Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension Strategies Improves EFL Learners' Writing Ability

Mohammad Reza Ghorbani
University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran

Atefeh Ardeshir Gangeraj
Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Iran

Sahar Zahed Alavi
Kosar University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran

Although the importance of reading in developing writing ability is undeniable, few competent readers in EFL contexts develop into competent writers. Since students are not aware that reading can assist them in writing, this study examined the effect of reciprocal teaching - which focuses on four reading comprehension strategies, namely summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting-on improving EFL students' writing ability. Assessment was made based on an evaluation sheet including five criteria (content, macro structure, micro structure, language range and complexity, and language errors) for evaluating the compositions. In this study, true-experimental design was used to study two classes of 104 randomly selected intermediate learners. The pre-test inter-rater reliability for the two raters who rated the students' compositions was 0.95 and the post-test inter-rater reliability was 0.97. Since this study was conducted under the supervision of a supervisor and an advisor, its validity was taken for granted. The results of the independent samples t-test supported the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching of comprehension strategies in improving the learners' writing ability. Since teaching comprehension strategies seems to have facilitated the process of writing, its application can be suggested to reinforce EFL students' writing ability. The findings of this study imply that students will get motivated to read more if they realize the importance of reading in improving their writing performance.

Keywords: reciprocal teaching strategies, reading comprehension, writing ability, EFL learners

Reading is one of the most important activities in any language teaching and learning classroom. Reading is an interactive process involving the utilization of both real-world and linguistic knowledge (Nunan, 2004; Khalily & Seyvandzadeh, 2008). When we read, we read for a variety of purposes. Mostly, we read the text to learn information, perhaps most often we read for general comprehension and persisting supporting information (Murcia, 2001). Reading requires that the reader focuses attention on the reading materials and joins together

background knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written (Chastain, 1988).

Writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. The difficulty lies both in generating thoughts and ideas and translating these ideas into readable text. L2 writers must pay attention not only to higher level skills of planning and organizing but also to lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Not only should what one writes be clear in its meaning, it should also make sense beyond the level of the statement; it should make sense as a text. Cohesion and coherence are two characteristics of a well written text. Cohesion refers to surface level signals that reflect the discourse organization of the text and the intended purposes of the writer. These signals include repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, paraphrase/ restate, anaphora, transition markers, substitution, ellipsis, parallelism, and other lexical relations that link parts of the text (Grabe, 2009). Coherence refers to whatever links the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text.

Although oral language is the natural channel of gaining information, human beings have developed writing systems for communication, too. For some decades reading and writing have been taught separately (Langer & Applebee, 1986). Some research studies have shown that they are very interdependent (Durukan, 2011; Krashen, 1984; Gregg & Steinberg, 1980; Anderson, Spiro, & Montague, 1977). Their interconnection is like that of the chicken and egg. That is, without one the other cannot exist. According to Durukan (2011), reading and writing skills are important from the first phase of education. Krashen (1984) believes that a great deal of self-motivated reading leads to writing competence. According to Gregg and Steinberg (1980) and Anderson, Spiro, and Montague (1977), both in constructivist theory and in research, reading and writing are meaning-generating activities. It is usually assumed that reading and writing are like two sides of the same coin and a good reader makes a good piece of writing. So, writing can be improved by improving reading.

Although there is a strong relationship between reading and writing (Giuliano, 2001; McGann, 2001), little attention has been given to the investigation of this relationship (Ito, 2011). According to Ito (2011), the correlation between EFL (English as a foreign language) reading and writing among Japanese high school learners is statistically significant implying that EFL reading skill has a positive effect on EFL composition. Alkhawaldeh (2011) studied the effect of EFL reading comprehension on writing achievement among Jordanian eighth grade students. One main conclusion emanating from the results of this study was that the experimental group students benefited from the reading passage in their writing. Yoshimura (2009) mentioned reading and writing are interdependent processes that are essential to each other

and mutually beneficial. By improving one skill, the other will be improved. According to Cobine (1995), students can organize their thoughts by arranging writing activities before and during reading such as note taking task or infer probable conclusions based upon textual cues. Grabe (2001, 2003) and Hudson (2007) believed that reading and writing's relationships are important in academic literacy skills, so reading is commonly combined with some type of writing , that involves note taking, summary writing, post reading answers to questions, response papers, paraphrasing of key information from multiple sources (Grabe, 2009). Thus, the EFL writing class can incorporate lessons which assist students in preparing academic writing assignments by using readings as a basis to practice such skills as interpreting, synthesizing concepts, paraphrasing and summarizing.

Throughout the history of language teaching, different approaches, methods, procedures have been utilized to help learners learn language. In one period the focus of attention was on teaching and teacher-centered classes; in other period the emphasis was on learning and learner-centered classes; they paid attention to meaning and use (Nunan, 1999). As the goal of language teaching was shifting, attitudes toward the four skills were changing as well. Recently the importance of reading in developing writing ability has been acknowledged. The teaching of writing has been suggested to be incorporated with reading instruction for language learners (Murcia, 2001).

According to Krashen (2004), no matter how much students spend on writing, it cannot be improved beyond their existing knowledge of the language by writing on its own. His alternative way is to read more because it leads to more vocabulary building and better writing style. Since understanding the printed text is the result of the interaction between the writer and reader (Harris, 2000), reciprocal teaching is supposed to enhance students' reading and writing skills respectively. Although it has been in use for the past two decades, most teachers and students in the United States are not familiar with it (Williams, 2010). According to Slater and Horstman (2002), reciprocal teaching helps students prevent cognitive failure during reading. Palincsar and Brown (1984) mentioned that reciprocal teaching is an instructional activity in which teacher and students take turn having a dialogue regarding the different parts of the text to construct meaning. It provides students with four specific reading strategies, namely questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting. In the prediction phase of reciprocal teaching, readers combine their own background knowledge with what they have understood from the text. In the questioning phase, readers ask some questions to monitor and assess their understanding of the text. In clarifying phase, the identification and clarification of unclear, difficult, or unfamiliar aspects of a text, including awkward structures, unfamiliar

vocabulary and unclear references happens. In summarizing phase, the important information, themes, and ideas in the text are integrated into a clear and concise statement that communicates the total meaning of the text.

According to Rosenshine and Meister (1994), the following four important instructional practices are embedded in reciprocal teaching:

- Direct teaching of strategies
- Practicing reading strategies with real reading instead of worksheets or contrived exercises
- Scaffolding of instruction
- Using Peer support for learning

Reciprocal teaching is an interactive teaching strategy and a cooperative learning instructional method based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the fundamental role of social interaction and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (cited in Galloway, 2001) which is used to develop text comprehension. It involves a high degree of social interaction and collaboration in which learners step by step learn to assume the responsibility of helping their peers construct meaning from text (Alverman & Phelps, 1998).It incorporates four activities: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (Oczkus, 2003; Palincsar & Brown, 1984) in which students move from spectators to performers. According to Hashey and Connors (2003), each of these strategies are first taught and modeled for the students over a number of teaching sessions by the teacher. After they are understood by students, they are practiced with peer and teacher feedback. The interaction may happen between teacher and student or between students. The teacher collaborates with the students and hands over the control of the group to the students in the end (Allen, 2003).

According to Choo, Eng, and Ahmad (2011), interactive, cognitive-constructivist, and social constructivism theories underpin reciprocal teaching. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, learning occurs in an interactive environment in which the knowledge constructed from the text is negotiated through interactions between both teacher and students or student and student (Gergen, 1999a, 1999b). Teaching cognitive strategies (Rosenshine & Meister, 1994) and giving appropriate feedback (Oczkus, 2003) facilitate learning and develop monitoring skills which improve motivation (Palincsar, David, & Brown, 1989).

Pearson and Fielding (1991) found that the instruction of comprehension strategies is more helpful for learners with poor comprehension skills. A meta-analysis of 16 studies on reciprocal teaching by Rosenshine and Meister (1994) indicated that reciprocal teaching is effective not only for older learners but also for those who show poor comprehension. A series of studies by Palincsar and Brown (1985) determined the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching for middle school students in pairs and small groups averaging five. The students who were very poor in comprehension were instructed over a period of 20 consecutive school days. They had to read passages about 450 to 500 words in length. Then, they were evaluated by having them answer 10 comprehension questions from recall.

Pilonieta and Medina's (2009) study in the United States indicated that that RT benefited even younger children. Yang (2010) conducted a study in Taiwan to develop a reciprocal teaching/learning strategy. His study showed students' reading progress in remedial English reading classes incorporating the RT system suggesting that it is helpful for teachers to encourage their students to interact with other.

Reciprocal teaching which is a contemporary application of Vygotsky's theories (Mcleod, 2007) comprises summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Each of these strategies helps learners construct meaning from text and monitor their reading. They help learners not to wander off or miss the meaning of the text. They may also inform them that they are not predicting well what is coming up or they are not learning what they are expected to (Bruer, 1993). These strategies are supposed to facilitate group work between teacher and students as well as among students as a means of aiding them to construct meaning from text. The concept of reciprocal teaching is described below based on Palincsar (1986).

Summarizing helps students to identify, paraphrase, integrate, and organize the most important information, themes, and ideas appearing in the text into a clear and concise statement. It is the driving force to bring into existence a context for comprehending the specific purpose of a text (Doolittle et al., 2006). The students follow the procedure at the sentence, paragraph, and passage levels, respectively. They monitor and assess their comprehension by asking themselves questions about unclear parts. This helps them explore the text more deeply and construct the intended meaning (Doolittle et al., 2006). Identifying significant information that is the substance for a question helps the students to generate questions about the text and re-processing the information into appropriate questions to figure out the main idea reinforces the summarizing strategy. Clarifying unclear, difficult, or unfamiliar aspects of a text remedy confusion. For clarifying difficult points in the text, the students engage in critical evaluation of the parts that are confusing and unclear. When there is a segment that students do not understand, they may re-read, use context clues, ask someone for help etc. The students will then use headings, sub-headings, questions imbedded in the text, and the title as a clue to hypothesize about what happens next in the text. They combine their own background knowledge with their new knowledge from the text to create, confirm or disconfirm their hypotheses (Doolittle et al., 2006). So they read with anticipation and expectancy and check their hypotheses during reading

(Stricklin, 2011).Their inability to predict correctly is usually supposed to be due to inadequate comprehension.

According to Palincsar (1986), five requirements are to be satisfied to teach the four strategies (summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting) to students successfully. These requirements are:

1. Teachers need to make these strategies explicit by modeling them for the students.
2. Teachers should not teach these strategies in isolation from the context in which they are used.
3. Teachers should make students aware of the reasons and situations they should use particular strategies.
4. Teachers should give feedback to their students about their success regardless of their level of performance.
5. Teachers should ensure that students can use these strategies spontaneously and transfer the comprehension responsibility to the students gradually.

In summary, based on the above-mentioned literature, reading and writing skills are closely connected and complement each other. Since many EFL learners are not aware of this connection, this study is aimed at investigating the impact of reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension on their writing performance in order to shed more light on the ways reading helps students in improving their writing. To achieve this objective, the following research question and hypothesis were formulated:

- Does reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension have any effect on improving EFL learners' writing ability?
- Ho: Reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension has no positive effect on improving EFL learners' writing ability.

Method
Research Design and Subjects

In this study, true-experimental design was used to study two classes of 104 randomly selected learners. A total number of 150 female students at the intermediate level from Daneshpajoohan, Shomal, and Asia language institutes in Amolsat for a placement test. The participants answered the Preliminary English Test (PET). They were ranked based on their scores. After omitting the extreme scores, 104 students whose scores were one standard deviation around the mean in normal curve were randomly assigned to two groups of 52 subjects. Only those two subjects with similar scores were randomly assigned to the experimental and control group each time to select homogenous groups. Due to time constraint limitations, it was not possible to have more than two groups. The subjects were between fifteen to twenty three years old.

The following diagram summarizes the design. The dotted line represents equivalent groups. In this diagram GA and GB stand for experimental and control groups, respectively. T1 stands for the test before applying the treatment. T2 stands for the test after the treatment and X stands for treatment.

```
GA       T1       X    T2
-------------------------------------
GB       T1            T2
```
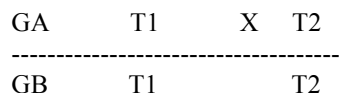
Instruments

The subjects sat for three tests in this study. The PET (the Preliminary English Test) was used for the placement test. This standardized test consisted of 35 questions related to two skills of reading and writing in which the first 5 questions had three choices, the next 15 questions had two choices (correct or incorrect), and the last 15 questions had 4 choices. The mean score and standard deviation of which was 20 and 16.1 respectively.

Table 1
Inter-rater Reliability of the Pre-Test

	Intra-class Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.905	.847	.942	20.107	60	60	.000
Average Measures	.950	.917	.970	20.107	60	60	.000

Table 2
Inter-rater Reliability of the Post-Test

	Intra-class Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.952	.922	.971	40.974	60	60	.000
Average Measures	.976	.959	.985	40.974	60	60	.000

The first composition written by the subjects before the intervention was considered as pre-test and the second composition after the treatment was used as post-test. The topic of the composition chosen from the book "select reading" is provided in the Appendix. Two experienced and competent university professors rated the compositions by using Yoshimura (2010) checklist which considers criteria such as content, macro structure, micro structure, language range and complexity and language error. Each of the criteria is explained thoroughly in the checklist mentioned in the Appendix. Raters were supposed to assign the particular score related to the met criteria in the subjects' compositions (excellent to good: 9-10, fair to poor: 5-6, good to average: 7-8, very poor: 1-4). The final score in each composition was the sum of the scores assigned to five mentioned domains. As indicated in Table 1, the inter-rater reliability for the two raters who rated the students' compositions on the pre-test was 0.95 meaning that the two raters enjoyed statistically significant inter-rater reliability. Since this study was conducted under the supervision of a supervisor and an advisor, its validity was taken for granted.

As indicated in Table 2, the inter-rater reliability for the two raters who rated the students' compositions on the post-test was 0.97 meaning that the two raters enjoyed statistically significant inter-rater reliability.

The passages from the book "Select Readings-Intermediate" by Lee and Gundersen (2004) were used for the treatment. They were taught and practiced for 15 one and a half hour sessions. This book was used because, as Lee and Gundersen mentioned, its high- interest, authentic reading passages act as springboards into reading comprehension activities, reading skills development, vocabulary building, grammatical analysis and practice, and thought-provoking discussion and writing. The passages represent a wide range of genres such as newspaper, essays, book excerpts, on-line discussion and interviews. The book provided some practices for both control group and experimental groups in the following sub-skill areas:

- Reading
- Identifying the topic
- Identifying supporting points or examples
- Identifying words and phrases appropriate to the context
- Identifying the relationships between sentences and paragraphs
- Understanding academic vocabulary
- Comprehending explicit and implicit information
- Following a logical or chronological sequence of events

Procedure

This study was implemented in four phases: placement test, pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The independent variable was the impact of teaching four reading comprehension strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The dependent variable wa5s the improvement of EFL learners' writing ability.

The PET was administered to 150 students as a placement test in order to select two groups of students as control and experimental groups. The result of PET was used to screen the subjects into two homogenous groups on the basis of the dispersion of scores around the mean. Based on the mean score plus and minus one standard deviation the students whose scores fell within the range of 14 and 26 were selected. Then, the sample was randomly assigned to two groups of 52 subjects. After administering the pre-test to capture the initial differences between the two groups, the experiment was carried out in 15sessions. Each group attended the class for a period of one and a half hours. One week after the last session, the participants sat for the post-test. The treatment is described below.

The researcher began by teaching and modeling the four comprehension strategies. At first she led the passage. As the subjects became more proficient with the strategies, she gradually faded out and allowed them to

assume leadership. The researcher taught and modeled the predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing strategies explicitly as a way to improve the students' comprehension skills. Once students were able to apply all four strategies, they were encouraged to annotate examples of all four strategies in the margins. Then, they shared their annotations and constructed their own meaning of the text. They added commentary to their annotations to improve their understanding of the text. The researcher circulated the classroom to guide the students' discussion. She also asked follow-up questions to enrich their activities.

The Teacher Bookmark by Oczkus (2003), which had prompts for each reciprocal teaching strategy, was used to help students work their way through texts and reciprocal teaching discussions (see Appendix). The subjects were introduced to the expectations of four roles: questioner, clarifier, predictor and summarizer. As a questioner, they asked questions (such as Did the author mean it? ,when? , where? ,who?, how? ,what? ,why? ,and what if?) to help their group to improve their understanding of the text before, during, and after reading. As a clarifier, they looked for and highlighted the parts where the meaning was not clear using sentences like: I'm not sure what it means. I think that word means …. Does anyone know what it refers to? Why do you think so? As a predictor, they guessed what might be ahead in the text, confirmed or rejected their predictions using sentences like: I wonder if…, What do you think will happen if…?, Why do you think…?, I think the passage will tell us about …., What might happen in this section of the text? As a summarizer, they located key words in the text and used their own words to talk about the most important parts of the text using sentences like: The key arguments in the text are …, The most important ideas are … The main ideas in this text are.

Both groups were required to identify the topic, supporting points, examples, words and phrases appropriate to the context, and the relationships between sentences and paragraphs. They were expected to comprehend explicit and implicit information and follow a logical or chronological sequence of events. However, only the experimental group received the treatment regarding the four reading comprehension strategies. First, the subjects in the experimental group were taught and asked to summarize the main points they encountered in the text. Second, they were asked to raise questions about the text and answer them on their own. Third, they were asked to clarify ambiguous points of the text. And fourth, they were asked to predict what would come next in the text. The combination of these strategies helped the subjects not to wander off or miss the point. The subjects in the control group focused on the passages and practiced the reading comprehension activities in the book. The intervention began in April and concluded in early July, 2010.

Statistical Analysis and Results

To answer the research question, the raw scores taken from the pre-test and post-test were submitted to the computer software Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS version 15), using t-test. Independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the possible differences between the means of the experimental and control groups based on the gain scores from the post-tests. The research question and the corresponding hypothesis in this study are as follows:

- Does reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension strategies have any effect on improving EFL learners' writing ability?
- Ho: Reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension strategies has no positive effect on improving EFL learners' writing ability.

The following tables indicate the summary of t-tests. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the experimental and control groups before the treatment. As indicated in Table 3, there was no significant difference between the experimental group (M =16.96, SD = 3.99) and the control group [M = 16.25, SD = 2.97; t (102) = 0.418, p. > .05] before the treatment.

Table 3
The Independent Samples t-test for the Experimental and Control Groups (Pre-Test)

Group	N	Mean	StdDev	df	t	Sig.
Experimental Control	52	16.96	3.99	102	.418	0.677
	52	16.25	2.97			

Table 4
The Independent Samples t-test for the experimental and control groups (post-test)

Group	N	Mean	StdDev	df	t	Sig.
Experimental Control	52 52	36.71 17.87	3.47 3.93	102	-25.87	0.000*

*Sig. p < .05

The second independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the scores of the experimental and control groups after the treatment (post-test). As indicated in Table 4, there is a significant difference between the experimental group (M = 36.71, SD = 3.47) and the control group (M = 17.87, SD = 3.93; t (102) = -25.87, p< .05). This final result shows that the mean score of the experimental group after the treatment is more than the control group. That is, the participants who received comprehension strategy instruction performed significantly better than those who didn't. Since there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups, the null hypothesis (Reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension strategies has no positive effect on improving EFL learners' writing ability) is rejected. Therefore, the reciprocal teaching, which consists of teaching four specific reading strategies, may have an effect on the students' writings.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of reciprocal teaching of reading comprehension on the writing performance among female students at the intermediate level in Amol, Iran. Primary data were collected by conducting a placement test, a pretest, and a post-test. The result of the independent samples t-test analysis from the post-test administration indicated that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group. This suggests that comprehension strategy instruction through reciprocal teaching be useful for the improvement of writing ability. The findings of this study confirm the effectiveness of instruction through four comprehension strategies which are in line with the previous studies (Krashen, 2004; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; Pearson & Fielding 1991; Palincsar & Brown, 1985). Since writing is such a skill that requires attention to higher level skills of planning, meaning and organizing (Richards & Renandya, 2002), improving these higher level skills can improve writing. As reciprocal teaching emphasizes on four strategies- namely summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting- and these strategies are dealing with planning, meaning and organizing and help learners not to wander off or miss the meaning of the text (Bruer, 1993), its implementing can improve writing ability indirectly. According to Krashen (2004), reading more leads to more vocabulary building and better writing style. And as Harris (2000) mentioned reciprocal teaching is supposed to enhance students' writing skills. Since understanding the printed text is the result of the interaction between the writer and reader. The findings also support Krashen's (1984) view that reading functions as a primary model for writing skill. Since teaching comprehension strategies seems to have facilitated the process of writing, its application can be suggested to reinforce EFL students' writing performance.

The implications from the findings of this study suggest that if comprehension strategies are incorporated into the curriculum and instructed in EFL classes, EFL learners' writing skill may improve. Therefore, teachers should provide their students with such strategies to facilitate their learning process. It is hoped that students will make reading their free time hobby by getting aware of the connection between reading and writing performance. It is also hoped that EFL teachers can design reading activities which lead to improvements in students' writing performance. Material developers can also introduce the reading strategies in reciprocal teaching through exercises to help students improve their writing skill.

This study was restrained by some limitations. It was performed in intermediate level of proficiency, therefore the other proficiency levels of the learners such as elementary or advanced levels were not investigated. The subjects in the study were females in institutes. So, it is not clear what the results of this study with males are. The reliance on only two readers was another limitation of this study. This study is the outcome a master thesis which had to be finished in due time. Therefore, the findings should be generalized with great caution.

Further research studies can be conducted to investigate the effect of reciprocal teaching on males. Other research studies can also be done to investigate the effect of reciprocal teaching on other students with primary and advanced level of proficiency. The effect of reciprocal teaching on the improvement of other skills (listening and speaking) can also be a topic for further research studies.

References

Alkhawaldeh, A. (2011). The effect of EFL reading comprehension on writing achievement among Jordanian eighth grade students. *European Journal of Scientific Research, 66*(3), 352-365.

Allen, S. (2003). An analytic comparison of three models of reading strategy instruction. *IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 41*(4), 319-339.

Alvermann, D. E., & Phelps, S. F. (1998). *Content reading and literacy: Succeeding in today's diverse classrooms.* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Anderson, R. C., Spiro, R. J., & Montague, W. E. (1977). *Schooling and the acquisition of knowledge.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bruer, J. (1993). The mind's journey from novice to expert. *American Educator, 17*(2), 6-15, 38-46.

Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second-language skills: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. PP.216- 256.

Choo, T. O. L., Eng, T. K., & Ahmad, N. (2011).Effects of reciprocal teaching strategies on reading comprehension. *The Reading Matrix,11*(2), 140-149.

Cobine, G. R. (1995). Writing as a response to reading. *ERIC DIGEST*, EDO-CS-95-08 .Retrieved from, http://www. Indiana. edu/reading/ieo/ digests/d105.html.

Doolittle, P. E., Hicks, D., Triplett, C. F., Nichols, W. D., & Young, C. A. (2006). Reciprocal teaching for reading comprehension in higher education: A strategy for fostering the deeper understanding of texts. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 17*(2), 106-118.

Durukan, E. (2011). Effects of cooperative integrated reading composition (CIRC) technique on reading-writing skills. *Educational Research and Reviews, 6*(1), 102-109.Available online at http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR

Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, M. (2003). *An introduction to language* (7th ed.): copyright by Heinle, a part of Thomson Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts 02210USA.

Galloway, C. A. (2001). Vygotsky's learning theory. In M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*. Available Website:http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Vygotsky%27s_constructivism

Gergen, K. J. (1999a). *An introduction to social construction.* Boston: Sage.

Gergen, K. J. (1999b). Agency/social construction and relational action. *Theory & Psychology, 9*, 113-115.

Grabe, W. (2001). Reading-writing relations: Theoretical perspectives and instructional practices. In D.

Belcher & A. Hirvela (Eds.), *Linking literacies: Perspectives on L2 reading-writing connections* (pp.15-47). Ann Arbor MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Grabe, W. (2003). Reading and writing relations: Second language perspectives on research and practice. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring dynamics of 2nd language writing* (pp.242-262). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W. (2009).*Reading in a second language: moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Gregg, L. W., & Steinberg, E. R. (Eds.), (1980).*Cognitive processes in writing*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Giuliano, C. F. (2001). The writing connection: Composing the learner's classroom. *Pedagogy, 1*, 387–398.

Harris, R. (2000). *Rethinking Writing.* London: Athlone Press.

Hashey, J. M., & Connors, D. J. (2003). Learn from our journey: Reciprocal teaching action research. *Reading Teacher, 57*(3), 224-233.

Hudson, T. (2007).*Teaching second language reading.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ito, F. (2011). L2 reading–writing correlation in Japanese EFL high school students, *The Language Teacher, 35*(5), 23-29.

Khalily, S., & Seyvandzadeh, A. (2008). *New perspectives on the nature of the reading process.* Rahnama Press. pp.40-50.

Krashen, S. (2004).*The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Krashen, S. D. (1984). *Writing: Research, theory, and applications.* Oxford: Pergamon.

Langer, J., & Applebee, A. (1986). Reading and writing instruction: Toward a theory of teaching and learning, *Review of Research in Education, 13*, 171_194.

Lee, L., & Gundersen, E. (2004).*Select readings-intermediate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McGann, J. J. (2001). Reading fiction/teaching fiction: A pedagogical experiment. *Pedagogy, 1*(1), 143–165.

Mcleod, S. A. (2007). *Simply psychology: Vygotsky.* Retrieved 6 April, 2011 from http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html

Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed.): copyright by Heinle and Heinle, a division of Thomson learning, Inc. 153-205.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oczkus, L. D. (2003). The four reciprocal teaching strategies. In *Reciprocal teaching at work:*

Strategies for improving reading comprehension (pp. 13-28). Newark, DE: International Reading Association

Palincsar, A. S. (1986). Reciprocal teaching. *In Teaching reading as thinking.* Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984).Reciprocal teaching of comprehension fostering and comprehension monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction, 1*(2), 117–175.

Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1985). Reciprocal teaching: Activities to promote read(ing) with your mind. In T. L. Harris & E. J. Cooper (Eds.), *Reading, thinking and concept development: Strategies for the classroom.* New York: The College Board.

Palincsar, A. S., David, Y. M., & Brown, A. L. (1989). *Using reciprocal teaching in the classroom: A guide for teachers.* Unpublished manual. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

Pearson, P. D., & Fielding, L. (1991).Comprehension instruction. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research:* Volume II (pp. 815-860). White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing.

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

Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2002).*Methodology In Language Teaching. An anthology of current practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Rosenshine, B., & Meister, C. (1994). Reciprocal teaching: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 64*(4), 479-530.

Slater, W. H., & Horstman, F. R. (2002). Teaching reading and writing to struggling middle school and high school students: The case for reciprocal teaching. *Preventing School Failure, 46*(4), 163.

Stricklin, K. (2011). Hands-on reciprocal teaching: A comprehension technique. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(8), 620–625.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Williams, J. (2010). Taking on the role of questioner: Revisiting reciprocal teaching. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(4), 278–281.

Yang, Y. F. (2010). Developing a reciprocal teaching/learning system for college remedial reading instruction. *Computers and Education, 55,* 1193–1201.

Yoshimura, F. (2010). Treatment of errors in an EFL writing course. In A. M. Stoke (Ed.), *JALT 2009 Conference Proceedings.* Tokyo: JALT.

Appendix

Composition Topic

"What problems worry you about the future?"

Evaluation Sheet
Please use the following criteria and evaluate the compositions.

Criteria		score
Content		
Excellent to good	knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis	
Good to average	some knowledge of the subject, adequate substance, limited development of thesis	
Fair to poor	limited knowledge of the subject, little substance, inadequate development	
Very poor	not show knowledge of the subject, non-substantive, Or not enough to evaluate	
Macro structure		
Excellent to good	idea clearly stated and supported, well-organized, logical sequencing	
Good to average	loosely organized but main ideas stand out, somewhat logical	
Fair to poor	ideas confusing or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing	
Very poor	does not communicate, no organization, Or not enough to evaluate	
Micro structure		
Excellent to good	fluent flow, detailed description	
Good to average	somewhat fluent flow, somewhat detailed description	
Fair to poor	choppy, ideas not connected well, few or no details	
Very poor	does not communicate, Or not enough to evaluate	
Language range and complexity		
Excellent to good	effective complex construction, sophisticated range of vocabulary, effective word/idiom choice and usage	
Good to average	simple construction, adequate range of vocabulary, somewhat effective word/idiom choice and usage	
Fair to poor	limited range of construction and/or vocabulary	
Very poor	no mastery of sentence construction and/ or little knowledge of vocabulary, Or not enough to evaluate	
Language errors		
Excellent to good	Few errors in sentence constructions and/or word choice/form	
Good to average	minor problems in sentence constructions and/or word choice/form	
Fair to poor	major problems in constructions and/or word choice/form	
Very poor	no mastery of English construction and/or vocabulary, Or not enough to evaluate	

Excellent to good: 9-10   Fair to poor: 5-6   Good to average: 7-8   Very poor: 1-4

Be the Teacher Bookmark
Directions: This bookmark has prompts for each reciprocal teaching strategy and can aid students as they work their way through texts and reciprocal teaching discussions.

Predict
Use clues from the text or illustrations
to predict what will happen next.
I think...because...
I'll bet...because...
I suppose...because...
I think I will learn...because...
Question
Ask questions as you read.
Ask some questions that have answers
in the text.
Use the question words *who*, *what*,
where, *when*, *why*, *how*, and *what if*.
Try asking some questions that can
be inferred. Use clues from the text
plus your experiences.
Clarify
How can you figure out a difficult
word or idea in the text?
Reread, reread, reread!
Think about word chunks you know.
Try sounding it out.
Read on.
Ask, Does it make sense?
Talk to a friend. © 2003 International Reading Association
Summarize
Using your *own* words, tell the main
ideas from the text in order.
This text is about...
This part is about...

Author Notes
Mohammad Reza Ghorbani
University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran
Iran, Bojnord, University of Bojnord
mrg872@yahoo.com

Dr. Mohammad Reza Ghorbani is Assistant Professor of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at the University of
Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran. He has worked as an EFL teacher and researcher in Iran, Japan, and Malaysia since 1990. He has
published three books on educational issues and one in Germany as well as fourteen articles in specialized international
journals. He has also presented six papers in international conferences. His interests are English Teaching, Learning, Testing,
and Evaluation. He is currently the president of State University of Kosar.

Atefeh Ardeshir Gangeraj
Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Iran
Mazandaran, Amol Khyabane Talebamoli,
Daryaye 43, Kode posti 4617975163
atefeh.ardeshir@yahoo.com

Atefeh Ardeshir Gangeraj got her M.A. in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Iran. She has been teaching
various English courses in different universities and English institutes in Amol, Iran.

Sahar Zahed Alavi
Kosar University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran
Iran, Bojnord, Daneshgah Kosar
sahar_alavi87@yahoo.com

Sahar Zahed Alavi got her M.A. in TEFL from Sabzevar Teacher Training University in 1388. She has been teaching various
English courses in different universities and English institutes. She is interested in areas of Teaching, Sociolinguistics and
Discourse Analysis.

Current Issues in Education

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College • Arizona State University
PO Box 37100, Phoenix, AZ 85069, USA