
Interactive Read Aloud

WHAT IS IT?

The teacher chooses texts to read and reread to students introducing them to “book” language, which is different from speech and conversation. Daily reading of texts at students’ comprehension level, but above their reading level, provides students opportunities to practice using comprehension strategies. The teacher models proficient comprehension at a few strategic locations in the text by thinking out loud. Talking prompts are used to guide students to practice the same skills in conversations with peers. Stop and jot prompts guide students to practice independently. The prompts hold students accountable to speak or write in ways that lead to mastery of grade-level listening, speaking and comprehension standards. New skills are introduced in Read Aloud because teacher demonstrations, prompts, and feedback provide scaffolds for approximating proficient comprehension skills. Observation and assessment provide evidence of student learning and help a teacher determine when students are ready to apply skills independently. When this occurs the same skill(s) taught in read aloud are revisited in mini-lessons to prepare students to use the skill(s) in their independent reading. Read aloud is also used to expand student’s knowledge of vocabulary and concepts. It is used to teach genre elements and identify writing craft, and thus supports Writing Workshop as well as Reading Workshop.

WHY DO I DO IT?

A well-balanced literacy program should include opportunities for children to hear stories that they would be unable to read for themselves. The teacher demonstrates what it means to enjoy literacy and models important uses of literacy. When teachers read aloud students are able to enjoy literature with others. The purposes of a read-aloud component are to:

- Access texts that may be more difficult than students can read for themselves and thus build their knowledge of text structure and expand their listening vocabulary.
- Provide a good model of fluent and expressive reading.
- Provide opportunities for retelling and deeper comprehension.
- Expose children to a wide variety of story structures, genres, characters, and authors.
- Increase children’s knowledge of concepts and vocabulary.
- Demonstrate ways to derive word meanings from context by thinking aloud
- Promote an enjoyable experience with books.
- Promote oral language development.
- Expose English Language Learners to syntax in a meaningful context.

HOW DO I DO IT?

- Choose a book beyond what the students can read on their own and choose a specific teaching point such as:
 - First Read – enjoyment,
 - Second Read – introduce new genre or story structure, or new vocabulary,
 - Third Read -- demonstrate comprehension strategies.
- Make sure that students are seated comfortably and if applicable, able to see the illustrations.
- Establish a purpose for reading.
- Introduce book title, author, & illustrator.
- Encourage predictions from individual students.
- Give brief summary or gist of the story.
- Read in an expressive and dramatic voice.
- Use pausing and voice inflection to invite predictions at appropriate points in the story.
- Observe children’s behavior to monitor their understanding of the story.
- Rephrase textual language if it seems children do not understand the story.
- Stop at appropriate points in the story to encourage predictions and other comprehension strategies.
- Discuss and react to the story.
- Engage children in activities which build on and extend the story.
- Model comprehension strategies through think aloud.
- Use prompts to promote peer talk in which students practice the skills demonstrated in the think aloud.
- After students have practiced a skill orally, sometimes a “stop and jot” prompt is used to encourage practicing the skill independently by writing on a sticky note or in a reading notebook. As students write, additional prompts support students to extend their thinking. (e.g. I think this because....) Stop and jots can also be used as a quick assessment, as they provide a written record of student’s thinking.
- Over time balance the use of read alouds between focusing on a single comprehension strategy to build proficiency and orchestrating the use of multiple strategies in one reading (which is what proficient readers do).
- Create charts about read aloud books as references for reading or writing discussions.
- Place books read aloud in a special basket so students can find and reread them (when applicable).

Resources

Interactive Read Aloud – Examples of Think Aloud & Prompt
Interactive Read Aloud Structure
Interactive Read Aloud – Planning Guide
Interactive Read Aloud – Tips for Read Aloud

Standards Connection

- Model Fluent & Expressive Reading
Standard 2 – Getting The Meaning
(Accuracy & Fluency)
(Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting)
- Provide Opportunities for Retelling and Deeper Comprehension
Standard 2 – Getting The Meaning
(Comprehension)
- Exposure to a Wide Variety of Story Structures and Genres
Standard 1 – Reading Habits
(Frequency and Variety of Reading)
- Exposure to Syntax and the Meaning of Text
Standard 2 – Getting the Meaning
(Vocabulary)
Standard 2 – Getting the Meaning
(Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting)
- Increase Conceptual Vocabulary Knowledge
Standard 2 – getting The Meaning
(Vocabulary)
- Promote Enjoyable Experiences with Books
Standard 1 – Reading Habits
(Frequency and Variety of Reading)
- Promote Oral Language Development
Standard 1 – Reading Habits
(Discussing)

References

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