

ENGAGING LEARNERS



STEP 2: READ ALOUD/THINK ALOUD

Listening to a Fluent Adult Read Aloud

This resource is designed to support the transition to a Balanced Literacy instructional approach. “Listening to a fluent adult read aloud” is the focus of this resource. Readers of all ages reap benefits from listening to a fluent adult read. In fact, it’s probably one of the most important things that teachers and parents can do. The activity builds important foundational and key literacy skills like expressive reading and vocabulary acquisition. Even at the middle school and high school level, read alouds demonstrate that reading for pleasure and enjoyment is a rewarding activity.

Elementary Level

At the elementary level, the read aloud is an integral component of a literacy program. When we share books with children, we model how to act like fluent, engaged readers. By listening to a read aloud, younger students learn that they can make connections between what they hear and what they know. If we do a “think aloud” by talking through our thoughts and connections as we read, students learn from modeling how to make connections and draw even deeper meanings from texts. This contributes to the development of literacy skills.

Secondary Level

Students venture into more sophisticated texts in the older grades, and they develop higher-level comprehension and analysis abilities. Those skills are specifically taught and modeled by using those complex texts. A research-based, effective way to do this is with a “think aloud,” in which the reader’s thoughts and comments are verbalized while reading aloud. When teachers provide models for reading discipline-specific texts, students witness how a historian reads a primary source document, how a scientist reads an article from a research journal, and how a coach reads the rules of a game.

Self-Regulation Stages

The read aloud aligns with these student self-regulation stages:

Modeling and Observing

When the teacher reads aloud to students, they provide a model for intonation, connotation and fluency in reading.

Copying and Doing

As students listen to an adult read aloud, they will copy the teacher read aloud model. Specifically, they integrate intonation, connotation and fluency in reading as modeled by the teacher.

Cash, R. M. (2016). Self-regulation in the classroom: Helping students learn how to learn. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Look-Fors in an Interactive Read Aloud

- Preview the text
- Model making predictions
- Elicit prior knowledge
- Embed vocabulary support
- Ask purposeful questions; focus on how and why
- Amplify comprehension with think alouds
- Summarize the text to bring closure

Part of the Engaging Learners 3 Step Plan

STEP 2
HOW

Help your students achieve two years of measured literacy skill growth in just one year!

CONTACT US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

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SIX ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION

EACH STUDENT:



Listens to a fluent adult read



Reads something they choose



Talks with peers about reading



Writes about something personally meaningful



Reads accurately



Reads texts they understand

Prepare

- Draw from a wide variety of genres.
- Locate texts that are rich with high-level vocabulary, tap into readers' interests and reflect students' culture.
- Read and reread the book to yourself.
- Plan stop points and open-ended questions on post-its, along with ways for students to respond (stop-and-jot, stop-and-act, turn-and-talk, stop-and-think, etc.
- Select vocabulary to discuss.

Steps with Students

Preview

- Share the title, author and illustrator.
- Observe and discuss artwork.
- Read the back cover to hook students.
- Take a picture walk (no reading) or chapter title walk to make predictions.

Scaffold prior knowledge

- What is important for students to know about this book? Historical context? Organization of text? How can it connect to them?

Vocabulary

- Identify important vocabulary that should be addressed in advance.

Emphasize elements of the story or text

- Predict genre and anticipate the elements students might find in this genre.
- Introduce genre vocabulary (ie. characters, setting, plot, compare/contrast, chronology, cause/effect).

Ask purposeful questions and use think alouds

- Think of comprehension skills you are working on (inferring, recalling a sequence of events, etc.) and ask purposeful, high level questions to determine the depth of knowledge.
- Give opportunities to respond orally or in writing. Use open-ended questions to get students talking and thinking.

Summarize and share thoughts about the story or text

- Summarize the text to solidify comprehension.
- Ask students how they related to the story or text.

There is a difference between modeling fluent reading and interactive read alouds. Each has its place in the classroom.

References

Morrison, V., & Wlodarczyk, L. (2009). *Revisiting read aloud: Instructional strategies that encourage students' engagement with texts. The Reading Teacher*, 63(2), 110-118.

Santoro, L. E., Chard, D. J., Howard, L., & Baker, S. K. (2008). *Making the very most of classroom read alouds to promote comprehension and vocabulary. The Reading Teacher*, 61(5), 396-408.

Trelease, J. (2013). *The read-aloud handbook*. Penguin.