During Reading Activity
*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (Signet Classics, 2004)

Purpose of this Strategy
Once the pre-reading activity has set the stage for the story and students are curious about what happens, a during reading activity will engage students deeply with the text and help them read beyond the lines. During reading strategies give meaning to the novel beyond a surface reading and tie into the enduring question. A Readers’ Theatre is especially applicable here, because we are reading a play. Although Readers’ Theatre has been recommended as a motivational way to increase students’ reading fluency, it is also excellent practice in revisiting the information, which is crucial to content area learning. Reading the text aloud makes it engaging and comprehensible to the rest of the class.

Directions

**Step One: Select a Passage for Students to Act Out**
Choose a passage of the play that will require deeper thinking in order for students to understand what is going on in the plot. Halfway through Act II where the conflict comes to a climax with Gwendolyn, Cecily, Algernon, and Jack all squabbling and fighting, is a great scene for students to act out.

**Step Two: Make Accessible Copies of the Passage**
Using a scanner, make enough copies of the passage so that all the students in the class can read it. Highlight each actor’s part to make it easier to read for the students. Make a teacher copy where you can mark breakpoints ahead of time for students to switch out parts.

**Step Three: Assign Parts**
Because there are only four characters in this scene, divide the students into four groups. There should be two equal groups of girls (to read for Cecily and Gwendolyn) and two equal groups of boys (to read for Algernon and Jack). Students are now ready to rehearse their specific parts. Instruct the four groups to study one character’s lines. ELL students will need to rehearse their parts, with assistance from the teacher, whereas mainstream students can probably just read their parts through once or twice before the performance.

**Step Four: Perform the Scene**
Choose four students, one from each group, to begin the scene. Commence the reading, and then stop at your designated place and have each actor go back to his or her group and tap another group member to begin reading. Let them read until your next stopping point, in which you instruct the four students to go back to their groups and tap a new member to perform. Repeat this process until all students have had an opportunity to perform.

Aubrey Lee, BYU, 2009
Step Five: Revisit the Anticipation Guide
After completing the Readers' Theatre, draw students' attention to the anticipation guide they filled out before reading. Discuss which predictions were accurate and which predictions were inaccurate or need to be modified.

Step Six: Discuss
Lead a class discussion. Get the students' responses on how they felt acting as the characters in the play. Talk about what happened in the story. Students should have a heightened sense of the language as well as what transpired in the scene they have read.

Assessment
By the time students have read to the class, they will be able to provide a clear, fluent, and thoughtful interpretation of the text. Students are able to focus their reading and interpret meaning. The teacher can use the during reading activity to ensure that students are drawing meaning from the text as well as making connections to themselves, other texts, and other events in the play.