Reciprocal Reading

Reading comprehension strategies, which focus on the learners’ understanding of written text, are rated as high impact on the EEF Toolkit. Reciprocal reading is a structured approach to teaching strategies (questioning, clarifying, summarising and predicting) that students can use to improve their reading comprehension.

It has been used widely in English-speaking countries, but is less common in the UK. There is some evidence of promise from previous evaluations on reciprocal teaching, including a meta-analysis of 16 studies, which showed an average impact equivalent to around +4 months’ additional progress.

This Reciprocal Reading programme was developed and delivered by FFT Literacy, who had previously conducted their own small-scale evaluation with promising results.

EEF Summary

Our trial involved 98 schools and 5222 pupils. We tested a whole-class approach in Year 4 and a targeted approach for students struggling with reading comprehension in Years 5 and 6.

The independent evaluation found that children in the targeted intervention made an average of +2 months’ more progress in terms of reading comprehension and overall reading, the measure of attainment chosen for the trial. The evaluation found no evidence that pupils in the whole-class intervention improved compared to pupils in the control group.

These results are rated as moderate-to-high security: 3 out of 5 on the EEF padlock scale.

It is worth highlighting that the evaluator analysed the impact of Reciprocal Reading specifically on the sub-group of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). This found a small positive impact for the targeted version on reading comprehension and no impact for the whole-class intervention. This initial analysis, though, was conducted using information supplied directly from schools and was constrained by missing data. Subsequent analysis matched data for FSM-eligible pupils within the trial using the National Pupil Database. Interestingly, these results found signs of promise for Reciprocal Reading in both the targeted and whole-class interventions on outcomes for FSM-eligible pupils, suggesting the programme could help schools close the disadvantage gap.

As a result of these encouraging results, the EEF is exploring whether to conduct a larger trial of the targeted version of Reciprocal Reading. Aspects to explore in any further trial would be what activity this intervention usually replaces and whether there are any negative effects on other subject areas.
Research Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Group</th>
<th>Impact - the size of the difference between Reciprocal Reading pupils and other pupils</th>
<th>Security - how confident are we in this result?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall reading (universal intervention, Y4)</td>
<td>0 Months' Progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension (universal intervention, Y4)</td>
<td>0 Months' Progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reading (targeted intervention: Y5 and Y6)</td>
<td>-2 Months' Progress</td>
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Were the schools in the trial similar to my school?

- There were 98 schools in the trial, located in the north of England and the Midlands.
- 87 of the 98 schools were Good or Outstanding.

Could I implement this in my school?

- FFT Literacy Reciprocal Reading is delivered by teachers or teaching assistants.
- There are two days of initial training with two to three half days in-school support visits thereafter.
- Sessions are delivered for 20-30 minutes at least once per week in the universal intervention and at least twice per week in the targeted intervention.

How much will it cost?

The average cost of the FFT Literacy Reciprocal Reading universal intervention for one class of 25 pupils was around £2,502, or £35 per pupil per year when averaged over 3 years. The average cost of the targeted intervention for 6 pupils was around £2,436, or £135 per pupil per year averaged over 3 years.

Delivered by Teachers
- Participant group: Whole Class
- Intervention length: 1 Year

Cost per pupil: £135
- No. of Teachers/TAs: Variable
- Training time per staff member: 3 Days
**Evaluation Conclusions**

1. Children in the FFT Literacy Reciprocal Reading targeted intervention group made the equivalent of 2 additional months’ progress in both primary outcomes (overall reading and reading comprehension), on average, compared to the equivalent children in the other schools. This result has a moderate to high security rating.

2. There is no evidence that the FFT Literacy Reciprocal Reading universal intervention had an impact on pupils’ overall reading or reading comprehension outcomes, on average. This result has a moderate to high security rating.

3. Children in the targeted intervention made more progress in both secondary outcomes (reading accuracy and pupil comprehension meta-cognition), whilst the universal intervention showed effects for only pupil comprehension meta-cognition.

4. Among children receiving free school meals (FSM) analysis showed an effect on reading comprehension for pupils in the targeted intervention, but not for the universal version. However, this initial analysis was conducted using information supplied directly from schools and was constrained by missing data. Subsequent analysis was able to match data for FSM eligible pupils within the trial using the National Pupil Database. These results found signs of promise for both the targeted and universal interventions on outcomes for children eligible for FSM. These results are summarised in full in appendix K of the full report.