determining the main idea and are much more comfortable discussing literature. In fact, after the intervention many students who normally did not volunteer to answer questions began to participate more in class. I believe the intervention provided the students with a vocabulary to use when speaking about literature and helped develop their skills for analyzing literature.

Student	Quote 1	Reflection 1	Quote 2	Reflection 2	Discussion of Change
ZH	“Somebody new yo’ were comin’ back for ‘em.”	Like-I like the way the author makes the characters sound like there from the time period.	“The collection taken up today and the next three Sundays will go to Helen, his wife, to help her out at home.” (ZH)	Prediction-I think Ewell will rob Helen for what they said, Tom Robinson did to his daughter.	Week One-Response is very basic, seems the student is reaching in order to make a reflection. Week Two- The student shows an understanding of the type of character Bob Ewell is by assuming he would do something to hurt Helen.
KR	“Somebody new yo’ were comin’ back for ‘em.”	Speculation-I wonder if somebody did know he was coming back, but who could know?	“Lula stopped, but she said, ‘You aint got no business bringin’ white chillin here-they go their own church, we got ourn’n. It is our church, aint it Miss Cal?’” (KR)	Connection-This reminds me when me and my mom went into this store and on the door it said no blacks, only whites are allowed.	Week One-The student is basically restating what the author has said by turning it into a question. Week Two- The student makes a great connection to how the Finch children were treated by relating an experience she had with racism.
TKH	“an old franklin stove sat ina corner of the porch.”	Connections- I’ve seen someone with a stove on there porch.	“He picked up the Camelia; and when I went off to bed I saw him fingering the wide petals.” (TKH)	Prediction-Jem might grow back ever single Camellia flower in her memory.	Week One-Response is very basic, no real connection to the material is made. Week Two- The student shows an understanding of the sadness Jem has over the death of Mrs. Dubose.
LG	“You know old Mr. Radley was a foot washing Baptist.”	Importance-This is important because he might be a good guy	“How’re we gonna sing it if there aint any humn-books?” (LG)	Connection-This reminds me of when it was my friends first time to my church and she said how they are going to dance when there isn’t any music. We don’t use music.	Week One-This reflection shows that the student doesn’t even have a basic understanding of what the quote is saying. The character was pointing out that the man was so strict in his beliefs that he sometimes couldn’t understand others. Week Two- The student shows their understanding by telling us about a time when she took a friend to her church and she was confused because things were different.

KB	"straight home and keep my fat flopping mouth shut."	Observation-They are telling her to keep quit (quiet) or she will have to go home.	"This church has no better friend than your daddy." (KB)	Speculation- Why is Atticus so important to this church?	Week One-Once again, the student is restating what the author has said. Week Two- The student shows that they understand that there is a reason why Atticus is so important to the people at Calpurnia's church.
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Figure 6. Student Selected Quotes and Their Reflections for Week One and Two of Double Entry Journals

Implications for Teaching and Research

As a teacher of struggling readers, I found that both strategies helped my students immensely. Although there were only small differences in the test scores, I was able to see improvement in my students. The students began to understand that good readers are active readers. Many students now stop when they are reading and think about what the author is saying. They will ask me or other students about something they do not understand or make a prediction about what they think will happen next. They are able to more accurately identify the main ideas in a text, instead of just listing unrelated events. They have gained confidence in their comprehension skills and this has encouraged them to participate more in class. I have seen students who would not speak up in class now actively participate and be engaged. I believe that both strategies gave the students a language in which to communicate their thoughts about a text.

Summary:

In September of this year, I discovered from the Stanford 10 test that my seventh grade students were reading at a sixth grade ability level. I choose to use both Reciprocal Teaching and Double Entry Journals in hopes of providing them with strategies that would improve their comprehension. The pre- and post-test data did not reveal a significant difference in their scores, but after breaking the test into sections, I found that students did make improvement in the Reading Process section. Students also improved significantly on the Stanford 10 test, going from a reading level of 6.1 to 7.3. Although students struggled with the interventions, especially Double Entry Journals, they showed gains in their work. They were able to identify the main ideas more easily and learned the value of working in cooperative groups. I believe the biggest benefit of the two interventions was that it gave the students the confidence in their reading ability and the vocabulary needed in which to discuss literature.

Limitations:

The limitations of the results of this research are as follows. This study was done with one class for only four weeks, and only two reading strategies were used. Another limitation is that I was more comfortable and enjoyed using Reciprocal Teaching more than the Double Entry Journals. This may have skewed my results because the students may have sensed my feelings about the Double Entry Journals. My confusion about the strategy may have caused confusion among my students.

In order to accurately assess the effectiveness of these two strategies, a longer study which encompasses multiple ages, grades, and reading levels would be instructive.

Below I outline recommendations, based on my experiences and study of the literature, for teachers wishing to try these strategies in their own classrooms.

Recommendations for Teachers:

- Both interventions take time. I have a two hour Language Arts block; when using the intervention it took the students an hour and a half to read a chapter. The intervention would be best to use when teaching short stories or grade level reading groups to ensure that students will have time to use the strategies effectively.
- When using Double Entry Journals, assign students a specific literary element, such as characterization, plot, setting, etc., to focus on when looking for important quotes. This will help students zero in on quotes that are important. The biggest frustration for my students was that they were unsure which quotes were important and which were not. Assigning a specific literary element may cut down on frustration and allow students to feel successful.
- For both interventions, I suggest “training” your students to do the interventions over a series of weeks. In Reciprocal Teaching, take the time to teach them good questioning skills and how to make good predictions, because it will help in the long run. When using Double Entry Journals, take the time to practice doing different types of reflections on quotes you have selected when reading. This will allow the students to master the skill of making reflections about what they read and get them used to reflecting on quotes from the reading. It is important that you gradually release responsibility to students and ensure that they are ready to use the strategies on their own.
- Use many and varied reading strategies to encourage engagement. Using the same strategy or intervention exclusively will only ensure that students get bored and are not engaged in the reading.
- It is important for the teacher to know the strategy that they are teaching very well, so that s/he will be able to anticipate any problems students may have using it.

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