THE COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE READ ALOUDS

INCLUDING THINKING ALOUD AND MAKING CONNECTIONS

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Adapted from the Chicago Literacy Project

Read Aloud-Defined

- **Today's read-aloud is a vibrant, deliberate part of good teaching. It is an essential and effective strategy for delivering sophisticated literacy ideas to learners and consumers of language**.

  L. Laminack and B. Wadsoworth, Learning *Under the Influence of Language and Literature.*

- **Read Aloud** is a *strategy* in which a teacher sets aside time to read *orally* to students on a consistent basis from texts above their *independent reading level* but at their *listening level*.

We read aloud to:

- **Start the day.**
- **Support reading and writing mini lessons.**
- **Support social studies and science curriculum.**
- **Support whole class book studies.**
- **Help students talk and think about texts.**

- **Introduce a new novel.**
- **Introduce a theme.**
- **Open up new worlds.**
- **Mentor students in the thinking processes that are present during proficient reading.**
- **Familiarize students with text structures and genres.**

What will teachers read aloud?

- Fiction
  - Novels
  - Short stories
  - Poetry
  - Picture books
  - Student authored writing

  High interest selections with absorbing plots, lively characters, and multiple layers of meaning!

- Magazine articles
- Newspaper articles
- Non-Fiction
  - Informational text
  - Biography
  - Autobiography
  - Speeches
  - Content area selections
  - Historical documents

Reading aloud to students allows the teacher to:

- Model fluent and expressive reading.
- Think aloud.
- Model the reading process.
- Review text structure.
- Facilitate comprehension to beginning (newcomer) and intermediate English Language Learners.
- Provide interactions with a variety of texts.
- Make connections.

Getting ready for the read aloud

■ Choose *high interest* selections that are at or above students' ***independent reading level*** and a̲t̲ their ***listening level***.

Independent Reading Level:

It is the level at which the student reads fluently with 90% (or higher) comprehension and 95% word recognition.

-Burns. P., & Roe. B. (2002). *Informal reading inventory.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

-Johns, J. (2005). *Basic reading inventory*. Debuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Listening Level:

- It is the level at which students adequately comprehend material that is read by the teacher.

  -Burns and Roe, 2002

- Is also referred to as capacity level or potential level.
- Can indicate potential for improvement as a reader.

Teacher preparation for read alouds

- Pre-read and re-read selection.
- Consider reading goals.
- Identify the process and strategy information (at work in the text).
- Anticipate where background knowledge needs to be built.

Teacher preparation for read alouds continued:

- Highlight places to stop, question, make predictions, or make connections.

- Write discussion questions before the lesson.

- Practice reading the selection using gestures and voice intonation.

- Plan before, during, and after reading activities to enhance comprehension.

Read aloud strategies: Before reading

- Open up conversation.
- Identify author, title, setting, characters, background.
- Activate prior knowledge or common knowledge.

- Picture walk (if illustrations enhance the selected genre or book)
- Story impressions
- Anticipation guide

Before reading
frontloading the meaning

- Purpose:
    - To interact with text prior to reading.
    - To provide conversations around the selection.
    - To construct meaning.
    - To draw comparisons.
    - To make inferences.
    - To predict.
    - To compare and contrast in groups.

Additional Participation Procedures:

1. **Distribute index cards with phrases, sentences, or single words excerpted from the selection.**
2. **Utilize the 6 + 1 Traits attributes to model the authors, voice, word choice, or sentence fluency.**
3. **Form small groups to discuss characters, plot, setting or authors purpose.**
4. **Record predictions in "We think" format.**
5. **Share "We think" statements.**

-Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read, what teachers can do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

"We think" Statements

- **"We think . . ."**
  - **this selection is about . . . (*predicting*).**

  - **this selection is like . . . (*comparing*).**

  - **this selection reminds us of. . . (*connecting to what they already know*).**

  - **this selection is sad, happy (emotions) because . . .**
    (*commenting, evaluating*).

Doing What's Good for Kids

- "The more we frontload students' knowledge of a text and help them become actively involved in constructing meaning prior to reading, the more engaged they are likely to be as they read the text."

-Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read, what teachers can do.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, p. 101.

Read aloud strategies: During reading

- On going interaction
- Response and dialogue
- Help students notice aspects of narrative/informational texts
- Sharing
- Questions
- Discussion
- Story map
- Graphic Organizers
- Think Aloud
- Metacognition (thinking about your thinking)

During reading strategy: *Think Aloud*

- Readers' verbal self-reports about their thinking processes.

  -Wade, 1990

- Technique in which students verbalize their thoughts as they read.

  -Keene & Zimmerman, 1997

- The Think-Aloud strategy helps readers to think about how they make meaning.

  -Beers, 2003

Think-Alouds help students to:

- Understand that reading should make sense.
- Move beyond literal decoding to comprehending.
- Learn a repertoire of strategies to use before, during, and after reading.
- Use particular strategies when reading varied texts (genres).
- Share ideas with peers and teachers.
- Learn, think, and reflect upon themselves and their reading.

What is a Think Aloud?

- **General Think Aloud Scenarios:**
  - **Teacher models think aloud; students listen.**
  - **Teacher thinks aloud; students assist.**
  - **Students think aloud as large group; teacher and other students monitor and assist.**
  - **Students think aloud in small groups while teacher and other students monitor and help.**
  - **Individual students think aloud in forum or Fishbowl; other students help.**
  - **Students think aloud individually; compare with others.**
  - **Teacher or students think aloud orally, in writing, on an overhead, with Post-it Notes, or in a journal; then share.**

-Wilhelm, J. (2001). *Improving comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies.*
New York: Scholastic.

Think Aloud

- As you the teacher or a student reads to an audience of listeners, they pause occasionally at strategic points to think orally about and model aloud the:

  🕮   **connections they are making;**

  🕮   **images they are creating/visualizing;**

  🕮   **problems with understanding that they are encountering; and ways they see of fixing those problems.**

Modeling a Think-Aloud #1

- Choose a high-interest selection/decide on a few strategies to highlight.

- State purpose for reading.

- Inform students that you will be thinking aloud and stopping to think through what is being read as the selection or passage is read aloud.

Modeling a Think-Aloud #2

- **Read text, stopping frequently to talk about how meaning is being made, analyzing the thinking process: "report out."**
- **List the cues and strategies used.**
- **Discuss strategy—ask students to identify other situations (connect to text, world, self) in which they could use these same strategies.**
- **Reinforce the Think Aloud with follow-up lessons and repeated think alouds.**

-Beers, 2003
-Wilhelm, 2001

Modeling Think-Alouds #3

The Think Aloud strategy can be used to model:

- **Predicting;**
- **Visualizing—creating mental images of information;**
- **Assessing and establishing prior knowledge;**
- **Making new connections;**
- **Summarizing;**
- **Synthesizing;**
- **Monitoring understanding; and**
- **Demonstrating the fix-up strategies for when students cannot make sense of what they read.**

-Keene, E., & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #1

- **Previewing Text:**
  - **"The title/author/pictures/captions/book design makes me think of . . ."**
  - **"The Title makes me think that this is going to be about a _____ ."**
  - **"The comments on the back cover lead me to believe that . . ."**
  - **"The photographs/headings/subheadings make me think that . . ."**

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #2

- **Make a prediction:**
  - **"I'm guessing that _____will happen next."**
  - **"I bet that . . ."**
  - **"I wonder if . . ."**
  - **"I imagine the author believes . . ."**
  - **"This reminds me of . . ."**
  - **"This could help me with . . ."**
  - **"Since this happened _____, then, I bet the next thing that is going to happen is . . ."**
  - **"This is like . . ."**

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #3

- **Clarify something/monitor comprehension:**
  - **"This is (not) making sense because . . ."**
  - **"This connects (or doesn't) to what I already know/already read because . . ."**
  - **"Now I understand _____."**
  - **"This makes sense now because . . ."**
  - **"No, I think it means. . . ."**
  - **"This part is really saying . . ."**
  - **"At first I thought ____, but now, I think . . ."**

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #4

- **Make a connection:**
  - **"This reminds me of . . ."**
  - **"This part is like . . ."**
  - **"This character _____ is like _____ because . . ."**
  - **"This is similar to . . ."**
  - **"I also (name something in the text that has also happened personally to student)."**
  - **"This character makes me think of . . ."**
  - **"The setting reminds me of . . ."**
  - **"This is helping me with/to think about . . ."**

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #5

- **Make a comment:**
  - **"This is good because . . ."**
  - **"This is hard because . . ."**
  - **"This is confusing . . ."**
  - **"I like the part where . . ."**
  - **"I don't like this part because . . ."**
  - **"My favorite part (so far) is . . ."**
  - **"I think that . . ."**
  - **"I imagine . . .I see . . ."**

Think-Aloud: Reporting out #6

- **Use fix-up strategies to address confusion and repair comprehension:**
  - **"Maybe I better . . ."**
  - **"Something I could do is . . ."**
  - **"Since I don't understand this word a good strategy would be to . . ."**
  - **"I need to revise my thinking by _____."**
  - **"What I thought this was about no longer makes sense to me because _____."**

Making Connections: please remember that……..

- Successful readers monitor their own thinking and make connections among text and their own experiences, other texts, and the world through writing and talking about the text before, during, and after reading.

- Model how YOU make connections during a THINK ALOUD.

After modeling the Think Aloud

- After modeling thinking aloud a few times and teaching the metacognitive report out/talk have students try it on a portion of text within small groups or with a partner.

- Provide ample opportunities for students to practice thinking.

- Give students a chance to reflect on HOW the think aloud has changed their reading habits.

Make connections from the selection

- To self,

- To the world,

- To other texts. . .

  before, during, and after reading.

Active teaching/explicit instruction:

- Modeling does not stop after the teacher has introduced a strategy.

- Explicit instruction teaches students strategic knowledge through actively modeling how to work through a task by setting goals, naming how particular strategies can be used, and by monitoring the strategies before, during, and after reading.

Metacognitive Awareness

- **Is being able to think about one's own thinking.**

- **Is an integral component of learning.**

- **Enables learners to assess their level of comprehension and adjust their strategies for greater success.**

- **Includes identifying and then using appropriate "fix-up" strategies to enhance comprehension.**

-Baker, L., & Brown, A.L. (1984a). Cognitive monitoring in reading.
      In J. Flood (Ed.), *Understanding reading comprehension* (21-44). Newark, DE:
      International Reading Association.

Read aloud strategies: After reading

- Respond and revisit text, poem article etc.
- Retell the story using time line format
- Summarize the story
- Sharing understanding and result of predictions

- **Story maps**
- **Graphic organizers**
- **Predictions check**
- **"Sketch-to-stretch" (drawing pictures of what is read to solidify understanding)**
- **Semantic Differential Scales**

Semantic Differential Scales
(a fancy way of saying comparison and contrast)

- Help students to:
  - **Make comparisons;**
  - **Make connections;**
  - **Recognize contrasts;**
  - **Draw conclusions; and**
  - **Discuss and explain their thinking.**

  (Example, using different versions of Cinderella books, compare characteristics of character, plot setting or good vs. evil. Compare characters in To Kill A Mockingbird to historical people or present day individuals)

Semantic Differential Scales
(comparison and contrast)

■ Procedure:

1. **Actively read a selection or listen to a read aloud. Teacher models for students.**
2. **Match traits/terms to character making connections to student experience, other texts, and the world.**
3. **Explain how opinion was reached.**
4. **Discuss and defend responses.**
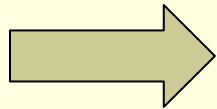5. **Provide evidence from selection.**

Semantic Differential Scales
(comparison and contrast)

- **Place opposite character traits (honest/dishonest) on opposite ends of a scale.**

- **Focus on character or plot development.**

- **Can be used to track character or plot changes.**

After Semantic Differential Scales

Students should:

- **Discuss their responses.**
- **Make Comparisons**
- **Create visual images.**
- **Stage debates.**
- **Write a response.**
- **Interview each other.**
- **Write editorials.**
- **Defend their responses**.

To that end……………..

- Listeners of read alouds increase their vocabulary foundation by hearing words in context.

- Listeners build listening and comprehension skills through discussion before during and after reading.

- Listeners hear your fluency, voice, drama and interest in the written word as it is spoken to them by caring teachers that enjoy the world of literature.

Oops, Almost forgot…
Read Alouds and More!!!!!

The International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. has an outstanding site for added year long support at school and home. Please go to this link to look for support of all literacy based activities Pre K –12th grade! The web address is:

http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/

Additional Credits………

- **Chicago Reading Initiative, 2007**

Reference books for relating to young audiences:

- **Read Alouds with Young Children, Robin Campbell, 2001**

- **Beyond Bedtime Stories, A Parents Guide to Promoting Reading, Writing, and Other Literacy Skills, Birth to 5, 2007**

- **Family Reading Night, Hutchins, Greenfeld and Epstein, 2008**

- **What Should I Read Aloud?, Nancy Anderson, 2007**

- **Interactive Read-Alouds, Linking Standards, Fluency and Comprehension, Linda Hoyt, 2007**

Additional Credits

Reference books for older audiences:

- **Book Club for Middle School, Raphael, Kehus,Damphousse, 2001**

- **Books that Don't Bore'em, Young Adult Books that speak to this generation, James Blasingame, 2007**

- **Literature is Back! Using the Best Books for Teaching Reader and Writer Across Genres, Fuhler, Walther, 2007**

- **Making the Match, The Right book for the Right Reader at the Right Time, Grades 4-12, Lesesne, 2003**

Thank you for all that you do for our students!!!
Laura Beltchenko

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"Learning for Life – Building Partnerships for Success"

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