

A Loop-Input Framework for Fostering Algerian

English Language

Teachers' Reciprocal Teaching Practicability



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Summary:

This paper suggests a generic small-scale training workshop that aims at enabling English teachers to demonstrate their basic understanding and use of reciprocal teaching, a reading comprehension strategy, via diverse individual, pair and group hands-on and minds-on tasks. The workshop's adopted methodology mirrors Woodward's (1988) "loop-Input", a commonly used procedure in teacher training arenas, where the session's topic aligns with the process employed in presenting it. As an illustration, to practise this reading comprehension strategy, the potential teacher-participants are practically immersed within an environment, in which they are given a text about reciprocal teaching and asked to predict, raise questions, clarify ambiguity and summarise the main ideas. This learning-by-doing would significantly scaffold these teachers' learning transfer of reciprocal teaching to their loci of activity. This way, they can successfully make their students better metacognitive and self-reliant readers, able to predict and solve potential comprehension problems.

Keywords: Loop-Input, reading comprehension, reciprocal teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

Literate people from all walks of life genuinely read different types of texts on paper or screen for diverse discursive and functional purposes. Some may read stories, fairy tales and other fiction narratives just for pleasure and entertainment. Others may oftentimes read outdoors' signals, notices,

addresses while going back and forth from home to work, or some service-related papers and documents such as a driving code, a doctor's prescription, a restaurant menu or a mere shopping list, to say the least, to fulfill personal needs and transactional requirements. Reading is also a natural daily practice in educational arenas for schooling and academic ends. At all primary, secondary and tertiary educational strata, learners of Arabic, French, English or any other foreign languages are required to read a variety of descriptive, prescriptive, narrative or even argumentative texts of literary or scientific types. Researchers, too, need to read books, articles, encyclopedias, dictionaries to conduct research and accomplish their Master or doctoral dissertation, and their slides to present their work in public. This widely used skill in different contexts to serve various personal and professional needs requires some further explication. What is reading, then?

Basically, reading is an activity whereby readers attempt to respond and make sense of a given written material through a semantic and morpho-syntactic analysis of textual structure at word, phrase, clause, sentence and discourse levels and / or by means of setting up meaningful and relevant connections between the text being read and the reader's prior schematic knowledge. Henceforth, this definition implies that reading involves comprehension, it is not just a mechanical exercise to decode individual or a combination of letters seen on paper or screen. Reading comprehension is both a cognitive and metacognitive activity in which readers consciously and purposefully analyse, make use of lexico-grammatical and background knowledge connections, and synthesise their understanding of textual content in a relevant and appropriate summary. In other words, they skim, scan, detect and infer co-textual and contextual meaning, and sum up both gist and details. Developing the skill of reading together with the aforementioned sub-skills, is hard: it becomes harder, though, when dealing with a text written in a foreign language, say English.

In an Algerian context, for example, secondary school freshmen or exam-class English learners, be they literary or scientific majors, should all be able to read and comprehend texts of various types such as scientific expository descriptions, narrative and historical accounts, and news paper's articles and reports. To do so, these students should be immersed in reading situations, where they can explicitly, and then, implicitly, develop their reading subskills. With no doubt, it is the teacher's job to bring assistance and scaffolding to these students, so that they can select appropriate reading sub-skills and use them to make sense of written texts. Secondary school teachers of English, for example, should work out and employ the best teaching strategy that would foster students reading skill. reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) can be one amongst other suggestions.

Nevertheless, to involve students in a reciprocal teaching activity, teachers themselves have to master this strategy. The best way to get this mastery is through training and professional development meetings. On score of this, this paper aims to help secondary school English teachers to get acquainted with the theoretical underpinnings and the procedural implementation of *reciprocal teaching* via a *loop-Input* framework (Woodward, 1988). The forthcoming sections will pin down *reciprocal teaching* and *Loop-Input* design together with other relevant concepts and methodological procedures that are required to conduct this demonstrative research task.

2. Conceptual Underpinnings

The incentive behind the inclusion of this section is to unravel potential conceptual and procedural mysteries that would possibly hamper the conceptualisation and implementation of these cornerstones, reciprocal teaching and loop-Input, and to foreground the underlied rationale for adopting these two.

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the other language skills, speaking, writing and listening. Together with listening, It is commonly dubbed a receptive skill because it does not involve production, but rather requires a reader's response to a written material. In this sense, responding to a written text may logically imply the reader's role as a passive recipient, which is more or less a misleading conceptualisation. Conversely, reading is an interactive process involving a reader, a text and an in-between interaction (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012) for a comprehension attempt to figure out the writer's intended message, even though, with reference to the "death of the author" , this target cannot be easily reached.

Reading, thus, is not just an ability to decode a single grapheme or a connected series of letters, and successfully find the right morpho-phonemic match for the sake of accurate silent or out loud pronunciation. Good reading is, and should also be, being able to comprehend and make sense of a written product going either upwards from a structural analysis of the text itself, or downwards from background knowledge and abstractions of prior experiences, or exploiting a blend of the two; henceforth, the three common approaches to reading comprehension, the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive, respectively.

2.1.1 Approaches to Reading Comprehension

Called "data-driven or text-based reading" (Carell, 1989, as cited in (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012, p. 2054), the bottom-up processing begins from the reader's analysis of the linguistic units "at word level, sentence level and whole-text level" (Spratt et al., 200 p. 21), through decoding textual mopho-syntactic combinations and making lexico-grammatical connections to relevant co-textual semantic meaning to get the message of the text, which in turn is compared to and backed up by contextual knowledge of the world. Adopting this model, readers need to be competent enough to decipher and detect meaning from individual words, and find appropriate word-to-word, and sentence-to-sentence structural and meaningful match. Highlighting the downsides of this processing

model, Ahmadi and Gilakjani (2012) contend that readers may think that their comprehension is only the outcome of the text's graphic transmission, not an idiosyncratic construction of meaning, where background knowledge is a major attribute.

Going the opposite direction, opting for a top-down reading comprehension process, readers exploit their knowledge of the world and activate their schemata in order to guess potential themes of pre-read texts, or to assist their understanding while reading. Therefore, this processing model is based on "linguistic guesswork rather than graphic textual information" (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012, p. 2055). Thus, there is no need to read every single word, but just preliminary contextual information can reveal about the text's topic and decide on the way and how much to read, or only a prediction about what a following group of words may mean would suffice to understand (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012). Going downwards, these pre-reading guesses are then either confirmed or rejected due to textual reading revelations.

Embracing the common eclectic trends in language teaching and learning approaches, the interactive approach to reading comprehension is no exception, as it encompasses the tenets of the bottom-up and the top-down processes, taking advantage of their strengths and compensating for their weaknesses. The interactive model is in essence compensatory and supportive (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012). When stuck, struggling to decode a word or a sentence, schematic knowledge is summoned to assist bottom-up readers to compensate for their comprehension weaknesses. When prior knowledge of the world cannot, or is not enough to, get what the text may be about, top-down readers find their way out through exploiting the text's "orthographic", syntactic and other textual resources. In a nutshell, the interactive process can successfully serve both top-down and bottom-up readers to mitigate potential difficulty in comprehending and making sense of a written material.

The aforementioned combined processes can bring assistance to readers, yet it is not as straightforward as it may seem. In the endeavour to read and understand a text, (foreign or second) language learners, for example English language learners, in most cases, find particular difficulties because of the language used, the selected topic and genre, the given comprehension task and the learners' negative expectations due to former bad reading experiences (cf Harmer, 2001, pp. 203-208).

2.1.2 (English) Learner Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Linguistically speaking, particularly English readers' comprehensibility problems lie in text's length with complex structures, longer sentences and complicated vocabulary. Aligning with this thought, Harmer (2001) concluded that "both sentence length and the percentage of unknown words both play their part in a text's comprehensibility" (p.203). Summed up in a commentary uniform as a response to a question about the difficulties a foreign language reader is more likely to face are the following reading problems: Lack of enough vocabulary, frequent need to use dictionaries, slow decoding process, Ability to detect meaning at word level with an inability to get the whole image (Scrivener, 2005, p.184). Language, though, is not the only obstacle.

An uninteresting and irrelevant topic together with an exotic genre can mostly

hamper reading comprehension process. There is a consensus amongst scholars in the realm of English language teaching (e.g., Harmer, 2001; Scrivener, 2005; Spratt et al., 2011) that we naturally read for some reason and purpose, which in turn governs the way we read. In real life, we read authentic written materials of different types and structural format (e.g., newspaper's articles, notices, schedules, books, novels and conversations) to perform various multidisciplinary functions such as to describe, to prescribe, to argue or to narrate. Obviously, we read each text differently according to its structure and the purpose it serves; we either speed up our reading of some parts of the text to get the gist or detect a specific information, or slow down to read a great deal of the text to seek details. Oftentimes, readers disconnect and switch off ignoring how to deal, just because the teacher's or the coursebook's suggested text mismatches the interest, the need and the ambition of their childhood, teenage or adulthood. Additionally, the scale to measure their willpower and desire to read would display the lowest mark when they are asked to comprehend a text whose structure and format is unfamiliar to them, let alone being beyond their cognitive development ability.

In addition to the text's language, topic and genre, a teacher's reading comprehension task that does not fit the reader's cognitive ability presents another understanding difficulty. Unconsciously or deliberately, English teachers, for example, perhaps in most cases, ask their learners to do a rather testing comprehension task, in which they are not able to go deeper in text analysis to infer an answer. Teaching first, then testing should be the sequence of the instructional procedure to gradually scaffold learners' development of reading comprehension skills in tandem with their intellectual level and mental processing capacity. Without much practice, demonstration and modelling activities, learners will not be able to get a grip on this skill. Consequently, learners' former bitter reading experiences, with texts in difficult language, with irrelevant themes, unfamiliar genres and hard comprehension tasks, would, therefore, consist a bulk of negative prior knowledge that would affectively cause readers' demotivation and disconnection from the text at hand, or even worse, reject the reading session altogether.

2.1.3 Possible Solutions

Harmer (2001), Scrivener (2005) and Spratt et al. (2011) provide some solutions in an attempt to facilitate English learners' reading comprehension endeavour. At the outset, It is worth noting that Harmer's (2001, pp. 203-208) suggestions are to get prominence because they are components of a sequence of a typical reading session (e.g., pre-teaching vocabulary and activating schemata), and describe the characteristics of a good reading material such as authenticity, thematic interest and genre familiarity.

To help English learners be successful readers, teachers first and foremost, need to select texts of various genres that are naturally used in real life, so as readers get accustomed to natural pieces of communication and acquainted with different textual structures, and the convenient method a particular form should be read, as well as the purpose it would serve. Nevertheless, due to their authenticity, some texts can display some degree of lexical difficulty. In this case, teachers should start by presenting most keywords in context prior to reading the text: doing so, learners would go through the text

easily to get the topic which has already been activated during pre-reading stage. If linguistically well-graded conforming to learners' cognitive level, both texts and the corresponding comprehension tasks would successfully upgrade their comprehensibility. The tasks should be neither hard nor too easy, but cognitively suitable affordances for too much practice of each individual sub-skill until full mastery is achieved. Depending on learners' age and educational level, these tasks can, for instance, furnish learner training opportunities to conceptualise and use these subskills: predicting the texts theme, skimming to find the gist, scanning for a specific information, detecting meaning from context, and inferring a concealed information. As a back up to reading intensively, where an in-depth detailed linguistic and communicative analysis is required, in- and / or out-class doors' extensive reading can be a motivational intrigue to restore or keep up the pleasure and interest in reading; the best way to inculcate the reading habit.

In spite of their effectiveness, these solutions on their own are not enough to scaffold readers' comprehensibility; other specific reading comprehension strategies are required such as guided imagery, jigsaw reading, think-pair-share (TPS), request procedure and reciprocal teaching (*cf* Bouchard, 2005, p.3); the latter is the crux of this work.

2.2 Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is one amongst other classroom strategies that a teacher can employ to present a reading comprehension lesson focusing on the process a successful reader should undergo to comprehend a given text. Being teachable and, therefore, learnable, this strategy, after much explicit practice, would also be used independently by students.

Reciprocal Teaching saw light thanks to evidence-based experimental research conducted by Palincsar and Brown (1984) aiming at helping poor comprehenders, though good at decoding texts, be successful at comprehension. Reciprocal teaching is a tutor-tutee instructional and learning reading comprehension method or activity where learners are involved in scaffolding procedures with teacher and / or peer guidelines, so that they be able to comprehend and make sense of a given text through undergoing a cooperative and (meta)cognitive process of *predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising*. All of these strategies, together, contribute a dual function of "*comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring* [emphasis original]" (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 121). That is, they ease comprehensibility and provide students with a lens to check whether comprehension is taking place.

In fact, to avoid longer lists of strategies for instruction facilitating purposes, these four strategic activities are just a short-cut toolkit encompassing the six fundamental comprehension activities mature readers do : (1) understand both the implicit and explicit purpose of the text, (2) activate relevant prior background knowledge, (3) concentrate on main ideas and neglect trivia, (4) critically evaluate text's content to structure consistency, and its compatibility with prior knowledge of the world and common sense, (5) monitor ongoing activities to check whether comprehension is occurring via periodic review and self-questioning, and (6) draw many kinds of inferences such as predictions, interpretations and conclusions (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). When students are asked to

predict a given text's theme or topic before reading, and to guess what comes next while on reading task, they respectively rely on activating their schemata and comparing content and background knowledge to get the purpose of the text. Composing questions requires readers' concentration on the most important ideas and a continuing check of their understanding relevance. To clarify requires that readers embark on in-depth critical evaluation as they read. During a summarising activity, students need to simultaneously focus on major ideas and overlook supplementary ones, and evaluate their understanding of content.

It is worth noting that the order in which these four strategies appear is optional, as it is a cooperative and concomitant activity where each member is assigned a role to perform. It is also a recursive process in that prediction can initiate, be in the middle or end the process. Besides, the acts of generating questions, clarifying an ambiguity and summing up main ideas would logically pervade the whole comprehension endeavour before, while and after reading.

Since Palinscar and Brown's model (1984), reciprocal teaching has been proved effective for "pre-readers, students with limited comprehension and decoding skills, English language learners, and students with specific learning difficulties" (Mc Allum, 2014, p. 26). Although there exist several procedures for its implementation, they mostly share similar principles of cooperative learning, ongoing teacher-learner and peer interactions, scaffolding and modelling within active, inclusive and socio-affective learning ethos (Mc Allum, 2014). According to Mc Allum (2014), the most constant implementation sequence that has been reiterated in most studies is the pre-reading teacher-learner interactions that trigger students' prior knowledge and predictions, and the while-reading thinking activities of questioning, clarifying, summarising and again predicting.

Put in practice, this explicitly taught strategy involves groups of mainly four learners, even though Rosenshine and Meister (1994) "found no relationship between effect size and size of group" (cited in McAllum, 2014, p. 31); each group member is assigned a role of a predictor, a question generator, a clarifier and a summariser; each adherent to the group can alternately be leader, taking the position of a teacher. Initially led by their teacher to demonstrate and model each of the four strategies as applied to deal with the first section of a given text, the task, then, is taken over by the groups of students who are required to work on the other sections collaboratively according to their roles in independence of the teacher. Being independent of the teacher does not mean being totally left behind, but rather autonomous to assess whether learning transfer has really taken place. When on task, the teacher is there, monitoring, observing, listening and taking notes ready to intervene if further explanation, demonstration or modelling is required.

Given its effectiveness in scaffolding learners at different schooling levels to become independent good readers and its possible transferability to disciplines other than the language proper class (Mc Allum, 2014), such as literacy and social studies (Palinscar & Brown, 1984), reciprocal teaching needs to be part of the teacher's repertoire of reading comprehension strategies. Henceforth, to reap the the benefits of this strategy, teachers

should get a grip on its theoretical underpinnings, as well as its implementation procedures. The only way to do so is training and professional development sessions. There is a plethora of training models that can be applied; the current demonstrative work, though, adopts Woodward's (1988) loop-input framework as it serves our purpose a great deal.

2.3 Loop-Input (Woodward, 1988)

By and large, teacher training and professional development programmes include content, what trainees will learn, and process, how they will get this content (Chang, 2003). The so-called traditional training session is oftentimes characterised by knowledge-methodology mismatch and trainer's word-action paradox. In this type of training settings, teacher trainees may well grasp the theoretical aspects of a skill, technique or strategy, but they cannot figure out its connection to the trainer's adopted procedures. Consequently, they will be unable to transfer a given skill accurately to their loci of activity, and put it in action with their learners, because they may have learnt the necessary concepts without a practical immersion to experience the skill in action. After all, classroom practice should fit learners' need in learning content and processes; It is good that a teacher, for example, provides his / her learners with a text to raise their awareness of the danger of global warming, but it may well be better to upgrade their reading skills through an explicit sequence of step-by-step procedures, so that they can read other encountered texts in or out of the classroom.

To break up with the above training practice, Tessa Woodward, in late 1980s, thought of a training model to help trainers adopt strategies other than lecture, small groups with plenary sessions, nick-named loop-Input. Being "a form of experiential learning" (Dooly & Masats, 2014, p. 44), loop-Input is a teacher training framework that "entails mirroring the content of training sessions in the process of these sessions" (Woodward, 1988, p. 23). To understand this statement, there is no better than an example that is congruent with this paper. To scaffold secondary teachers' understanding and use of reciprocal teaching as a reading comprehension strategy, they should experience the whole step-by-step process of reciprocal teaching to comprehend a reading text about reciprocal teaching as well. Hence, content incorporates process and process in turn makes part of content. Thus, aligning theory to practice, loop-Input would help participants in training sessions figure out the importance of process to reinforce and demonstrate content (Woodward, 1988). In EFL contexts, loop-Input has been widely used to present various topics such as *dictation, role play, study skills, counselling learning, behaviourism*, to say the least (Woodward, 1988). This framework was also applied to plan university courses for teacher students on project-based learning (Dooly & Masats, 2014), and to design a training programme for neophyte Korean teachers (Chang, 2003).

3. The Suggested Loop-Input Framework

3.1 Rationale

This is a generic loop-input framework to help English teachers understand and use reciprocal teaching in their reading comprehension classes. The reciprocal teaching content-process alignment provides cooperative and experiential learning

affordances for hands-on and minds-on activities in which participants act and reflect in and on their actions. Cognitive scaffolding with think-aloud interactions amongst participants is crucial to guide the internalisation of relevant concepts, correct potential misconceptions and assure appropriate use of the target strategy. Practically, participants within their groups are required to grasp and be able to perform the four roles to predict, generate questions, clarify, and summarise, as a contribution to a common understanding of the text about reciprocal teaching.

3. 2 Context and Participants

As said earlier, this is just a generic demonstrative process that can be applied in various teaching and learning contexts with different groups. Thus, the selection of secondary school English teaching community and context in this research is optional, yet rational. Secondary school education is a preparatory educational stratum for higher education learning, where all students, including English language learners, need to read and comprehend a variety of texts. To reach successful reading comprehension performance at university, English students, for instance, should have presumably mastered and developed the skills and strategies necessary to comprehend and make sense of texts of any type. These students cannot get mastery of these strategies without their teacher's explicit and practical instruction; this implies that for an effective instructional presentation to take place, these teachers themselves should have mastered them in the first place. Henceforth, within this context, the suggested training session would include some secondary school English teachers from a selected list of school clusters.

3. 3 Resources and Materials

To serve the loop-Input's content and process fusion, the selected text incorporates various sections about reciprocal teaching concepts and process, which participants will experience throughout the session. The text is academically written and structured to create some challenging understanding difficulty, so that participants would find it necessary to cooperate and cognitively scaffold one another by means of prediction, questions, clarification and a summed up series of explanations. In addition to the text, being the main resource, other supplementary materials are employed: badges to indicate the assigned roles, slips of paper of text's sections and instructional handouts. The suggested text (*cf* Appendix A) is adapted from the New Zealand's Ministry of Education document about reciprocal teaching, as this body grants copyrights to use the included materials: "... You may copy this exemplar to support educational improvement" (Ministry of Education, 2012, p.14). To fit our purpose, the nine-paragraph text is cut off into three sections: Section one includes the first and the second paragraphs, section two subsumes the four following paragraphs, and section three incorporates the last three paragraphs).

3. 4 Procedure

At the outset of this section, it is worth noting that many stages are deliberately overlooked, emphasis is on clarifying how reciprocal teaching is carried out within a loop-Input framework, foregrounding the four roles (i.e., predicting, generating questions,

clarifying and summarising).

The session begins with whole-class discussion, as warm up and lead-in, to activate the participants' schematic knowledge about their prior experiences with reading (e.g., reading frequency, reading preference, the way they read, the strategies, if any, they use, reading difficulties, and many more). It continues with a think-aloud activity about describing the cognitive process they undergo to comprehend a reading text to trigger the theme, reciprocal teaching, and mainly the four thinking processes mentioned earlier. The focal point is to raise their awareness that the four cognitive functions are to be explicitly externalised and put in action through their roles and acts as contributors to common understanding within their groups. Next, the participants are kindly invited to join their groups and select the badges on the tables to cast the four roles, including that of a leader. Note that grouping depends on fitness for purpose. Of course, all group members are more likely to start questioning about both meaning and functions of these roles; henceforth, another series of question-answer is launched. Because they are cognitively perplexed, a sequence of modelling and demonstration is required, so an interactive explanation of the four roles begins.

A. Predicting / Predictor: In this activity, the predictor is concerned with collecting evidence using text features together with his /her prior knowledge to preview the theme of the text and anticipate what would come next before and during reading. Predicting involves these thinking activities:

- Preview cover art, title, author, and illustrations
- Flip through text for clues and text features (i.e., headings, maps, tables, charts and diagrams, photos, drawings, and captions)
- Preview to determine text structure, sequence of events, main idea and details, cause-effect, compare-contrast relationships
- Consider the author's purpose whether to inform, argue or persuade
- Return to predictions during or after reading to confirm or revise them
- Use these sentence frames (e.g., I think I will learn because; I'll bet because; I wonder if ...because...; I suppose because ..). The use of because indicates an evidence-based prediction (Oczkus, 2018, pp.23-24).

B. Questioning/ question generator: Multiple textual resources would generate questions for further understanding. Questioning about the main idea, an inference or other features would raise motivation and challenge amongst peers to mine the text. Questions of this type can include the following wh. questions: what /where when /why / who / how....? What / How/ Why do you think? (Oczkus, 2018, p.25)

C. Clarifying / clarifier: This is a monitoring activity to keep track of comprehension through clarifying any ambiguity that can stop reading in terms of a difficult word or phrase. The clarifier is required to read again to correct a misunderstanding, use a dictionary or ask for help to get the right meaning of an unfamiliar word. The clarifier should admit being stuck and be eager to figure out a possible solution. Problems and clarification sentence frames include:

- I didn't understand the part where

- This does not make sense, so I.....
- I can't figure out
- This is a tricky word.....
- This sentence, paragraph, or chapter is not clear
 - ✓ I reread the parts that
 - ✓ I thought about words that mean the same thing
 - ✓ I looked for word parts that I know
 - ✓ I reread to get a picture in my head (Oczkus, 2018, pp. 26-28)

D. *Summarising* / summariser: To sum up a text, the summariser needs to recall the main ideas and appropriate details, paraphrase, use synonyms of the selected words, select the most important informative sections and arrange them in a logical order. Text features (e.g., headings, table of content and visuals) also help composing summaries. The summariser can use these prompts:

- The most important ideas in the text are.....
- This part was mostly about
- A problem occurs when
- Use of sequencers for logical order: First ..., Next Then Finally
- In the beginning / middle / end (Oczkus, 2018, pp.29-30)

After this whole-class explanatory interactions, the participants are assisted with some coaching guidelines to put their learning in action. As guided practice, participants and coach outloud apply the four thinking activities to read and decipher the first section of the text (*the first two paragraphs : cf Appendix A*), as a model. Note that much clarification is perhaps needed because of some, or all, participants' potential unfamiliarity with these strategies. When all the dark spots in their understanding have been enlightened, they are given the opportunity to work in independence of their coach to deal with the second section of the text (*from the third to the sixth paragraph : cf Appendix A*) using the four thinking activities within their groups, alternating leading roles. Note that the coach is still there, monitoring their work, guiding and helping them when a problem pops up. The same routines are used to make sense of the remaining section (*from the seventh to eighth paragraph : cf Appendix A*)

At the end of this loop-Input process to practise reciprocal teaching, participants are asked to reflect on this experience in terms of content and procedures, as well as their learning, and the practicability of this reading comprehension strategy in their classes. Possible prompting questions to trigger their reflection follow:

- Q1. How did you experience the fusion of content and process ?
- Q2. What was easy / difficult to grasp in reciprocal teaching ?
- Q3. Which of the four thinking activities did you find hard to do?
- Q4. Can you apply reciprocal teaching to your classes ? Why/ why not?
- Q5. If it is possible, how would you do it?

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Reading is not a mere activity of decoding an individual grapheme or a cluster of letters with a successful accurate mopho-phonemic association, but rather a complex ,

(meta)cognitive and interactive process to comprehend and make sense of a variety of texts. Tracking comprehensibility, learners at all educational strata, be it primary, secondary or tertiary level, in scientific, literary, or any other discipline, should be able to read texts of various types in different languages. To appropriate this reading ability requires learners' acquaintance with and mastery of a relevant repertoire of strategies ; chief amongst them would perhaps be reciprocal teaching. This (meta)cognitive and socio-affective reading comprehension strategy makes explicit most of the mental operations involved in the endeavour of comprehensibility (i.e., predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising) through externalising them and putting them in action within a cooperative group work, where members alternately cast each of the four thinking activities to contribute a common understanding of a given text.

Taken as an example for the sake of demonstration, helping secondary school English learners be good readers applying reciprocal teaching in their independent reading activities to get ready for further higher education readings, a loop-Input framework is suggested to scaffold their teachers so that they get both the conceptual underpinnings, as well as the implementation procedures of reciprocal teaching. This framework can be highly recommended as a teacher training system, especially when a skill development is the target (e.g., reciprocal teaching) because it provides a content-process fused learning environment, where teachers experience theory and practice together through acting the target content in the undergone process.

Since much research-based evidence has, to a large extent, accredited reciprocal teaching as an effective multidisciplinary reading comprehension strategy, it has been widely used to explicitly and cooperatively foster and monitor readers' comprehension, making them future independent competent readers. Given its utmost importance in scaffolding readers in their complex comprehensibility endeavour, reciprocal teaching should, at a large scale, make part of the Algerian educational study skills' curricula and canvas, and, particularly, a component of, so to speak, an English teacher's inner strategic repertoire.

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6. Appendix A

Text : 'Reciprocal Teaching' (Adapted from : New Zealand's Ministry of education, 2012, pp.1-5)

Reciprocal teaching is a way of explicitly teaching reading comprehension. It involves four 'thinking skills': clarifying, questioning, summarising, and predicting. Teachers coach their students one skill at a time until they are themselves able to lead small groups. All students take turns at leading their group. This requires teachers to explicitly model the thinking skills, provide clear feedback, and provide repeated opportunities for practice.

Reciprocal teaching takes place in a small group context. Teacher and students take turns at being 'teacher' or leading the dialogue while focusing on defined segments of a shared text. The teacher role is rotated among group members to ensure each has a turn each session. The person in the teacher role structures the dialogue by selecting the length of the passage to be read silently. They then ask for points to be clarified from the text, generate a question on the content of the text to which group members respond, summarise the text segment in their own words, and predict the content of upcoming text. If reciprocal teaching is used ritualistically, without careful teacher scaffolding, then the potential opportunity to learn will be lost. Scaffolding should include modelling the four thinking skills and focusing student attention on the deeper meaning of text. The role of the four thinking skills in creating the opportunity to learn is explained below.

Predicting is a form of preparation for reading comprehension. It provides a purpose for reading and an opportunity to link new ideas to prior learning. Prediction helps students to anticipate and use cues from the text such as the title, illustrations, subtitles, and diagrams in order to find meaning within the print. Students learn to hypothesise what the author will discuss and then confirm or disprove their hypothesis.

Clarifying moves students' attention from decoding to comprehension and helps them recognise when their understanding has broken down. When a student recognises

comprehension failure, they can do something about it. Students are taught to focus on unfamiliar or new words, new or difficult ideas, unfamiliar passages or paragraphs, and loss of meaning. They are encouraged to use 'fix-up' skills (for example, rereading, checking with others about the meaning, using a dictionary, atlas, or other resource, asking for help, or asking if others need anything clarified).

Questioning focuses reading, can work as a means of self-testing for students, and involves students more actively in reading activity. Reciprocal teaching gives students opportunities to identify the kind of information that provides the basis of a good question (as modelled by the teacher), develop a question, find the information that will enable them to answer their question, and help other students to answer questions.

Summarising helps students to identify important content by finding key words and topic sentences, separating out detail and repetition from the main ideas, and integrating information across paragraphs. This activity requires students first to identify the most important content of the paragraph or section of text, and then to integrate important information in the whole passage with the guidance of the teacher. Summarising is a useful skill for remembering, studying, and self-review.

Reciprocal teaching involves repeated practice, providing more opportunities for students and the group to manage their own learning and for teachers to focus on explicitly scaffolding students into developing higher thinking and social skills.

When well implemented, reciprocal teaching has been shown to improve students' skills in reading comprehension, **metacognition**[?], social participation, and **self-management**[?]. It is a strategy that is user-friendly for both teachers and students, yet has a high impact after a relatively short period of use. With long-term use, **reciprocal teaching** can support ongoing achievement gains, particularly if implemented across learning areas in ways that promote deep learning.

While **reciprocal teaching** is a very high-yield strategy, it should not be seen as a comprehensive literacy or learning programme. Instead it should become an integrated component of a balanced teaching and learning programme. Because of its potential to strengthen peer learning and learning-to-learn skills, it can be especially effective when used at the start of the school year.