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# Using interactive read-alouds to support students' comprehension

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# Using interactive read-alouds to support students' comprehension

## **Abstract**

This research project reviews literature on the impact interactive read-alouds have on lower elementary students' comprehension. The studies that were researched focused on how students benefited from interactive read-alouds and how teachers prepared and conducted interactive read-alouds. The project focused on providing model lessons to be used in an interactive read-aloud. Each model lesson consists of introduction to the comprehension strategy being taught, teacher dialogue with students participating in turn and talks throughout the interactive read-aloud and a reflection time for the teacher and students to reflect on the story and how applying the comprehension strategy helped them.

USING INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUDS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS'  
COMPREHENSION

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Literacy Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

In this research project reviewed literature on the impact interactive read-alouds have on lower elementary students' comprehension. The studies that were researched focused on how students benefited from interactive read-alouds and how teachers prepared and conducted interactive read-alouds. The project focused on providing model lessons to be used in an interactive read-aloud. Each model lesson consists of introduction to the comprehension strategy being taught, teacher dialogue with students participating in turn and talks throughout the interactive read-aloud and a reflection time for the teacher and students to reflect on the story and how applying the comprehension strategy helped them.

*Key words:* literacy, interactive read-alouds, comprehension, elementary

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## **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this research project was two-fold: 1) research the impact that interactive read-alouds had on young elementary age students' comprehension; 2) to provide teachers with model lessons to conduct interactive read-alouds in the classroom. Interactive read-alouds have been shown to support children's comprehension (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hoffman, 2011; Lohfink, 2012; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wiseman, 2011; Wiseman, 2012). While proficient readers do some of the comprehension strategies naturally, struggling readers may not know that they should be asking questions or predicting or thinking during reading, which needs to be explicitly taught (Cunningham & Allington, 2003; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). Students are provided time to practice comprehension strategies with guidance during interactive read-alouds (Hoffman, 2011). During classroom discussions that take place during read-alouds students are asking questions, predicting, inferring, making connections and working on vocabulary development all of which connects to skill development in reading. Several studies also showed that providing professional development and support for teachers increased teachers' confidence and effectiveness in implementing interactive read-alouds (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Wasik & Bond, 2001).

I reviewed literature about the impact that interactive read-alouds had on young elementary age students' comprehension and how interactive read-alouds are conducted and how teachers prepare for them. I shared how I developed my own interactive read-aloud lessons and provided the lessons I have written.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Benefits from Interactive Read-Alouds**

Reading comprehension occurs before basic reading skills start and researchers argue that everyone benefits from interactive read-alouds from readers who struggle with reading to readers who are reading above grade level (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Dooley, 2010; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wiseman, 2011; Wiseman, 2012). Students' reading experience begins before conventional reading, which is considered to be emergent literacy (e.g., print concepts, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary) (Dooley, 2010). Dooley (2010) conducted a three-year longitudinal study of emergent literacy in children between the ages of 2 and 5.6 year olds. Through the field notes and videos from this study four categories emerged on how children approach books (book as a prop, book as an invitation, book as a script, and book as a text). The categories show how students try to construct meaning from books well before they have the basic skills of reading. Dooley (2010) argues that children try to make meaning from books at a young age that are essential for reading comprehension development and should not be ignored.

Research has shown that it is not necessary to wait till students have the basic skills of reading (like letter naming, letter sounds, etc.) secure before teaching comprehension strategies (Cunningham & Allington, 2003; DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wiseman, 2011). In fact Cunningham and Allington (2003) argue that students "who are taught to read in a rigid, phonics-first method with



texts that make little sense (Nan can fan a man), the real danger is that they will not learn that thinking is the goal” (p. 70). Students who struggle with reading benefit from interactive read-alouds (Smolkin & Donovan, 2003). Many schools will often wait to expose students, who are not able to fluently decode words, to comprehension strategies until their decoding skills increase. Smolkin and Donovan (2003) explain that comprehension acquisition is important for all students. Interactive read-alouds allow students who struggle with writing and other print based forms of literacy to successfully engage in complex discussions about the story (Wiseman, 2012).

Wiseman (2012) conducted a nine-month case study of a kindergarten student (Kevin) who was identified by his teacher as struggling in progress and attitude. Kevin would become very frustrated with writing and other print-based tasks (struggling to write his own name) but was able to be successful with oral literacy and was willing to participate and respond to read-alouds. Throughout the nine-month study the researcher saw Kevin’s participation increase and his responses became more complex as the study went on. Therefore, Wiseman points out that using interactive read-alouds with students like Kevin who struggle with writing and other print based forms of literacy enabled them to experience success and to successfully engage in complex discussions about stories. Wasik and Bond (2001) implemented a fifteen-week intervention in a preschool with students from low-income families. Four preschool classrooms participated. Two teachers were randomly assigned to the intervention condition, and two teachers were assigned to the control condition. The teachers who were part of the intervention were trained in how to use interactive read-alouds. For the first four weeks Bond modeled

interactive read-alouds and helped implement the follow up activities. Intervention teachers would introduce the vocabulary word from the books, and then show an object that matched the vocabulary word. During the read-alouds the intervention teachers were trained to ask open-ended questions and have discussions with the students, and at the end of the book then ask reflecting questions. After the interactive read-aloud teachers also provided extension activities that supported the vocabulary words introduced in the read-aloud. The teachers in the control group were given the same trade books but did not receive training in interactive book reading strategies and were not provided any other materials. All students took the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III) before and after the fifteen weeks. Students also took a receptive language measure with vocabulary words that were introduced during the weeks and took a measure of expressive vocabulary test at the end of the fifteen weeks. The PPVT-III showed that students who were exposed to interactive read-alouds scored significantly better than students in the comparison group.

Thus, students who struggle with print based literacy are able to succeed and show what they know in oral language when they engage in interactive read-alouds (Wiseman, 2012). It also gives students time to access knowledge that would be otherwise beyond their reading ability (Smolkin & Donovan, 2003). DeBruin-Parecki and Squibb (2011) point out that reading is not just about decoding words and reading fluently, that if the student is not able to understand what he/she is reading (decoding) then it is of little help to the student.

DeBruin-Parecki and Squibb (2011) conducted an eight-week intervention in two low-income prekindergarten classrooms. The intervention was to develop intentional comprehension strategies through comprehension strategy instruction sessions. There were three sessions per week for a total of twenty four sessions. The sessions focused on four strategies that were commonly identified in literature as increasing listening comprehension for beginning readers: constructing understanding and connecting to background knowledge (making it relevant), predicting, retelling story sequences (telling beginning, middle, end of stories, identifying characters, plot, problem and solution), and expanding vocabulary. Each session consisted of a whole group instruction with a read-aloud (which consisted of introducing a vocabulary word, a shared book reading, a discussion, and working on target strategies) and a small group activity (which related to the target strategy). Researchers also provided weekly professional development and would model lessons and small group activities for the teachers. Researchers used a vocabulary test at the end of the eight weeks, which showed that students learned about eleven new words. Teachers also kept Teacher Response Journals that researchers used to see how teachers felt whole group and small group instruction was going. The researchers used the comprehension portion from the Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) to measure students comprehension growth. Prekindergarten students were given the ELSA before and after the eight week intervention. The ELSA showed positive results and showed that comprehension increased for students who were in a classroom where interactive read-alouds were done,. The ELSA comprehension portion asked questions

where students had to make connections, predict, and retell. These skills are worked on through interactive read-alouds.

### **Teachers' Roles for Interactive Read-Alouds**

Researchers state that class discussions and asking open-ended questions is an integral part of interactive read-alouds (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hoffman, 2011; Lohfink, 2012; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001). Teachers' questioning styles have an effect on students' vocabulary growth and comprehension (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Dickinson and Smith (1994) videotaped and transcribed 25 classrooms during their read-aloud time; based off of these read-alouds the researchers observed, they found three approaches to read-alouds: 1) co-constructive (discussion by students and teachers during text, little talk before and after text), 2) didactic-interactional (little talk before, during, and after text, only talking dealt with recall and questions with preconceived answers and management comments), and, 3) performance oriented (discussion before and after story, little during story, extended book introductions). A year later (when the students turned five, they were four years old during the observation) students were assessed for language skills with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R).. Students were also given an assessment designed by the Home-School Study research team to assess story comprehension. The story *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats was read to students and then students were asked to recall parts of the story, factual and inferential questions. The score was based on the total number of questions answered correctly. The researchers found that students in performance-oriented classrooms had greater gains than students in

didactic-interactional rooms (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). In performance classrooms, teachers used questioning to help with the discussion.

An important part of the interactive read-aloud is using open-ended questions to help guide the discussion (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Hoffman, 2011; Wasik & Bond, 2001). In Wasik and Bond's study (2001), an important part was training teachers in how to implement an interactive read-aloud. The teachers were also taught and provided examples of open-ended questions that encouraged and provided students opportunities to talk about the book (e.g., *Tell me more about what is happening on this page. What do you think will happen next?* and *Why do you think that character did that?*). Reflection questions such as, *What part of the book did you like the best?* and *Tell me why you think the boy thought the carrot would grow* (Wasik & Bond, 2001) were also emphasized. By using questioning and asking further questions (e.g., *why is she doing that; what is the reason you think that*) students are able to dig deeper and construct meaning (Hoffman, 2011).

Several studies involved training teachers in how to model a specific comprehension strategy being taught (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Wasik & Bond, 2001). DeBruin-Parecki and Squibb (2011) found that it is important for teachers to explicitly teach the comprehension strategies and be intentional about it, otherwise it probably will not be taught. In one study, teachers planned the read-aloud ahead of time and often used post-it notes to mark where they were going to model a strategy and where classroom discussions took place (Delacruz, 2013). Smolkin and Donovan (2003) suggest there are four key elements of an interactive information read-

aloud. The first element is interaction. This is where kids ask questions, make connections with the text and work on making meaning during the reading of the text. Together the teacher and students co-construct meaning. The second element is using information books. Informational books have more features, expands world knowledge, introduces new vocabulary, concepts, introduces students to new grammatical constructions and complex text structures (Smolkin & Donovan, 2003). Informational books also are more likely to hold boys' and struggling readers' attentions (Smolkin & Donovan, 2003). The third element is teacher awareness of text features. Teachers need to be aware of the types and range of informational books available to them. Smolkin and Donovan (2003) suggest that teachers read the text before sharing it with the class and look for parts that students may get stuck; also teachers need to anticipate students' questions and make connections with students' previous knowledge. The fourth element is making time for in-depth reading. Smolkin and Donovan found that effective read alouds include making time to discuss ideas and to find out if questions that were asked during the book get answered in the book. If not, teachers then use post reading time to discuss these unanswered questions. The power of read alouds is that it also gives students time to access knowledge that would be otherwise beyond their reading ability. Research has shown that interactive read-alouds increase students' achievement (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Wiseman, 2012).

Delacruz's (2013) research provides detailed information about how teachers implemented interactive read-alouds. The study involved a nine-week investigation on two schools, one that was a literacy collaborative school which used interactive read-

alouds and the second school that did not use interactive read-alouds instead used a basal reading program. The *Developmental Reading Assessment 2* was given by the researcher to three classes in each school (one kindergarten classroom, one first grade classroom, and one second grade classroom). The test was given in the beginning and end of the nine week study. Teachers were also interviewed to find out how teachers prepared for the interactive read alouds. Member checks were done to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. Interviews were done once for thirty minutes. After the interview the researcher would then transcribe the interview and then the participants would read over the transcription to check that the researcher had accurately interpreted what they said. The researcher found that teachers looked at state standards, themes and students' needs to plan lessons. Teachers also planned the read aloud ahead and frequently used post-it notes to mark where they were going to model a strategy and where classroom discussions took place.

### **Issues to Consider with Interactive Read-Alouds**

Interactive read-alouds can take more time than just reading a book because of the discussions (Hoffman, 2011). Hoffman observed during the study “her read-aloud sessions grew longer, from approximately 23 to 30 minutes. Second, lengths of discussions within the read-aloud also expanded (increased 45%)” (2011, pp. 192). Smolkin and Donovan (2003) also state the importance of making sure that there is adequate time for in-depth readings. There needs to be enough time to find out if questions get answered in the informational book and, if not, then there should be time for a discussion at the end.

Adequate professional development is another important part of interactive read-alouds. Teachers need to feel comfortable and know what to ask and how to do an interactive read-aloud (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Hoffman, 2011). According to DeBruin-Parecki and Squibb (2011) “intentional teaching of comprehension strategies to preschool children is often lacking because teachers may not have had the opportunity to learn about this type of instruction, either in their preservice education or during regular professional development” (pp. 47). Several studies involved training teachers in how to model a specific comprehension strategy being taught (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Hoffman, 2011; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001). Several studies involved professional development (DeBruin-Parecki & Squibb, 2011; Hoffman, 2011; Wasik & Bond, 2001). While some professional development provided a full week before the study started, and some involved an experienced teacher modeling how to implement interactive read-alouds, all the professional development studies involved continual professional development (either weekly or monthly) throughout the study. Delacruz (2013) and Smolkin and Donovan (2003) both studied how teachers prepare for interactive read-alouds. In their studies they saw that teachers planned ahead and would use post-it notes to mark where they were going to model a certain strategy, where questions might occur, or where the students might get stuck.

### **III. Methodology**

The purpose of this research project was to research the impact interactive read-alouds had on young elementary age students’ comprehension and provide teachers with lessons to conduct interactive read-alouds in the classroom. I gathered studies that



focused on using interactive read-alouds in a lower elementary setting. I selected some studies that used classrooms that did and did not use interactive read-alouds. Also I wanted to see the impact interactive read-alouds had on students, particular students who struggled in reading. I looked at the references of the studies I had found to see what studies they used. I saw that Dickinson and Smith (1994) and Wasik and Bond (2001) were referenced in most of the studies I found, so I then selected these studies to use. The studies I gathered had information on the key parts of interactive read-alouds and how teachers were supported. The key parts of interactive read-alouds are having discussions before, during, and after the story. It is also important to ask open ended questions and to give students the opportunity to share their thinking. I used this outline to write model lessons in this project. I selected five comprehension strategies that appeared most frequently in the studies: asking questions, predicting, inferring, making connections, and working on vocabulary development. The mentor texts that are used are texts that I have used previously to model teaching comprehension strategies. The texts were selected from books in my children's literature collection that were chosen for their story grammar and text elements as being effective texts for modeling particular comprehension strategies. Hoffman (2011) discussed the criteria that they used in their research for selecting text to use in interactive read-alouds. I took criteria from this research and looked at the types of text other studies used as well to select the text I used. I used picture books because student would be able to use visual context and clues to help with their comprehension. I selected text that had a narrative story structure. I also selected books that could be read with a discussion occurring before, during and after the

read-aloud within a time frame of 20 to 30 minutes. I used post-it notes to mark the pages where I wanted to stop t to either share my thinking or have the students turn and talk. I typically have my thinking points either written on the post-it note or on a piece of paper that I have by me while I implement an interactive read-aloud.

#### **IV. The Project**

The purpose of this project was to develop model lesson plans for the use of interactive read alouds organized within five specific comprehension areas: questioning, predicting, inferring, making connections, and vocabulary development. The following table provides an overview of the read aloud lessons developed for the five instructional areas, with a focus on the texts selected for each lesson. Each lesson has an introduction where the teacher states the comprehension skill that the students will be working on, turn and talks throughout the interactive read-aloud and a end of story area where the teacher and students reflect on the story and how applying the comprehension skill helped them.

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Table

*Strategy-based Read Aloud Lessons with Text Selection*

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Questioning

1. Shannon, D. (2002). *Duck on a bike*. New York: Scholastic.
2. Rathmann, P. (1995). *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
3. Van Allsburg, C. (1986). *The stranger*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Predicting

1. Pilkey, D. (1994). *Dog breath: The horrible trouble with Hally Tosis*. New York: Scholastic.
2. Freeman, D. (1977). *Dandelion*. New York: Puffin Books.

Inferring

1. Rocco, J. (2011). *Blackout*. New York: Hyperion Books.
2. Raschka, C. (1993). *Yo! Yes?* New York: Scholastic.
3. Escoffier, M. (2014). *The day I lost my superpowers*. New York: Enchanted Lion Books.

Making Connections

1. Rath, T., & Reckmeyer, M. (2009). *How full is your bucket? For kids*. New York: Gallup Press.
2. Child, L. (2008). *You can be my friend*. New York: Penguin Group.

Vocabulary Development

1. Cannon, J. (1993). *Stellaluna*. New York: Scholastic.
  2. Wilson, K. (2002). *Bear snores on*. New York: Scholastic.
- 

In the following lessons, parentheses “( )” are used to indicate possible questions or comments students may be making to each other. Since most of the picture books do not have page numbers, I tried to describe the page where I share my thinking or have the students turn and talk.

## *Questioning Lesson Plans*

In this section, the focus of the lessons is in questioning. Questioning occurs during the actual reading, when the reader asks questions to self. Questions can be answered within the text or by thinking beyond the text. The three questioning lessons include questions about the illustrations, questions about character's actions (why did the character act that way, what will the character do next), and questions about what will happen next. When the reader asks questions about the story it is like having a conversation with oneself.

### 1) Duck on a Bike

*Materials:* Shannon, D. (2002). *Duck on a bike*. New York: Scholastic.

*Introduction:* We often ask questions. Remember a question is when you are wondering something, asking what if, why, where, I wonder. When we read we also ask questions. Normally we ask questions while we are reading in our heads but today we are going to be asking our questions out loud so that we can hear what we are wondering about.

Today we are going to be reading David Shannon's book *Duck on a bike*.

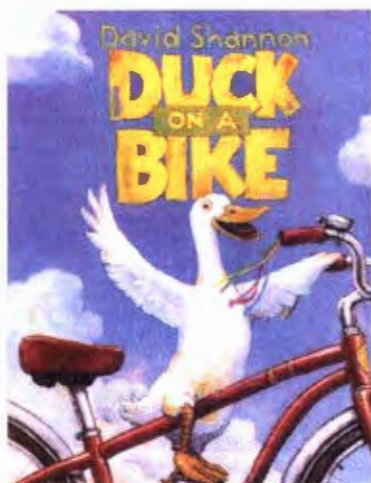


Figure 1. Cover page of *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*Cover:* Looking at the cover I am already asking questions in my head like: Why is Duck on a bike? How can Duck ride a bike? Where is Duck going?



Figure 2. Title page of *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*Title Page:* I wonder what Duck is thinking about? I wonder whose bike is it?



Figure 3. First page of *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*First Page:* How is Duck going to be able to peddle? I wonder if he will crash?



Figure 4. Page with sheep from *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*Page with sheep:* I wonder if the boy who owns the bike will see Duck? How is Duck able to steer the bike?





Figure 5. Page with chicken from *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*Page with chicken:* I want you to think of some questions you are wondering. Share with your neighbor some of your questions. Have some students share their thinking.



Figure 6. Page with all animals staring from *Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon.

*Page with all animals staring:* Have students turn and talk to their neighbors

*Last page with tractor:* Have students turn and talk to their neighbors

*End of story:* Readers ask questions as they read. When we read this story we asked questions, some of our questions were answered some were not. What were some of the questions that were answered? What were some of the questions that were not answered, that we are still wondering about?

## 2) Officer Buckle and Gloria

*Materials:* Rathmann, P. (1995). *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.



Figure 7. Cover from *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann.

*Introduction:* We are working on questioning. As we are reading we will be stopping to ask questions.

*Cover (before reading the title):* I am wondering why is the dog in the air? How did the dog learn to do that? What is the dog's name?

*Cover (after reading the title):* I wonder if it means that the man's name is Officer Buckle and the dog's name is Gloria.



Figure 8. Page 2 from *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann.

*Page 2:* I wonder why no one listened?



Figure 9 Page 10, where Gloria is jumping up from the thumbtack from *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann.

Page 10, where Gloria is jumping up from the thumbtack: I wonder why Officer Buckle never saw Gloria act out the safety tips?



Figure 10 Page 22 watching the news from *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann.

Page 22 watching the news: Turn to your neighbor and share your questions or what you are wondering. (might ask about Will Officer Buckle be mad at Gloria, Will he still do the safety speeches?)

Page 24 (before Gloria sleeps on stage) Turn to your neighbor and share your questions. (What if Officer Buckle and Gloria don't do speeches together, what will happen? What will Gloria do for the safety speech on her own?)

End of Story: Review again that readers ask questions while they are reading. Discuss how asking questions helped them enjoy and understand the story better.



### 3) The Stranger

*Materials:* Van Allsburg, C. (1986). *The stranger*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Prior to the lesson make sure students have some background knowledge on Jack Frost

*Introduction:* Readers ask questions as they are reading. Talk about what students brought up last time on how asking questions helped them as readers.



Figure 11 Cover from *The Stranger* by Chris Van Allsburg.

*Cover:* Who is the stranger? Why is he looking at the soup like he has never seen it before?

*Doctor page:* I wonder who this stranger is? I am also wondering how the thermometer broke?



Figure 12 Rabbit page from *The Stranger* by Chris Van Allsburg.

*Rabbit page:* I wonder why the rabbits are not afraid of him? Why do they think he would follow them?

*Looking at geese:* Have students turn and talk (I wonder if he will remember who he is?  
Why is fascinated with the geese?)



Figure 13 Leaves page from *The Stranger*  
by Chris Van Allsburg.

*Leaves page:* Have students turn and talk  
(Why is the stranger blowing on the leaves?  
What is he trying to do? Why does it upset  
him?)

*End of story:* Have students turn and talk and share any other questions they are wondering. Have a class discussion on how asking questions helped them better understand and enjoy this book.

## *Predicting Lesson Plans*

In this section, the focus of the lessons is in predicting. Predicting is using what one knows to guess or predict what one thinks is going to happen. In the two predicting lessons students will be asked to use their background knowledge, and use what they see in the illustrations to make predictions. Students will participate in turn and talk and whole group discussions.

### 1) Dog Breath: The Horrible Trouble with Hally Tosis

*Materials:* Pilkey, D. (1994). *Dog breath: the horrible trouble with Hally Tosis*. New York: Scholastic.

*Introduction:* We often make predictions in our lives. If we see dark clouds coming in we might predict that it is going to storm. Readers make predictions as they read. They look at the illustrations and use the words in the books and think about what they think is going to happen next. Predictions are not always correct because we are guessing and thinking what might happen. Today we are going to be making predictions while we read *Dog Breath* by Dav Pilkey.

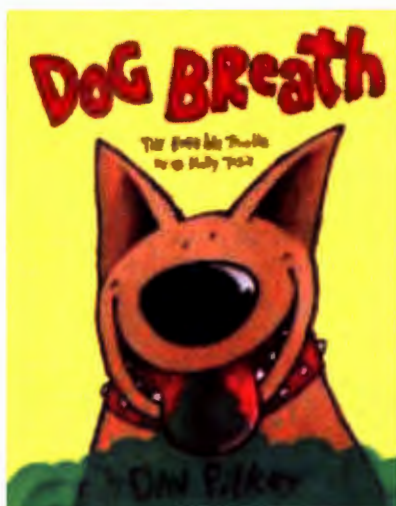


Figure 14 Cover from *Dog Breath: the horrible trouble with Hally Tosis* by Dav Pilkey

*Cover:* Looking at the cover I see a dog with its mouth open and green coming from the dog's mouth. I know that illustrators will sometimes use the color green to try to illustrate or show that something smells bad.

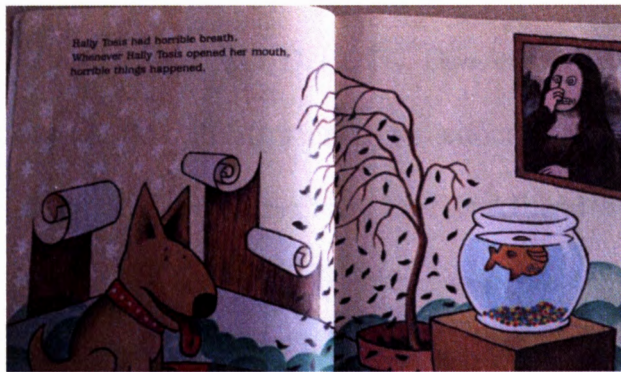


Figure 15 Page 2 with Hally Tosis and the goldfish from *Dog Breath: the horrible trouble with Hally Tosis* by Dav Pilkey

*Page 2 with Hally Tosis and the goldfish:* Talk about what the illustration is showing. I predict that no one wants to be by Hally Tosis since her breath smells so bad.

*When the family puts up the free dog sign, read that they want to get rid of her bad breath:* I want you to think for a minute what do you predict the children will do to try to get rid of Hally Tosis' bad breath? (let them think for a little bit, then have them turn to their neighbors and say I predict that ....)

*Where the children are taking Hally Tosis to a carnival:* Think for a moment what do you predict will happen next? Do you think it will work? What do you think might happen? Turn to your neighbor and share saying I predict that....

*Hally Tosis gives burglars kiss:* What do you predict will happen? Turn and talk

*End of story:* We made a lot of predictions during our story. Was our predictions always right? How did our predictions change as the book went on? What helped you make your predictions? (illustrations, background knowledge, thinking about the story)



## 2) Dandelion

*Materials:* Freeman, D. (1977). *Dandelion*. New York: Puffin Books.

*Introduction:* Readers make predictions as they are reading. We are thinking about what we think might happen next. Last time friends said that they used the illustrations, their background knowledge (thinking about what they already knew), and what was going on in the story to help them prediction. We are going to make predictions while we read the book *Dandelion* by Don Freeman.

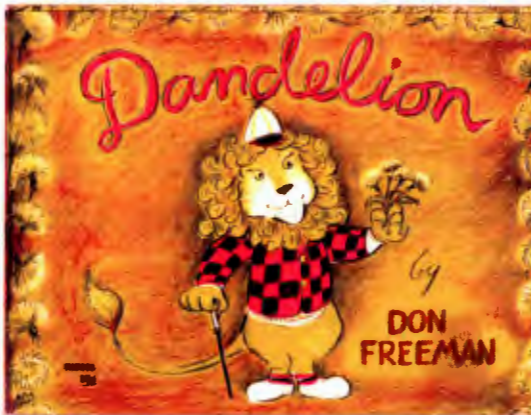


Figure 16 Cover from *Dandelion* by Don Freeman.

*Cover:* Here we see a lion all dressed up. I wonder where he is going?

*Mailbox page:* Because the letter is written in fancy ink and fancy lettering I am predicting it is an invitation to a fancy party or a wedding.

*Next page with letter:* Here I can see that my prediction was right.



Figure 17 When Dandelion is going to the door with flowers from *Dandelion* by Don Freeman.

*When Dandelion is going to the door with flowers:* What do you predict will happen next? What might you predict Giraffe and his friends are going to say to him? Turn and talk to your neighbor, remember to say I predict that...

*When Giraffe closes the door on Dandelion's face:* That is interesting. I predicted they would say nice things to Dandelion. Giraffe didn't even recognize him. This is a good reminder that our predictions aren't always correct. What might we predict Dandelion will do now?



Figure 18 When Dandelion picks the flowers and says he will try again from *Dandelion* by Don Freeman.

*When Dandelion picks the flowers and says he will try again:* What do you predict will happen now?

*End of story:* Discuss how readers have to change their predictions, and review what helped them make their predictions.

## *Inferring Lesson Plans*

In this section, the focus of the lesson is in inferring. There are three lessons on inferring. The first lesson has more modeling than the following two. I use *Blackout* first and then later in the week I use the other two books. Inferring is using clues both visual and context clues to be able to tell what is happening in the story. Students do this all the time but do not realize that they are inferring.

### 1) *Blackout*

*Materials:* Rocco, J. (2011). *Blackout*. New York: Hyperion Books.

*Introduction:* We are going to be inferring. For example if you see a friend crying holding their knee and a bike is on the ground next to them what do you think, or infer happened? (Students say the friend fell off the bike). When you do that you are inferring, you didn't see the friend fall off the bike and the friend didn't tell you but based on the clues you can infer that the friend fell off the bike. While we read *Blackout* by John Rocco we are going to think about the clues the author gives us and make inferences from those clues.

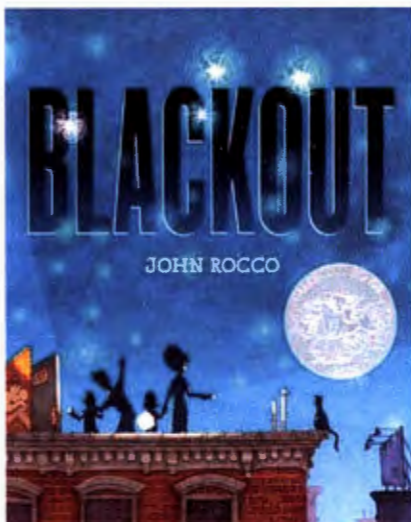


Figure 19 Cover from *Blackout* by John Rocco.

*Cover:* Before reading title pause. I am going to stop reading for a minute and think about the clues that might help me infer. It looks like people are in the city and the city is dark. I am going to infer that the lights went out.



Figure 20 Where child is walking around with game in hands from *Blackout* by John Rocco.

*Where child is walking around with game in hands:* I can infer that the kid wants to play a game, since the kid is walking around with a game in their hands. I can infer that the kid is sad that everyone is too busy because of how the illustrator is showing the kid walking up the steps.

*When lights go out and the child is hiding behind a chair:* What is something that we can infer? What can we infer how the child is feeling? Why do you infer that the child is feeling scared? What clues is the author giving you? (hiding behind a chair, yelled mom)

*When everything is back to normal and the child flips the light switch:* What can you infer? Turn and talk using I can infer that... Think about what the kid who turned off the lights wants. What clues does the author give you?

*End of story:* We made a lot of inferences in this book. We had to use the clues the author gave us to infer.



2) Yo! Yes?

*Materials:* Raschka, C. (1993). *Yo! Yes?* New York: Scholastic.

*Introduction:* We are going to be inferring while we read *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka. The author doesn't use a lot of words so we have to infer what is happening.

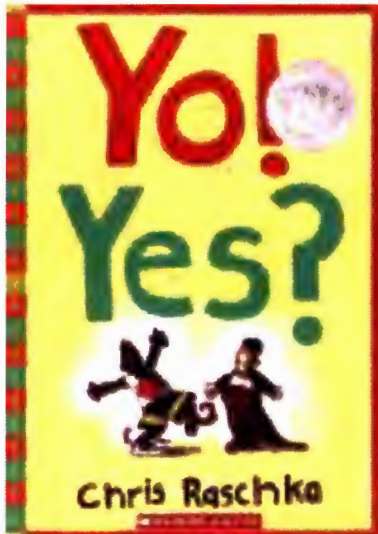


Figure 21 Cover from *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka.

*Cover:* I am inferring that Yo! might be a greeting like hello because it looks like the one character is going up to the other character.



Figure 22 Hey! Who? From *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka.

*Hey! Who? Page:* I am inferring that they have never met before because when the boy says hey he isn't saying the other boy's name and the other boy is saying who?

*Yes, you. Oh Page:* This confirmed what I inferred that they haven't met before.



Figure 22 Not much from *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka.

*Not much:* What is something that you can infer? How is the boy feeling, what makes you think that? (I can infer that the boy is unhappy because he is looking away and his shoulders are down, and he is holding his arm).

*No friends:* My inference was confirmed. I can infer that the boy is new to the area or to the school because the boy who greeted him didn't know his name, and the boy is saying that he doesn't have any friends.

*Look!:* Turn to your neighbor and say I can infer that ... (Boy is saying I can be your friend)

*Well.:* Turn and talk to your neighbor I can infer that...

*Last page:* Turn and talk to your neighbor I can infer that...

*End of story:* We were able to infer a lot in this story. What were some things that the author did that helped us infer?

### 3) The Day I Lost My Superpowers

*Materials:* Escoffier, M. (2014). *The day I lost my superpowers*. New York: Enchanted Lion Books.

*Introduction:* Review things that help you to infer.

*Cover:* This is the story *The day I lost my superpowers* by Michaël Escoffier. Looking at the cover I see a child dressed up with a cape and mask and she looks sad. I am inferring that since she is dressed up as a super hero and she looks sad that she is the one who lost her super powers.



Figure 23 She eats the cupcake but the peas are still there from *The Day I lost my superpowers* by Michaël Escoffier.

*She eats the cupcake but the peas are still there:* What can we infer here? Looking at the clues think about why is the cupcake gone and not the peas. Turn and talk to your neighbor I can infer that...

*Becoming invisible:* What can we infer? Why is her superpower invisible? Why would she want to be invisible? Turn and talk to your neighbor I can infer that...

*Communicating with animals:* What can we infer? I can infer that...

*End of story:* Review again what help us infer.

## *Making Connections Lesson Plans*

In this section, the focus of the lessons is in making connections. There are two lessons on making connections. *How full is your bucket? For kids* is used first. The second lesson using the book *You can be my friend* references the first story. Making connections shows how it can help the reader connect and understand how the characters are feeling.

### 1) How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids

*Materials:* Rath, T., & Reckmeyer, M. (2009). *How full is your bucket? For kids*. New York: Gallup Press.

*Introduction:* Readers make connections as they are reading. You might make a connection to yourself, to another book, or to the world. Today we are going to work on making connections while we read *How full is your bucket?* by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer.

*Cover:* Discuss what you notice on the cover.



Figure 24 Mom is brushing Anna's hair from *How full is your bucket? For kids* by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer.

*Mom is brushing Anna's hair:* When I read this part about getting ready in the morning, it reminds me of when my mom would get my sister and I ready for school. I remember my mom telling me to sit still as she curled my hair. When a book makes me think of my own life I am making a connection to myself.

*When Felix hopes that people will trip and fall:* Felix is not feeling good. His bucket is almost empty. Can you connect with how Felix is feeling?

*When the teacher tells Felix that he wrote a wonderful story:* When I read that a teacher complimented Felix on his story it reminded me of when I was in eighth grade and my teacher shared a story that I had written to the class. That is another connection.

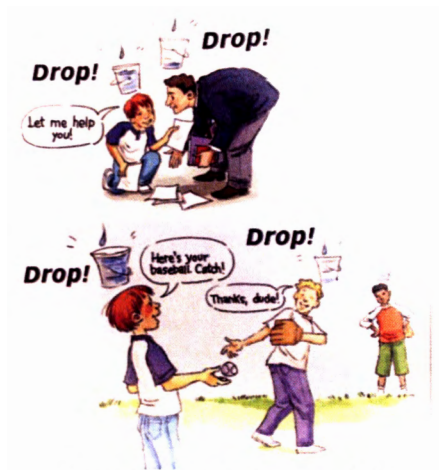


Figure 25 Felix is helping to pick up papers and greeting someone from *How full is your bucket? For kids* by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer.

*Felix is helping to pick up papers and greeting someone:* This reminds me of a time when I helped a friend clean when they dropped something. It made my friend and I both happy. Can you connect with how Felix is feeling? Can you remember a time when you helped someone else and it filled your bucket too?

*Anna's torn doll:* Can you connect with how Anna is feeling? Can you remember a time when something like that happened to you?

*End of story:* When we make connections it helps us understand the story better and understand how the characters are feeling. Discuss how making connections helped them understand the story. Go back through and discuss how connecting with how the characters are feeling helps you understand the story.



## 2) You Can Be My Friend

*Materials:* Child, L. (2008). *You can be my friend*. New York: Penguin Group.

*Introduction:* Readers make connections as they are reading. Yesterday we read *How full is your bucket?* (remind students of some connections that you made)

*Cover:* This is the book *You can be my friend* by Lauren Child. I see two kids on the cover and I am thinking that because the title is you can be my friend that the two become friends.



Figure 26 When Morten comes and doesn't say anything from *You can be my friend* by Lauren Child.

*When Morten comes and doesn't say*

*anything:* When I read this part about

Morten not saying anything and acting

shy, it reminds me of the first day of

kindergarten (referencing my students

first day of kindergarten) and there were

several of my friends who were shy and

didn't say anything the first day of school. Remember when a book makes you think of your own life you are making connections.

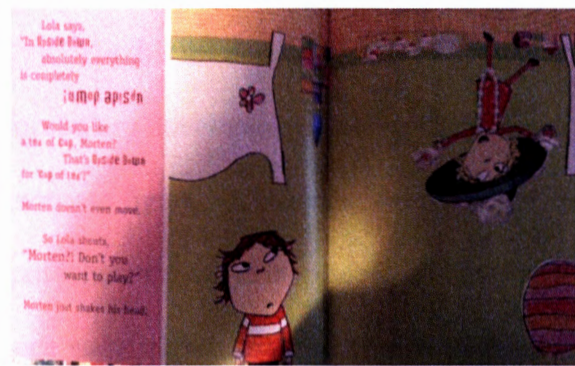


Figure 27 Upside down game from *You can be my friend* by Lauren Child.

*Upside down game:* This reminds me of when I was in elementary school and a new friend that I was playing with was very shy and didn't play either. I can relate to Lola and I remember feeling like my friend didn't like me when they didn't play with me.

*Asks to play round and round:* Can you connect to how Lola is feeling? Can you remember a time when something like that happened to you?

*End of story:* When we make connections it helps us understand the story better and understand how the characters are feeling. Discuss how making connections helped them understand the story. Go back through and discuss how connecting with how the characters are feeling helps you understand the story.

*Vocabulary Development Lesson Plans*

In this section, the focus of the lessons is in vocabulary development. The vocabulary development lessons focus on using the context and using what the reader knows to figure out what the word means. Students will also replace the meaning in the spot where the word is to see if it makes sense. Students will also discuss how understanding what words mean help them understand the text.

1) *Stellaluna*

*Materials:* Cannon, J. (1993). *Stellaluna*. New York: Scholastic.

Have a chart to record words and meanings. The following is a frame that can be used as a chart. (See Appendix for an example of a word-meaning chart)

Words	Meanings

*Introduction & Cover:* We are going to be re-reading *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon. This time when we are reading the book I want you to be on the look out for wonderful words. We are going to record some of the words on a piece of paper. When you hear a wonderful word you can put your finger on your nose.

*First page:* “Each night, Mother Bat would carry Stellaluna clutched to her breast as she flew out to search for food” *clutched* - I am going to reread that sentence again. I see that the mother is carrying Stellaluna. The author mentions that Stellaluna is clutched to her. I



am thinking that *clutched* might mean that she is carrying Stلالuna closely or holding on tight. Let's see if it makes sense in the sentence. Does it mean the same as *clutched*?

*Second page:* "Her baby wings were as limp and useless as wet paper." *limp*, I am going to reread that sentence again. The author talks about her wings being as useless as wet paper. What do we know about wet paper? (call on a few students) so limp probably means something like not strong or not useful. Let's see if it makes sense in the sentence? Does it mean the same as limp?

I then had the students put their finger on their nose when they heard a wonderful word. (some words students have stopped at were *babble*, *curious*, *gracefully*, *clumsy*). I typically pick out a few ahead of time that I want to do and then do a few that the students pick out (but not all, otherwise there may not be enough time in the lesson to read through the story).

*End of story:* There were a lot of wonderful words in this story. Some of the words we heard were...(*clutched*, *limp*, *babble*, *curious*, *gracefully*, *clumsy*). Discuss how we figured out what the words meant.

## 2. Bear snores on

*Materials:* Wilson, K. (2002). *Bear snores on*. New York: Scholastic.

Have a chart to record the wonderful words

*Introduction:* We are going to be reading *Bear snores on* by Karma Wilson. Yesterday we read *Stellaluna* and found some wonderful words like.... We are going to do the same thing for *Bear snores on*. When we are reading the book I want you to be on the look at for wonderful words. We are going to record some of the words on a piece of paper.

When you hear a wonderful word you can put your finger on your nose.

*Cover:* Already on the cover I found a wonderful word *snores*. (also discuss how knowing that snores means that the person or animal is sleeping help them understand that story).

I then had the students put their finger on their nose when they heard a wonderful word. (some words students have stopped at were *lair, nibble, slumbering, heap*). I typically pick out a few ahead of time that I want to do and then do a few that the students pick out.

*End of story:* There were a lot of wonderful words in this story. Some of the words we heard were.... Discuss how we figured out what the words meant. Also discuss how knowing what the word meant helped us to understand the story.

## V. Conclusions

Interactive read-alouds can support students' comprehension (DeBruin-Parcecki & Squibb, 2011; Delacruz, 2013; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hoffman, 2011; Lohfink, 2012; Smolkin & Donovan, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Wiseman, 2011; Wiseman, 2012). Students learn to ask questions, make predictions, infer, and make connections while they are reading. Through interactive read-alouds students are able to hear the thinking of a proficient reader and are given the opportunity to practice applying comprehension strategies with teacher support. Students who are not proficient readers and students who are proficient readers are both able to participate and feel success.

Teachers may feel ill equipped to implement an interactive read-aloud if teachers have not observed interactive read-alouds. It allows teachers to be reassured that the teacher's steps are in the right direction and provides additional support if needed. Teachers can use my interactive read-alouds lessons as a resource to implement in their own classrooms. Teachers may also use them as a guide on how to plan out their own interactive read-alouds by looking at how questions are phased or how to help prepare for interactive read-alouds.

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Appendix  
Word-Meaning Chart  
*Stellaluna*

The following Word-Meaning Chart provides an example of how words were documented from the read aloud activity with the text *Stellaluna* by Janelle Cannon.

Words	Meanings
clutched	Carrying closely, holding on tight
limp	Not strong or not useful
babble	Talk, chatter
curious	Wondering
gracefully	Done well, elegant
clumsy	Not graceful, not done well