Reciprocal Teaching and Reading Comprehension

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December 8, 2010
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ABSTRACT

Reciprocal teaching is a reading comprehension strategy that focuses on the areas of predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. Reciprocal teaching was implemented in a second grade classroom of nineteen students, during a two week long unit about plants. Three atypical students, including a struggling student, a high achieving student, and an ELL (English Language Learner), were identified and closely monitored during the implementation of reciprocal teaching. Students were given a pre-assessment to determine their existing knowledge about plants, which helped to guide their instruction. Rubrics on the different areas of reciprocal teaching were created and used as formative assessments, which gave insight to the students’ abilities to use the strategies of predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. The pre-assessment was given again as a post-assessment, which was compared to the students’ pre-assessment. This data was then used to measure the students’ growth in the comprehension of the material taught during the unit. All three atypical students, as well as the whole class, increased their comprehension of plants, as indicated by the results of the post-assessment.
CHAPTER 1

Reading comprehension is a skill that students in my classroom tend to struggle with. In my district, students are expected to reach 85% comprehension, in order to be considered proficient. I have participated in staff development and workshops, looking for techniques and strategies that will help the students in my classroom be able to comprehend what they are reading. I chose reading comprehension as the topic for this project in hopes that I could introduce a strategy that would allow my second grade students to become fluent and accurate readers, while being able to comprehend what they are reading.

The Davenport Community School District, which is a large urban school district, consists of 3 high schools, 6 middle schools, 19 elementary schools, 1 alternative school, and 4 preschool sights, servicing a total of 17,000 students. I am in my eighth year of teaching with the Davenport Community School District. I taught a Kindergarten/1st grade split class my first year, and was then moved to second grade, which is what I currently teach. I teach second grade at Buchanan Elementary School, located in Davenport, Iowa.

At Buchanan Elementary, there are 3 sections of 2nd grade. In my classroom I have 19 students; 10 females and 9 males. Of my 19 students I have 5 Caucasians, 4 Hispanics, 1 Asian, and 9 African American students. I have 3 students who are ELL learners, who receive help with their English skills outside of the classroom. I currently have no students with IEP’s. I have 3 students who are part of the Talented and Gifted program and meet with our TAG teacher during reading center time twice a week. During this time they do lessons that correspond with what we are doing in the
classroom, but are presented in a more challenging format. I also have 2 students who are struggling in the areas of reading and math, and need a lot of extra help. I already have these students on a Solution Focus Plan which outlines my specific goals for them, and the extra help that they will receive. These students have also been moved to the front of the classroom, which is where I instruction is taught. I have one male student who has a severe behavior disorder and receives medication 3 times a day. Since he is new to Buchanan this year, I have been in touch with his 1st grade teacher and previous school counselor, and have set up a behavior plan similar to what he was used to. This plan includes a tally mark system, which earns him stickers and rewards, such as lunch with the teacher or computer time. He is also given 15 minutes every day to help our school counselor with her morning duties.

In my classroom, 74% of my students come from single parent homes, with parents who have had little schooling beyond high school. Concerning the home life of my students, 53% of the parents are unemployed and live in the low income housing complex across from school, or the trailer parks located down the street. Unfortunately, many of these parents lack the necessary skills to help their children with their learning, because they themselves don’t know how. It is a challenge getting these parents to come in for conferences, as well as to get them involved in their children’s learning. Throughout the year, Buchanan has events such as Curriculum Night, Math Night, Reading Night, etc. and offer meals and prizes. These events help to bring parents and families to our school.

I do not have any Para educators who assist in my classroom this year. However, I am fortunate enough to have 2 adult community volunteers who come into
my classroom for a half-hour each, every week. They assist students during reading centers and read one on one with my striving readers. Our school also has a reading facilitator who helps us with planning and interventions for students who are not meeting standards.

Although the school that I teach at can be a challenge, I absolutely love my job and love the fact that I am helping the 19 students who enter my classroom everyday!

While preparing this unit, I gave thought to all the students in my room and decided to carefully monitor and record the progress of three atypical students. I chose a student who struggles to learn, one who learns quickly, and a student whom English is not his first language. Once these students were identified, I planned and made modifications that would support their learning throughout the unit.

**Task 2-Summary Journal Entry**

*Atypical Student #1* - This female student is very quiet and very shy. She often tends to blend in with the crowd and doesn’t want to do or say anything that would make her stand out. She doesn’t have a lot of friends and tends to cling to those who pay attention to her. Since school is a challenge for her, she tends to give up when the work gets to hard. She would be happier if her peers would do her work for her.

Student #1 had a hard time doing QAR on her own. Her strengths included not giving up and accepting the help provided. She was more successful when help was given and she was supported through the lesson. Her weakness is that she won’t raise her hand and ask for help. She relies on the teacher to come to her. The modifications I implemented continued to provide scaffolding, but slowly decreased, causing her to
become more independent. I picked out text that was on a lower level, which was easier for her to read.

Atypical Student #2 - This male student is very outgoing and outspoken. He is bright academically and socially. He is popular and well liked among his peers. He enjoys tasks that challenge him and call for him to think outside the box. Emotionally, he can get very upset if someone hurts his feelings or causes him to feel left out. He cries and can throw a tantrum. When this happens, I pull him aside and allow him “cool off” time, where he can regroup and get himself back together.

Student #2 did well with QAR. He was able to differentiate the difference between the two types of questions and back up his answers with his rationale. Although he was able to successfully answer and defend his answers, he did have trouble coming up with “In the Book” and “In my Head” types of questions on his own. The modifications I implemented helped him to come up with these types of questions. I modeled how I came up with my questions, and helped him come up with questions of his own.

Atypical Student #3 - This male ESL student is very shy and timid. Since he is new to Buchanan this year, he hasn’t made a lot of friends. His closest friend is another high achieving ESL student. Since he sits next to this student, he often asks and relies on him for help when completing his assignments. He tends to get frustrated and cries if the work becomes too much for him. He speaks English, but his vocabulary is limited and his sentences are often broken.

Student #3 struggled with QAR and needed lots of scaffolding. His strength was that he was able to make a connection between a fire that was caused by a lighter in
Mexico, and relate that to something that might cause a wildfire in a forest. His weakness is confidence to understand and complete the tasks on his own. The modifications I made included providing easier text, confirming he understands what is asked of him, and using cues and prompts to help him when he is confused.

My strength throughout the lessons was that I was able to adapt and change my plans, based on what the students demonstrated and what I was expecting from them. On day 1, students proved that they didn’t have a clear understanding of QAR. Instead of continuing on with my lesson and hoping they would catch on, I changed my plans and decided to break down the 2 strands of QAR, spending a day on each to focus on that particular skill.

My weakness was not allowing students enough “think time.” After reviewing the audiotapes, I was amazed at how little time I gave them to think about their answers. I asked a question and if an answer wasn’t given within 4 seconds, I was rewording and asking again. I need to work on allowing at least 10 seconds of “think time,” allowing those students who process things differently, enough time to comprehend and respond.

The specific area of learning that I plan to focus on and enhance is reading comprehension. I want to focus on how I can motivate and encourage students to use higher level thinking skills, while asking high order questions. I want them to have and know how to use the necessary tools, when looking to answer questions pertaining to their reading. I want to be knowledgeable a resourceful when it comes to providing them with strategies. The reason I chose reading comprehension is because it is an area of focus that Buchanan Elementary has been focused on for several years. When looking at the data from last year’s second grade, only 39/68 (56%) of second grade students met
the goal of 95% for comprehension. By helping my students to become better readers, and helping them to understand what it is that they are reading, my students will be able to apply those skills to other content areas.
CHAPTER 2- Task 18- Review of Literature

In today’s classrooms, reading comprehension instruction tends to focus on teacher generated questions, which measure comprehension of specific text rather than developing the metacognitive strategies students need for comprehending all text (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). The weakness with this form of instruction is that teachers become the independent authorities of interpretation and students become passive recipients of inert knowledge (DeCleene, Juettner, & Marcell, 2010). Beyond knowing and reciting a list of strategies, students should be able to actually use them, without teacher prompting (DeCleene, Juettner, & Marcell, 2010). The lack of comprehension instruction has prompted researchers to conclude that comprehension instruction should be an essential part of primary grade reading programs (Medina & Pilonieta, 2009). Instead of engaging students in dynamic lessons that include a variety of literacy materials and modeling appropriate strategies to help with text comprehension, teachers are primarily relying on content textbook teachers’ manuals. Instruction is often limited to either the teacher or the students perfunctorily reading the texts, and is followed by questions the teacher asks the class (Kragler, Walker, & Martin, 2005). Ultimately, teachers and schools need to see core reading programs as a structure, one that provides text and a general curriculum but also allows for elaboration (Dewitz, Jones, Leahy, 2009). The goal for students in today’s classroom is to become familiar and comfortable at using a variety of different reading comprehension strategies, as needed, according to the text structure, the purpose at hand, and the level of print difficulty.
Research of Metacognitive Comprehension Strategies

Eilher and Pinkley (2006) describe a study that was designed to assess the effectiveness of explicit instruction of the specific metacognitive strategies of using prior knowledge, predicting, and sequencing on the reading comprehension development of readers in a first grade classroom. The project was conducted in a first grade classroom of twenty-four students. Of those students, five were Hispanic, one was Asian/Pacific Island, and eighteen were Caucasian. Six of these students received English Language Learner (ELL) services in a pull-out program (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006).

Data Collection Instruments

Specific comprehension assessment tools were used to establish a baseline score to measure each first grader’s comprehension. Comprehension scores derived from the Beaver Developmental Reading Assessment, (DRA) were taken two weeks prior to the beginning of the metacognitive instruction. The DRA is a field-tested, research based tool designed to provide an accurate assessment of individual students’ reading comprehension (Pearson Learning Group, 2005). The students were given the test individually before the intervention of the explicit instruction comprehension strategies, as well as after the intervention (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006).

Another assessment tool that was used was the Index of Reading Awareness (IRA), was used to determine the students’ level of cognitive thinking about reading prior to the intervention. The IRA test was designed to measure students’ cognitive awareness during reading (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). Students completed this multiple choice test that questioned what cognitive processes they used while reading.
To measure reading comprehension during the project, a Comprehension Strategy Checklist was developed and completed while listening and observing individual students during small group reading instruction. (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). A checkmark was recorded when a strategy was used, a minus when it was taught and modeled, but not used. A mark of N/A signified that the strategy was neither taught nor observed.

**Intervention Strategies**

Students were taught explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies in both whole group and small group settings. During the whole group instruction, each comprehension strategy was introduced and taught to the first graders. During this time, any previous questions that had arisen during small group instructed, were addressed and discussed. The first grade students were exposed to nine weeks of strategy instruction during story time. The teacher modeled instruction on how to use prior knowledge to make text connections, how to use context clues to make meaningful predictions, and how to sequence the events of a story (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). Students were also taught how to use graphic organizers to accompany their learning of the different comprehension strategies.

Small group instruction was designed to support students’ use of comprehension strategies while reading independently. Small groups consisted of two-five students. Groups were based on students’ DRA score, SAT-9 scores, and knowledge of sight words. Results of these assessments showed that 54% of the students were performing at grade level, 21% were below grade level, and 25% were above grade level (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). A total of six groups were established; two above level groups, three at
grade level groups, and one group below grade level. Each of the six groups were given a trade book based on their reading readiness level. The researcher met with each of the small groups for approximately thirty minutes once a week. During this time, the students read their trade book, while the researcher stopped and would engage the students in a directed discussion of the text. The discussion focused around the reading strategies being taught; using prior knowledge, making predictions, and sequencing events (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006).

**Results of the Study**

After the nine week implementation study, the students were given the DRA and IRA again, which was compared to their pretest. Results showed that that reading awareness scores were higher after the implementation of reading comprehension than before explicit instruction (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). Both of these tests revealed a significant increase in the students’ reading comprehension levels.

The Comprehension Strategy Checklist and graphic organizers showed two learning patterns. First, students were genuinely using prior knowledge in making text-to-self, text, and world connections that enhanced their understanding of what was being read. Second, the independent use of the strategies taught emerged as students used them during reading (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006).

The results of this study suggest that the use of explicit instruction of metacognitive reading strategies significantly improved the first-grade students’ reading comprehension. It also suggests that the introduction of these strategies should begin at an early stage in students’ reading development (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). Whole group
instruction, teacher modeling, and independent practice appear to support and benefit students’ use of reading comprehension strategies.

**Kinesthetic Comprehension Research**

Comprehension instruction should be an essential feature in the primary grades literacy programs (Block, Parris, & Whiteley, 2008). A study by Block, Parris, and Whiteley was designed for young readers to learn comprehension processes and to develop their abilities to initiate them without teacher prompting. The purpose of this study was to determine if adding kinesthetic learning aides, referred to as Comprehension Process Motions (CPMs), would increase students’ comprehension and metacognition. This project included 19 experimental and 10 control groups from two U.S. urban elementary schools. The schools were underperforming schools in lower socioeconomic status communities. The population was 57% Hispanic, 32% African American, 6% Caucasian, 4% Asian, and 1% Native American cultures (Block, Parris, & Whiteley, 2008).

**Study Design**

Teachers and students were randomly assigned to either an experimental or a control group using a stratified randomization procedure. This resulted in 257 experimental and 256 control students, including 123 kindergarteners, 67 first graders, 78 second graders, 96 third graders, 108 fourth graders, and 41 fifth graders (Block, Parris, & Whiteley, 2008). A 45 minute instruction was given in small-group settings outside of the classroom to both the experimental and control group for 60 days.
The control subjects were taught comprehension lessons created by a basal reading company. These groups followed the basal teacher’s guide to dictate their instruction. Lessons for each process lasted for 10 days, followed by a one day review of the process, and a workbook page that focused on the comprehension process.

The experimental subject students rotated through new groups with different teachers, each time a new comprehension strategy was introduced. Students were taught CPMs for finding the main idea, making predictions, inferring, and clarifying. Teachers would record the CPM that was taught in each lesson, as well as how many students signaled a CPM during instruction. This intervention was used to increase young readers’ abilities to think about the mental processes they used to comprehend by teaching declarative, conditional, and procedural knowledge through direct transactional strategy lessons that included dual-coded kinesthetic learning aids and by asking students to signal the comprehension processes that they used during shared and silent reading lessons (Block, Parris, & Whiteley, 2008).

Results of the study

Students who used CPMs significantly outperformed those who were taught the same process without the use of kinesthetic teaching aids, in the areas of drawing conclusions, clarifying and identifying problems, following fictional plot, identifying nonfiction authors’ writing patterns, and identifying main ideas. Within two weeks, after beginning the CPM instruction, as many as 48-79% of students showed a metacognitive awareness of comprehension processes and demonstrated self initiated use of these processes three months after the instruction was completed (Block, Parris, & Whiteley,
These results support the idea that CPM teaching tools hold the potential to aid students who have trouble making meaning, as well as to assist younger, more active kinesthetic learners. This data proves that basic comprehension and metacognitive processes can be learned and use independently by early learners.

**Reciprocal Teaching Study**

Jane M. Hashey and Diane J. Connors conducted an action research project that focused on reciprocals teaching’s effect on reading in the content areas. Reciprocal teaching is defined as “A scaffolded discussion technique that is built on four strategies that readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). The project was conducted by eight teachers from grades 3rd through 8th.

**Study design**

To begin the study, the teachers prepared themselves by reading numerous articles and brainstorming a list of questions that they hoped this study would answers. Each teacher designed his or her own approach to reciprocal teaching based on the grade that they taught and their instructional style. All teachers kept journals to document student’s behaviors, response to instruction, and literature dialogues. These journals were then brought and shared at monthly meetings between to the teachers to discuss.

All eight teachers agreed to integrate each of the four reciprocal teaching strategies one at a time by activating prior knowledge, defining, modeling, and providing opportunities for students to practice and apply them (Connors & Hashey, 2003). The teachers began their study with the strategy of predicting. A range of instruction
including webs, journal writing, and discussions were used to help students to predict. Next the teachers focused on questioning. The teachers struggled with this because they wanted the students’ generated questions to engage and challenge them to think at deeper and higher levels. Students worked in small groups, discussed types of questions, and had teacher modeling to help them. Next was the strategy of clarifying. The teachers relied on strategies such as rereading, using context clues, visualizing, and activating prior knowledge to help reinforce this skill. Summarizing was the last skill taught because the teachers felt it was the most difficult. To teach summarizing the teachers had students create definitions, compare and contrast teacher written passages, discuss big ideas, and retelling (Connors & Hashey, 2003).

Results of the study

The teachers agreed that students need decoding skills and those students in third grade, were found to benefit the most. They found that the strongest instructional strategies used for reciprocal teaching were teacher modeling and think-alouds, guided practice, and independent practice (Connors & Hashey, 2003). Reciprocal teaching improved the quality of classroom dialogues and was found to be the most effective with fiction. The teachers concluded that reciprocal teaching is an effective strategy to increase students’ reading comprehension.

Conclusions

After reviewing the research on metacognitive strategies, kinesthetic strategies, and reciprocal teaching, I feel that all of these different tools can be successful to help
struggling readers improve their reading comprehension. Reading comprehension
instruction needs to engage students in lessons that include a variety of literacy materials
with teachers modeling appropriate strategies to help with text comprehension, instead of
relying and basing instruction strictly from the content textbook teachers’ manual.

The strategy that I was most intrigued by was reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal
teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that is built on four strategies that good
readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.
Each skill is introduced, modeled, and practiced one at a time by the teacher modeling the
think-aloud approach. Once the students are familiar with it, they will practice with
teacher support.

Reciprocal teaching has been proven to be a technique requires that not only
students know how to comprehend, but calls for teachers to learn how to teach important
comprehension strategies so that students understand why they are using them and can
successfully use them without teacher prompting. Reciprocal teaching requires students
to become self-regulated learners who have the knowledge to choose from several
strategies to accomplish a reading goal. Through reciprocal teaching, students are taught
how to use and coordinate multiple strategies while they are reading, which aid in their
understanding and comprehension.
CHAPTER 3: Implementation of the Unit and Analysis of the Data

Task 8: Overview of the Unit

The two-week unit I will be teaching in my second grade classroom, is called, “Plants Alive!” This unit will be taught in both whole group and small group reading.

The content that this unit will teach students includes:

- Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.
- Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.
- Plants are important to people in many ways.

The skills that will be taught in this unit include:

- Previewing and making predictions
- Generating questions about a text’s main idea, important details, and textual inferences
- Clarifying portions of text or figuring out difficult words
- Summarizing important events in a text and arranging them in a logical order.

The new technique that I will be introducing, modeling, and implementing in this unit is reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is a scaffolded discussion technique that is built on four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. My goal is to improve student comprehension by scaffolding the four strategies by modeling, guiding, and applying the strategies while reading, to guide students to become metacognitive and reflective in their strategy use, to help students monitor their reading comprehension, and to strengthen instruction in a variety of classroom settings.
Students will be exposed to reciprocal teaching in a whole group setting daily for 20-30 minutes. During this time, students will share a common text, from which the different strategies are taught. Students will be learning as a whole group, yet also have practice working with a partner. Students will also receive reciprocal teaching instruction in their small guided reading groups. (These groups meet 2-3 times weekly.) Small groups of students will use their guided reading books to continue to work on the reciprocal teaching strategies that were introduced and practiced in whole group.

Students will be working with a partner to research a plant. Students will use the internet to find the following information about their plant:

- What does their plant look like?
- What are the parts of the plant?
- What does their plant need to survive? (Weather, water, food, etc.)
- How is their plant resourceful to people?
- What is one interesting fact about the plant?

From this information, students will make a short book illustrating the above information, as well as drawing a picture and labeling the parts of the plant.

**OBJECTIVES FOR WHOLE GROUP LESSONS**

*Lesson 1:* Today we will be building background knowledge and discussion children’s experiences with and knowledge of plants. We will discuss where they see plants, what they look like, and what they know about plants. We will use the picture prompt on page 154 of their text book, to talk about why people like to grow plants, how are plants important to people, what plants need to grow, and what kinds of plants they have seen.
Together we will brainstorm on chart paper a list of plant parts and needs, which we will continue to add to throughout the unit.

OBJECTIVE: After the classroom discussion and the poster we created while brainstorming, students will be able to identify plant needs and parts.

Lesson 2: We will revisit our list of plant parts/needs from the previous lesson. We will read the story, Plant Power!, by Bradley Roberts. Before reading we will talk about previewing a story, looking for bold words, and pictures to help us make a prediction about what the story will be about. I will model the first strategy in reciprocal teaching, which is predicting, for the students, sharing with them my thought process. We will read the story together. Afterwards, we will discuss if my prediction was correct. I have different plant books that I will pass out to groups of students. Students will follow the same procedure I used to make a prediction and make their own predictions about the books their group has.

OBJECTIVE: After watching the teacher model the strategy of prediction, students will be able to use that information to make and formulate their own predictions. Students will identify that people use objects that are made from plants.

Lesson 3 & 4: (2 days) We will begin the lesson by reviewing the strategy of making predictions. Students will make predictions about the story, The Tiny Seed, by Eric Carle, which we will record on chart paper. Next, we will talk about how good readers ask questions while they are reading. We will discuss who, what, where, when, why, how, and what if questions. We will read together the first 2 pages of the story. I
will model my thinking about asking a question and see if the students can answer the question. We will continue reading a few pages at a time, asking and answering questions. Students will come up with their own questions from the reading to ask and have their classmates answer.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will make predictions about the story, based on the title, pictures, key words, etc. Students will be able to formulate and answer appropriate questions pertaining to the story. Students will understand how plants grow.

*Lesson 5:* We will discuss what we read yesterday. Students will be paired with a partner to read, *Power-Packed Plants!*, by Drew Matthews. Students will first make a prediction. (They will write/draw a picture of their prediction.) Students will partner read chapter 1 of the story and formulate and write a question to ask another pair of students. Pairs of students will take turns asking and answering questions. We will continue to do the same for chapter 2.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will make predictions about the story. Students will formulate, write, and ask questions from the story with their partner. Students will use their text to answer questions. Students will learn how and why the plants that people eat are important to them.

*Lesson 6:* Today I will introduce another strategy of reciprocal teaching called clarifying. Clarifying helps readers monitor their own comprehension as they identify problems they are having in comprehending portions of text or figuring out difficult words. We will continue to read, *Power-Packed Plants*. We will read chapter 3 out loud. I will model
what it means to clarify. I will share with students that when I come to a word or a part of the story I don’t understand, I can reread the part I didn’t understand, look for clues, think about what I know, ask a friend/teacher, look for parts of the words that I know, read on to find clues, or try another word that makes sense. I will demonstrate this technique with the word “cloves” and the sentence, “They will warm you up and help you digest your food.” Next, we will read chapter 4 of the story together. As a group we will clarify any words or ideas that they had trouble with.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the idea of the clarifying strategy. They will understand that they need to clarify a word or an idea that doesn’t make sense to them in what they are reading. Students will clarify words or ideas that they had trouble understanding in the reading. Students will understand how and why plants are important to people.

*Lesson 7:* Today we will read the non-fiction article entitled, *Plant Parts*, by Pilar Jacob. Students will learn about the stem, roots, leaves and flowers of a plant. Students will be paired with a partner to read the short article and identify any words or ideas they were unclear about. Students will be given post-it notes to write down the words or ideas they were unclear about. Together as a class, students will share their findings and help to answer them.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to identify and write down any words or ideas that they don’t understand and find ways to clarify their questions, to increase their comprehension. Students will be able to identify the stem, roots, leaves and flowers of a plant, as well as explain their function.
Lesson 8: Today we will focus on the last strategy of reciprocal teaching, which is summarizing. To summarize effectively, students must recall and arrange in order the important events in a text. We will discuss the setting, characters, problems, events, and resolution which can help to guide their summaries. We will revisit the story, Plant Power!, by Bradley Roberts. We will reread the story and talk about the most important parts of the story and what we think the author wanted us to learn and know after reading. As a class, we will write a summary as a group on chart paper.

OBJECTIVE: Students will comprehend that a summary is a short description of the important parts of a story. Students will understand that people use objects that are made from plants.

Lesson 9: We will continue discussing and reviewing summaries. We will revisit the story Power-Packed Plants!, by Drew Matthews. Students will be paired with a partner and assigned one of the chapters from this story. After rereading their chapter, students will discuss and write a summary from the chapter they read, which they will share with the class.

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a written summary about the importance of plants to people.

Lesson 10 & 11: (2 days) Students will be paired in groups of two. From the resources provided, each group will choose a plant to research. They will have to find the following information using the internet:

What does their plant look like?
What are the parts of the plant?

What does their plant need to survive? (Weather, water, food, etc.)

Where can their plant be found?

How is their plant resourceful to people?

Students will be using the computers to research and find information about their plant. Students will create a book with their information, pictures and labeled plant parts. Each pair will present their book to the class, sharing their information about their plant.

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use the internet to research and find information pertaining to their specified plant. Students will create a book demonstrating and sharing what they learned about their plant. Students will finish working on their books. Each pair will present their book to the class, sharing their information about their plant.

**SMALL GROUP LESSONS:**

Students will be reviewing and practicing the reciprocal teaching strategies that they learned in whole group, in their small guided reading groups.

**Approaching Guided Reading Group:**

*Lesson 1:* Preview and make predictions about the book entitled, *Plants You Can Eat*, by Sandy McKay. (Students may look and cover and take a quick picture walk through the book to help them make their predictions.)

*Lesson 2:* Read Chapter 1: What Leaves Can You Eat? (Questioning)

*Lesson 3:* Read Chapter 2: What Stems Can You Eat? (Clarifying)

*Lesson 4:* Read Chapter 3: What Roots Can You Eat? (Clarifying)
Lesson 5: Read Chapter 4: What Flowers and Seeds Can You Eat? (Summarizing)

On Level Guided Reading Group:

Lesson 1: Preview and make predictions about the book entitled, Amazing Plants, by Andres Whitmore. (Students may look and cover and take a quick picture walk through the book to help them make their predictions.)

Lesson 2: Read Chapter 1: Why Are Plants Amazing? (Questioning)

Lesson 3: Read Chapter 2: Big-Time Plants (Clarifying)

Lesson 4: Read Chapter 3: Odd Plants (Clarifying)

Lesson 5: Read Chapter 4: The Sweet Smell of Plants (Summarizing)

Atypical Student #1 - This female student is in my approaching grade level reading group. She struggles to read and is currently reading at a first grade level. She lacks decoding and phonemic awareness skills. She needs directions to be read and reread to her several times. She yearns for approval and fears making a mistake. She is unsure of her work and tends to give up when the work becomes too hard. Her work is often unfinished. Assignments often have made easier, to accommodate her learning. (For example, whatever skill we are working on, I only give her half of the problems or tasks to complete.)

The accommodations that I will make for Student #1 is to provide extra support, modeling, and scaffolding. When put with partners, I will need to put her with a stronger student who knows what to do and can help her. In small group I will need to make sure that I address the areas she is struggling with, by using a text that is easier than the whole group level text.
Atypical Student #2- This male student is in the Talented and Gifted program at school. He is an excellent reader and writer, and does well in Math, Science, and Social Studies. This student rarely needs oral directions. He can read the directions and figure out what he is to do by himself. He is always the first one done with an assignment, and usually has the assignment done correctly. He is very confident and sure of his work and loves to be challenged.

The accommodations that I will make for Student #2, is to model the different strategies, but then give him some freedom to explore and use them. I may only have to provide a limited amount of scaffolding for him. Depending on how he does, I may partner him with a struggling student, so that he can be a role model/teacher and help to the struggling student, but also helping him to fully understand the strategy that we are working on.

Atypical Student #3- This male student is an ESL student who receives ESL services for 35 minutes every morning and 30 minutes every afternoon. This student moved to Iowa from Mexico in the middle of kindergarten. He struggles with speaking English, but is able to follow directions in English. He is timid and afraid to speak the English language because he is still learning. He does well working in small group or one on one, where he feels less threatened. He is easily frustrated and often cries when the work gets too hard for him.

The accommodations that I will make for Student #3, is to provide constant modeling and scaffolding. Because speaking and reading English are a struggle for him, When I put him with a partner, I will put him with another ESL learner, so that it will provide a more comfortable learning atmosphere.
Task 9: Impact of the New Technique

I will use verbal observations in whole and small group, student discussions, rubrics, and student’s written responses to determine if the reciprocal teaching techniques that I implemented were successful. I will also use the pre-assessment and post-assessment to determine if the content of the material that was taught, was learned and applied by the students. I will also see if the strategies that were taught, were transferred to other reading in the content areas, such as science and social studies.

Task 10: Pre-Assessment and Rationale

Learning Objectives
P – Proportion of total items in the assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Assessment Analysis Instrument</th>
<th>Objective 1: Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th>Objective 2: Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th>Objective 3: Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Items</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total items= 14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the qualities/characteristics that indicate that the pre-assessment is accurate, consistent, and fair, is that the objectives are evenly distributed. All questions are aligned with the objectives that were set for the unit. There are 10 true/false questions, 4 plant part for students to match the correct label with, as well as a writing
portion which allows the student to elaborate on what they already know/don’t know about plants.

I know that some adaptations will need to be made prior to giving the pre-assessment. For my #2 and #3 atypical student, I will need to read the test out loud. Students will mark and label their answers. For the writing portion, I will write down what they verbalize to me about plants, instead of asking them to write it. I think that this will cause less anxiety and will give me a better understanding about what they know about plants.

The criteria I will use to determine if the students’ performance will be as follows:

90% or above: students exceeded expectations for the objective
80%-89%: students meet the objective
79%-70: students did not meet the objective
69% and below: student has a significant weakness in this content/skill

I will use the pre-assessment as the post-assessment, so that I can see how they did before the content was taught and after it was taught.

**Task 12: Analysis of the Pre-Assessment Data**

The pre-assessment was given to the students in a whole group setting. I went over directions with all the students before giving them the test. I instructed them to choose true if the statement was true and made sense, as well as to choose false if any part of the statement wasn’t true or didn’t make sense. On the labeled diagram, I went over the words in the box and told them to match the correct label with the correct part. Finally, on the writing portion I told the students to tell me anything they knew about plants.

Listed below are the three atypical students’ pre-assessment scores.
### Table 2- Pre-Assessment Data

**Atypical Student #1 (Struggling student)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/4 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>2/6 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>0/4 (significant weakness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Atypical Student #2 (Learns quickly)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>6/6 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Atypical Student #3 (ELL student)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/4 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>4/6 (met expectations)</td>
<td>3/4 (met expectations)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
90% or above: students exceeded expectations for the objective

80%-89%: students meet the objective

79%-70: students did not meet the objective

69% and below: student has a significant weakness in this content/skill

Atypical Student #1- This student really struggled with the pre-assessment. I had to read several of the questions to her. On several of the questions she marked an answer without thinking about it. When it came to the labeling she labeled 3 parts of the plants as the roots. (Roots, stem, and leaf.) The flower was the only part she identified correctly. On the writing assessment she wrote, “I like plants.” She completed the pre-assessment in 18 minutes.

Modifications that I will need to make for this student include providing a variety of easy level texts that she can read, understand, and still achieve the same objectives as the other students. I will need to model my thinking and provide continued scaffolded instruction. When I put her with a partner, I will put her with a student who is more independent and who can help guide her.

Atypical Student #2- This student did really well, with no assistance or guidance from me. He read all questions, didn’t ask any questions, was the first student done, and everything was correct. He finished the pre-assessment in about 8 minutes. He seemed very comfortable and knowledgeable about plants and didn’t struggle with any of the concepts presented. On the writing assessment, he discussed the needs of plants and the part of plants, as well as what their function was. He even wrote about the plants that his family planted in his garden.
Some modifications that I will need to make to the unit for this student include providing extra high level texts that will be more challenging, writing about his findings from his extra books, and giving him some extra tasks for the group project. (I thought I would have him research 2 plants that he would have to answer all the same questions than the other groups are answering, but compare and contrast these two plants, instead of researching just one.)

*Atypical Student #3*- This student met objective 2 and 3, but did not successfully meet objective 1. I had to go over directions with him several times, as well as help him sound out many of the words. He took his time and seemed to really think about the questions and his answers. On the writing assessment he copied down the exact sentences from the true/false section. (Question #1 & #2) He completed the pre-assessment in 20 minutes.

One modification that I will need to make for this student is to continue to offer guidance and support with reading text. He seemed to grasp and understand the concepts of the questions, but struggled to read them. This shows me that he has some understanding of the topic, but will need assistance when reading information about it.

**Table 3- Whole Class Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th>Objective 1: Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th>Objective 2: Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th>Objective 3: Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% exceeded</td>
<td>2/19 or 11% exceeded</td>
<td>3/19 or 16% exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/19 or 42 % met</td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/19 or 37% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>8/19 or 42% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>7/19 or 37% showed significant weakness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After administering the pre-assessment, I realized that 63% of the class exceeded or met each of the three objectives. Strengths were that the majority of the students really worked hard on the assessment and thought about their answers. Several students asked for clarification on questions if something didn’t make sense. I found the majority of the weaknesses in the writing portion of the assessment interesting because several students left it blank or wrote what they felt about plants, while many of the others copied sentences from the true and false section. This demonstrated to me that their actual knowledge of plants is limited and requires further instruction.

Since 63% if of the class met or exceeded the content objectives, I will have to extend their learning by offering a variety of other resources including books, reference materials, and student friendly websites. The remaining 37% of the students who showed significant weakness will receive modeling, demonstrations, and extensive small group work to reinforce the learning objectives.
Task 13: Implementation of the Unit and Analysis of Formative Data

Lesson 1- November 1, 2010

OBJECTIVE: After the classroom discussion and the poster we created while brainstorming, students will be able identify plant needs and parts.

Procedures

In this lesson, we worked on building background knowledge by discussing the students’ experiences with and knowledge of plants. We used the picture prompt on page 154 of their text book to talk about why people like to grow plants, how are plants important to people, what plants need to grow, and what kinds of plants they have seen. Together we brainstormed on chart paper a list of plant parts and needs.

Modifications

Atypical Student #1: This student was seated up front, next to me, so that I could keep her on task and involved. She was also placed next to two on level students who helped to model and share their thinking with her.

Atypical Student #2: No modifications

Atypical Student #3: This student was also seated up front, next to me, so that I could keep him on task and involved. He was also placed next to two on level students, one being another ESL learner, who helped to model and share their thinking with him.

Lesson 2- November 2, 2010:

OBJECTIVE: After watching the teacher model the strategy of prediction, students will be able to use that information to make and formulate their own predictions. Students will identify that people use objects that are made from plants.
Procedures

As a class, we read the story, Plant Power!, by Bradley Roberts. Before reading we talked about previewing a story, looking for bold words and pictures to help us make a prediction about what the story will be about. I modeled the first strategy in reciprocal teaching, which is predicting, for the students, sharing with them my thought process. I put students into groups and gave each group a plant book. Each group used their book to make a prediction.

Modifications

Atypical Student #1: She was put in a group with students at her current level and students who were on level. The group was given an easier level text to make their predictions. I frequently monitored and helped to guide the group when they were having trouble.

Atypical Student #2: He was given a harder level plant book and placed with students who were at his level, to make a prediction.

Atypical Student #3: He was put in a group with another ESL student, which allowed him to be more comfortable and eager to participate. His group was also given an easier level text, from which to write their prediction.

Lesson 3 & 4- November 3rd & 4th, 2010:

OBJECTIVE: Students will make predictions about the story, based on the title, pictures, key words, etc. Students will be able to formulate and answer appropriate questions pertaining to the story. Students will understand how plants grow.


Procedures

We reviewed the strategy of making predictions. Students made predictions about the story, *The Tiny Seed*, by Eric Carle. We talked about how good readers ask questions while they are reading, as well as we discussed who, what, where, when, why, how, and what if types of questions. We read the first 2 pages of the story. I modeled my thinking about how to ask a question and asked the class some questions. We continued reading a few pages at a time, allowing time for students to ask and answer questions. The lesson ended with students formulating their own questions from the reading and asking those questions to their classmates.

Modifications

*Atypical Student #1 & 3:* I paired these students together, so I could work intensively with them, providing more modeling and scaffolding.

*Atypical Student #2:* This student was allowed to formulate his own questions, without having a partner.

Lesson 5- November 5, 2010:

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will make predictions about the story. Students will formulate, write, and ask questions from the story with their partner. Students will use their text to answer questions. Students will learn how and why the plants that people eat are important to them.

Procedures

Students were paired with a partner to read, *Power-Packed Plants!*, by Drew Matthews. Students were asked to write/draw a picture of their prediction. Pairs of
students read chapter 1 of the story and formulated and wrote a question to ask another pair of students. Students took turns asking and answering questions. We continued to do this for chapter 2.

**Modifications**

*Atypical Student #1:* I paired this student with a stronger student who is currently on grade level. I let her draw her prediction, instead of writing it, since writing tends to frustrate her. I then had her read her prediction to me.

*Atypical Student #2:* I gave this student the opportunity to work alone or with a partner. He chose to work alone. I asked that he write and draw his prediction.

*Atypical Student #3:* I paired this student with a stronger ESL student who I knew he would be comfortable with. I also let him draw his prediction. I monitored their group and helped guided them as needed.

**Lesson 6- November 8, 2010:**

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the idea of the clarifying strategy. They will understand that they need to clarify a word or an idea that doesn’t make sense to them in what they are reading. Students will clarify words or ideas that they had trouble understanding in the reading. Students will understand how and why plants are important to people.

**Procedures**

Today’s lesson was focused on another strategy of reciprocal teaching called clarifying. We continued to read, *Power-Packed Plants.* We read chapter 3 out loud. We discussed that when readers come to a word or a part of the story they don’t understand,
they can reread the part they didn’t understand, look for clues, think about what they
know, ask a friend/teacher, look for parts of the words that they know, read on to find
clues, or try another word that makes sense. We read chapter 4 of the story together. As a
group we clarified the words and ideas that they had trouble with.

Modifications

Atypical Student #1: No modifications
Atypical Student #2: No modifications
Atypical Student #3: No modifications

Lesson 7- November 9, 2010:

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to identify and write down any words or ideas
that they don’t understand and find ways to clarify their questions, to increase their
comprehension. Students will be able to identify the stem, roots, leaves and flowers of a
plant, as well as explain their function.

Procedures

The lesson began by reading the non-fiction article entitled, Plant Parts, by Pilar Jacob. Students learned about the stem, roots, leaves and flowers of a plant. Students
were put in pairs to read the short article and identify any words or ideas they were
unclear about. Students were given post-it notes to write down the word or idea they
were unclear about. Together as a class, students shared their notes, as other students
helped to clarify/answer them.
Modifications

Atypical Student #1 & #3: I paired these students together so I could work with them. I modeled clarifying for them again using a think aloud and provided scaffolding while they came up with their words.

Atypical Student #2: I paired this student with another TAG student and asked them to come up with at least 3 words or ideas that they thought might be difficult for themselves or their classmates.

Lesson 8- November 10, 2010:

OBJECTIVE: Students will comprehend that a summary is a short description of the important parts of a story. Students will understand that people use objects that are made from plants.

Procedures

Today we focused on the last strategy of reciprocal teaching, which is summarizing. We discussed the setting, characters, problems, events, and resolution which can help to guide their summaries. We revisited the story, Plant Power!, by Bradley Roberts. We reread the story and talked about the most important parts of the story and what we thought the author wanted us to learn and know after reading. As a class, we wrote a summary as a group on chart paper.

Modifications

Atypical Student #1: No modifications

Atypical Student #2: No modifications

Atypical Student #3: No modifications
Lesson 9- November 11, 2010:

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will create a written summary about the importance of plants to people.

**Procedures**

We continued discussing and reviewing summaries. We revisited the story *Power-Packed Plants!* by Drew Matthews. Students were put into small groups and assigned one of the chapters from this story. After rereading their chapter, students discussed and wrote a summary from the chapter they read. Afterwards, each pair shared their summary with the class.

**Modifications**

*Atypical Student #1:* I placed her in a mixed ability group and continually made sure she was on task, focused, and participating.

*Atypical Student #2:* I gave him the choice to work with a group or alone, and he chose to work alone. I assigned him a chapter for him to write a short summary about.

*Atypical Student #3:* I placed him in a mixed ability group and continually made sure he was on task, focused, and participating.

Lesson 10 & 11- November 12th & 15th, 2010:

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use the internet to research and find information pertaining to their specified plant. Students will create a book demonstrating and sharing what they learned about their plant.
Procedures

Students were paired in groups of two. From the resources provided, each group chose a plant to research. Students used the computers to research and find information about their plant, from which they created a book with their information, pictures and labeled plant parts. Each pair presented their book to the class, sharing their information they learned about their plant.

Modifications

Atypical Student #1 & 3: I put these two students together and assigned them a plant. I continually made sure to check on them and remind them of the different aspects that their books needed to have.

Atypical Student #2: I allowed this student to work alone and to choose his own plant.

Table 4- Formative Assessment

Atypical Student #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th>Objective #1- Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive (Predicting)</th>
<th>Objective #2- Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant. (Questioning/Clarifying)</th>
<th>Objective #3- Plants are important to people in many ways. (Summarizing)</th>
<th>Formative Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atypical Student #2

| Phase of Assessment | Objective #1- Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive (Predicting) | Objective #2- Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant. (Questioning/Clarifying) | Objective #3- Plants are important to people in many ways. (Summarizing) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
|                     |                                                                                                 |                                                                                  |                                                                                  |                     |
Atypical Student #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th>Objective #1 - Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive (Predicting)</th>
<th>Objective #2 - Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant. (Questioning/Clarifying)</th>
<th>Objective #3 - Plants are important to people in many ways. (Summarizing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atypical Student #1- After reviewing the formative assessment, I noticed that she scored 2/4 on each objective and reciprocal teaching skill. I think her lack of confidence and willingness to try new things hindered her learning. She is very shy and didn’t want to share much with me, her partner, or her small group. She felt the most comfortable with predicting, although she only used the picture on the front cover of the book to help her. Questioning/clarifying were the hardest for her. She didn’t know many of the words, yet had a hard time choosing one. She didn’t use any of the strategies for decoding an unknown word.

Atypical Student #2- This student did very well on summarizing and predicting, by scoring 4/4. He was able to make accurate and valid predictions, as well as support his predictions with reasons why he thought the way he did. When summarizing, he was able to list the main idea and a few important supporting details. He scored 3/4 for questioning/clarifying. Even though he didn’t get 4/4, he knew what strategies to use when he came to a word he didn’t know. He tried those strategies, even though he was unable to successfully decode the meaning of the word.
Atypical Student #3- This student did the best on questioning/clarifying. He needed support and prompting when identifying a word that he didn’t know, or that was unclear to him. Once he identified the word, he was unable to use any of the decoding strategies that we had been working on. Summarizing was the hardest skill for him. He could only write one sentence, as well as he didn’t have any supporting details. I think this was hard for him because he struggles so much with using the English language, that writing overwhelmed him.

The planned modifications seemed to work well for the students. Since student #1 and #3 are both struggling students, they benefited and learned by working with students who were at a high level. They also did a nice job when I paired them together. I think that they didn’t feel intimidated and could use the extra support and scaffolding that I provided them. Student #2 did well in groups/pairs, but really enjoyed working alone. In pairs/small groups, he stepped up and took a leadership role. He had asked to work alone on other assignments and I hadn’t really allowed that opportunity until now. By working alone, he was allowed to work at his own pace and not have to wait or get frustrated when his partner wasn’t keeping up with him.

Table 5 - Whole Class Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th>Objective #1- Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive (Predicting)</th>
<th>Objective #2- Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant. (Questioning/Clarifying)</th>
<th>Objective #3- Plants are important to people in many ways. (Summarizing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td>5/19 or 26% exceeded</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% exceeded</td>
<td>3/19 or 16% exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/19 or 63%</td>
<td>10/19 or 53%</td>
<td>10/19 or 53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, the class did the best with predicting. I feel that they did the best with this skill, because this is a skill that they have been working on since Kindergarten. We are continually making predictions before we read, looking at the cover of the book, the title, taking a picture walk through the book, and looking at any bold words. This was a concept that they were familiar with.

The class struggled with summarizing. Several students had trouble grasping the idea that a summary is only a few sentences that describe the most important parts of the books. Several students wanted to copy sentences from the book or include sentences that were not important details. Summarizing is a new skill that is taught in second grade and has not been introduced before.

Reflecting back, I thought the use of using reciprocal teaching in our, “Plants Alive!” unit was successful! I found that the students were able to grasp the ideas of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, as well as transfer those reading strategies to other content areas. I noticed some of the students using those techniques in their small groups and during free choice reading.

Reciprocal teaching proved to be a technique that helped my students to learn and comprehend what they were reading about plants. This technique is one that can be applied to all content areas and I will use in other areas.

The only changes I felt that needed to be made were just to allow more time to work on, review, and practice using the different reciprocal teaching strategies. The time
allotted for the lesson, required us to move at a fairly fast pace. I would like to continue to use the reciprocal teaching strategies, but allowing more time to focus on individual student needs.

**Task 14- Post-Assessment**

I used the pre-assessment as the post assessment, with the exception of changing the writing prompt at the end of the test. On the pre-assessment the writing prompt was, “Write anything you know about plants.” On the post-assessment the writing prompt was, “Write something new you learned about plants.” My goal was that questions the students answered incorrectly on the pre-assessment, were covered through my teaching during the unit, and answered correctly on the post-assessment. I also thought that by changing the writing portion, I might see a more in-depth explanation of what they learned.

**Table 4- Post-Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Assessment Analysis Instrument</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Items</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 6,</td>
<td>7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</td>
<td>2, 5, 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total items= 14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The formative assessment that I used to monitor the three atypical students included three rubrics that focused on predicting, questioning/clarifying, and
summarizing. I found that these rubrics helped me to assess if the students were able to use the specific reciprocal teaching technique, as well as attain the objectives I had identified.

The post-assessment provided an accurate, consistent, and fair evaluation of the information that was taught, presented, and learned by all of the students. Each of the three objectives are fairly distributed over the post-assessment. I decided that using the pre-assessment as the post-assessment would be an accurate representation of what the students learned over the unit.

Adaptations that were provided to atypical students #1 and #3 include providing help while they were reading the test. I wanted to see if they attained the information that was taught, and since both of them are struggling readers. I didn’t feel that asking them to read and answer the test will reflect if the content that was taught and absorbed by the students.

The modifications that I made to the post-assessment for atypical students #1 and #3 included assisting them while reading the questions. I want to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what the questions are asking, instead of becoming frustrated and just marking an answer. The other modification I did was to have them dictate the writing portion of the test to me. Since writing is difficult for both of these students I thought that allowing them to verbalize what they learned, provided a better representation of what they actually learned, instead of asking them to write about what they learned.
### Task 15: Analysis of the Post-Assessment and Growth Data

#### Table 5

**Atypical Student #1 (Struggling student)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>1/4 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>2/6 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>0/4 (significant weakness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td>2/4 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>4/6 (did not met expectations)</td>
<td>2/4 (significant weakness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pres-Assessment</th>
<th>Post-Assessment</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>8/14</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Atypical Student #2 (Learns quickly)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>6/6 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>6/6 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>6/6 (exceeded expectations)</td>
<td>4/4 (exceeded expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Total Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pres-Assessment</th>
<th>Post-Assessment</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1:</strong></td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2:</strong></td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong></td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>14/14</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Atypical Student #3 (ELL student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P = 29%</td>
<td>P = 42%</td>
<td>P = 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>2/4 (significant weakness)</td>
<td>4/6 (did not meet expectations)</td>
<td>3/4 (did not meet expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td>3/4 (did not meet expectations)</td>
<td>5/6 (met expectations)</td>
<td>3/4 (did not meet expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Atypical Student #1

Atypical Student #1 was most successful with objective 2, “Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.” On the pre-assessment she scored 2/6, which equals 33% and represented a significant weakness in this area. On the post-assessment she scored 4/6, which equals 67%, and represented that she did not meet expectations. Although she didn’t meet the expectation, she doubled her score, and demonstrated her knowledge of this objective.

This student was the least successful with objective 1, “Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.” On the pre-assessment she scored
1/4, which equaled 25% and represented a significant weakness in this area. On the post-assessment she scored 2/4, which equals 50% and represented a significant weakness.

Although this student did not successfully meet any of the objectives, I was pleased with her growth. For objective 1, her assessment showed she improved by 25%. For objective 2 she improved 34%, and for objective 3 she improved 50%. She improved her learning with all three objectives. I think that she did not successfully achieve the three objectives because she struggled to fully attain the concepts. Although she was provided with extra scaffolding and modeling, she still needed more help and assistance to help her understand. I think that if the time for the unit was longer, she may have done better.

The modifications that were most helpful for her included being placed in groups with students at her level and above her level. The students above her level helped to model their thinking and involved her in strong content discussions.

Atypical Student #2

Atypical Student #2 was successful and exceeded all three of the identified objectives. He scored 14/14 on both the pre and post-assessments.

Although he scored the same on both his pre-assessment and post-assessment, I can tell that this student did improve his learning. He was able to demonstrate this to me through his leadership in small group discussions, his work on his plant book, and the writing portion of his post-assessment. Through these things, he demonstrated his in-depth knowledge of plants.

The modification that was most helpful for him involved him to work alone, instead of with a partner or group. Previously, I had not let him do this when everyone else was in groups. I found that by allowing him to work alone, he could work at his own
pace and not get frustrated by having to wait for group members that weren’t keeping up with him. It allowed him to explore and take charge of his learning.

Atypical Student #3

Atypical student #3 was most successful with objective 1, “Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.” On the pre-assessment he scored 2/4, which equaled 50% and represented a significant weakness in this area. On the post-assessment he scored 3/4, which equaled 75% and represented that he did not meet the objective.

He was least successful with objective 3, “Plants are important to people in many ways.” On the pre-assessment he scored 3/4, which equaled 75% and represented that he did not meet expectations. On the post-assessment, he received the same score, which indicated that no growth was made.

He successfully met objective 2, and demonstrated growth at 16%. Although he didn’t meet objective 1 or objective 3, he scored 75% on both. I think the biggest reason that this student didn’t meet the objectives was the language barrier. He has trouble reading and understanding English, and struggles with speaking his English.

The modification that was most helpful with this student, involved putting him with other ESL students, with whom he felt comfortable. Since speaking English is something that he struggles with, and is something that he is aware that he struggles with, he appeared more comfortable and willing to participate when he was surrounded with other ESL learners.
Reflecting on the post-assessment data, the class was the most successful with objective 3, “Plants are important to people in many ways.” Out of the 19 students in my classroom, 89% of them met or exceeded this objective. I think they were most successful with this objective because it was something that they related to in their own lives.

### Table 6-Whole Class Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Assessment</th>
<th><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.</th>
<th><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Plants are important to people in many ways.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
<td>P= 42%</td>
<td>P= 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% exceeded</td>
<td>2/19 or 11% exceeded</td>
<td>3/19 or 16% exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/19 or 42 % met</td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/19 or 37% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>8/19 or 42% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>7/19 or 37% showed significant weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td>7/19 or 37% exceeded</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% exceeded</td>
<td>8/19 or 42% exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
<td>11/19 or 58% met</td>
<td>9/19 or 47% met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/19 or 16% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% showed significant weakness</td>
<td>2/19 or 11% showed significant weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>3/19 or 16% increase in the number of students who exceeded</td>
<td>2/19 or 11% increase in the number of students who exceeded</td>
<td>5/19 or 26% increase in the number of students who exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/19 or .05% increase in the number who met</td>
<td>2/19 or 11% increase in the number of students who met</td>
<td>0/19 or 0% increase in the number of students who met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/19 or 21% decrease in the number who showed significant weakness</td>
<td>4/19 or 21% decrease in the number who showed significant weakness</td>
<td>5/19 or 26% decrease in the number of students who showed significant weakness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During classroom discussions students were very interested in learning about how certain types of fabrics used for clothes are made from plants, as well as how certain medicines are made from plants. Students were very intrigued with this objective and enjoyed reading, learning, and discussing it.

The class was the least successful with objective 2, “Each plant part has a specific job that helps the plant.” Out of the 19 students in my classroom, 79% of them met or exceeded this objective. Students did better on identifying the basic plant parts, but had difficulties explaining what each of the specific plant parts role or function was, and how it helped the plant.

Overall, 84% of the students met or exceeded objective 1, 79% of the students met or exceeded objective 2, and 89% of the students met or exceeded objective 3. I was pleased with the amount of growth that the students made over the lesson. This unit on plants was one that the students were excited about and eager to learn about. They enjoyed reading the different stories and learning about the plants around them.
\textbf{CHAPTER 4: Summary of Results}

\textbf{Task 16- Reflection on Unit and Teaching}

Comprehension strategies are often skills that students in my second grade class struggle with. When deciding upon a topic, I looked for different comprehension strategies and techniques that aided my students with their comprehension abilities. I came across some research that focused on the effectiveness of explicit instruction and the use of metacognitive strategies including using prior knowledge, predicting, and sequencing. The results of this indicated that reading awareness scores were higher after the implementation of reading comprehension than before explicit instruction. Students were genuinely using prior knowledge in making text-to-self, text, and world connections that enhanced their understanding of what was being read. The independent use of the strategies taught emerged, as students used them during reading.

I found research that supported kinesthetic comprehension instruction. This research involved students using kinesthetic learning aids, referred to as Comprehension Process Motions, or CPMS. CPMS refer to signals or motions that the students used to represent the different mental processes used to comprehend text. Students who were taught how to use the CPMs, significantly outperformed students who were taught without the use of kinesthetic teaching aids, specifically in the areas of drawing conclusions, clarifying/identifying problems, and identifying main ideas.

The research that most intrigued me was on reciprocal teaching. This research was founded on four strategies that readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Reciprocal teaching encourages students to
think about their own thought process during reading. It helps students learn to be actively involved and to monitor their comprehension and ask questions.

I found that this unit was something the students were eager to learn about and was something that they all had some type of background knowledge about. The students were able to share experiences of taking care of plants in their homes, and few of them even had gardens that they helped to take care of. I found that all of the students could use whatever background knowledge or experience they had to connect to this unit.

The use of technology enhanced the students’ learning, by allowing them to use a different research tool other than books. They were allowed to explore the internet to find information about their plants. The students were much more eager and excited to do research using the computer. Too often we teach students to use books as their only research tool. Although books are a great resource, it is amazing for students to see all the different types of information that they can find when using technology. Using technology as a research tool opened their eyes to another way of finding information.

The pre-assessment helped to drive my instruction, because the pre-assessment showed what knowledge my students already had about plants, as well as it showed the gaps or holes that I needed to fill in. The pre-assessment helped me to focus my instruction and target those students who needed help with specific concepts.

I created and used rubrics as my formative data, to show what the students learned. I found the rubrics especially helpful because they provided an accurate representation of what they students could and couldn’t do. The rubrics helped me to realize what areas the students needed more modeling, scaffolding, and practice with.
One of my greatest strengths as a teacher is managing a classroom and building and maintaining a warm and successful learning classroom environment. I am able to connect with the children and get on their level. My specific strengths in this unit included varying student modifications as needed. I was able to give extra help to those who needed it, as well as give some ownership, responsibility, and independence to those who were ready for it.

My weakness in this unit limited class time. I had so many creative activities I wanted to do with my students but found it difficult to incorporate all of the activities in such a short amount of time. I need to prioritize what lessons are the most important to enhance my student learning. I need to continue to work on sorting through and picking the most important ideas and activities to implement during my class time that will effectively benefit all students.

To promote student learning, I shared the pre-assessment with the students and had the students graph their score on graph paper. I again shared the post-assessment score with them and had them graph it. All of the students did better on the post-assessment and were excited to see their graphing lines go up. The students who did not meet the expectation, still showed growth in their learning. By allowing the students to graph their pre and post-assessment scores, it gave them responsibility of their learning and it provided a visual representation of their progress.

**Task 17- Examination of the Research Hypothesis**

My action research hypothesis was, “Using the strategy of reciprocal teaching instruction during shared reading will increase my students' knowledge of predicting,
clarifying, questioning, and summarizing, which will impact and lead to improved comprehension skills, as they read text in the future.”

Reciprocal teaching proved to be an effective technique that helped my second grade students comprehend the material they were reading about plants. While predicting, students were looking for clues from the title of the book they were reading, pictures in the book, and bold words to activate their prior knowledge of plants. They used this knowledge to make a reasonable prediction about what they thought they would be reading and learning about. Even though the students’ predictions were not always correct, the comprehension strategy of predicting engaged them in thinking about what they were reading and led to valuable classroom discussions.

Good readers continually ask themselves questions throughout the reading process, but formulating questions can be a difficult and complex task. Through reciprocal teaching, the students learned to generate questions about the text’s main idea and important details, improving their reading comprehension skills. The students were reluctant at first to share words or ideas that they had trouble understanding. However, when I asked them to identify a word or idea that a classmate might have trouble decoding or understanding, they were able to find and share much more!

Problem solving became more explicit through the process of clarifying unknown words that the students came across while reading. Clarifying helped the students to monitor their own comprehension while they were reading, and allowed them to identify problems that they encountered while reading portions of text or difficult words. When the students were able to identify and clarify difficult words or confusing portions of text while they were reading, they became more strategic readers. The students looked for
clues to help them connect their understanding, instead of reading on and not comprehending what they were reading.

Summarizing was the hardest reciprocal teaching strategy that the students encountered. Summarizing required the students to recall and arrange in order only the important events in a text. Summarizing improved the students’ reading comprehension and allowed them to construct an overall understanding of the text. My second grade students had difficulties identifying the most important parts of the text, instead of details. Many of the students needed modeling and more scaffolding to help them with this strategy.

I found that my hypothesis was confirmed after using the strategy of reciprocal teaching. Post-assessment results reflected that 84% of the students were at or above grade level with objective 1, 79% were at or above grade level with objective 2, and 89% were at or above grade level with objective 3. Student comprehension increased throughout the two week unit on plants as students were introduced to and used the reciprocal teaching strategies to aid in their comprehension of information on the needs, parts, and uses of plants.
REFERENCES


Pilonieta, P., & Medina, A. (2009). Reciprocal teaching for the primary grades: "We can do it, too!". Reading Teacher, 63(2), 120-129.

Appendix A

Task #2- Journals

#1- The strategy I used during a whole group reading lesson, was QAR; Question, Answer, Relationships. QAR is a comprehension strategy that provides a way to think and talk about sources of information for answering questions. The purpose of teaching the QAR strategy is to show students that questions and answers have a variety of sources, and that learning about the questions and their answers will help them become better at understanding and answering questions. Teaching students about QAR gives them the language for talking about the strategies they use for answering questions. It also helps students to develop awareness of their own cognitive processes when answering questions. QAR is a strategy that was implemented school wide at Buchanan Elementary in the 2009-2010 school year.

During the week, students were learning and studying about how firefighters fight fires. On Day 1, students read a story entitled,  

Call 911. This informational story described the different types of fires that might occur at home, as well as what students should do if one of these fires happened. My objective for the lesson was:

Students will be able to answer questions, identifying if the answer could be found “In the Book” or “In my Head.”

My assessment for this lesson was through observation. I asked students questions that demonstrated their understanding of the topic. I asked students questions, based on the two primary sources of information that QAR outlines: “In the Book” and “In My Head.” An “In the Book” question means that the answers are found in the text. An “In My
Head” question means that students must use their prior knowledge to answer these questions.

As I was teaching the lesson, I saw that students were struggling when I asked them questions about where they found the answers. For example, I asked a question and the answer to that question could be found on page 7 of the book. I wanted the student to tell me that the question was an “In the Book” question.

Teacher: “Why can storms that cause power outages be dangerous?”

Student 1: “Because they can cause the lights to go off and people can trip and fall.”

Teacher: “Yes, that can happen. How else can they be dangerous? Did the book mention anything?”

Student 1: “People can light candles when they can’t see and those candles can start stuff on fire.”

Teacher: “Yes, we do have to be careful when lighting candles. Where did you find that answer?”

Student 1: “I just knew it in my head.”

After this conversation, I realized that this student was having trouble identifying questions that are “In the Book.” I wanted the student to identify that the answer to that question could be found on page 7. On page 7 it stated, “During power outages, people can light candles to help them see. People need to be careful around the open flame of a candle. If the flame of the candle touches clothing or any other objects, it could catch on fire.” I decided to ask another question to see if other students were having the same problem. I asked Student 2 a similar type of question:
Teacher: “How are gas stoves dangerous?”

Student: “They are hot and the flames can burn you if you touch them.”

Teacher: “You are right, they are hot! Did the book mention anything about how gas stoves cause fires?”

Student: “No, but they can. My grandma’s stove once caught fire and we had to call 911.”

Again, I realized that this student was having trouble understanding that this question’s answer could be found “In the Book” on page 11. Page 11 states, “Gas stoves can have an open flame. When cooking with a gas stove, make sure that loose clothing and other objects are kept away from the flame. If an object touches the flame, it can catch fire.”

Reflection

After having conversations with 9 other students, I realized that they were unclear about our QAR strategy. 8/9 of the students I asked a similar type of question, could correctly identify the where they found the answer, with a little prompting. The students who could do this successfully were those students who were in my on level guided reading groups. These students were independent readers. The students who failed to do this successfully were in my approaching guided reading groups. These students were reading below the second grade reading level. They struggled with this lesson, due to the fact that they struggled to read the material when looking for their answer. I concluded that over 50% of the students could use their prior knowledge to answer some of the questions that I was asking, but they were unable to identify that the question I was asking could be found right there in the information presented in their textbooks.
Reflecting on my teaching skills, I decided that the students needed more examples, demonstrations, and modeling that focused on questions and where we can find their answers. I felt that what I was asking the students to do today was unclear to them. They needed more redirection and clarification. I decided that instead of continuing on the next day with a new story and QAR, I would back up and focus on just one type of QAR question, “In the Book.”

After yesterday’s lesson, where over half of the class showed that they did not understand QAR, I decided today that I need to focus my lesson on examples, demonstrations, and modeling of what QAR is. I decided that today’s lesson would just focus on answers that could be found, “In the Book.” I decided to use the informational story in the student’s text book called, *Fighting the Fire*. After reading the first page of the story out loud with the class, I shared that today I was going to share my thinking with them. The first question I asked was, “What happened when the sky filled with smoke?”

*Teacher:* “After reading the first page, I remember reading that the sky filled with smoke. I am going to go back and reread that page to see if the answer to this question is in book, or if it is a question that I am going to have to use my prior knowledge to answer. (Teacher rereads page out loud.) I read that when the sky filled with smoke, the people who lived nearby knew what it meant. They knew a fire was close. I found that answer “In the Book!””
After sharing my thinking with the students we read the next page. I asked the next question, “How can a wildfire do a lot of damage to a forest?”

Teacher: “Looking back at what I just read, I noticed that the very first line of text states that a wildfire can cause a lot of damage to a forest. I bet the answer to this question will be found right here in the book. I will keep reading to find out. (Teacher rereads page out loud.) It says that a fire can kill trees and animals. I found this answer right here, “In the Book!”

After sharing my thinking with the students I felt like they were beginning to understand “In the Book” questions and answers. I decided to give them a question and have them share their thinking with me. We read the next page of the story out loud. After reading, I asked the students, “How do firefighters fight wildfires?” I saw students looking back to what we just read, pointing and following along with their fingers. I had 16 students who immediately raised their hands, showing they had found the answer. As I made my way around quietly talking with each of them, 14/16 of them correctly told me that firefighters use special helicopters that drop water with chemicals from the air, to put out the fire. Both of the students who didn’t answer the question correctly told me that firefighters use the hoses from the fire truck. (On the opposite page of the story was a picture with a firefighter holding the hose that was attached to the fire truck.) 3 students didn’t raise their hand so I walked over to them and asked them to share their thinking with me. 2 of the students, who are struggling readers, said they couldn’t find the answer because they couldn’t read the story. After quietly reading that page again, they were
able to identify the correct answer, which some prompting. The third student, who is a struggling ESL learner, just shrugged his shoulders when I asked the question. Since he wouldn’t respond, I modeled my thinking for him and showed him that the answer could be found “In the Book.”

**Reflection**

Today’s lesson of “In the Book” questions and answers proved to be successful. 74% of the students were able to correctly identify that the answer to my question was “In the Book.” (Yesterday, only 50% was able to correctly identify the answer.) Although these students were exposed to QAR during 1st grade, 2 of the 3 students who were unable to answer the question were not at Buchanan last year. These 2 students were not exposed to QAR at their previous schools. I will need to make sure that I provide extra support and practice for these 2 students. I found that modeling just one type of question and answer relationship, instead of focusing on both, allowed the students to explore successfully identify the correct answer. The 3 students who were unable to identify the correct answer were those students who are in my approaching guided reading group. I found that when I helped 2/3 of the students to reread the page, they were able to identify the correct answer. I conclude that they understand “In the Book” types of questions however, their striving reading skills are hindering their success. I attributed the third student’s lack of English skills and understanding, as to why he couldn’t answer the question. For the 14/19 students who correctly identified the answer, I could make the next lesson more challenging, by inviting them to come up with “In the Book” questions to ask each other.
Reflecting on my teaching skills, I felt that I was successful today with ensuring that the students understood what I was asking them. I felt that my modeling of “In the Book” questions and answers, provided them with a visual example for them to see and model. By sharing my thinking with the students, they were able to make a connection between what I was asking them to do and doing it correctly. Tomorrow I will focus on questions and answers that are “In my Head.” I will form a small group for students who struggled with this skill, in which we will review and practice this skill before tomorrow’s lesson.

#3- After yesterday’s successful lesson of “In the Book” questions and answers, I was going to introduce and review the other type of QAR questions and answers which is “In my Head.” These types of questions require students to use their prior knowledge to answer these questions. The answer to these types of questions, are not in the book.

I decided to use the same story as yesterday. I thought this would give my struggling readers some prior knowledge, since they have already read this once. I had students open their stories to the first page of, Fighting the Fire. I told them that today I was going to model my thinking for them.

Teacher: “Today we are going to focus on a different type of question and answer. Unlike yesterday where the answers could be found “In the Book,” today’s questions and answers are going to be found in your head! The answer I am looking for, is based on what you know and what you think. Your answer might be the same or different from your classmate’s answer and that is ok. I am going to read the first page of the story out
The story was talking about the people in LeVerne, California, who saw the dark smoke that was filling the sky and making it hard for them to breathe. The last sentence said, “People were afraid they would have to leave their homes.” Why do you think that the people would have to leave their homes? The answer isn’t in the book, so I am going to have to use what I know about wildfires to answer the question. I know that wildfires can be hard for firefighters to control and put out. I think that people might have to leave their homes, so that they can be safe. I found this answer in my head. My answer might not be the same as your answer. Does anyone have an answer that they would like to share?

Student 1: “I think they would have to leave their homes because the picture shows that the fire has caught the trees by the house on fire. If the trees are on fire, they could catch the roof of the house on fire and if the house caught on fire, the people might not be able to escape safely. This would make them afraid.

Student 2: “People would have to leave their homes because fires are hot and if they get too close, they can burn you. That would make me afraid.”

Teacher: “Great answers! All of our answers came from our heads. It was what we thought! Let’s look on the next page. (Teacher reads the next page out loud.) This page discussed how the wildfire can kill trees and animals. It stated that the people who lived near the forest did not feel safe. Why do you think the people would not feel safe? The book doesn’t tell me the answer, so I will have to find this answer, “In my Head.” I know
that fires can damage anything in their way. I think the people don’t feel safe because the fire has already destroyed trees and they are afraid the fire might destroy their homes and all their belongings. That would make me feel unsafe. Turn to a partner and share why you think the people would not feel safe. (As I was walking around I heard students sharing what they thought. Some of the answers were similar. 18/19 of the students shared their thinking from their heads.) Some of the answers I heard included”

Student 1: “I think the people would not feel safe because they would see the animals dying and they might die too.”

Student 2: “I think the people would not feel safe because they don’t know how to put out the fire and their stuff might catch on fire.”

Student 3: “People wouldn’t feel safe because they can’t breathe with all the smoke.”

I was impressed with the success that the students had with this concept. Of the 19 students in my class, only 1 student was unable to do this. This was the same student who had trouble in the previous lesson. This student is an ESL learner, who has trouble speaking and understanding the English language. Again, I modeled my thinking for him in hopes that my demonstration would help him to understand.

Reflection

I was very pleased with the outcomes of this lesson. 18/19 students were able to successfully demonstrate and answer the question. I felt that the “In my Head” type of question was easier for them to understand. I thought this might be due to the fact that
they are not afraid to find the right answer, in fear of being wrong. Instead, they are comfortable sharing what they know, and not afraid of being rejected. I also felt that through modeling what I was looking for, students were provided with a visual representation, which helped them to understand what they were doing. Since 18/19 students were successful while answering the question, I could make the lesson more challenging, by having them come up with their own questions, that could not be found in the book. I will provide one on one support for the student who did not master this skill. I will continue to model and have this child practice this skill alone and in small guided reading groups, until he is successful.

*Atypical Student #1*- This female student is in my approaching grade level reading group. She struggles to read and is currently reading at a first grade level. She lacks decoding and phonemic awareness skills. She needs directions to be read and reread to her several times. She yearns for approval and fears making a mistake. She is unsure of her work and tends to give up when the work becomes too hard. Her work is often unfinished. Assignments often have made easier, to accommodate her learning. (For example, whatever skill we are working on, I only give her half of the problems or tasks to complete.)

*Atypical Student #2*- This male student is in the Talented and Gifted program at school. He is an excellent reader and writer, and does well in Math, Science, and Social Studies. This student rarely needs oral directions. He can read the directions and figure out what he is to do by himself. He is always the first one done with an assignment, and usually has the assignment done correctly. He is very confident and sure of his work and loves to be challenged.
Atypical Student #3- This male student is an ESL student who receives ESL services for 35 minutes every morning and 30 minutes every afternoon. This student moved to Iowa from Mexico in the middle of kindergarten. He struggles with speaking English, but is able to follow directions in English. He is timid and afraid to speak the English language because he is still learning. He does well working in small group or one on one, where he feels less threatened. He is easily frustrated and often cries when the work gets too hard for him. His math abilities are on grade level, while is reading and writing skills are currently at a beginning first grade level. I choose this student because approximately 35% of Buchanan’s population consists of ESL students.

#4- Since breaking down the “In my Head” and “In the Book” questions and answers, I found the students have really started to understand and grasp what I am teaching them. Today we are reading a story together, and after I ask a question, students have to identify where they would find the answer. The story is called, Different Ways to Put Out a Fire. My assessment for the student is their verbal response and rationale of thinking.

Teacher: “How do firefighters put out fires in the city?” (I walked around asking students to share their thinking with me. I have recorded the answers of the atypical students, who were identified earlier.)

Atypical Student #1- (Searching and scanning the page frantically. I reread the story with her and ask her again.) “Umm…I think they put it out with the hoses on the truck.” (When I ask her to point to where she found her answer, she is unable. I point out the
second line in the story that states the answer. I ask her to read it to me.) “Oh, there is the answer. It’s right there. They use the ladders on the truck.”

*Atypical Student #2* - “That’s easy. That answer is right there in the book.” (As he points to the sentence with the correct answer.) “It says that in the city they use fire trucks with long ladders.”

*Atypical Student #3* - (Looks at me and shrugs his shoulders, indicating he doesn’t know the answer. I read the story to him again and ask him if he heard me say how firefighters put out fires in the city. He nods his head. When I ask him how he says “fire trucks.” When I ask him what fire trucks have on them that help them reach people in tall buildings, he says, “ladder.” After praising him, I point out the sentence that contains the answer and reread it to him.)

Teacher: “The book mentioned that sometimes wildfires strike on mountains and in forests. As I come around, I want you to tell me your answer and whether it was “In the Book” or “In your Head.”

*Atypical Student #1* - She seems confused so I ask her the question again. She nods her head and looks at her book, searching for clues. I talk about a story she read in our small guided reading group about Smokey the Bear. That book mentioned wildfires and how people have to be careful when using fire. She finally said, “If someone was camping on the 4th of July and threw their firework on the ground, it might catch the trees on fire.” When I asked her where she found that answer, she first looked at her book, and then at me and said, “I thought it in my head!”
Atypical Student #2—“I have been camping and we have a campfire to roast our hotdogs and marshmallows. Before we go to bed, my dad pours water on the campfire so it doesn’t keep burning when we go to sleep. But I have seen other people who don’t do that. I think those campfire could start wildfires. I found that answer in my head.”

Atypical Student #3— I asked this student if he had ever been in a forest or camped in a forest and he said he had not. But surprisingly, the said, “My house in Mexico caught fire because my sister was playing with my mom’s lighter.” I asked him if playing with lighters, matches, or any other type of fire while in a forest could cause a fire. He said, “Yes!” I asked him if that answer was in the book and he told me, “It was here,” and pointed to his head.

Reflection

Overall, I feel like the students grasped the idea or QAR. Some students required little scaffolding or help, while others relied on it. Some students just needed the extra support when rereading the text, while others needed more verbal prompts and cues, to get them thinking in the right direction. Since my assessment was observation and student response, I felt like it allowed me to understand where each student was coming from, and allowed me to see where I could intervene for help. I found that the lessons that focused on just one skill that I modeled, helped students to understand what I was asking them. After reviewing the audiotape, I noticed that one thing I need to work on, is allowing enough feedback time for my students. I averaged about 4 seconds of silence, before I prompted the student again for their answer. I know that I need to allow at least 10 seconds for students who take longer to process information. Overall, I was pleased with the four lessons of QAR!
Summary

Atypical Student #1- This female student is very quiet and very shy. She often tends to blend in with the crowd and doesn’t want to do or say anything that would make her stand out. She doesn’t have a lot of friends and tends to cling to those who pay attention to her. Since school is a challenge for her, she tends to give up when the work gets too hard. She would be happier if her peers would do her work for her.

Student #1 had a hard time doing QAR on her own. Her strengths included not giving up and accepting the help provided. She was more successful when help was given and she was supported through the lesson. Her weakness is that she won’t raise her hand and ask for help. She relies on the teacher to come to her. The modifications I would implement would be to continue to provide scaffolding, but slowly decreasing the amount that I was providing, causing her to become more independent. I would also pick out text that was on a lower level, which would be easier for her to read.

Atypical Student #2- This male student is very outgoing and outspoken. He is bright academically and socially. He is popular and well liked among his peers. He enjoys tasks that challenge him and call for him to think outside the box. Emotionally, he can get very upset if someone hurts his feelings or causes him to feel left out. He cries and can throw a tantrum. When this happens, I pull him aside and allow him “cool off” time, where he can regroup and get himself back together.

Student #2 did well with QAR. He was able to differentiate the difference between the two types of questions and back up his answers with his rationale. Although he was able to successfully answer and defend his answers, he did have trouble coming up with “In the Book” and “In my Head” types of questions on his own. The
modifications I would implement would be helping him to come up with these types of questions. I would model how I came up with my questions, and help him come up with questions of his own.

*Atypical Student #3-* This male ESL student is very shy and timid. Since he is new to Buchanan this year, he hasn’t made a lot of friends. His closest friend is another high achieving ESL student. Since he sits next to this student, he often asks and relies on him for help when completing his assignments. He tends to get frustrated and cries if the work becomes too much for him. He speaks English, but his vocabulary is limited and his sentences are often broken.

Student #3 struggled with QAR and needed lots of scaffolding. His strength was that he was able to make a connection between a fire that was caused by a lighter in Mexico, and relate that to something that might cause a wildfire in a forest. His weakness is confidence to understand and complete the tasks on his own. The modifications I would make include providing easier text, making sure he understands what is asked of him, and use cues and prompts to help him when he is confused.

My strength though out the lessons was that I was able to adapt and change my plans, based on what the students demonstrated and what I was expecting from them. On day 1, students proved that they didn’t have a clear understanding of QAR. Instead of continuing on with my lesson and hoping they would catch on, I changed my plans and decided to break down the 2 strands of QAR, spending a day on each to focus on that particular skill.

My weakness was not allowing students enough “think time.” After reviewing the audiotapes, I was amazed at how little time I gave them to think about their answers.
I would ask a question and if an answer wasn’t given within 4 seconds, I was rewording and asking again. I need to work on allowing at least 10 seconds of “think time,” allowing those students, who process things differently, enough time to comprehend and respond.

The specific area of learning that I would like to focus on and enhance is reading comprehension. I want to focus on how I can motivate and encourage students to use higher level thinking skills, while asking high order questions. I want them to have and know how to use the necessary tools, when looking to answer questions pertaining to their reading. I want to be knowledgeable a resourceful when it comes to providing them with strategies. The reason I choose reading comprehension is because it is an area of focus that Buchanan Elementary has been focused on for several years. When looking at the data from last year’s second grade, only 39/68 (56%) of second grade students met the goal of 95% for comprehension. By helping my students to become better readers, and helping them to understand what it is that they are reading, my students will be able to apply those skills to other content areas.
Appendix B: Pre-Assessment

NAME_______________________

DIRECTIONS: Answer true (T) or false (F) next to the following statements.

1. _________ Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.

2. _________ People use plants in many ways.

3. _________ Plants don’t need sunlight to grow.

4. _________ Plants only need water to grow.

5. _________ People use plants as a source of food.

6. _________ Leaves use sunlight, water, and air to make food.

7. _________ The roots of a plant grow above the ground.

8. _________ Some plants are used to make medicines and houses.

9. _________ Some clothing that we wear comes from plants.

10. _________ The stem makes seeds that can grow into new plants.
Plant Parts
Can you fill in the blanks with the correct words?

stem  flower  leaf  roots

Name: ________________________________

Use the lines provided to write anything you know about plants!
Appendix C:

**Answer Key**

**Plants**

DIRECTIONS: Answer true (T) or false (F) next to the following statements.

1. ____ T ____  Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.

2. ____ T ____  People use plants in many ways.

3. ____ F ____  Plants don’t need sunlight to grow.

4. ____ F ____  Plants **only** need water to grow.

5. ____ T ____  People use plants as a source of food.

6. ____ T ____  Leaves use sunlight, water, and air to make food.

7. ____ F ____  The roots of a plant grow above the ground.

8. ____ T ____  Some plants are used to make medicines and houses.
9. **T** Some clothing that we wear comes from plants.

10. **F** The stem makes seeds that can grow into new plants.

**Plant Parts**

Can you fill in the blanks with the correct words?

stem  flower  leaf  roots

FLOWER

LEAVES

STEM

ROOTS

Name: _______________________________

Use the lines provided to write **anything** you know about plants!
Appendix D: Students’ Pre-Assessment

PRE TEST #1
PRE TEST #1
PRE TEST #2
PRE TEST #2
PRE TEST #3
PRE TEST #3
Appendix E- Formative Assessments
Appendix F: Post-Assessment

NAME_______________________

DIRECTIONS: Answer true (T) or false (F) next to the following statements.

1. __________ Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.

2. __________ People use plants in many ways.

3. __________ Plants don’t need sunlight to grow.

4. __________ Plants only need water to grow.

5. __________ People use plants as a source of food.

6. __________ Leaves use sunlight, water, and air to make food.

7. __________ The roots of a plant grow above the ground.

8. __________ Some plants are used to make medicines and houses.

9. __________ Some clothing that we wear comes from plants.

10. __________ The stem makes seeds that can grow into new plants.
Plant Parts
Can you fill in the blanks with the correct words?

stem   flower   leaf   roots

Name: ____________________________________________

Use the lines provided to write something new you learned about plants!

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Appendix G: Post Assessment

**Answer Key**

DIRECTIONS: Answer true (T) or false (F) next to the following statements.

1. _____T_____ Plants have needs that must be met in order for them to grow and survive.

2. _____T_____ People use plants in many ways.

3. _____F_____ Plants don’t need sunlight to grow.

4. _____F_____ Plants **only** need water to grow.

5. _____T_____ People use plants as a source of food.

6. _____T_____ Leaves use sunlight, water, and air to make food.

7. _____F_____ The roots of a plant grow above the ground.

8. _____T_____ Some plants are used to make medicines and houses.
9. **T** Some clothing that we wear comes from plants.

10. **F** The stem makes seeds that can grow into new plants.

---

**Plant Parts**

Can you fill in the blanks with the correct words?

stem   flower   leaf   roots

FLOWER

LEAVES

STEM

ROOTS

Use the lines provided to write something new you learned about plants!
Appendix H: Students’ Post-Assessment

#1
#1
#2
#3
Book 1
Book 1
Book 2
Book 2
Book 3
Book 3
Book 3