Shared Readings: Modeling Comprehension, Vocabulary, Text Structures, and Text Features for Older Readers

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Modeling reading is an important component of literacy instruction. This study suggests that expert teachers focus their modeling during shared reading on four categories: comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features.

Modeling is the primary way through which teachers can demonstrate for their students how readers can interact with texts (e.g., Taylor & Pearson, 2002). One of the most common forms of teacher modeling of text processing is shared reading. Beginning with the work of Holdaway (1979, 1983), who developed Big Books as a way for teachers to model while young students watched, the definition of *shared reading* has evolved from a focus on Big Books to a variety of classroom interactions in which the teacher and students share a text. Currently, *shared reading* is a generic term many teachers use to describe a range of classroom activities, including echo reading (students echoing the words aloud after the teacher reads), choral reading (students reading aloud while the teacher reads aloud), or cloze reading (teacher reads aloud and pauses periodically for students to fill in the missing word; e.g., Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001).

In their study of effective teachers in England, Topping and Ferguson(2005) noted, "Effective teachers were more likely to teach a range of literacy skills and knowledge at the word, sentence and text level through the context of a shared text" (p. 126). According to the Topping and Ferguson study, shared reading involved the teacher modeling reading by focusing on word- or sentence-level work. Alternatively, Short, Kane, and Peeling (2000) described shared and guided reading as allowing the teacher to "model and support the use of cues and self-monitoring reading strategies, which may include the use of pictures to help construct meaning, making predictions, rereading, segmenting and blending phonemes, and finding familiar word chunks to decode words" (p. 287). As can be seen in these two definitions, specifically identifying what constitutes a shared reading is difficult. Both definitions indicate that shared readings have potential with older readers and should not be limited to use with emergent readers.

Manning (2006) is concerned that new guidelines and policies have forced teachers to eliminate practices such as shared reading. This is troubling, especially given the evidence that shared reading positively affects student achievement. For example, Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, and Stoolmiller (2004) demonstrated the positive impact that shared readings had on kindergarten students' vocabulary. Ukrainetz, Cooney, Dyer, Kysar, and Harris (2000) showed how shared readings could be used to improve students' phonemic awareness. Davie and Kemp (2002) studied the language opportunities provided during shared reading and concluded that this approach elicited "significantly more utterances and more intelligible utterances than the facilitated play condition" in their sample of young Australian children with intellectual disabilities (p. 456).

Despite the evidence related to the effectiveness of shared reading, in his study of teachers in England, Fisher (2002) noted that while there should be opportunities for metacognitive modeling, teachers find it difficult to use these opportunities. The fact that teachers

found modeling difficult was also confirmed by Pressley and Afflerbach (1995). We were intrigued by this because many teachers with whom we work self-report the significance of their modeling during shared reading on the literacy development of their students. Because of this, we decided to investigate how teachers used shared reading and what patterns emerged in their application of this instructional strategy.

Methodology

Participants

The methodological design employed in this study mirrors our previous study on the practices of expert teachers in delivering interactive read-alouds (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). Letters were sent to 100 site administrators and peer coaches who worked in urban schools in a large county in the western part of the United States. All teacher and school names are pseudonyms. The letter introduced the research project and asked for nominations of current classroom teachers in grades 3–8 who had developed a level of expertise in shared reading. The letter defined an expert as someone who was often asked to model for other teachers, a teacher who regularly presented his or her instructional strategies in professional development forums, or one who was generally recognized for excellence in teaching. Seventy-four individuals responded, and they identified 67 expert teachers.

From this group of 67 nominated expert teachers, 25 teachers representing 25 schools were randomly selected for participation. An invitation letter was then sent to each of the 25 teachers inviting their participation. Follow-up phone calls were made and all 25 agreed to participate. Prior to conducting the observations, all of the researchers observed a teacher not selected for the research pool as she conducted a shared reading. We did so in order to establish inter-observer reliability among the researchers.

After establishing reliability among the researchers (.92), each expert teacher was observed on three different occasions (a total of 75 lessons were observed) by two of the researchers to identify the procedures used to implement a shared reading and modeled think-aloud. Two researchers participated in each observation in an attempt to ensure the reliability of the coded components. The observers agreed most of the time, with an overall interobserver reliability score of .88 for the 75 lessons.

Instruments

Observations. Teachers were observed while they conducted a shared reading and think-aloud with their students. When observing teacher experts, observational field notes were collected by the researchers in order to identify the components of a shared reading and think-aloud. The field notes focused on the ways in which teachers shared their thinking as they read.

Interviews. Once the observations were completed, a random stratified sample of six teachers was invited to participate in either individual or group interviews that were conducted by the researchers in an attempt to better understand the teacher's planning and practice. This sample included one teacher from each of the 3–8 grades. Before the interview, teachers were asked to identify the components of their shared readings. They were also asked to report on the frequency of shared readings in their classrooms and to determine a sequence of a shared reading they conducted regularly in their classrooms. During the interviews, participants and interviewers discussed the shared reading and think-aloud components that had been observed by the researchers. Each interview was fairly unstructured but focused on the following key points:

- The components of a typical shared reading
- The frequency of shared readings
- The process used to determine the focus of a shared reading
- A reaction to the four themes identified by the researchers

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed so the investigators could compare the responses from each participant.

Analysis

Data from the expert teacher observations were reviewed by the researchers for procedures that could be considered essential components of quality shared reading and think-alouds. Using a constant comparative method in which the researchers met weekly to review the components of shared readings that were observed, we identified four major areas of instruction (comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features). We assumed that comprehension would be one category but did not identify specific categories before analyzing data. In addition to identifying the

major areas of instruction, we coded the data for subtypes and highlighted examples of each. Each of the four major areas of instruction contained subtypes that became clear after multiple reviews of the data.

The interview data were used to extend the observational findings by providing teacher examples and rationales for specific behaviors. The interview data were coded using a recursive approach as we reread the transcripts and identified explanations and examples (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In addition, the interview was used as a member check. The researchers presented the findings from the observational data and asked the participants to assess whether the findings fit with their experiences. The member check served to confirm the major categories and to provide additional examples from the teachers.

Findings

The observational data clustered into four major categories. Each of these categories contained a number of elements. In order of frequency, teachers modeled their thinking using comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and text features. Figure 1 contains a list of each of these. In addition to the content of the modeling, in each of the 75 lessons we observed a number of commonly used instructional practices. For example, in every case students could see the text as the teacher read it aloud. Some teachers used a class set of books, others had photocopies of specific texts, and still others projected the text on a screen using an overhead or document camera. The teachers also modeled fluent reading and had clearly practiced the selections before reading them aloud.

These 25 teachers also modeled their own thinking and did not ask students individual questions. The focus clearly was on modeling thinking and not on asking students comprehension questions about the texts being read. That's not to say that students were silent observers during the shared reading. Students were often encouraged to talk with a partner, write a reflection, indicate agreement through unison responses such as fist-to-five (in which students hold up a number of fingers depending on how strongly they agree with a statement), and ask questions.

Reading Comprehension

The most common modeling during a shared reading focused on reading comprehension strategies such

as activating background, inferencing, summarizing, predicting, clarifying, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, synthesizing, evaluating, and connecting. For example, a third-grade teacher displayed *The Red Book* (Lehman, 2004) using a document camera and data projector. As she examined each of the wordless pages, she shared her thinking with students. When looking at the cover, she said,

> It seems to me that this boy is cold. I see his hat, scarf, jacket, and boots. But it's just all red on the cover so I don't have all of the clues I need to make a good inference or prediction. But I can tell that he's walking quickly, and when I add that to the clothing, I predict that it's cold where he is.

As she talked about each page, she described her thinking. Several pages into the book, she said,

> Oh, wow. Now that's a surprise. The boy on the island is looking through the book to the girl in the cold city *and* vice versa. I'm wondering if they'll ever get to meet, or if it will be like other books where the reader gets to meet people through books that you'll never really meet in person. I remember meeting Charlotte from *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952), and I'll never forget her advice. Have you met someone in a book that you'll never forget? Let's take a minute and talk with a partner about who we've met in books.

In a similar manner, a sixth-grade teacher modeled his comprehension strategies with students during a shared reading of *I Am the Mummy Heb-Nefert* (Bunting, 1997). Also using a document camera and projector, students followed along as he read. He paused periodically to share his thinking, such as when the author discussed a snake that was tightly coiled and sleeping inside the kitchen basket. He paused and said,

> I don't know a lot of people personally who'd want a snake sleeping in their kitchen, but I do know from the books we've read so far about ancient Egypt that they had a different relationship with snakes than we do. For example, I remember reading about the snake god *Apophis*. I also know from the photos and illustrations we've examined that snakes are all often thought of as protection. Making these connections helps me put this in context. Yes, I guess that people might have had snakes in their houses for protection and to keep the rodents away.

We asked the teachers why they modeled multiple ways of thinking about texts instead of just focusing on one strategy in each of their lessons. For example, we didn't see questioning used throughout the entire pe-

Figure 1
Shared Reading Components

Component	Definition	Subtypes
Comprehension	Strategic and active moves to understand the text	Activating background, inferencing, summarizing, predicting, clarifying, questioning, visualizing, monitoring, synthesizing, evaluating, and connecting
Vocabulary	Focus on solving an unknown word, not providing the definition of the word	1. Inside-the-word strategies: Word parts such as prefix, suffix, root, base, cognates, and word families 2. Outside-the-word strategies: Context clues 3. Use of resources: peers, dictionaries, Internet
Text structures	Structures used in presenting information that readers can use to predict the flow of information	1. Compare/contrast 2. Problem/solution 3. Cause/effect 4. Chronological/sequence/temporal 5. Descriptive 6. Story grammar (plot, setting, character, conflict, etc.)
Text features	Components of the text added to increase understanding or interest	Headings, captions, illustrations, bold or italic words, charts, tables, diagrams, glossary, index, or graphs

riod of shared reading. In response, one of the teachers noted,

> I used to do it that way—focus on one comprehension strategy at a time. But I think that's a problem. I don't really read that way, and if I don't read that way it's not really an authentic shared reading and think-aloud, right?

In response, another teacher commented,

> I hope you're not suggesting that we should model one at a time. [We assured her we were not.] For me, the shared reading is about consolidation. We need to show students how to incorporate these things automatically and not artificially stop and summarize or question or whatever. I use my guided instructional time to focus on specific strategies with specific students who need attention in a specific area.

Another teacher added, "Yes, I agree. And it's also about metacognition—knowing that you're doing this but not paying a lot of attention to it."

In response to the discussion about which comprehension strategies to use, the teachers who participated in the interview suggested that the strategies outlined in *Strategies That Work* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007) were effective in promoting comprehension. As one of them put it,

> If I could get all of my students to automatically use all of the strategies from *Strategies That Work*, I'd be a happy person. Of course, these strategies aren't everything we do in our modeling, or everything that a reader does to understand, but these will help students make sense when they really use them.

Vocabulary

In no case did the teachers in this study simply tell students what the words meant or call on students and ask them to define words. Instead, they modeled solving words using one of three systems: context clues, word parts, and resources. In the interviews they talked about the importance of teaching students to solve for unknown words. As one of them said, "I don't have time to tell students the meaning of every word they'll encounter. What we need to do, year after year, is help students develop ways to figure out words as they read."

Another teacher focused on the ways in which unknown words can be solved. In her words,

> I want students to have both "inside" and "outside" word strategies. I want them to be able to go outside of the word to context clues. I also want them to be able to go inside the word, using parts of words, to figure out or make educated guesses about the word's meaning.

Another teacher added, "And when these systems don't work, they need to know how to use resources to figure out the words."

Context Clues. Readers use a number of clues provided by the author to understand unknown words. Of course, most readers use context clues, or their "outside-the-word" strategies, automatically as they read (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1985). The teachers in this study modeled the use of context clues to figure out unknown or confusing words by focusing on embedded definitions, synonyms, antonyms, comparisons, contrasts, descriptions, and examples.

During her shared reading of *Coming on Home Soon* (Woodson, 2004), a third-grade teacher read the line "When she put her dress into the satchel, I held my breath" (p. 1) and said, "I'm not sure what a *satchel* is. I'll read this page and check out the picture. If I can't figure it out from this information, I'll ask someone for some help." A few sentences later, she read the line "Mama folded another dress and put it in the bag" (p. 1) and said,

> Another dress in the bag? She already put a dress in the satchel. I bet that a satchel is a special kind of bag, but it looks like a suitcase in the picture. I'm going to reread this page with the word *suitcase* in place of both *bag* and *satchel* to see if this makes sense.... Yes, it does. So there's another word for a *suitcase*—a special kind of bag for traveling.

A seventh-grade teacher, while reading from the history textbook, noted that the author had provided a "right there" meaning for the word. He said,

> Let me read that again. "Romans also learned from Greek science. A Greek doctor named Galen brought many medical ideas to Rome. For example, he emphasized the importance of anatomy, the study of body structure." I know that anatomy is the study of the structure of the body because the definition was embedded right there in the text. I'm always on the lookout for help the author provides. I'm also thinking about the connections between the Greeks and the Romans. To summarize what I've read so far in the chapter, the Romans benefited significantly from the learnings of the Greeks. On your interactive note pages, list a few things that the Romans learned from the Greeks and then talk with your group about these things.

Word Parts. In addition to context clues, there are a number of "inside-the-word" strategies students can use to figure out word meanings. These include prefixes, suffixes, roots, bases, word families, and cognates. Word part lessons are often quick and somewhat ex-

planatory. For example, a fourth-grade teacher reading from a textbook noted, "*Carnivore* reminds me of *carne* in Spanish meaning *meat*. It also reminds me of *carne asada*, a kind of meat, but that just makes me hungry. So, I use *carne* to remind me that carnivores eat meat."

A third-grade science teacher paused on the word *evaporation* while reading about the water cycle and said,

> I know how to remember this word. It has *vapor* in it and that means steam—like to vaporize. I also know that *–tion* is a process. So, evaporation is a process that allows the water to disappear into the steam or air.

A sixth-grade teacher, reading from a magazine article about war wounds, came across the word *malodorous* and said,

> Now here's a great word: *malodorous*. Say this wonderful word with me: *malodorous*. I know that the prefix *mal-* is bad and that *odor* has to do with smell and the suffix *-ous* means full of or having the characteristic of. So, putting it together, *malodorous* is being full of bad smells. Isn't that a delicious word? Now, instead of saying it's stinky or foul, you can say malodorous. The malodorous locker room, the malodorous streets filled with refuse, plants with malodorous bouquets. You try it— you use the word. [She paused while students talked together.] Just beautiful!

Resources. When outside-the-word and inside-the-word strategies fail, teachers modeled the use of resources. Most commonly, this involved asking another person. For example, when she came across the word *atmosphere* on a page with no context clues, the fifth-grade teacher said,

> I'm not sure about this word. I can't really get it from context. I'll try some resources. Well, there's no glossary to help me out. I guess I'll call Ms. Johnson next door and ask her if she knows what this word really means.

While reading *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam* (Myers, 2002), a seventh-grade teacher stopped on the page that read, "Two clicks away, there are flashes of gunfire. Two clicks is the distance of my enemy" (p. 15). She then paused and said,

> I've heard of clicks before but mostly about the Internet, you know—click on this page and stuff. I think I want to know what this is, and I don't have any context clues to use to figure it out. I'm going to look it up really quick.

Turning to the computer, the teacher types "measurement click" into the search engine while she says, "I

know that it's a measurement because the author says distance, so I guess I did have a little bit of context help." The teacher selects a couple of websites that define *click*, including The History Channel, which notes that *click* has two common definitions: one click = one kilometer or the adjustments on the sight of a weapon for elevation and wind. She then says, "So the enemy is about two kilometers away. That's not too far, but far enough to feel a bit safer. I'll reread this page with my new understanding."

In the interview, we asked about the difference between vocabulary instruction and vocabulary modeling. One of the teachers noted,

> I know that students will learn a lot of words from reading, so I have them reading all of the time. I also know that they will learn to solve unknown words when they're taught how to do this. They need the mental models to figure out how to do this.

A fourth-grade teacher added,

> I do a lot of vocabulary instruction—direct instruction— during the day. I think it's critical for learning specific words and the families of those words. But that's not getting them to figure out words while they're reading. That's what I have to do during the shared reading. I have to set an example and show them *how* to solve words in addition to knowing a lot of words.

We also asked about the strategy of "skip it," which has been printed on several commercially available classroom posters. We wanted to know why none of the teachers modeled this strategy despite the fact that it was listed on classroom posters. Shocked, one of the teachers said,

> Are you kidding me? I would *never* model something that I didn't want students to use and use. I know that what I model will be overgeneralized by students. That's a good thing when they're learning about visualizing and predicting. It would be terrible if they overgeneralized skip it! I only use the skip it strategy when I'm working with students individually or in small groups. Then I can control their use of this, and I can talk with them about when this works and when it doesn't work.

Another teacher responded,

> Can you imagine me giving permission to my struggling readers to just skip it? I'd rather make sure that they were reading books they can read so that they can periodically solve unknown words like I do. If they are spending too much time solving unknown words, the book is too hard and they need to get a new one.

Text Structures

One of the ways that readers organize information as they read is to pay attention to the text structures that authors use. Informational texts are commonly organized into compare/contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect, chronological/sequence/temporal, and descriptive. Narrative texts also have a common structure. Narrative texts use a story grammar (setting, plot, characters, conflict, etc.). Teachers regularly commented on the text structures and explained to students why this information was helpful.

For example, during a shared reading of an excerpt of *The Prince* by Niccolo Machiavelli, the seventh-grade teacher noted the text structure as a way to organize information. In his words,

> I think that Machiavelli is comparing and contrasting here. I'm thinking that he wants me to understand the difference in the two types of fighting he discusses. I see here, where he says, "You should consider then, that there are two ways of fight, one with laws and the other with force." I think he's setting up to compare and contrast these two ways. This leads me to organize my thinking into categories that I can use to help me remember what Machiavelli believes.

A fifth-grade teacher also noted the author's use of text structure while reading about circulating blood. She said,

> So I'm seeing this as a process that occurs in a specific sequence. It reminds me of the water cycle we learned about and how that is also a process. So the author tells me about this in order. I understand from the text structure that blood circulates through the heart chambers, lungs, body, and then back again. I see that he's going to describe how carbon dioxide (CO_2) and oxygen (O_2) are exchanged in the lungs and tissues, and I bet that will be a process as well. This whole section is about the processes used by living things. Now that I know it will be a process, I'll get my notes ready so that I can record the major steps of the process.

In her shared reading of a narrative text, a fourth-grade teacher reading *Shiloh* (Naylor, 1991) paused and said,

> I see our character changing. Marty has lied before, and he's lying again. But the difference is he *knows* it. I think that when he realizes this, he's changing. Here's what he says, let me read it again. "Funny how one lie leads to another and before you know it, your whole life can be a lie" (p. 60). I think Marty realizes that his whole life could change and that he'll think about this before he lies again.

In a similar manner, a sixth-grade teacher noticed a plot twist in the book *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) and shared her thinking with students. In her words,

> Now here's a plot twist. Esperanza could see a body in the back of a wagon, and Miguel has his head down and he's crying. I think that this is a really important change in the plot. I think so because all of the main characters we've met are there and I notice that the mood has changed. The author isn't using such happy words any more. I'm thinking that there is something bad about to happen—worse than the death. I know that authors often provide readers hints—foreshadowing—about future events or twists in the plot.

In discussing text structures during the interviews, we were reminded of signal words that authors use. As one of the teachers said,

> When there are signal words, I notice them and talk about them. However, as texts become more sophisticated, I see fewer and fewer signal words. Instead, they are implied and readers have to intuit the structure. I think it's even more important to model thinking when the signal words are absent because that's when the reader is more challenged.

Another teacher commented that her attention to text structures developed as a result of her frustration with graphic organizers:

> I was trying to have students complete graphic organizers after they had read something. I realized that they didn't know what to record or which tool to use. I could have just copied the correct graphic organizer, but then they wouldn't learn about the text. I now explain the text structure and how I know which structure the author has used. Then I model a sample graphic organizer to collect my information. My students have learned to do this on their own—they determine which graphic organizers to use because they're looking for the implicit structure of the text.

Text Features

There are a number of text features that readers use to determine meaning and importance in texts, including headings, captions, illustrations, boldface words, graphs, diagrams, glossaries, and so on. Unfortunately, there are a number of students who do not understand how to use these text features (Barton, 1997). In discussing text features, one of the teachers noted, "In some cases, the text features may even confuse the reader." Another commented,

> At a minimum, students need to know when to attend to the text features. For example, when should they read

the graph? Before reading the text, while reading the text, or after reading the text? The answer is, It depends. And any time that's the answer—students need a lot of modeling and practice.

And another teacher said, "I used to skip all of the features included in the text, but then I realized those weren't just decorations. They were there to aid comprehension. I decided I better teach students how to use the features."

As part of an investigation of disasters, a fifth-grade teacher shared the book *Disaster! Catastrophes That Shook the World* (Bonson & Platt, 1997). In talking about the page on the *Titanic*, the teacher noted the figure that discussed the number of people lost versus saved and how this information was presented by class. He said,

> This figure is very interesting to me. The author uses the term *lost* really to mean they died. I think that's a better word for a figure like this. *Lost* seems more respectful of the families. For the passengers in first class, 130 were lost and 199 were saved. So, about 60% of the first-class passengers were saved. I can compare that with the information for third class: 536 were lost and 174 were saved. That's about 25%. What a difference. But then I look at the information for the crew. They seem to have had it the worst because so many of them died. Of the crew, 685 were lost and 214 were saved. That's almost just about 25% so I guess that I was wrong: The crew didn't have it much worse than the third class, but there were just a lot more of them.

An eighth-grade teacher, reading from *We Rode the Orphan Trains* (Warren, 2001), read a passage and then paused and said,

> I can tell from the change in the font and the indent that this is a quote—this is what the person was really saying. The author doesn't need to use quote marks because this is a very long quote and she's used the text feature to tell me. Wow! What a quote: "I had no desire to ever meet my birth mother.... My adoptive parents are the ones who wanted and loved me. If I go to heaven, my eyes will search only for them. They gave me life." (p. 5). This quote is from Lorraine Williams—there I see a picture of her as a child. I also see that she got to meet First Lady Barbara Bush. I know that from the picture—I know what Barbara Bush looks like—and from the caption under the picture, which gives me more information. Mrs. Williams got to meet the First Lady because she worked to promote literacy. I know that literacy is very important to Mrs. Bush, so I'm not surprised by their meeting.

Text features were also noted in textbooks. A third-grade teacher, while reading from the social studies

text, paused to discuss the highlighted words and what that told her. A fourth-grade teacher noted the way that the headings helped her understand what the author would describe next. She informed the class,

> When I see headings like these, I think about what I already know and what I expect the author to tell me. I also know that I can use the headings to find specific information when I need to later on. And I also know that the headings can help me arrange my notes. The headings are often the main point of the text, which I can use to organize my thinking.

In discussing text features during the interviews, we were reminded of the connection between reading and writing when one of the teachers said,

> I teach text features, in part, because I want my students to use them in their writing. If I'm really clear about how I use text features as a reader, my students will incorporate these into their own writing knowing that I'm going to read their papers. They begin to see the connections between reading like a writer and writing like a reader. It's very powerful.

Discussion

The teachers in this study were observed using a number of common approaches for modeling, or explaining, reading. As Duffy (2003) has noted, explaining reading is an important component of literacy instruction. The expert teachers in this study reported that modeling, as expressed through shared reading, was a daily occurrence. Of course the model must be followed by opportunities to practice and apply skills. What this study contributes is an analysis of the specific behaviors that expert teachers use during modeling. It is important to note that they did not use all four components in each of their shared reading lessons. Some lessons focused more on vocabulary, for example, while others focused more on comprehension. In analyzing the 75 observations, we realized that no shared reading lesson focused solely on one of the four factors and that each of the 25 teachers demonstrated each of the four factors at some point in the three observations. We find this confirming of the applicability of the findings from this study. In addition, based on the discussions with the teachers we interviewed, several cautions regarding teacher modeling with shared reading are in order.

First, teacher modeling through shared reading should be based on an identified purpose. Teachers clearly knew why they had selected a particular piece of text and what they could use it for. We regularly observed texts with sticky notes attached to them that teachers used for their modeling. When we asked about this, one of the teachers said,

> Purpose is everything. I know why I'm reading something and explaining it to my students, and I let them in on that. I also know that they'll have opportunities to use what I've modeled during guided reading, centers, and during their independent reading.

Second, teacher modeling through shared reading should not lengthen the amount of time that students spend in whole-class instruction. As one of the teachers noted,

> I tried to help another teacher improve her shared readings, but she didn't take anything away. She still had her students participate in the modeling phase, but then she felt the need to explain and question students. As a result, the amount of time students spent in whole class increased and the amount of time they spent in small-group instruction decreased. Overall, I'm not sure that did anything positive.

The experts we observed averaged 10–14 minutes of shared reading. As they finished the shared reading, they often provided students with a discussion or writing prompt and then the class made a transition into small-group or collaborative learning.

Third, shared readings should not be used to "curricularize comprehension." The expert teachers we observed did not focus on one aspect of modeling or one comprehension strategy. This is consistent with the recommendations of Pressley (2002) who expressed concerns about focusing on one comprehension strategy at a time. One of the teachers we interviewed explained that "the text will guide you" to determine what needs to be shared and explained. Another teacher said,

> When you look at a piece of text through the lens of shared reading, you notice different things. You notice things that jump out and beg to be talked about—an illustration that does not match the words on the page, a word that is a perfect example of multiple meanings, or some descriptive language that simply must be visualized.

Still another teacher noted that she matched the shared readings with the needs of the class and the grade-level content standards.

Finally, we were reminded that modeling thinking is critical and yet difficult. As one teacher said,

I know that my principal nominated me, but I'm frustrated. Most everyone else doesn't do this. They ask kids a lot of questions, as if that will make them better readers. I wonder if some of my colleagues don't know what they think when they read because they're just good at it. It takes a lot to slow down enough to pay attention to what your brain is doing and then learn to explain it to children.

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