



Chapter 3

Read-Alouds and Shared Readings: Not Just for Elementary Anymore

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The 11th-grade U.S. history classroom is shrouded in darkness, lit only by the soft glow of two colonial-style lanterns. Students have been studying the American Revolution and its effect around the world. They lean in closer as the teacher begins a dramatic reading of *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* (Longfellow, 1860/2001). “Listen, my children, and you shall hear. . .” (p. 3). Richly detailed illustrations by Christopher Bing appear on the projector as the reading continues. The two lanterns are lifted high as the poem describes patriot Robert Newman’s ascent to the belfry of the Old North Church to signal Paul Revere of the British approach across the Charles River. “For, borne on the night-wind of the Past, through all our history, to the last, in the hour of darkness and peril and need, the people will waken to listen and hear. . .” As the poem concludes, fifteen-year-old Terrell exclaims, “That’s the way all poems should be!”

Interest in the practice of read-alouds and shared readings in secondary content area classrooms has increased in the last decade. At one time, public performance of text in high school classrooms was limited to oratory exercises of excerpts from the English canon. It was rare to find narrative or expository text used in content area classrooms, and, in fact, there was some resistance to instruction of any reading strategies in content area classrooms (Price, 1978; Rieck, 1977; Smith & Otto, 1969). However, deeper understandings of the connections between reading and learning have caused content area teachers to reexamine sound literacy practices in their classrooms (McKenna & Robinson, 1990; Ornstein, 1994).

Two literacy practices borrowed from developmental reading theory and customized for secondary classrooms are read-alouds and shared reading. A *read-aloud* is a text or passage selected by the teacher to read publicly to a large or small group of students. A primary purpose for the read-aloud selection is to focus on the content of the text. A *shared reading* is a text or passage that is jointly shared by teacher and student, but is read aloud by the teacher. In shared readings, the students can also

In both read-alouds and shared reading, the reading is done by the teacher, not the students.

see the text, and it is usually chosen both for its content and to draw attention to a particular text feature or comprehension strategy. Let's take a closer look at each of these literacy practices.

Read-Alouds

The practice of reading aloud in public dates to the dawn of written language. Throughout history, town criers shared local news, religious orders proclaimed scriptures, and lectors read classical works and newspapers to Cuban cigar factory workers, paid for by the laborers themselves (Manguel, 1996). Even in widely literate societies, the act of being read to continues to enthrall. Demand for audio books rose 75% between 1995 and 1999, and some estimate that "for every ten print books sold, one audio program is sold" (Block, 1999).

A large body of evidence suggests that being read to by an adult enhances literacy development. For example, young children who are read to are more likely to enter school with higher literacy skills (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). Likewise, a longitudinal study of students identified as precocious readers (before age 6) revealed that they were more likely to be read to by their parents (Durkin, 1974–1975). Correlational studies demonstrate an association between exposure to read-alouds and positive motivation to read (Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Morrow & Young, 1997). Conversely, Rosow's (1988) interviews with illiterate adults demonstrated the negative effects when read-alouds are not available. Her data revealed that none of the interviewed adults had any recollection of being read to as a child.

Do you remember being read to as a child? Who read to you?

Effectiveness of Read-Alouds

While read-alouds have been shown to be effective for young children's literacy development, they can also be used to motivate older, reluctant readers (Beckman, 1986; Erickson, 1996). In a study of 1,700 adolescents, Herrold, Stanchfield, and Serabian (1989) found positive changes in attitude toward reading among students who were read to by their teacher on a daily basis. Likewise, a survey of 1,765 adolescents conducted more than a decade later reported that 62% of the participants identified teacher read-alouds as a favorite literacy activity (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). Students themselves have reported that a preferred instructional practice is having teachers read aloud portions of text to introduce new readings and promote interest (Worthy, 2002). It appears that students appreciate the read-aloud event as an opportunity to share the teacher's enthusiasm and interest in the topic.

Another advantage to the use of read-alouds is the level of text complexity that can be utilized. When text is read aloud by the teacher, students with reading difficulties can access books that might otherwise be too difficult for them to read independently. This is essential in content area classrooms. Text complexity rises rapidly during the secondary school years and students who have reading difficulties often find themselves unable to comprehend the information in content area books. A vicious cycle then begins when these students fail to assimilate the information, further impacting their ability to use it as background information for new content. Thus, the gap continues to widen as students with reading difficulties fall further behind their

classmates. It comes as no surprise that student interest and attitudes toward reading also decline precipitously after sixth grade coinciding with the increased reading demand in their content area classes.

While read-alouds alone cannot compensate for these gaps, they can introduce important texts that some students might not otherwise be able to read and comprehend independently. Students without reading difficulties are also likely to benefit. A recent empirical analysis of secondary textbooks revealed that many students were unsure about their comprehension of the readings (Wang, 1996). Read-alouds are a viable strategy for clarifying difficult text.

The Benefits for English Language Learners

English language learners benefit from exposure to read-alouds as well. Adolescents acquiring a new language are subjected to a bewildering array of social, pragmatic, and academic language patterns (Nieto, 1992). Read-alouds create opportunities for the teacher to utilize multiple pathways to promote understanding of the content of the text, including intonation, facial expressions, and gestures (Cummins, 1980).

Read-alouds also support language acquisition for English language learners because it provides fluent language role models (Amer, 1997). The text choice for the read-aloud is also crucial for English language learners. Selection of books that utilize engaging illustrations or photographs adds another dimension to assist students in creating new schema (Early & Tang, 1991).

Planning for Read-Alouds in Secondary Classrooms

The successful use of read-alouds in secondary content area classrooms has been well documented. It has been shown to be effective in foreign language instruction (Richardson, 1997–1998), social studies (Irvin, Lunstrum, Lynch-Brown, & Shepard, 1995), and mathematics (Richardson & Gross, 1997). However, text selection can also be daunting for teachers unfamiliar with the range of possibilities associated with their discipline. It is important to note that read-alouds in content area need not be confined to narrative text, or unrelated to the topic of study. In other words, we wouldn't advise the algebra teacher to read from *Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer, 1400/1985)! However, that same algebra teacher might be interested in a read-aloud from *The Number Devil* (Enzensberger, 1998) detailing the intricacies of irrational numbers, referred to by the title character as “unreasonable numbers.” Several excellent teacher resources on text selection are available, including *Read All About It!* (Trelease, 1993) and *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (Trelease, 2002). The author of these books has compiled an array of short stories, poems, and newspaper articles suitable for a number of classroom applications. In addition, *Read It Aloud!* (Richardson, 2000) is organized by content areas, including mathematics, geography, music, physical education, and social studies.

Each chapter contains examples of readings and recommendations for connecting the texts to the concepts being taught. Figure 3.1 lists picture books that are particularly well-suited for secondary content classrooms.

There are several elements to consider in planning and delivering read-alouds to secondary students. These items also serve as indicators of effective instructional

Teachers should monitor student interest in reading and topics associated with the content. This can be accomplished using an interest survey asking students about their reading preferences.

This also helps students meet and exceed the English language arts standards for listening.

Regardless of where you find your readings, make sure it is connected to the content you are teaching.

W Figure 3.1 List of Picture Books Across Content Areas

Picture Books for English

Narrative:

Johnson, D. B. (2002). *Henry builds a cabin*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Martin, J. (1998). *The rough-face girl*. New York: Putnam & Grosset.

Rohmann, E. (1994). *Time flies*. New York: Scholastic.

Scieszka, J. (1994). *The book that Jack wrote*. New York: Viking.

David, L. (1999). *Beetle boy*. New York: Bt Bound.

Non-narrative:

Aliki. (1999). *William Shakespeare and the Globe*. New York: HarperCollins.

Lincoln, A. (1995). *The Gettysburg address*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Thayer, E. L., & Bing, C. (2000). *Casey at the bat: A ballad of the republic sung in the year 1888*. New York: Handprint Books.

Spier, P. (1973). *The Star-Spangled Banner*. New York: Yearling.

Picture Books for Social Studies

Narrative

Cherry, L. (1993). *The great kapok tree*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace.

Hesse, K. (Scholastic). *Come on, rain!* New York: Scholastic.

Wiesner, D. (1991). *Tuesday*. New York: Clarion.

Bunting, E. (1989). *Terrible things*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

Siebert, D. (1988). *Mojave*. New York: HarperCollins.

Tsuchiya, Y. (1988). *Faithful elephants: A true story of animals, people, and war*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Yin. (2001). *Coolies*. New York: Philomel.

Non-narrative

Hart, T. (1994). *Antarctic diary*. New York: Macmillan-McGraw Hill.

Martin, (1998). *Snowflake Bentley*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sis, P. (1996). *Starry messenger: Galileo Galilei*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Abells, C. B. (1983). *The children we remember*. New York: Greenwillow.

Bridges, R. (1999). *Through my eyes*. New York: Scholastic.

Lincoln, A. (1998). *The Gettysburg address*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Smith, D. J. (2002). *If the world were a village: A book about the world's people*. Toronto, Canada: Kids Can Press.

Picture Books for Mathematics

Narrative

Demi. (1997). *One grain of rice*. New York: Scholastic.

Friedman, A. (1994). *The king's commissioners*. New York: Scholastic.

Neuschwander, C. (1999). *Sir Cumference and the dragon of Pi*. New York: Scholastic.

Scieszka, J. (1995). *Math curse*. New York: Viking.

Turner, P. (1999). *Among the odds and the evens*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux.

Non-narrative

Pappas, T. (1993). *Fractals, googles, and other mathematical tales*. San Carlos, CA: Wide World Publishing/Tetra.

Parker, S. (1995). *Isaac Newton and gravity*. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House.

Picture Books in Elective Courses

Narrative

Krull, K. (2000). *Wilma unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph became the world's fastest woman*. New York: Voyager.

Laden, N. (1998). *When Pigasso met Mootise*. San Francisco: Chronicle.

Shafer, A. C. (2002). *The fantastic journey of Pieter Bruegel*. New York: Scholastic.

Taylor, C. (1992). *The house that crack built*. San Francisco: Chronicle.

Weatherford, C. B. (2000). *The sound that jazz makes*. New York: Walker.

Non-narrative

Krull, K. (1993). *The lives of the musicians: Good times, bad times (and what the neighbors thought)*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Roalf, P. (1992). *Looking at paintings: Dancers*. New York: Hyperion.

W Figure 3.2 Read-Aloud Rubric for Self-Assessment

	Successfully implemented	Moderately successful	Just getting started	Not evident
<i>Text chosen appropriate for students' interests and level</i>				
<i>Selection has been previewed and practiced</i>				
<i>Clear purpose established</i>				
<i>Teacher provides a fluent reading model</i>				
<i>Students are engaged in listening</i>				
<i>Teacher stops periodically and questions thoughtfully to enhance focus (literal, interpretive, and evaluative)</i>				
<i>Students engaged in discussion</i>				
<i>Connections to reading and writing</i>				
Comments:				

practice for administrative observations. A self-assessment rubric of these same elements appears in Figure 3.2.

1. *Select readings appropriate to content, students' emotional and social development, and interests.* Read-alouds can be especially useful for activating background knowledge and connecting to student experiences.
2. *Practice the selection.* You wouldn't go on stage without rehearsing, would you? Think of the read-aloud as a performance. Rehearsal allows you to make decisions about inflection, rate, and pitch.

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See chapter 2 for more information on using anticipatory activities.

See chapter 4 for more information on questioning strategies.

See chapter 8 for more ideas on using writing to learn.

The concept behind gradual release of responsibility is that students experience scaffolded instruction that moves them from teacher-modeled activities to student-directed work.

3. Model fluent oral reading. In addition to exposure to content information, a read-aloud also serves as a place for students to hear fluent oral reading. Reading acquisition for students with reading difficulties, as well as some English language learners, can be inhibited by their own disfluent reading.

4. Engage students and hook them into listening to the text. Creating anticipation for the reading, as the teacher did in the *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* scenario, can activate student interest and increase meaning. When appropriate, pair read-alouds with other supporting materials such as props, diagrams, manipulatives, or illustrations.

5. Stop periodically to ask questions. Talk within the text enhances student understanding. Plan questions for critical thinking in advance and write them on a sticky note to remind you. Don't rely only on "constrained questions" (Beck & McKeown, 2001) that can be answered in a few words. For example, "What do you believe was the author's purpose for writing this story?" allows for a more detailed response than "Where did the story take place?" Create inferential questions that invite connections beyond the text as well.

6. Engage students in book discussions. This is related to the questioning that is done during the reading. Choose read-alouds that foster further discussion once the reading is complete. Perhaps you may ask students why you chose this particular reading, or how it relates to the current topic of study.

7. Make explicit connections to students' independent reading and writing. A read-aloud should relate directly to the content—otherwise, it might have limited applicability in the curriculum. As well, the read-aloud should also connect to other literacy experiences. For instance, the end of a read-aloud event might signal an ideal time to invite students to write a response. Questions raised through the discussion following the reading might also prompt further research and outside reading by students.

Shared Reading

In addition to read-alouds, teachers also extend literacy experiences through shared reading. Shared reading is the practice of reading collaboratively with students. Unlike read-alouds, where only the teacher can see the text, an important feature of a shared reading experience is that students can follow along silently as the teacher reads aloud. Another difference is that in shared reading there is a lesson specifically related to a comprehension strategy, text feature, or reading behavior. As with read-alouds, the practice of shared reading has its roots in emergent literacy practices for young children (Holdaway, 1982).

Shared reading serves as an instructional bridge between the teacher-directed read-aloud and student-directed independent reading. While read-alouds are teacher-controlled and independent reading is student-controlled, these literacy activities provide little opportunity for teacher and students to alternatively take and relinquish the lead. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) proposed a model for comprehension instruction called the gradual release of responsibility. They suggest that using guided practice as a method for instruction allows students to attempt new strategies for eventual use in their own reading. Thus, through instructional practices like shared reading, teachers move from modeling in read-alouds to applying strategies in independent reading.

Shared reading is grounded in the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky's zones of proximal development (1978). This allows for scaffolding of information to extend learning through guided instruction. Vygotsky theorized that when students receive support just beyond what they can accomplish independently, they learn new skills and concepts. He defined the zone as

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with peers. (p. 86)

The scaffolded instruction in shared reading extends students' learning. In addition, the learner receives immediate feedback and further prompts to arrive at solutions (Tharp & Gallimore, 1989). While students may not be able to initiate a new strategy alone, they can easily apply one with guidance, further advancing their zone of proximal development.

Thus, shared reading events allow teachers to address comprehension strategies through modeling. For instance, teachers who work with English language learners and students with reading difficulties recognize the power of a daily fluent reading model (Early, 1990). This allows teachers to model prosody (the use of rate, pitch, inflection, and tone) to demonstrate subtle language techniques that influence meaning (Pynte & Prieur, 1996). While read-alouds also present opportunities for modeling prosody, they lack the visual prompts that signal fluent readers. Because students can see the text in shared reading, they can associate the punctuation, layout, spacing, phrase boundaries, and other text cues used by the teacher to make decisions about how the piece should be read and interpreted. Perhaps the most powerful endorsement of this effect comes from students. A survey of 600 adolescents revealed that they attributed their literacy achievement growth to shared reading (Allen, 2001).

Implementing Shared Reading

As with all instruction, practical application is as important as the theoretical underpinning. One of the first decisions teachers make in shared reading is how students will interact with the reading. Teachers employ several methods to share the text with students, such as using an overhead projector to display enlarged print on a screen.

This is particularly convenient with use of textbook passages, graphs, or charts. This technique also allows the teacher to highlight words or phrases using overhead markers. At other times, photocopies of a passage can be distributed to each student, with the advantage of encouraging students to become more actively involved with the reading, including making notations directly on the paper. While marking passages in a school textbook is usually discouraged for obvious reasons, this method provides students with guided practice for interacting with text. When teachers construct participatory approaches to text, they assist their students in moving away from ineffective beliefs about reading as a passive experience (Brown, Palinscar, & Armbruster, 1994; Wade & Moje, 2000).

Selecting Texts for Shared Reading

Text choice is equally important in shared reading, and it differs on several levels from text choice for read-alouds. Recall that a primary purpose for read-alouds is to build background knowledge, often through ancillary text that might otherwise be above the students' independent reading level. In shared reading, teachers focus on a comprehension

Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, also theorized that humans learn when they transfer information to inner speech.

E-books and audio books can be used together to share text with a laptop and data projector while being read by a professional reader.

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strategy or a text feature that enables the learner to understand the content of the text. Therefore, the text selected should be at the independent or instructional level of the students. It should also offer the teacher an opportunity to discuss the identified strategy. Examples of comprehension strategies suitable for shared reading instruction include:

- inferencing,
- summarizing,
- self-questioning and self-monitoring,
- text structures (e.g., cause and effect, sequence, problem-solution),
- text features (e.g., headings and subheadings, captions, directions), and
- interpreting visual representations (charts, graphs, diagrams).

Notice that you are using all of these skills as you read this text.

Notice that these comprehension strategies are not the exclusive domain of any one content area; rather, they transcend reading for meaning in any discipline, with any text.

Want to discuss inferencing? Then choose a text that implies attitudes or opinions without stating them outright. Text features and interpretation of visual representations are easily modeled using the course textbook. Self-questioning and self-monitoring (that small insistent voice inside every fluent reader's head that keeps asking, "does this make sense?") can be demonstrated through the teacher's own questions as a reading is shared. If the word "ancillary" in the previous paragraph was a little vague to you (and you noticed) then you are self-monitoring!

As with read-alouds, we find that a self-assessment rubric can be useful for organizing lessons (see Figure 3.3). Some of the elements on this rubric overlap with the features of the read-aloud (for instance, practicing the reading), so we will focus on the unique elements of the shared reading:

1. *Choose text that is appropriate for the purpose.* In the case of shared readings, not only should the text be associated with the content of the class, but it should also provide clear illustrations of the strategy or reading behavior being modeled. For example, a passage about how the biceps muscle of the arm contracts to move a lever (the radius) on a fulcrum (the elbow) is an excellent example of cause-and-effect text, especially if it contains signal words like *accordingly*, *therefore*, *as a result*, or *since*.
2. *Make the purpose of the reading explicit.* If you are modeling a particular strategy, tell your students what it is before you read. Remind them each time you model the strategy.
3. *Decide how the text will be accessible to all students.* If you are projecting the reading on the overhead, make sure the font is large enough for those in the back row to read.
4. *Scaffold, scaffold, scaffold.* This is the foundation of shared reading. Don't assume that they "got it"—teach the strategy or reading behavior explicitly and provide multiple examples. Then have them do it with you during the course of the reading. This leads to the last element of a shared reading. . .
5. *Make sure students are aware of what they are supposed to do with the new knowledge.* A frustration of teachers is that students ask questions like, "Is this going to be on the test?" when the teacher really wanted them to see the usefulness and practicality of what they had been taught. Our experience has been that when students ask questions like this, it is because we have not made it clear what they should

We've all attended a university class or professional conference where the presenter put a 12-point font overhead on the screen and then said, "I know you can't read this but. . ." Remember how frustrating that was? Don't do this to your students!

W Figure 3.3 Shared Reading Rubric for Self-Assessment

	Successfully implemented	Moderately successful	Just getting started	Not evident
<i>Choice of text is appropriate for purpose</i>				
<i>Selection has been previewed and practiced</i>				
<i>Purpose of reading made explicit and is reflective of student needs</i>				
<i>Text visible to students</i>				
<i>Model provided of fluent reader</i>				
<i>Lesson design reflects scaffolding for student success</i>				
<i>Questions elicit thoughtful response</i>				
<i>Students are aware of what they are expected to do with new knowledge</i>				
Comments:				

do with the new information. After you have modeled a strategy, and given them guided practice in using the strategy, you must connect it to their independent reading. When students can apply the strategy independently, the instructional cycle of shared reading is complete.

We've discussed read-alouds and shared reading at length, and have examined both the research and the practical considerations for implementing both in the classroom. Now let's look inside classrooms to see how teachers apply these instructional strategies in the content area.

Strategies at Work

Read-Alouds in English

Read-alouds are a quiet time in the classroom. They can be effectively used throughout the period, whether it be to introduce a new topic at the beginning of class, emphasize a discussion point by returning to quote a text passage, or ending the period with well-crafted prose. Many teachers see this time as an opportunity to hone their students' critical thinking skills. A popular method for creating a focus on critical thinking is the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (Stauffer & Harrell, 1975). The DR-TA, as it is commonly known, is an instructional technique that invites students to make predictions, then check their predictions during and after the reading. An advantage of the DR-TA is that it assists listeners in clarifying the purpose for the reading. In addition, the DR-TA provides a frame for self-monitoring because the teacher pauses throughout the reading to ask students questions.

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity. While the steps of a DR-TA may vary slightly in individual practice, the sequence usually consists of the following (Stauffer & Harrell, 1975):

1. Introduce background knowledge. Begin the lesson with a discussion of the topic of the reading. Elicit information the students may already know, including personal experiences and prior readings. Discuss the title, cover (if there is one), and any other salient information. Record students' ideas on the board or chart paper.

2. Make predictions. Although these predictions can be part of a class discussion, we like to use this as an opportunity to write. Ask questions that invite prediction, such as:

- What do you expect the main idea of this article will be?
- From the title, do you anticipate that the author will be for or against?
- Will this short story have a happy or tragic ending?

After students have written their predictions, extend their writing further by instructing them to explain what evidence they used to arrive at their predictions.

3. Read a section of text, stopping at predetermined places in the text. Ask students to check and revise their predictions. This is a crucial step in DR-TA instruction. Identify where the natural stopping points are, then ask students to reread their predictions. Let them know they should change their predictions if necessary and cite new evidence that has influenced their opinions. Repeat this cycle several times through the course of the read-aloud.

4. After the reading is completed, use student predictions as a discussion tool. The beauty of a DR-TA may not be apparent until this step. We have all faced the blank stares and shuffled silence of adolescents reluctant to respond to discussion questions. However, when students have written and revised predictions throughout a reading, the tools for discussion lie waiting for them in their own handwriting. "What did you expect to happen before we began the reading?" is easily recalled when the student has a record of his or her thoughts to consult. Another important strategy is embedded in their predictions—it serves as a track record for their thinking processes. The ability to understand one's own thinking—metacognition—is viewed as a key to increased comprehension (Fitzgerald, 1983).

Another version of DR-TA can be found in chapter 4 on questioning.

DR-TA in English. Lee Mongrue used DR-TA's throughout his extended read-alouds of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Rowling, 1997) in his English class. A primary focus of this course is genres (types of literature, such as poetry, folklore and myth, and expository text), and Mr. Mongrue used *Harry Potter* as an entry point into the genre of fantasy. While *Harry Potter* might not be a traditional choice for an English class, he recognized that this semester (the fall of 2001) coincided with the enormous publicity associated with the release of the movie. An experienced teacher, Mr. Mongrue knew the value of student motivation and interest in learning. Therefore, he decided to read excerpts from the book over the course of several weeks. Students read assigned chapters independently in anticipation of the next read-aloud event. He used DR-TA's during some read-alouds to focus their attention on the importance of prediction in reading comprehension (his graphic organizer appears in Figure 3.4). To introduce the book, Mr. Mongrue first led a discussion about the cover art and title. There was much discussion about the word *sorcerer*, which replaced *philosopher* in the title for the American market.

They also compared and contrasted the cover art with the photograph of a train featured on a British paperback cover. He then turned to the first chapter, entitled "The Boy Who Lived" and invited students to make predictions about what they might find out in the first few pages. Eric, noting the drawing of a house above the chapter's text, wrote "We'll find out where Harry lives, and maybe where he was born." Mr. Mongrue also added another organizing question—what is normal and abnormal in a magical world?

Mr. Mongrue placed stickies in his copy of the text so that he would know where to stop to invite students to reconsider their original predictions.

After completing the chapter, he led a discussion about the reading. Eric, who had initially predicted that the chapter would be about Harry's living quarters, noted that the author meant the chapter title to serve a second purpose—the reader finds out that Harry was the only survivor of an attack that left his parents dead. In response to Mr. Mongrue's question about normality in a magical world, Anthony remarked, "that's way too normal, when you have to live with people who don't really like you."

It is important to note once again that the class did not complete a DR-TA each time they listened to a read-aloud. By any measure, this would represent overkill, and students would quickly become bored with the activity. At times, he used the read-aloud to introduce an important plot change or event. For instance, Harry's first visit to Diagon Alley in chapter 5 challenged readers with a completely new setting, a number of unfamiliar characters, and detailed information about the workings of a magical society. At other times, he read aloud for the pure pleasure of it. Chapter 14, when a dragon is born in Hagrid's hut, was a particularly enjoyable read-aloud event. (We suspect it was because Mr. Mongrue enjoyed doing the voice of a giant!) This also raises an essential component of a read-aloud event—the teacher's enthusiasm for the text. We witnessed the infectious nature of his joy for the story and how he hooked even the most reluctant students into the book. And lest anyone question whether the book was of a suitable rigor for this class, we should also note that his students averaged a gain in reading levels of 2.1 years in one semester.

Discussing the cover art engages students and encourages them to make predictions about the text.

Using stickies in books allows teachers to plan questions in advance, as well as ensure a natural stopping point.

Never underestimate the power of a good story, an expressive reader, and a room full of captivated students!

Shared Reading in Mathematics

A critical aspect of reading is *fluency*, the ability to decode and understand words, sentences, and paragraphs in a way that is smooth and accurate. Fluency is closely related to the concept of prosody discussed earlier in this chapter. While the rate of

W Figure 3.4 Directed Reading-Thinking Activity

<p>DR-TA for (title) _____</p> <p>Prediction question(s):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Using the title, your own background knowledge, and any other contextual clues, make your predictions.</p>
<p>Before reading:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>During reading:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>During reading:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>During reading:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>After reading:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

reading alone is not the only indicator of a good reader, consider the labored reading of a struggling student (Rasinski, 2000). When reading is choppy and disfluent, it becomes difficult to attend to the message behind the words. Meaning for the reader (and listener) is lost in a string of pauses, false starts, and hesitations.

Rereading. An effective instructional strategy for building fluency is repeated readings (Mastropieri, Leinart, & Scruggs, 1999). Repeated readings are just that—the repeated reading of the same text passage. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that repeated readings lead to a practice effect. If you are skeptical, try it yourself. Select a passage from this chapter and read it aloud for one minute—be sure to time yourself. When the timer rings, count the number of words you read and record it. Now read the same passage again, beginning at the same starting point, and count the number of words you read during this second one-minute interval. Repeat this cycle one more time and then compare your results. If you are like most readers, you read more words at cycle 3 than you did at cycle 1. Many of you may have read more during each cycle.

If you completed the above exercise, then you have also identified a difficulty with repeated readings. Many students, and especially adolescents, are not terribly motivated to reread. In fact, we often hear them say something like “I read this before! Why do I have to read it again?” And indeed, less able readers often believe that any text only needs to be read once, with no new information to be gained from subsequent readings (Alvermann, 1988). However, fluent adolescent readers recognize that rereading is an important tool for comprehending text, especially dense content area readings (Faust & Glenzer, 2000).

Reader’s Theatre. A popular method for engaging in repeated readings to build fluency and comprehension is Reader’s Theatre (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1998–1999). Reader’s Theatre is the public performance of a scripted text, but unlike traditional theatre, the lines are not memorized, and props, movement, and other acting devices are not used. Instead, students read the text using prosodic elements while their classmates follow along silently using their own copies.

The success of Reader’s Theatre for promoting repeated reading and conversations about meaning seems to be related to the performance itself. Think about what motivates you—if you know that you will be presenting an oral reading for your peers, you are probably going to rehearse, reread, and discuss the methods of performance with your fellow actors. That is precisely what happened in Aaron Sage’s 10th-grade algebra class.

Reader’s Theatre in Mathematics. Toward the end of the semester, Mr. Sage needed to prepare students for the end-of-course examination. He used a number of different review techniques, including structured study groups and student presentations.

However, he also recognized that it was important to interject some novelty and inventiveness in the review. During one class period, he used a version of Reader’s Theatre (which he entitled “Math Theatre”). Mr. Sage used the book *Math Talk* (Pappas, 1991), an innovative collection of poems of mathematical concepts, written to be read by two voices (or two sets of voices). Mr. Sage began by showing the students a large strip of paper connected to form a continuous band, with a single twist in the loop. With great flourish, he cut the strip down the center, producing not two thinner strips as many had predicted, but rather one larger loop. He then modeled the poem “Mobius Strip” with another teacher and explained the mathematics behind the phenomenon.

Fluency and vocabulary are two of the best predictors of reading comprehension.

Many Reader’s Theatre scripts are available at <http://www.aaronshelp.com/rt/RTE.html>.

Remember that the emphasis of Reader’s Theatre is on oral language development and fluency, not on props, costumes, or dramatic performance.

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Refer back to chapter 2 to review Mr. Sage's advance organizer.

Next, he divided the class into five groups of students. Each group was assigned a poem to perform. In addition to performing the poem, they were also to explain the mathematical concepts represented by their poem. The poems he chose for this lesson addressed concepts studied during the semester, including square roots, radicals, integers, variables, and imaginary numbers. He included an advance organizer for each group that summarized the main concepts of their assigned poem.

Students rehearsed for 30 minutes or so, and Mr. Sage noted that they repeatedly returned to the text, their notes, the advance organizer, and the algebra textbook in order to support their understanding. After sufficient rehearsal, each group performed their poem, which was displayed on an overhead for all to see. They ended their performance with a review of the selected mathematical concept. Mr. Sage later remarked, "There's no way I would have gotten any of them to read about square roots for half an hour straight, let alone talk about it with their classmates. I think this activity really gave them a different way to find out what they know."

Shared Reading in Social Studies

A think aloud is a metacognitive process that allows students to hear what goes on "inside the head" of a fluent reader.

Many teachers use shared readings to demonstrate a *think aloud* technique for explicit modeling (Davey, 1983).

The journalistic style used in many newspapers is very different from the essays students are accustomed to writing. This can be confusing for students and should be used as a teaching point, along with the content.

When using a think aloud, the teacher interjects questions and statements as the text is read. For instance, Ms. Richardson, a 12th-grade government teacher, applied this strategy during a shared reading of a newspaper article on a lawsuit that had been recently filed against the school district concerning the use of federal money (Magee, 2002). The class had been studying federal compensatory programs, including Title 1 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, so Ms. Richardson used the article to begin a discussion. She read the sentence "A lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court yesterday includes claims the school district has segregated minority children, deprived them of a decent education and has fostered a hostile and racist environment" (p. B2). She underlined "segregated," "deprived," and "fostered a hostile. . . environment" and then asked herself aloud, "I wonder what are the examples of the charges? And who is filing the suit?" She then went on to explain that a common writing style in newspaper articles is to write the "big ideas" first, then provide supporting details in later paragraphs.

As she continued to read, she pointed out general statements that connected to the phrases in the opening paragraph. The class quickly noted that the article provided few specific examples, although it did detail the group filing the lawsuit. This led to a spirited discussion about the importance of using several sources of information when learning about current issues. The students all agreed that the newspaper article gave general information about the lawsuit, but not enough to form an opinion one way or the other.

Some shared reading tasks lend themselves to notetaking opportunities for readers, including adding "marginalia"—brief notes in the margins.

Another U.S. history teacher, Helen Arnold, used a newspaper article as a beginning point for a study of the 1942 Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles. A community in San Diego county had recently obtained a court injunction aimed at prohibiting 22 alleged gang members from associating with each other. The restriction made it possible for the police to arrest any of the identified people for "flashing gang signs, making loud noises and engaging in other activities in two city neighborhoods" (Ma, 2001, p. A8). Ms. Arnold made an overhead of the newspaper article and distributed copies for the students to make notes on.

The class searched the article for details about the specific activities that might lead to arrest. They found a quote from a police sergeant explaining that they were “activities that may lead to violence” and located a list of prohibited activities in the sidebar. The students were surprised to see that the injunction included wearing clothing associated with the gangs. The article also provided quite a bit of detail on the number and types of crimes associated with the gang members. The class was in wide agreement that the seriousness of the crimes made it necessary to enforce such restrictions.

She then distributed another reading for the class to consider. It was a web site report on the Zoot Suit Riots. The report duplicated a newspaper article from 1942 outlining the “Mexican crime wave” that was occurring in the city. The newspaper called for a crackdown, and reported on grand jury testimony by the head of the sheriff’s office investigation that Mexicans had inherited “naturally violent tendencies” from the “bloodthirsty Aztecs of Mexico” (Ayres, 1942/1974). These two shared readings provided Ms. Arnold with a way to discuss point of view when considering texts. She pointed out that when evaluating historical events, it would be unwise to read only one source because the information may or may not be accurate. She believed it vital that her students become adept in seeking multiple perspectives. Tunnell and Ammon (1996) suggest that multiple perspectives are “fundamental to good history teaching” (Robb, 2002, p. 31). Because she wanted them to consider point of view and the author’s perspective in reading about the Zoot Suit Riots, she modeled the use of a tool for evaluating information found on the Internet (see Figure 3.5).

Later in the unit, Ms. Arnold also used a Reader’s Theatre play on the riots and an anticipation guide to structure another reading.

Shared Reading in Science

Many content area textbooks contain a great deal of technical information that is presented in tables, photographs, diagrams, and graphs. This is especially true of science textbooks, where students frequently misinterpret complicated diagrams, thus leading them to incorrect conclusions (Wheeler & Hill, 1990). However, because of the complex concepts inherent in science, much of the information needs to be presented in the form of a diagram.

Could you imagine learning the elements without a periodic table? Science teachers recognize the role of literacy for science students, especially as it applies to interpreting diagrams and drawings (Bridges, 1986). In many secondary science classrooms, teachers explicitly instruct on graph and diagram interpretation. Antoinette Linton, a 10th-grade biology teacher, also cites testing concerns. “These are just the kinds of things that are on the Golden State Exams (a subject area test for merit scholarships). I’ve got to make sure they can read and interpret these properly. That’s how you think like a researcher.”

During a unit on genetics, Ms. Linton reviewed diagrams and tables for displaying scientific information. The students were expected to write a research paper on the ethics of genetic engineering as a final project. Included in the project were the results from a number of labs, including karyotyping, probability, and bird adaptations. Because of the technical nature of these labs, the results needed to be displayed as graphs, diagrams, and tables, with support and explanation in the text. She used a chapter on Mendel’s law of heredity from another textbook because the visuals offered good examples for her shared reading lesson. She reminded her students that

Too often students believe everything they find on the Internet to be of equal value. Critical thinking skills are developed when students learn to evaluate sources of information.

During standardized tests, students are often required to analyze information presented in diagrams. Using diagrams as shared readings gives students opportunities to practice using this type of information.

W Figure 3.5 Web Site Evaluation Tool

URL: _____
1. Title of web site: _____
2. What is the main purpose of the web site? _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it selling something? • Does it describe a service? • Is it an educational site?
3. Who created the web site? _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a contact name? • Is it a private company? • Is it a school? • Is it a government agency?
4. How current is the web site? (When was it last updated?) _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the bottom of the homepage.
5. Are links available to other sites? (Try some of them to make sure they work).

6. Are there references or citations? _____ If yes, what are they?

7. What new information did you learn from this web site?

8. What information is missing?

Readability refers to the complexity or difficulty of the text. There are many ways to report readability, including grade level equivalence.

the purpose of displaying data is to compare or to show relationships. She then put a variety of tables from the chapter on the overhead and discussed the characteristics of good visuals, especially the importance of labels and captions. She displayed a series of diagrams from the chapter, including a flow chart illustrating the genetic changes in four generations of beans. With a copy of the diagrams and charts in front of them, they interpreted the displayed data. In cases where the tables or diagrams were ambiguous, they made changes to improve the ease of readability.

Ms. Linton later noted that the shared reading about displaying data was particularly useful in the students' final projects. "After all," she said "what good is knowing all the information if you can't use it?"

Read-Alouds and Shared Reading in Electives

Andy Trakas teaches an elective class titled Tutoring and Mentoring. This class offers a unique opportunity for students to improve their literacy skills by helping others. In addition to supporting their own academic growth, students in the course can also earn internship and community service hours. Mr. Trakas "sells" the course to

prospective participants by telling them “you’ll learn something about yourself, too.” Each morning, his students go to nearby elementary schools to teach younger students.

A Rationale for Cross-age Tutoring. Cross-age peer tutoring involves an older student, under a teacher’s guidance, who helps younger students learn or practice a skill or concept (Cassady, 1998; Giesecke, 1993). Though features vary from program to program, all cross-age tutoring programs provide individualized and personal attention, high levels of interaction, and immediate feedback. The effects of cross-age peer tutoring on the older student are particularly intriguing. A study of 21 adolescents participating in a cross-age peer tutoring program found significant growth in the tutors’ reading scores on standardized measures (Jacobson, Thrope, Fisher, Lapp, Frey, & Flood, 2001). According to Gaustad (1993) and Cobb (1998), cross-age tutoring is beneficial because the process allows tutors expanded opportunities to review material, reiterate the purpose of the assignment, and expand their communication skills. A meta-analysis of 65 studies on cross-age tutoring revealed that the practice of students helping one another enhanced classroom instruction and led to higher academic achievement (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982). Through purposeful engagement, cross-age tutoring provides the older learners with an authentic reason for practicing in order to improve their reading performance (Haluska & Gillen, 1995; Juel, 1991). Tutoring has been shown to be effective within classrooms as well. Referred to as peer tutoring, classmates are paired to support each other’s learning and problem solving. In addition, cross-age or peer tutoring has been found to promote positive reading attitudes and habits (Caserta-Henry, 1996; Newell, 1996). Cohen (1986) suggests that the act of planning instruction for another aids the student in understanding the text.

It is likely that the relatively small difference in ages between tutor and tutee contribute positively to the success of the younger students. Sensitivity and responsiveness to tentative understandings of a concept is seen frequently in cross-age tutoring (Schneider & Barone, 1997). The ability of older students to effectively communicate with younger children may be due to the fact that they are cognitively closer to the tutee, and likely to have experienced similar situations in the recent past (Jenkins, Mayhall, Peschka, & Jenkins, 1974). Feldman and Allen (1979) demonstrated that sixth-graders were more likely to accurately determine understanding through the nonverbal behavior of their third-grade tutees than experienced teachers.

Student-Conducted Read-Alouds and Shared Readings. An understanding of the reading process is essential in Mr. Trakas’ Tutoring and Mentoring class. Students begin the year with study on the characteristics of effective teachers and development of a personal goals statement. They receive instruction on read-alouds and shared reading techniques, principles of reading, and child development. Because they work with emergent and early readers, they pay particular attention to directionality, accessing prior information, rereading for fluency, making predictions, and phonics.

In addition to working with the younger students, Mr. Trakas also emphasizes their own literacy development, particularly through writing. Tutors are expected to maintain reflective journals, develop lessons, and communicate with the elementary teacher. They also propose and write a research paper on a topic related to their experience. Students wrote papers such as, “Reading Strategies at the Elementary Level,” “Motivation for Mentoring,” and “The Impact of Inspirational and Motivating Teachers.”

Possibly the favorite project of the class is the picture book they create for their tutee. The tutors develop a story, edit, illustrate, and publish a picture book that they

Emergent readers benefit from instruction about concepts of print, which includes book handling skills, directionality, and layout of the text.

give to their elementary student to keep. The process of bringing a picture book to publication is an involved one, and students conduct research on what makes a picture book appropriate and effective for read-alouds and shared reading. Their own experiences with interacting with a large volume of picture books over the course of the year also contributes to their understanding of good children's literature. Layout, print size, and complexity of language must all be considered. Illustrations should support and advance the story. And of course, these books are designed with a particular student in mind. Background knowledge and interests play an important role in shaping the text. Picture books produced have included stories on friendship, Pokemon, and skateboarding. An especially creative young man known widely for his interest in graffiti crafted a story about a boy who learned to write through tagging! (Don't worry—the book's message also emphasized the importance of tagging only where it is invited.)

As we said earlier, tutors benefit as well. In the three years that Tutoring and Mentoring has been offered, counselors and other teachers have come to expect that students will make gains in reading. Students in Mr. Trakas' course average a 1.5 year gain in reading scores, as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, & Dreyer, 2000). Individuals have been known to make more than two years' progress in reading during this course. None of these results should be surprising, notes Mr. Trakas. "They're immersed in literacy. They talk about it, read about it, and write about it. There's a 'trampoline effect.'" Perhaps the best indicator of all is the number of students who have re-enrolled in the class—30%. Several students have joined the Future Educators Club, and several are now studying at local universities with the intent of entering the teaching profession. As Mr. Trakas promises them all on the first day—"you'll learn something about yourself."

Conclusion

The decision to use a read-aloud or shared reading is based on the purpose and the text selected. Teachers do both, but usually on different days.


Read-alouds and shared readings increase content knowledge.

Read-alouds and shared reading are two instructional practices borrowed from elementary reading practice and customized for secondary content area use. A *read-aloud* is a text or passage selected by the teacher to read publicly to a small or large group of students. A primary purpose for the read-aloud selection is to focus on the content of the text. A *shared reading* is a text or passage that is jointly shared by teacher and student. In shared readings, the students can also see the text, and it is usually chosen both for its content and as a way to draw attention to a particular text feature or comprehension strategy.

A summary of tips for using read-alouds and shared readings in the classroom appears in Figure 3.6.

When considering read-alouds and shared readings for your own practice, always keep in mind the focus of your course. While we believe strongly that students should see their teachers regularly engaged in the act of reading for pleasure, we do not suggest that large portions of instructional time should be spent on using readings that are unrelated to your instructional purposes.

The teachers in this chapter made a strong case for their purposes in selecting a particular piece, and clearly saw these experiences as an important way to advance student learning. Having said that, do not underestimate the influence of a teacher who shares a newspaper story that concerned them, an email that made them laugh, or a cartoon that made them think. When students see their teachers reading a variety of genres, they begin to see possibilities in their own literate lives.

 Figure 3.6 Summary of Effective Strategies for Using Read-Alouds and Shared Readings

- Read-alouds and shared reading events do not need to be long to be effective. A short, powerful passage has far more impact than a long, dull reading. Plan on about five minutes a day, and increase gradually as your students' stamina for listening improves.
- Rehearse in advance. Remember that one goal is to provide a fluent language model. That requires a bit of rehearsal so that you can bring the proper expression and inflection to the text.
- Choose readings that are meaningful to you and are connected with the course content. Comprehension increases when connections are made, so don't assume that your students understood the relevance of your selection. Be explicit that the information from the selected reading fits into your course of study.
- Determine in advance where you're going to stop. Look for the natural breaks in a piece. Selected passages can either be read in a single reading, or extended over a few class periods. If the reading will continue on another day, stop at a point where you can elicit predictions about what is yet to come.

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