Fall 2017

How To Make Read-Aloud In Language Arts Engaging To Students In A Fifth-Grade Classroom

Elizabeth M. Burgos
Hamline University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp

Part of the Education Commons

HOW TO MAKE READ-ALOUD IN LANGUAGE ARTS ENGAGING TO

STUDENTS IN A FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOM

by

Elizabeth M. Burgos

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

December 2017

Primary Advisor: Susan Manikowski
Content Reviewer: Kathryn Fox
Peer Reviewer: Courtney Loynachan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Reading has always been one of the cornerstones of the foundation of education. In the past, the ability to read was a factor that separated the classes and revealed who was educated and who was not. Nowadays, we have recognized the importance for societies to have the goal of a 100% literacy rate, but within everyone being able to read there are still disparities. We now know from recent research that the earlier children are exposed to reading, the better prepared they will be to become independent readers themselves. Children who fall behind in their reading skills early in the primary grades of kindergarten, first, and second grade will have a harder time catching up later to be on grade level in the intermediate grades. Therefore, it is a teacher's duty to help students develop their reading skills, wherever they are at, so that they can have a successful educational experience. The reading support that elementary teachers give to their students will benefit them later in middle school, high school, and higher education where students will be expected to read in order to learn rather than learn how to read.

To support students' reading development in elementary there are many different strategies a teacher can choose to use. Strategies that I have studied and heard about include Guided Reading, Daily 5, CAFE, Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) and many more. One of my favorites though is read-aloud because unlike some of the other reading strategies, the teacher and students are able to share the experience of reading a story. Read-aloud is one of my favorite times of the day where I can sit down with my fifth-

graders and read aloud to them for 15-30 minutes depending on our schedule. What I have noticed is that sometimes my students do not seem to be paying attention to what I am reading, and they are not excited to continue in our book. This observation made me start wondering what I could do to make my read-aloud time more captivating for students. Thus, my research question focuses on *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.*

In this chapter I will explain my reasoning for choosing my research question both on a professional and personal level. I will also describe what I hope to learn from investigating my research question as well as outline the story of my journey to my question. I will recount the important people and events that have led me to be interested in the topic of read-aloud, and at the end of the chapter, I will summarize the content previously stated.

Professional and Personal Significance

One of the compelling reasons for why I chose my research topic is because I am currently in the classroom teaching fifth-grade Spanish Immersion in a suburban school in the upper Midwest. I have been teaching for five years and I have learned about how impactful reading aloud can be on children's reading growth. I know that read-aloud helps students enhance their reading skills because usually the teacher chooses a text that is higher than grade-level standards. For me, this means I need to choose an English text that is at the sixth-grade level so that I can challenge students while reading the book, but also be there as a guide to help students' comprehension. If I am reading aloud to students in Spanish, which is usually their second language, I make sure the text is still more advanced than the level they are at, but that may not even be at a fifth-grade level

because my students are not native speakers. I acknowledge that in either language, read-aloud is a strategy that will help students increase their proficiency in reading, and I want to be a teacher who uses multiple strategies to support students. Therefore, I am interested in learning more ways to engage my students during read-aloud which led me to my research question.

Another reason I chose the topic and research question I did was because of the personal significance that reading and read-aloud have to me. I loved to read as a child and all the way through high school because it gave me a way to escape reality and become caught up in characters' stories and plights. I devoured books and would choose reading in the car over sightseeing on any family road trip. I had a pleasant experience with reading as a child and I want my students to feel the same way. When I went to college and started working, my reading time decreased, so I want my students to make the most of the time they have right now. I hope to inspire them to love reading as much as I did and to develop a lifelong habit of reading that they can take with them to share with their friends and families. Read-aloud provides me the opportunity to share the love of reading with my students, and that is why I want to research how to make it more interesting and purposeful.

From pursuing my research topic and question I hope to learn more about read-aloud in general. I want to discover the definition of the strategy and to learn why it is so important to implement in the classroom. I also hope to learn specific techniques that I can use to make my read-aloud time more captivating to my students. My goal is to have my students be more engaged and to be active listeners rather than passive participants.

Overall, I hope to ignite a spark with my read-aloud so that everyone involved (myself and my students) is enjoying themselves and truly benefitting from the shared experience.

Background Context

Hearing stories read aloud has played an important role in my life. As mentioned above, I loved to read as a child and I think this was due to the excellent work my parents did by introducing reading to me early on in my childhood. My mom and dad took turns reading to me every night before bed. I remember Mom would do wonderful voices for the different characters, and Dad would make up his own stories about a pig called Barbecue who had a French accent. At an early age, I was shown by my parents how fun and intriguing stories could be when told and read aloud. I was always enthralled when my parents read aloud to me and that pleasure followed me into the beginning of my formal education.

I do not remember all the detailed events that took place in kindergarten, first, and second grade, but I do remember story time. I remember my kindergarten teacher sitting down on a special chair with us students sitting on the rug at her feet, craning our necks to look up at the book she had in her hands. I remember how my first- and second-grade teacher (I looped with her) would pause and take time to show us the illustrations on each page as she read. I have memories of teachers' facial expressions changing as they read us a story and how their voices would change pitch depending on which character was talking. Story time, or read-aloud, was always something I looked forward to at school, and I would feel lucky if we were able to listen to more than two stories in a day. There was a sense of satisfaction and pride of having an adult who cared about you share something as intimate as a story with you that made me realize how meaningful read-

aloud had become to me. I wanted to share the same experience with others and this became possible once I turned into an independent reader.

As I completed elementary school and began middle school, I started conducting my own read-alouds. My dad was my audience because I usually read aloud to him in the car as we travelled from activity to activity. I had to complete a certain amount of reading time each week for my reading logs, so I took advantage of our 15-minute rides and shared whatever book I was reading with him. I sat in the passenger seat and read aloud which helped me improve my reading fluency and prosody because I had to read in a way that would help him follow along. Soon it came to be that on long road trips instead of listening to the radio or a CD, my dad would ask for me to read aloud. We even finished whole books together from start to finish if the trip was long enough or if Dad was hooked on a story. After every ride or reading session my dad would praise me saying that I was a good reader and that there was no one else he liked listening to more. I associated Dad's compliments with a positive experience of reading aloud and I have maintained that feeling towards read-aloud even until today.

During my college years I did not practice reading for pleasure as much as I had before and even less was I reading aloud to someone. It was not until the last months of undergraduate that I once again discovered how significant read-aloud can be. I was interviewing for a teaching job as a Spanish Immersion teacher and part of the interview included observing a class in action. I walked into a fourth-grade Spanish Immersion classroom right in the middle of read-aloud and I was amazed at what I saw. The teacher was in a special chair with students sitting on the floor at her feet, craning their necks to see the pages of the book she was holding in her hands. As the teacher read, fluent

Spanish came out of her mouth, and I was impressed to see students nodding their heads and giggling in reaction to the events of the story. They were understanding everything the teacher was reading even though it was in Spanish which was a skill that I personally could not do until college. From that moment on I saw how read-aloud could be an effective way to help students build second-language communication skills as well as reading comprehension skills. Once more, read-aloud was becoming a part of my life and I wanted to integrate it into my own teaching and share this experience and love for reading as I had with my dad years before.

The interview where I saw the fourth-grade classroom was with the district that eventually hired me. I became a fifth-grade Spanish Immersion teacher at an elementary school, and I took the opportunity to implement the strategy of read-aloud with my class. The year that stands out to me the most in reference to this technique is my second year. I decided to read *The BFG* by Roald Dahl to my students in Spanish to help them with their second language. I chose this book because it would be challenging for students to read on their own, and I had read the book before so I knew the story was fun and creative, as most of Dahl's books tend to be. The main character is a giant who speaks grammatically incorrect, so this gave me the chance to play with his voice as I had seen my parents and teachers do with book characters. When I read, I made sure to read with passion and I loved seeing my students' reactions. There was also a lot of humor written in the story and my students howled with laughter which made me laugh too. By the end of the year, we finished the book and I remember this as a great accomplishment for myself as well as for my students for persevering with the story. After such a marvelous

experience, I was looking forward to the next school year's read-aloud time, but it did not result in the same outcome.

For the past few years I have started a read aloud with each class, but none of them has been as exciting and fun as with my second-year class. I have even managed to finish a book or two with my students, but the reading session did not feel the same. I have tried books in Spanish and in English to see if it was the language that was making a difference, but neither has led me to the results I desire. I increasingly see that my students only passively listen to the story I am reading and only a handful can summarize what happened the last time we read. I want to change this so that I can feel the joy again of sharing a story with my students and know that they are participating in the experience just as much as I am. This is the journey that has led me to my research topic and has led me to question *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.*

Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter I stated the reasons why I chose to focus on read-aloud for my research topic including professional and personal rationales. Next, I outlined what I hope to learn by investigating this topic including general information about read-aloud as well as specific strategies to use with my class in order to engage students more. After that, I narrated the background information of my personal experiences that have led me to my research question. Through many people and events, I have realized the significance that read-aloud has had on my life, and I aspire to share this with my students. To do so, I must research more information and be able to teach

my students how to take part in read-aloud so that they develop a love for reading just as I had when I was their age.

I first must dig deeper into my research topic so that I can study what there is to know about read-aloud. In chapter two, the literature on read-aloud is reviewed so that I can find out more about what an effective read-aloud encompasses. In chapter two I explore four main topics including the reading theory that forms the basis for read-aloud, the definition of read-aloud and its components, the benefits of read-aloud, and strategies to engage students in read-aloud. In chapter three I describe the project for my research question and explain what theories and models I used to create it. In chapter four I reflect upon what I have learned from completing the capstone process, how my project benefits the teaching profession, and I describe how my project can be used in the future by myself and others.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of literature has been completed to provide me with detailed information about the topic of read-aloud in language arts. I am curious to know more about using the strategy of read-aloud with students and what I can do as the teacher to capture my students' attention so they actively participate in read-aloud sessions. The following review of literature informs the research question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.*

I will begin the literature review by describing Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature. This will provide a base from which to explore literature and how people interact with it to gain insight about how to engage students in read-aloud. Next, I will investigate the general strategy of read-aloud and look at how it is defined, what its components are, and what teachers can do to implement it effectively. This close examination of the read-aloud strategy will give me a deeper understanding of what read-aloud is which will help me create a more powerful read-aloud experience. After exploring the specific strategy, I will then consider the benefits of implementing read-aloud in the classroom. Knowing the benefits that read-aloud brings to students will validate the use of it which will support my desire to answer my research question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom. Lastly, I will delve into the different strategies that a teacher can use to engage students

in read-aloud. The strategies are all based in a reader response approach that includes artistic response, written response, and oral response. By examining multiple engagement strategies, I will be compiling a list of ideas to use in the classroom to engage students more fully in read-aloud.

The Transactional Theory of Literature

Whenever a teacher decides to implement a reading strategy in the classroom, such as read-aloud, it is important to know what fundamental reading belief is behind it. In order to better know why read-aloud is even a worthwhile strategy to have in the classroom, a review of research on the different reading theories that influence it was completed. This section will provide an overview of one of the most significant reading theories that justifies using the strategy of read-aloud in the classroom: Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature. The first part will summarize Rosenblatt's argument that the main focus of literature in the past was not on the reader, but that it should be now. The second part of the section will review Rosenblatt's definition of her theory of transaction, and the last part will describe Rosenblatt's two forms of response to literature as outlined in her theory. By researching the literature on this specific theory, I will gain information to uphold the idea of using read-aloud in the classroom which will inform my research question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

Focus on the reader. In her book, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Rosenblatt (1978) presents a metaphor for how to understand the way in which literature has been viewed in the past: a stage. She states that on the stage of literature there are three performers: the author, the book

(literary work), and the reader. Rosenblatt (1978) describes that the order of the three actors is important because it reveals who has been in the spotlight the most. Thus, she paints the picture of the book being in center stage while the other two are on either side relegated to stage right and stage left. Rosenblatt (1978) explains that "during the many centuries when classical and neoclassical ideas prevailed in one or another form" (p. 2) the spotlight was on the book. This was because in those times, the literary work was viewed as a mirror of reality, and what was most important was determining how well it imitated the real world (Rosenblatt, 1978). According to Rosenblatt (1978), it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the spotlight changed to be upon another performer: the author.

Rosenblatt (1978) writes that during the latter part of the eighteenth century, the book was viewed as "embodying the personality and life of the author" (p. 2) and was seen more as an event in the author's life rather than looked at as a reflection of the outer world as before. Even after such a change in focus, Rosenblatt (1978) states that the third performer was still neglected and the spotlight has not landed upon him because the reader has been seen as indifferent and not playing a major role. She argues against this view, and claims that it is now time to focus on the reader and what he has to bring to the stage along with the author and the book. This is the foundational idea that leads her to create the transactional theory of literature which centers on the performer that has previously been overlooked: the reader (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Transaction, not interaction. Rosenblatt's theory focuses on the transaction between the reader and the text. She deliberately chooses to use the word "transaction" and not "interaction" because the latter suggests that there are two separate objects doing

something to each other when in fact they are working with each other, "each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 17) simultaneously. Rosenblatt's theory upholds the idea that in order to make meaning, a transaction must occur between the reader and the text (Angelillo, 2003; Dugan, 1997; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). This means that the making of meaning is an active process where the reader is no longer a passive participant. The author provides the text that a reader reads, but it is no more than marks on a page until the reader comes and brings his own background knowledge and life experiences to it which leads to constructing meaning (Hancock, 2008; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1978). Only in this process of transaction between text and reader is the literary work realized; it does not exist until the two transact (Rosenblatt, 1978).

> Rosenblatt (1978) outlines her transactional theory in the following way:
>
> A two-way, or better, a circular, process can be postulated, in which the reader responds to the verbal stimuli offered by the text, but at the same time he must draw selectively on the resources of his own fund of experience and sensibility to provide and organize the substance of his response. Out of this new experience, the literary work, is formed. (p. 43)

Thus, it is the transaction between the reader and the text that brings the literary work to life in what Rosenblatt (1978) calls a reading-event. She deems it as such because "for the reader, the poem [literary work] is lived-through during his intercourse with the text" (p. 14). A reading-event is an experience to be created just like any other event in a reader's life. Similarly, as one responds to events in one's own life, a reader responds to the reading-event that he is experiencing in different ways (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Aesthetic and efferent stances. Rosenblatt specifies two ways, which she calls stances, that a reader chooses to respond to text: efferent and aesthetic (Barone, 2011; Hancock, 2008; Spiegel, 2008). The distinguishing factor between the two is "the difference in the reader's focus of attention during the reading-event" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 23). When a reader selects the efferent stance, then he or she focuses on gaining information from the text after finishing reading (Hancock, 2008; Rosenblatt, 1978; Spiegel, 1998). On the other hand, when a reader chooses to respond to a text aesthetically, he or she is more focused on the lived-through experience that occurs during the reading-event like the thoughts, feelings, and personal connections that he or she experiences (Hancock, 2008; Spiegel, 1998; Worthy, Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp, & Shih, 2012).

One should be careful of thinking about these two stances toward text as mutually exclusive because in fact they are only extremes on a spectrum that has different degrees of aesthetic and efferent responses (Rosenblatt, 1978). According to Rosenblatt (1978), the reader can choose a stance to take before reading, but he can also move along the continuum while he is reading. It all depends on the "attitude of the reader, in what dimension of his response to the text becomes central to him" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 36). In this way, a reader can focus on some details in a text using an efferent stance and then choose to read other details in the same text aesthetically by changing his focus of attention during the reading-event (Rosenblatt, 1978). This reveals the complexity of how a reader chooses to respond during a literary transaction, and it also shows how big a role the reader plays when making a literary work come to life.

Summary. Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature finally brings into the spotlight one of the forgotten performers of the literary stage: the reader. Her theory proposes the idea that the reader needs to transact with the text in order to make meaning and to bring a literary work into form. According to Rosenblatt (1978), the reader brings his experience and knowledge to the reading-event as well as selects the stance he wants to take in the literary transaction. It is the reader's "selective attention" that allows him to move up and down the efferent and aesthetic spectrum when transacting with a text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Through the circular process of transaction, a reader is able to create a literary work of art and be an active participant in reading. This is the kind of reader teachers want their students to become, and this theory serves as the basis for many different reading strategies in the classroom including read-aloud.

Read-Aloud

A review of literature on the strategy of read-aloud was completed because it provides information about the procedure itself. It is important to understand what read-aloud encompasses before enacting it in the classroom which is what this section will review. The first part of this section will define what read-aloud is and what it is not. The second part will outline the different components of an effective read-aloud, and the third part of this section will lay out the many duties that a teacher needs to perform when carrying out a read-aloud with students. By researching what read-aloud is all about, I will know more about how to present a more compelling read-aloud which will help to address the question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

What is read-aloud? Recently there has been more of a focus on assessments when it comes to reading, but even within a testing environment, one strategy has withstood the test of time because it is still considered best practice to balance out a language arts curriculum: the read-aloud (Wadsworth, 2008). Read-aloud is an instructional practice where a teacher reads a text aloud to students incorporating pitch, tone, pace, volume, pauses, eye contact, questions, and comments to create a fluent and captivating reading experience (Johnston, 2016; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). Implementing the strategy of read-aloud in the classroom is not just a teacher decoding the words on a page in front of a group of children; "it is a performance…it is an art very akin to storytelling" (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006, p. 4).

Just like with storytelling, the role of the audience is not a passive one. The job of the listeners, in this case the students, is to "actively listen and visualize the words they are hearing" (Allen, 2000, p. 49) so they can participate in the read-aloud experience with the teacher and with each other. Read-aloud is not an instructional practice where the teacher is the only one speaking just because he or she is reading. As mentioned above, read-aloud includes questions and comments, and students are encouraged to interact with the text and with one another during the event (Johnston, 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that read-aloud is not just one more tool in a teacher's toolbox to use for reading instruction. It is a "sociocultural literary event" (Yocom, 1993, p.2) because students are socially interacting with each other and the teacher within the culture of the classroom, school, and society in which they live. Read-aloud is a powerful instructional strategy to use in the classroom, and a teacher must know all the elements needed to create an effective read-aloud experience for students.

The components of read-aloud. The first component of a read-aloud that a teacher needs to consider is the "selection of a book" (Yocom, 1993, p. 103). To read aloud to students, a teacher must have something to read, but with so many options available it can be overwhelming to narrow down the choices. Many researchers recommend that a teacher picks out a book that is considered high-quality literature (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004; Fisher & Medvic, 2003; Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993). Many times, this means that a teacher selects an award-winning book (Fisher et al., 2004) because it has already been deemed above-average in comparison to others.

Another component that a teacher must include in his read-aloud is to set aside one specific time each day in the class schedule solely devoted to read-aloud (Barone, 2011; Drogowski, 2009; Hoffman et al., 1993; Trelease, 2006; Yocom, 1993). It is important to keep the time for read-aloud consistent day to day so that "children know that, no matter what happens, a story will be read aloud" (Yocom, 1993, p. 107). The element that follows setting aside a time for read-aloud each day is figuring out how much time should be allotted. In general, researchers recommend that read-aloud lasts at least twenty minutes or longer (Fisher & Medvic, 2003; Hoffman et al., 1993; Johnston, 2016) depending on the class, the teacher, and other factors that would influence a teacher's decision to read longer. The most important part to remember is that read-aloud is not just a 5-minute time filler, but a solid block of time where students are read to each day.

The last piece of setting up a read-aloud is the space. A teacher needs to choose a place in which to read aloud to students. This can vary from teacher to teacher, but on the whole, the space should be a place where the teacher and the children are comfortable

(Trelease, 2006), and where the children can position themselves to "hear the story, see the pictures, and share smiles, laughter, delight, and even sorrow and sadness in the story together" (Fisher & Medvic, 2003, p. 34). With all of the aforementioned components in place, a teacher should begin to shift her attention to what she needs to do to perform a successful read-aloud.

What should a teacher do? The first thing a teacher must do to prepare himself for read-aloud is to become familiar with the selected text by previewing it and reading it alone before reading it aloud to students (Fisher et al., 2004; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006; Trelease, 2006; Wadsworth, 2008; Yocom, 1993). According to Wadsworth (2008), this also gives the teacher time to mark any passages she wants to use for thinking aloud as well as any parts she wants to use for initiating student discussion. After prereading the whole book, a teacher must focus on the delivery of the read-aloud to students. It is the teacher's job to read aloud with expression by changing his voice to match the dialogue and use relevant body gestures and facial expressions to engage students in the story (Drogowski, 2009; Fisher et al., 2004; Johnston, 2016; Trelease, 2006; Yocom, 1993).

While reading, the teacher should model her thinking by thinking aloud (Angelillo, 2003; Ivey, 2003; Johnston, 2016). As stated by Dugan (1997), "by modeling thinking aloud, actually pausing at intervals during reading to voice thoughts about the story, teachers illuminate thinking processes used to make sense of a text" (p. 88). Not only can a teacher help students learn how to think about a text by stopping to think aloud, but she can also increase students' vocabulary by pausing occasionally to study an interesting word or phrase (Cunningham, 2014). It is the teacher's duty to choose specific

words in the read-aloud text to introduce to students while reading (Johnston, 2016). As described by Trelease (2006), one way to do this is to stop after reading the identified word and give a brief explanation or a synonym in order to teach the new word to students in what he calls the "reading with explanation" style (p. 55). All the previous tasks are the responsibility of the teacher only, but during read-aloud it is also a teacher's job to invite students to participate in the experience.

One way a teacher can promote student participation is to stop regularly during the read-aloud and ask open-ended questions about the story (Dugan, 1997; Fisher et al., 2004; Johnston, 2016; Long & Gove, 2003). Johnston (2016) claims that "open-ended questions monitor comprehension, allow students to infer based on the text, and provide opportunities for critical thinking" (p. 42). By stopping during reading to ask questions, the teacher is providing the opportunity for students to respond and share their thoughts in the moment. Another way the teacher can encourage students to interact with the read-aloud is to provide time after the session is complete. According to Levesque (1989), "listeners need a little time to reflect on the good thoughts and feelings that were stimulated by the story" in after-reading activities that "allow the listeners to build on the meaning that was made during the listening experience" (p. 94).

One activity that a teacher can implement with her class after reading for the day is discussion (Spiegel, 1998; Trelease, 2006). The teacher facilitates discussion by asking open-ended questions and having students "share their thoughts, reactions, expectations, or concerns about the book the teacher was reading" (Fisher et al., 2004, p. 13). Through this type of guided discussion, the teacher provides the opportunity for students to make meaning, reflect on the book, and ask questions as a whole class (Worthy et al., 2012). A

different activity the teacher can assign to students to foster interaction with the read-aloud is writing (Dugan, 1997). After finishing the read-aloud for the day, the teacher can have students freely write in a journal about their thoughts and reactions to the reading, or teachers can select a specific writing prompt that students need to respond to (Fisher et al., 2004). Either way, students are given the opportunity to write about their reflections which allows them to dig deeper into the read-aloud text. These and other response options will be reviewed later in the chapter, but for now it is important to note that it is the teacher's responsibility to give opportunities for student response during read-aloud.

Summary. In summary, read-aloud is an instructional practice where a teacher reads a text aloud to his students expecting them to actively listen and imagine the story in their heads. Students are also expected to interact with the text, the teacher, and each other making read-aloud a literary event rather than a time-filler. There are many components to read-aloud including the selection of a book, the time of day to perform it, the length of time to read, and the area in which it will be carried out. The teacher also has many duties to accomplish in order to provide a successful read-aloud like prereading the text, reading aloud with expression, thinking aloud, teaching new vocabulary words, asking open-ended questions, facilitating discussion, and providing time for written response. When all these components and responsibilities are met, a successful read-aloud experience is sure to follow that benefits students in a multitude of ways.

The Benefits of Read-Aloud

When reviewing the research question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom, it begs the following question: Why implement the instructional practice of read-aloud in the classroom at all? It is important

to know why it is worth a teacher's time to integrate read-aloud into her instructional day. Therefore, a review of literature on the benefits of read-aloud for students was completed in this section. The first part of this section will provide an overview of some of the general benefits that students will gain from participating in a read-aloud. The second part will describe the benefits to students' growth in their language skills, and the third part will explain how during a read-aloud, the teacher acts as a role model for students in different ways. The fourth part of this section will explore how read-aloud benefits students' comprehension of text, and the last part will examine how read-aloud benefits students as individual readers. By reviewing all the benefits that read-aloud brings to students, I will validate the use of read-aloud in the classroom as a solid instructional practice which will then lead me to question how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

　　　　General benefits. When a teacher performs read-aloud in the classroom, there are many general benefits that students receive just from being read to on a daily basis. The first positive result of read-aloud is that students are introduced to a variety of literature including different literary genres, various authors, specific text structures, new topics, and styles of writing (Allen, 2000; Barone, 2011; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006). Without a teacher carefully and thoughtfully selecting a book for read-aloud, students may never be exposed to an assortment of literary styles. Read-aloud provides students with the opportunity to branch out and discover new literary interests.

　　　　Another benefit of read-aloud is that it helps students build background knowledge (Allen, 2000; Barone, 2011; Johnston, 2016; Trelease, 2006; Wadsworth, 2008). During read-aloud, teachers present new topics, themes, and information to

students that they are learning about for the first time. Students intake the new information and work with it and think about it until it becomes stored in their brains so that they can use it later to make other connections and create new learnings. Not only does read-aloud support the development of background knowledge, but it also "builds general world knowledge" (Allen, 2000, p. 47) and "broadens a listener's worldview" (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006, p. 2). When a teacher delivers a read-aloud to students, he is opening doors for them to explore other cultures and points of view. Listeners in a read-aloud have the opportunity to learn about how others around the world live and think, and are able to grow in their empathy for and understanding of them. The benefits described above are only the general outcomes of implementing an effective read-aloud, but there are also more specific ways in which read-aloud benefits students.

Student language growth. One benefit of read-aloud for students is that it helps develop their overall language acquisition (Allen, 2000; Hoffman et al., 1993; Johnston, 2016; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Wadsworth, 2008). Students at any age are always working towards improving their language skills whether it is spoken or written, and the read-aloud strategy supports both. Reading aloud to students supports their oral language development (Fisher et al., 2004; Johnston, 2016) because the teacher is reading with accuracy, fluency, and prosody. Hearing the written word read aloud in a correctly-spoken manner gives students the language input they need to improve their own speaking skills.

One more way that read-aloud promotes oral language development is by expanding students' vocabulary (Barone, 2011; Fisher et al., 2004; Johnston, 2016; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Trelease, 2006;

Wadsworth, 2008). According to Trelease (2006), whenever an adult reads aloud to a child, the spoken words flow into the child's ear. He explains that, "inside the ear these words collect in a reservoir called the listening vocabulary. Eventually, if you pour enough words into it, the reservoir starts to overflow—pouring words into the speaking vocabulary, reading vocabulary, and writing vocabulary" (Trelease, 2006, p. 33). Therefore, not only is read-aloud developing students' oral language skills, but also their writing.

Read-aloud enhances students' writing skills because it exposes them to quality writing. According to Trelease (2006), it is important for students to practice writing to develop their writing skills, but what they need to do even more is to read so they can "watch how *other* people throw words around to catch meaning" (p. 43). By carrying out an effective read-aloud with quality literature, a teacher is providing her students with models of good writing that they can then use to improve their own writing. Overall, the read-aloud strategy bolsters students' language skills in various areas which is only one of the many benefits it brings to students.

The teacher as a model. An additional benefit of read-aloud to students is that it gives them a reading role model (Trelease, 2006). The teacher who is reading aloud to students serves as a model for language (Barone, 2011) as well as "models effective reading behaviors" (Allen, 2000, p. 48). According to the 1985 report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, teachers who read aloud to their students provide them with "a model of skillful oral reading" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, p. 51). Other researchers agree with this conclusion and state that teachers who read aloud to their students, model reading fluency (Allen, 2000; Johnston, 2016; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006;

Wadsworth, 2008). The benefit to students of having a fluent model is that they listen to the correct way to read and internalize it which enhances their own reading fluency (Barone, 2011).

Teachers who implement read-aloud not only model fluency, but they also model reading strategies (Fisher et al., 2004). During a read-aloud, teachers help students learn about different reading components (Allen, 2000) by modeling how to "ask questions, hypothesize and predict, make connections to what you already know and to what you have read, relate the information to personal experiences, [and] keep a check on whether or not you truly understand as you read" (Ivey, 2003, p. 813). Through modeling various reading processes during read-aloud, teachers help students to improve their overall literacy learning (Fisher & Medvic, 2003; Johnston, 2016). When a teacher acts as a reading model during read-aloud, it is a great benefit to students because it helps them to become better readers themselves which includes understanding the text better.

Support in comprehension. A read-aloud delivered by a teacher in his classroom enhances students' understanding of the text (Ivey, 2003; Johnston, 2016; Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006). In the first place, the teacher provides the "support of a more experienced reader" (Barone, 2011, p. 24) during a read-aloud which allows students to understand the text just as the teacher does (Ivey, 2003) with his guidance along the way. This allows the teacher to choose a more difficult text that students may not be able to read on their own and make it "interesting and comprehensible" (Ivey, 2003, p.812) during a read-aloud with the whole class. The reason read-aloud benefits student comprehension is because of the way it is organized. The teacher is the only one looking at the text and decoding it which takes that burden off the student. This

consequently frees up students' minds to focus on creating the image of what is happening in the story (Allen, 2000) which leads to deeper understanding.

Read-aloud also provides students with a safe space to feel comfortable enough to construct meaning by interacting with the text, the teacher, and classmates. According to Wadsworth (2008), "during a read aloud…students are enveloped in a risk-free learning environment that removes the pressure of achievement and the fear of failure". In this setting, students are more likely to ask clarifying questions, negotiate meaning, and analyze text than when they are on their own or when they know they are being evaluated. Therefore, during read-aloud students can comprehend more with the help of the teacher even when the text may be at a higher level than they are used to. With such support and guidance during read-aloud, it is not surprising to see that some of the reading experience rubs off on students as individual readers.

The student as a reader. The greatest benefit of read-aloud is that it encourages students to become lifelong readers (Barone, 2011). Sharing a book with students by reading it aloud expressively and with passion "has the potential to spark a love of reading" (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006, p. 1) that students will carry with them hopefully into adulthood. Through their experience of read-aloud, students are introduced to the thrill of reading and learn how to take delight in it (Allen, 2000; Fisher et al., 2004; Trelease, 2006). According to Wadsworth (2008), read-aloud helps to promote a passion for reading in students which in turn, as other researchers have found, leads to a motivation in students to want to read more (Cunningham, 2014; Fisher et al., 2004; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009; Worthy et al., 2012).

With a desire to read more caused by their positive read-aloud experience, students are more intrigued by the idea of reading independently (Barone, 2011; Ivey, 2003). They even develop ideas from read-aloud about what topics, genres, authors, and types of text they want to pursue on their own (Allen, 2000). It is a simple, yet important, lesson for teachers to learn that just "reading to them [students]…is a powerful way to get students to read new texts on their own" (Ivey, 2003, p. 812). Out of all the benefits listed and described above, this last one is the most impactful because it creates independent readers who will become lifelong enthusiasts of reading.

Summary. In conclusion, the benefits of read-aloud are numerous and diverse. There are straightforward ones that include exposure to different types of literature, the construction of background knowledge, and introduction to worldviews. There are others that focus on student development of skills in language, vocabulary, writing, fluency, and reading strategies. In addition, read-aloud benefits students by providing them with a role model of good oral fluency and someone who can model the different components of literacy a reader should be practicing. For students, there is also the benefit of having an experienced adult reader with them to support their comprehension of the text especially when it may be at a higher level than they are accustomed to reading on their own. Lastly, read-aloud produces independent readers by sharing the love of reading with students which motivates them to read independently. All of these benefits are more than enough to justify integrating read-aloud into the daily classroom routine, so what teachers should focus on next is how to make read-aloud engaging to students when it does occur.

Strategies to Engage Students

This section will provide a description of the types of instructional strategies a teacher can use in the classroom with read-aloud. It is important for a teacher to be familiar with various strategies so that she can engage students more fully during read-aloud time. The basis for these strategies lies in a theory called reader response which itself is "greatly influenced by the work of Rosenblatt" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 42). The first part of this section will outline what reader response is and the benefits to students of using this approach. The second part will examine artistic response to literature, the third part will explore written response, and the fourth part will describe oral response and its benefits. As a result of reviewing literature that provides multiple strategies of reader response, specific answers are given to the question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

Reader response. Once again, it is important to identify the theory in which a reading strategy is based before it is used. As described earlier in this chapter, the read-aloud strategy has its foundation in Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature. This same theory has also led to others that focus on Rosenblatt's statements that readers respond to text in a literary transaction. One of these theories is the basis for the strategies that a teacher can use with students to engage them more with read-aloud: the reader response theory.

As defined by Barone (2011), "reader response happens as a person is read to or reads independently. Response is grounded in the belief that reading is an active process, with meaning being constructed continuously through intellectual and emotional connections" (p. 39). One can clearly see the link between this theory and Rosenblatt's with the role that the reader plays in making meaning and responding aesthetically.

Spiegel (1998) also shows the connection between the two theories in her description of "the four basic assumptions of reader response theory: stance is important; readers make meaning; this meaning is personal but also grounded in text; and because readers themselves make meaning, multiple interpretations of text are constructed" (p. 42). The stance Spiegel mentions refers to Rosenblatt's aesthetic and efferent stances, the ways in which a reader focuses attention on a text and how the reader responds. Her list of assumptions also includes Rosenblatt's idea that the reader is the one who makes meaning during the literary transaction with the text which also supports Rosenblatt's belief that meaning cannot be found solely in either part when they are separate. The reader response theory upholds the idea that the reader is an active participant by constantly responding to what he is reading. This is what teachers need to help students do in daily read-aloud to engage them more with the text.

There are multiple benefits from taking on a reader response approach during read-aloud. One benefit is that when students are given the opportunity to respond to literature and make their own meaning, then they feel like they have more control and become more confident in themselves as readers (Spiegel, 1998). Another benefit is that students "develop critical and creative thinking skills" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 28) through the process of responding to literature. Students start to become more reflective and critical about what they read, or hear in the case of read-aloud, due to participating in reader response (Spiegel, 1998). They even "gain an appreciation for multiple interpretations along with a tolerance for and even expectation of ambiguity" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 43) because they recognize the idea that different readers can make diverse meaning from the same base text. According to Spiegel (1998), this leads students to

"higher levels of thinking and richer understandings of literature" (p. 45) which is just another benefit of having students take part in reader response. In order for students to gain all the benefits mentioned above, teachers need to give them time and teach them how to respond, but one or two ways will not suffice for students to create their own toolbox of responses (Spiegel, 1998). Teachers need to supply students with multiple ways to respond through different mediums: artistic response, written response, and oral response.

Artistic response. One form of artistic response to literature is through visual representation using the strategy of drawing because it can "reflect comprehension, emotions, attention to story detail, and personal interpretation of [the] text" (Hancock, 2008, p. 19). Drawing as a reader's response can be specific like a sketch of a character or a particular scene, or it can be more intangible like a drawing of an emotion the reader felt during the story (Barone, 2011). An example strategy of the latter is Harste, Short, and Burke's sketch-to-stretch strategy where the reader responds to "theme, characters and their relationships, conflict, and feelings through sketching using symbols, colors, shapes, lines, and textures" (as cited in Whitin, 1996, p. 117). Using such an abstract technique pushes the reader to think in a different way and to be creative with the manner in which she interprets feelings and ideas.

Whether it is a concrete drawing or a more conceptual one, either artistic response can be accomplished at any time during the read-aloud event. Angelillo (2003) recommends that teachers pause periodically while reading aloud to give students time to sketch and respond to what is being read. At other times, a teacher may choose to have students wait until the end of the read-aloud session before drawing. In either case, the

purpose of using the artistic response of sketching is the same: "to make sense of stories" (Whitin, 1996, p. 7). Overall, drawing is one way to engage students with the text by having them visually represent their understandings and responses to the read-aloud. A bonus to using this strategy with students is that if it is done during the read-aloud or immediately after, it can be used like a brainstorm of ideas for written and oral responses that may be constructed later on (Hancock, 2008).

Written response. Another way to engage students during read-aloud is by using written response strategies. Writing allows students to take "their thoughts, opinions, feelings, and reactions" to the read-aloud text and store them in writing so that they will not be forgotten as can happen with oral responses (Hancock, 2008, p. 21). One writing item that many researchers recommend teachers use is the student literature response journal (Barone, 2011; Dugan, 1997; Golden & Handloff, 1993; Hancock, 2008). According to Golden and Handloff (1993), writing in a journal is one of the best tools for students to use in order to organize their own thoughts and reactions in a coherent manner. The advantage of using literature response journals is that every student has his or her own, and they can be used for writing ideas down before, during, or after the read-aloud event (Barone, 2011; Golden & Handloff, 1993).

If a teacher does not want to use student response journals, or just has not introduced them yet, then he can use a different item to engage students in written response: the sticky-note. The sticky-note provides students the opportunity to jot down shorter in-the-moment thoughts and reactions while the teacher is reading aloud (Barone, 2011; Dugan, 1997). Dugan (1997) calls these short, written responses "wonderings" and states that they should be "questions or comments that do not have specific answers, but

open the door for exploring ideas" (p. 88). These "wonderings" can then be used for

journal entries that expand on the ideas, or they can be used as prompts for a class

discussion (Barone, 2011; Dugan, 1997; Spiegel, 1998). If a discussion does take place,

then another opportunity is presented to use the student response journal because students

can then "choose some aspect, theme, or interpretation to explore further in their

journals" (Dugan, 1997, p. 89) which will give them time to dig deeper into their personal

opinions, feelings, and reactions to the read-aloud text. As described above, written

response can take many forms when used to engage students in read-aloud, and it helps

students express their understandings in a more personal way. In contrast, the last

response to literature that will be reviewed in this chapter offers students the chance to

share their reactions publicly in oral response.

Oral response. The last response strategy that will be mentioned in this chapter

is oral response to literature. Students can engage more with read-aloud when they are

granted time to talk about what was read during a read-aloud session. According to

Spiegel (1998), "discussion permits intensive, extended interactions over books" (p. 43)

which, as described by other researchers, is accomplished by the teacher who facilitates

the discussion asking open-ended questions and the students who share their thoughts,

ideas, emotions, predictions, wonderings, and concerns with each other in a safe space

where everyone can take part (Dugan, 1997; Fisher et al., 2004; Worthy et al., 2012). In a

class discussion, students are talking about the text with one another and can depend on

classmates to clarify misunderstandings, answer questions about the story, and

hypothesize together about why characters acted the way they did or wonder what might

happen next (Almasi, 1996). This conversation, mostly managed by the students with the

teacher only in a facilitative role, leads to a deeper understanding of the text for students (Gambrell, 1996). During discussion students are given the opportunity to create shared meanings for the story that "go beyond what they could construct alone or without verbal interaction" (Barrentine, 1996, p. 53). This is only one of the benefits of having students participate in oral response.

Other benefits include supporting students' language development and developing students' thinking skills (Worthy et al., 2012). All of oral reader response is done through speech, so students improve their communication skills (Gambrell, 1996) when sharing in a discussion because they must articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in order to convey their message (Hancock, 2008). Class discussion also "increases higher level thinking and problem-solving ability" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 30) in students because they are in a situation where they work collaboratively to "revisit, question, and clarify text ideas" (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009, p. 115) which promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Discussion also benefits students in the way that during oral response, everyone has the chance to share his or her point of view and that means that there are likely to be alternative perspectives shared in the conversation (Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). This is a benefit to students because it provides them with the practice of actively listening to other points of view which promotes an appreciation for multiple perspectives (Spiegel, 1998; Worthy et al., 2012). Overall, the discussion strategy of oral response engages students with the read-aloud by arranging a time and space for them to speak their minds and create a shared understanding of the text.

Summary. All the preceding strategies of response find their foundation in reader response theory. This theory derives from Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature because they both hold that the reader is the one who creates meaning from a text and that readers respond to what they are reading. To engage students with a text during read-aloud, it is helpful to use different responses so that students learn how to think critically as well as grow to welcome perspectives other than their own. Types of responses include artistic response where students draw and sketch their ideas and feelings in either concrete pictures or abstract designs. Another kind of response is written where students write in a journal recording their reactions to the text during the reading or after. In this response students can also write down short questions and comments using sticky-notes that they can use as a starting-point for a longer journal entry or to spark conversation during a class talk session. Lastly, there is also the option of doing oral response through a class discussion where the teacher acts as a guide and lets students share their thoughts and opinions in a safe classroom environment. In a discussion, students build meaning together and hear other points of view which enhances their individual communication and thinking skills. Whatever response that is used will engage students with the read-aloud text by inviting them to reflect on their own reactions and understandings, as well as exploring others'. These are reliable strategies to use and they serve as specific answers to the question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

Rationale for the Research

The literature review completed above relates to my research question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom in many

ways. The first part of the review that describes Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature gives me more information about reading in general and how I should look at it when it comes to read-aloud. It is not that meaning is only found in the text, but that the reader plays a crucial role in creating meaning during the literary transaction. In my case, the reader is composed of every student who is listening to a read-aloud which means that the focus should be on them. In the second section, I explore the strategy of read-aloud which gives me guidelines to follow about how to implement one successfully and effectively. Without this dependable structure, I cannot expect students to engage with the read-aloud as I want them to. After learning about the strategy itself, I outline its many benefits in the following section which reassures me that I am choosing an excellent strategy to use to help students learn and become better readers. Finally, I go into detail about the many ways in which students can respond to read-aloud which answers my research question by providing me with specific techniques I can use that cause students to take a more active role and engage with the story. One aspect of my question that was not referenced explicitly in the literature review was that I am focusing on fifth-graders.

My literature review applies to a fifth-grade classroom because the students will still reap all the same benefits that a primary student does from read-aloud. First, Rosenblatt's theory applies to readers of all ages and describes what is happening when a fifth-grader reads or listens to a story. Secondly, the read-aloud strategy is not only reserved for K-2 students, but for students in the intermediary grades as well. Allen (2000) states that "any middle or secondary teacher…can attest to the fact that no one is too old to enjoy read-aloud time" (p. 45), and according to Trelease (2006), today's

teenagers and adults do not read enough, so he suggests reading aloud to older children to build their interest in reading. Thirdly, the benefits listed and explained in detail in the literature review apply to fifth-graders just like any other student who participates in a read-aloud. Students grow academically and become better readers from read-aloud, so it should be used with older students too. Lastly, all the different kinds of responses described above can be done by fifth-grade students. None of the artistic, written, or oral response strategies are too much to expect from ten- and eleven-year-olds, and they can always be modified based on the class. Therefore, the preceding literature review relates to all aspects of my research question and even provides some specific strategies to use.

Summary

In conclusion, the literature review completed above provides research on four main topics in order to deeply explore the question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom*. The first topic is the transactional theory of literature as created by Louise Rosenblatt which describes the relationship the reader has with the literature he is reading. This theory forms the basis for the strategy of read-aloud which is when a teacher reads a specific text aloud to students following clear guidelines and integrates all the elements of a successful read-aloud. The next topic examines the various benefits to students from implementing a read-aloud, and the last topic outlines the different forms of response a teacher can use to engage his students in the read-aloud event. Now that all of this information has been synthesized in this chapter, chapter three will build off these base ideas and describe what the project related to my research question is, how it is organized, and why.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

My experience as a fifth-grade teacher revealed to me certain beliefs that I hold about the language arts curriculum and reading. One strong belief is that read-aloud is a solid strategy that should be conducted in the fifth-grade language arts curriculum. Within this technique I also believe that students should do more than just sit back and listen; they should take an active role in the read-aloud experience. These beliefs led me to ask myself the research question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom*. Through my literature review I found some answers to this question which prepared me to create a curriculum development project that will help teachers in fifth-grade classrooms perform a read-aloud.

In this chapter, I begin with a description of my project identifying and defining the two grounding theories for my curriculum: Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature and reader response theory. Next, I define the curricular model of Understanding by Design that I used as a base for the design part of my project. After this, I continue with an explanation of the participants and setting that this project was designed for. Finally, I end with describing the format that I used for the lessons in my project as well as the different curricular elements that make up my final product.

Grounding Theories

The first theory in which my project is grounded is in Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature. Rosenblatt (1978) argues that the text and the reader

must transact with each other for the reader to create meaning. To Rosenblatt (1978), the meaning of a text does not reside in the words of a book, play, or poem. Only through a reader bringing his own knowledge and experiences to the transaction is the meaning of a literary work brought to life. In this transaction, a reader responds to the text and can decide to respond efferently or aesthetically, all depending on what the reader chooses to focus on (Rosenblatt, 1978). According to Hancock (2008), if a reader chooses the efferent stance then he will only focus on obtaining information from the text whereas with the aesthetic stance, the reader chooses to focus on the overall experience of the reading-event including his thoughts and feelings. These two responses to text are extremes on a continuum that Rosenblatt (1978) says a reader can move around on changing from a more efferent stance to a more aesthetic stance, and vice-versa, even during a transaction with one text. This view of the reader's role in making meaning and responding to text have led to other theories of literature like reader response.

Reader response theory is the second theory in which my project is grounded. This theory originates from Rosenblatt's transactional theory because it supports the idea that readers make meaning of a text and that consequently, there can be multiple ways to interpret the same text (Spiegel, 1998). According to Barone (2011), the reader is an active participant in the literary transaction because he is continuously creating meaning "through intellectual and emotional connections" (p. 39). The reader is responding to text and making meaning at the same time. This is the main theory that my project was based on because it leads to strategies that answer my research question.

It is important that students learn the active role that they play as readers and develop skills of how to respond to text. According to Gambrell (1996), "the ability to

respond to text, or response-ability…is nurtured when students have opportunities to negotiate meaning with text and with other members of the interpretive community" (p. 28). To provide the above-mentioned opportunities, a teacher needs to teach students multiple ways of responding (Spiegel, 1998) which include the various strategies described in the literature review in chapter two including artistic, written, and oral response. One way to teach students how to respond to text is by using a read-aloud book so that they have the chance to practice the different responses. Done this way, students can work with the read-aloud text individually through their artistic and written responses as well as work with others to create meaning through oral discussion. This approach provides the answer to my research question because when students respond to the read-aloud text, they are actively participating.

Summary. In conclusion, the two theories that I used to ground my project are Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature and reader response theory. Rosenblatt's theory led to the development of reader response which focuses more on the different ways in which a reader responds to text. Responses highlighted previously in the literature review include artistic response, written response, and oral response all of which provide students with the opportunity to make meaning of the text. While these theories provide the "why" and specific strategies of response, they do not provide a process to follow in order to implement them, so this is what the next section covers.

Curriculum Model

I chose to complete a curriculum development project focusing only on the step of design. I decided to design a curriculum for a specific read-aloud book because I felt that there was not a step-by-step plan for books to be read aloud to fifth-grade students. The

book I chose as the content for my curriculum was *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. I wanted to create a product that could be used by any fifth-grade teacher in his or her classroom that would provide a detailed plan to complete a read-aloud. So, I decided to create lessons for each reading session that a teacher could read beforehand and know what to do. Within each lesson I included some of the teacher duties and response strategies for students that were described in chapter two so that students are more engaged with the text. I felt that this would be helpful to other teachers because they will not need to take too much time to plan an effective read-aloud.

To provide a consistent structure for the design process in my read-aloud project, I decided to use the curriculum model of Understanding by Design created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Wiggins and McTighe (2011) propose a new way of designing curriculum that they call "backward design" which differs from the more traditional practices. According to Kelting-Gibson (2005), the traditional method of curriculum design began with defining the learning goal, then moved on to creating the learning activities linked to the goal, then continued with organizing the developed activities, and ended with evaluating whether students met the goal. The major focus in this approach was on the student activities, and this is where Wiggins and McTighe (2011) differ because they suggest that this should be the last step rather than the first. Thus, the label of "backward" was applied to their method because they outline a curriculum design process where the first stage is to identify desired results (essential questions and understandings), the second stage is to determine acceptable evidence (assessment), and the third stage is to plan learning experiences and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Summary. Overall, I decided to do a curriculum development project focusing on the design step of the process. My goal was to create a product that could give fifth-grade teachers a guide for implementing a read-aloud with a specific book. To do this I used Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design model to support my design process of the curriculum. Understanding by Design differs from older methods of curriculum development because it begins with setting the desired goals and understandings, and then identifies what assessments will be needed to evaluate whether the results were met. Lastly, the learning events are planned which traditionally came second or first in older methods. Using the backward design method, I was able to create a read-aloud guide to be used with fifth-graders in various settings.

Participants and Setting

The intended student group for my project was fifth-grade students. This was due to my experience of being a fifth-grade teacher for five years at the time of this project. In general, students in this grade range from nine-years-old at the young end to eleven-years-old. This grade is where students start to understand more abstract ideas like justice and fairness, and it is a grade that does well with class discussion for most of the children (Northeast Foundation for Children, 2005). This means that a read-aloud with themes of fairness and justice is appropriate for this grade level as well as having read-aloud itself where students partake in an activity with the whole class. Other than the grade level, there were no other restrictions on who could participate. In contrast, the setting was a little more specific than the participants for this project.

I originally designed the read-aloud guide for an elementary classroom setting. This was due to my experience teaching in an elementary school where fifth grade was

the highest grade before middle school. I also designed the lessons in this way based on the information I gathered in my literature review that recommended teachers have a set block of time each day to read aloud to students. This means the teacher would be allotting 20-30 minutes in the daily schedule for read-aloud which is easier for an elementary teacher to do because he or she spends more time with the same set of students throughout the day. Therefore, I wrote the lesson plans with the idea that a teacher would be implementing this read-aloud over a period of a few weeks, completing a lesson every day, and would not skip any days.

I acknowledge though that not all fifth-grade classrooms are set in an elementary school. I personally completed fifth grade as the first year of middle school where we had seven periods each day with seven different teachers. Even in a middle-school setting, this read-aloud guide for fifth-grade could still be implemented. Many middle schools have an English or Language Arts class as core curriculum that students need to take. A teacher for this class could use the read-aloud lessons I have designed and complete them for any fifth-grade classes he or she teaches. The idea of completing a reading session daily would not fit as well with this setting because a class is usually 40 to 60 minutes long and the read-aloud would take up too much time. Instead, I would recommend modifying the reading schedule so that a teacher performs at least one lesson from the guide per week. This would mean giving up a day of the week for read-aloud, but it would allow a teacher to carry out the whole read-aloud over the course of a semester.

Summary. In summary, the intended student group that I designed my curriculum for was fifth-grade students. Within students being fifth-graders, there were not any other stipulations. The intended setting for my project was an elementary school classroom so

that a teacher could read aloud daily to students over a period of only a few weeks. While some elementary schools still have fifth grade, others may only go up to fourth, so I have outlined a plan for teachers to enact this curriculum in a middle-school setting. Either way, this project was designed for fifth-grade students to participate in a read-aloud with their teacher and peers. The next section explains more details about the project itself.

Curriculum Description and Curricular Elements

  Format. The curriculum that I designed focused on a read-aloud book that would be read to a fifth-grade class over several reading sessions. Each session was outlined in its own lesson plan that was meant to be used at the same time each day. The format that I selected for the lesson plans was a combination of Understanding by Design and the lesson plan framework that my school district uses. I chose this because I am accustomed to using the district lesson plan framework for yearly observations, and I know the district has also based their format on the idea of backward design. The district lesson plan includes a place to list the date, subject, and topic of the lesson to be taught at the beginning of the template. After that, there is a place to identify the lesson objective, describe any prior learning activities completed in the unit or lesson design, write the lesson format, describe the assessment, describe the connection to the next lesson, and explain how the lesson ties into the unit that is being taught.

  The district lesson plan is similar and different from the design stages of Understanding by Design. Both formats use backward design by identifying the learning goal (objective) first so that the teacher knows what students should understand by the end of the lesson. They are also similar in the way that the planning for the learning events and instruction comes after deciding on the learning goals and is towards the end

of the planning process. They differ in that the district lesson plan does not explicitly say that the assessment should be created second whereas the Understanding by Design method states that the teacher should plan the assessment immediately after identifying the desired results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). The other difference is that the district lesson plan does not have a specific area for essential questions and understandings like Understanding by Design does (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

To create a lesson plan format that integrates the two, I chose to take elements from each design framework. I kept the date, subject, and topic from the district plan, but I added a place for listing the standards and the essential questions that are addressed based on the first stage of Understanding by Design. I also kept the lesson objective area at the beginning per both plans, but I made sure to include the assessment within the learning goal statement. I also added in a part called "teacher preparation" where I described the duties the teacher must do before the reading session. After these changes, I kept the order of the components from the district's lesson plan including the prior learning activities, the lesson format, the assessment, and the connection to the next lesson. For the part that asks for an explanation of how the lesson ties into the unit, I decided to include a description of how the lesson connects to the essential questions. The last part of the plan asks for a list of materials needed where I listed any resources or materials the teacher needs. The final lesson plan template can be found in Appendix A.

Standards. This project was designed to meet standards in the language arts curriculum, so I used the Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12 revised in 2010. The fifth-grade standards identified throughout the read-aloud guide come from various parts of the academic standards including the Reading Benchmarks

for Literature, the Writing Benchmarks, the Speaking, Viewing, Listening, and Media

Literacy Benchmarks, and in general, the College and Career Readiness Anchor

Standards for Reading (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010). According to

Wiggins and McTighe (2011), "most state standards involve multiple layers of different

learning goals" (p. 22) which is what I found within the standards that I used. Therefore,

the lessons that I designed may address only part of the standard identified at the

beginning of the lesson plan.

Essential Questions. Another part of Stage 1 in Understanding by Design is to

identify a few essential questions that the unit will explore. These questions are not

knowledge focused and do not have a "correct" answer, but instead have various

acceptable answers (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). As defined by Wiggins and McTighe

(2011), "essential questions are ongoing and guided queries by which we [teachers] make

clear to students that true learning is about digging deeper" (p. 15). Based on this

description, I chose to identify two essential questions that would guide students

throughout the whole read-aloud project: 1) How do readers respond to literature? and 2)

How do readers connect with the text they are reading? Each lesson focuses on one or

both essential questions through the learning activities and/or assessments that students

accomplish for the reading session. By using these guiding questions, students will have

an idea of the bigger picture of reader response.

Assessments. After Stage 1 of Understanding by Design, Stage 2 concentrates on

determining acceptable evidence that will show if students meet the desired results

(Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). This usually comes in the form of summative and formative

assessment. According to Dixon and Worrell (2016), summative assessment happens at

the end of a unit to evaluate how much a student has learned. Summative assessments are almost always graded, and they are considered "high-stakes" like final exams and term papers (Dixon & Worrell, 2016, p. 156). I did not create a summative assessment for this project because it was meant to be enjoyed by students for the experience of read-aloud and responding to literature rather than testing them on their knowledge of the plot.

Instead, I used formative assessment in my lesson plans which gives the teacher feedback about how students are doing in relation to the learning goal for the lesson (Dixon & Worrell, 2016). Formative assessments in my project include the three types of responses to literature described in the literature review: artistic response, written response, and oral response. The different forms of responses were dispersed throughout the read-aloud guide to meet the goal of providing a variety of responses. This allows students to add responses to their toolbox that they can use during independent reading.

Learning Experiences and Instruction. The content for this curriculum design project was a book by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley titled *The War That Saved My Life*. I chose this book based on the ideas that a read-aloud book should be higher than the independent reading level for students in the classroom (Boyd & Devennie, 2009), and that it should be a book appropriate for the age group of students (Drogowski, 2009). This book is labeled for children nine-years-old and up which meets the age range, and for students in grades 4 through 7 which provides a higher level of reading. I also chose this book based on the awards it has won because according to Fisher et al. (2004), teachers choose books to read aloud that are "high-quality literature" which often include award-winning books (p. 11). This book won the 2016 Schneider Family Book Award and was a 2016 Newberry Honor Book. Besides these factors, I chose this book because

it is historical fiction set in London during World War II which provides students with historical knowledge about the evacuation of children during that time. The book also has a main character with a physical disability which gives students the opportunity to see a different perspective and learn about people with disabilities.

Each lesson follows the same organization of learning experiences and instruction. First the teacher and students begin with a review of the previous reading session to help students transition their minds back to the story. This may include a type of artistic or written response, or an oral response to make sure everyone is on the same page. Next, the main part of the lesson takes place with the teacher reading aloud three chapters from the book. During the reading, the teacher enacts specific strategies like thinking aloud, questioning, writing, drawing, and oral discussion among others to engage students in the experience. After the read-aloud, there is time to practice a response to literature. This may be the teacher and the whole class completing an activity, or students in small groups or partners working together, or students working individually. The responses vary from lesson to lesson, but they still serve as the formative assessment for each reading session.

Summary. In closure, my project consists of multiple lessons written so that a fifth-grade teacher can perform a read-aloud of the book *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. The lesson plan framework combines elements from Understanding by Design and the lesson template my school district uses. Academic standards and essential questions are used to identify desired results, and formative assessments in the form of reader responses serve as the evidence needed to show how close students are to meeting the learning goals. Each lesson is organized so that there is

a review of the previous reading session, time for new chapters to be read aloud, and time for student response at the end. With this guide, a fifth-grade teacher can conduct a read-aloud with students that supports the language arts curriculum.

Summary

 In this chapter, I described my project on curriculum design to answer my research question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom*. I started out with defining the grounding theories for my work as well as the curricular model I chose to use. After that, I explained what student group my project was designed for and explored the different settings in which it could be implemented. Lastly, I outlined in detail the format of the lesson plans I created and the different elements that I included in my curriculum design. In the next chapter, I will reflect upon what I have learned from completing my project, how my project will benefit the teaching profession, and I will describe how my project can be used in the future by myself and others.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The goal of my final project was to answer the research question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.* In the past years of teaching fifth grade, I experienced read-alouds where I would be engrossed in the book, but when I observed students they were bored and disengaged. I want my students to enjoy the read-aloud experience as much as I do, and if I can link each session to language arts standards then it is even better. Based on the research I completed in my literature review and the plan outlined in Chapter Three, I have created a project of sixteen lesson plans that a fifth-grade teacher can use to complete a read-aloud with his or her class that will generate student engagement and participation.

In this chapter, I will reflect on my project and the capstone process as a whole. First, I will consider lessons that I have learned and insights that I have gained from researching and writing the capstone and project. Secondly, I will look back upon the literature review and reflect on what information was the most important for my capstone in the end. I will also use new understandings gained from completing the project to connect back to what I learned from the literature review. Next, I will describe the benefit that my project brings to the profession of teaching, and I will explore some of the limitations my project has. Lastly, I will describe ideas for future projects or research and include my recommendations for anyone who wants to produce something similar to my

project. In the last section, I will also explain how I plan to use my capstone in the future on a more personal level.

Learning from the Capstone Process

Throughout the capstone process I came to see myself in a more scholarly way from all that I learned while researching and writing about my research question. First, I see myself as more scholarly because of the way I used all of the different resources available to me when I was investigating background information on my topic. I learned that I am resourceful and a skilled researcher because I not only used electronic databases to find information, but I also utilized the library. I checked out books on several topics and even had to put some back because I found too many sources. I used indexes, tables of contents, chapter titles, headings, and other techniques to help find the information I was looking for, and from all my work I was able to write my literature review.

I also feel more scholarly because of all the writing I did for the capstone and my project. I always knew that I enjoyed writing, but going through the capstone process showed me that I am good at it too, and the experience solidified a view of myself as a writer. I learned the writing process that works best for me and accepted it with every draft of each chapter I wrote even if it took more time. I also realized that I enjoy picking apart sentences and finding the exact words to use when crafting ideas in my writing because this allows me to communicate the specific message that I have in my head. I never thought before that I would be capable of writing what I have now accomplished for my capstone, and it raises my self-confidence to know that this is the culmination of all of my hard work.

Lastly, the most impactful learning I gained throughout this process is the knowledge that I have the power to create solutions to problems I see in my own classroom. My research question came from an issue I was seeing in my setting but was doing nothing about. Now I have learned that I do not have to be stuck doing the same thing year after year just because that is how it has always been done. Instead, I learned that I can (and should) change the teaching strategies I am using especially if I am not seeing the results that I desire. This is what lead me to investigate the answer to my research question, and it is what influenced my decision to create the project I did.

Summary. In general, I learned so much in the process of working on my capstone that has led me to think of myself in a more scholarly light. I now know I am capable of in-depth research on a topic using legitimate sources from the internet and from books. I also now recognize myself as a good writer and someone who takes joy in the writing process. Most important of all, I learned that if I have an issue in my classroom that I am not pleased with, it is in my control to change it. Now I know that to start this process of change I need to begin with research by performing a literature review just like I did for this capstone. Looking back, the literature review was a challenge for me, but it also ended up being the foundation for my final project.

Revisiting the Literature Review

I needed to complete the literature review because I had almost no background knowledge about read-aloud, and the experience I did have was not supported by scholarly sources. At first, I thought the most important sources I would read would be about the strategy of read-aloud and how to implement it in the classroom. Surprisingly, while these were helpful and necessary for my final project, the most important sources

turned out to be the ones describing broad theories. Reflecting on it now, this makes

sense to me because every teaching strategy should be grounded in sound theory that will

help students learn effectively.

 The two theories that became fundamental to my project in my literature review

were Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature and the reader response theory.

The specific source that helped me understand the first theory was the book *The Reader,*

the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work that Rosenblatt wrote

back in 1978. Many of the other articles and books in my literature review cited this book

and/or theory when explaining the reasoning for read-aloud, so I knew it was something I

needed to consider. The other theory did not have one cited author, and in fact, in most of

the sources that talked about reader response theory Rosenblatt was the one credited with

originating the idea through her transactional theory. For my literature review though, the

one source that provided me with the most information about reader response theory was

the article "Reader Response Approaches and the Growth of Readers" written by Dixie

Lee Spiegel in 1998. This article described the components of reader response theory and

provided examples of what it looks like when implemented in the classroom. With both

theories I was able to generate ideas for my project to answer my research question about

how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

 After finishing my project, I have new understandings about what I read in the

literature review. For example, after planning and writing all sixteen lessons, I now

realize how important variety in reader response is to make read-aloud engaging. By

integrating all three types of responses I read about in the literature review (artistic,

written, and oral) across multiple lessons, I was able to provide diversity for students so

they do not become bored or disinterested. I also developed a better understanding of how teachers perform Think Aloud during a read-aloud, as well as how teachers can incorporate the teaching of specific reading strategies during read-aloud that will support students' abilities as readers. I found that the more comprehension strategies I could integrate in the lessons, the more students would begin to grasp the idea about all the actions a reader takes while reading. This in turn led me to a new understanding about what Rosenblatt meant about readers transacting with text in order to create meaning, which I would not have seen if I had not completed this project.

   Summary. Overall, the literature review proved to be the most helpful part of the capstone process because it gave me guidance about where to start and what to do for my project. While I read many books and articles about the components of read-aloud and its benefits, the most crucial information I learned was about the two theories that led me to create my final project: Rosenblatt's transactional theory and reader response theory. Through my work designing my final product, I also gained new understandings about what I read in my literature review and felt as if the decisions I made about what to include in my lesson plans were justified. It was because of my thorough literature review that my project turned out to be such a success.

The Final Project

   I consider my project to be a success because it includes all the information I learned about in the literature review, and it follows what I had planned in Chapter Three. My final product is a unit plan comprised of sixteen lessons written for a fifth-grade teacher to read aloud the whole book *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker

Bradley. Each lesson follows the outline described in Chapter Three and provides students with the opportunity to participate in the read-aloud so they are fully engaged.

This project is a benefit to the teaching profession because now any fifth-grade teacher can use this resource in his or her language arts class, and they do not have to undergo the ordeal of choosing a book, planning all the lessons, and creating the activities to meet fifth-grade language arts standards. A fifth-grade teacher simply has to pick up this unit plan and follow it faithfully as outlined in each lesson, which saves him or her time and energy. The project also benefits fifth-grade students because now they will be active participants during the class read-aloud, rather than passive listeners, by completing the different review activities, as well as the during-reading and after-reading responses. Overall, with this unit plan, no longer will read-aloud just be a random activity a teacher chooses to do to fill up an extra five minutes of time; it will be another tool that a teacher can add to his or her language arts curriculum.

While the project was a success in that it fulfilled all of the expectations outlined in Chapter Three, there are still some limitations of this project. One limitation is that while the read-aloud book could be read to a fourth-grade class or a sixth-grade class, it would be hard to adapt the lessons so that they are aligned to the language arts curriculum of either grade since the lessons follow fifth-grade standards. Teachers of different grades could choose to read the book and complete the activities outlined in the sixteen lessons, but there is no guarantee that they would be meeting the correct language arts standards for their specific grade. Another limitation is time which was mentioned in the description of the project in Chapter Three. Originally, I had planned for every lesson to take about 30 minutes since that was the daily read-aloud time most of the sources in the

literature review recommended. After creating each lesson though making sure to include time to review, time for the read-aloud, time for a type of response activity that is assessed, and a conclusion, I found that most of the lessons would most likely run 40 to 45 minutes long instead. This would be a limitation for any fifth-grade teacher who cannot find a 40-45-minute block of time in his or her daily schedule, as well as a problem for any middle school fifth-grade teacher who only has 40 minutes to teach each class. Due to this obstacle, if I were to do the project over again, I would choose to only read two chapters per lesson and create 23 lessons instead so that each lesson could fit a 30-minute block of time.

Summary. In summary, I am proud of what I created for my final project because I feel that it answers my question of how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom. My project will benefit fifth-grade teachers at any school because it gives them a specific book to read, definitive read-aloud strategies to use, and reader responses for students to complete so that they participate actively in the read-aloud experience. The project also aligns to Minnesota fifth-grade language arts standards which will give teachers a reason to use it in their curriculum. I admit that the standards can also be a limitation for other teachers who want to use the lesson plans, but they could always just use the project to enhance their language arts time. There is also the limitation of finding enough time to complete each lesson, but teachers who can find 30-45 minutes in their day, or are willing to give up another activity for read-aloud, will benefit from doing so as seen by the special reading experience they will share with their students. This project is now complete and fulfills the description given in the previous chapter, but just because it is done does not mean the learning stops here.

Where to Go from Here

  With this one project complete, it gives myself and others the opportunity to continue with similar projects and to use this one as a guide for future work. I could see myself or others choosing to create a similar unit plan using a different award-winning book for fifth-graders. The plan would incorporate the different reader response activities and would follow the same essential questions. Teachers would be able to use the same read-aloud strategies and would become better at Think Aloud and asking questions for Turn and Talk as well as for Pause and Ponder and Stop and Jot. I could also see myself doing a similar project, but using a book in Spanish instead so that I could use it in my Immersion language arts curriculum. If, in the future, there would be enough projects for a teacher to do read-alouds continuously the whole year, it would also be interesting to see if someone could measure the impact read-aloud has on standardized test scores. This would be more like a capstone thesis, but it could still use the projects as the intervention to be measured comparing student test scores in the fall versus in the spring after having nine months of daily interactive read-aloud.

  Based on my findings from doing this project, I would recommend some changes for those who want to create a similar project. First, I would highly recommend limiting the number of pages or chapters read aloud each session to under 20 pages or around two chapters. I found that I underestimated the time it would take to read 20 pages (three chapters) while doing Think Aloud, Pause and Ponder, Turn and Talk, Stop and Jot, and the other strategies I had the teacher implement during each read-aloud session. Add to that a review activity and a reader response at the end and I realized I had tried to fit too much into each lesson. Another recommendation I would make to anyone trying to create

another read-aloud project would be to use standards that are similar across grade levels. Obviously, first-grade standards are different from fifth-grade standards, but the grades on either side of one grade level (one above and one below) may have related or repeated standards that could be used. I recommend trying to use such standards for each lesson so that there is a wider audience of teachers that can use each project.

As for me personally, I think that I could use my project in my own classroom each year as long as I am teaching fifth grade. I decided to make this project based on an issue I had been seeing in my class the past few years and now I feel like I have provided the solution. All I need to do is to block out a 40-minute chunk of time in my daily schedule for sixteen days to perform this read-aloud plan. I already know I have the materials needed, I have read the book twice now, and I have the pages marked so I am ready to start as soon as our schedules become routine in the fall. I can also reach out to my colleagues in fifth grade at my school and share my project with them. All they need is the book and each lesson plan to follow for sixteen days so they can implement this read-aloud project in their classrooms too. The best part is that it is aligned to the Minnesota standards so there is no reason for them not to use this read-aloud during their language arts time.

Summary. Altogether I feel that while I am done with the project and the capstone in general, there still is more that can be accomplished going on from here. Based on the project that I have made for one book, I could make more for other books that I want to read aloud to my class including books in Spanish. Others can also use my project and take it another step further by researching how the lesson plans and read-aloud impact students' reading scores on standardized tests. Of course, if myself or others

are going to create more projects like mine then I have a few recommendations for changes like timing and what standards to use. Along with all these ideas for the future I also plan to use my project in my classroom to help my read-aloud time. This was the initial reason I chose this topic; I wanted to create a project that would be a solution to the issue I have had in the past where students were not engaged during read-aloud. I am pleased to say now at the end of the capstone process that I think I have come up with a solution to my problem that I can use directly in my classroom.

Summary

In conclusion, completing the capstone process and creating a final project have been great learning experiences for me. I now see myself as more of a scholar than I did before because I can research a problem and find a solution. I also have greatly developed my writing skills and boosted my confidence in writing by writing so many pages and producing my final project. One challenge that I am proud of overcoming in this process was the literature review because it gave me the background information I needed about read-aloud as well as the two grounding theories for my project. In the end, I feel my project will benefit all fifth-grade teachers because it will be another resource to use in their language arts curriculum that supports language arts standards. The project will also be beneficial to students and teachers alike because read-aloud will be active and engaging again. While there are some limitations to my project, overall it will be helpful to teachers and may even lead to new projects and research. Personally, I plan to use my project in my own classroom so that I can have a read-aloud with my students where we are all engaged and excited to read the next chapters.

This project started out as an answer to my research question of *how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom*. While my final project turned out to be the answer to my question, I feel like this whole capstone process meant so much more. I have grown professionally with the knowledge that I now have about reading and the strategy of read-aloud. From writing all the lessons I feel more comfortable doing Think Aloud and asking questions to students while reading a book to them. I have also grown in my personal development from participating in this process. I am now more confident in my writing and have come to embrace my writing process even if it differs from others'. I have gained self-respect through this experience because now I see what I am capable of and I have proof that if I work hard enough, I can achieve things I did not think possible before. I am grateful that I have had this opportunity to complete the capstone process, and I hope my project helps other teachers like me who are looking for answers to how to make read-aloud in language arts engaging to students in a fifth-grade classroom.

REFERENCES

Allen, J. (2000). *Yellow brick roads: Shared and guided paths to independent reading 4-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Almasi, J. F. (1996). A new view of discussion. In L. B. Gambrell & J. F. Almasi (Eds.), *Lively discussions: Fostering engaged reading* (2-24). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Education. Retrieved from http://textproject.org/assets/library/resources/Anderson-Hiebert-Scott-Wilkinson-Becoming-a-Nation-of-Readers.pdf

Angelillo, J. (2003). *Writing about reading: From book talk to literary essays, grades 3-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Barone, D. (2011). *Children's literature in the classroom: Engaging lifelong readers*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Barrentine, S. J. (1996). Storytime plus dialogue equals interactive read-alouds. In L. B. Gambrell & J. F. Almasi (Eds.), *Lively discussions: Fostering engaged reading* (52-62). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Boyd, M. P., & Devennie, M. K. (2009). Student voices and teacher choices: Selecting

    chapter book read-alouds. *Childhood Education, 85*(3), 148-153. doi:

    10.1080/00094056.2009.10521380

Brubaker-Bradley, K. (2015). *The war that saved my life.* New York, NY: Puffin Books.

Cunningham, P. (2014). *What really matters in vocabulary: Research-based practices*

    across the curriculum (Second ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Dixon, D. D., & Worrell, F. C. (2016). Formative and summative assessment in the

    classroom. *Theory into Practice, 55*(2), 153-159. doi:

    10.1080/00405841.2016.1148989

Drogowski, P. (2009). Time well-spent: The intermediate read aloud. *School Library*

    Media Activities Monthly, *25*(6), 19-20. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Professional

    Development Collection

Dugan, J. (1997). Transactional literature discussions: Engaging students in the

    appreciation and understanding of literature. *The Reading Teacher, 51*(2), 86-96.

    Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20201868

Fisher, D., Flood, J., Lapp, D., & Frey, N. (2004). Interactive read-alouds: Is there a

    common set of implementation practices? *Reading Teacher, 58*(1), 8-17.

    Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20205442

Fisher, B., & Medvic, E. (2003). *For reading out loud*: *Planning and practice*.

    Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gambrell, L. B. (1996). What research reveals about discussion. In L. B. Gambrell & J.

    F. Almasi (Eds.), *Lively discussions: Fostering engaged reading* (25-38). Newark,

    DE: International Reading Association.

Golden, J. M., & Handloff, E. (1993). Responding to literature through journal writing. In

    K. E. Holland, R. A. Hungerford, & S. B. Ernst (Eds.), *Journeying: Children*

    responding to literature (91-113). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hancock, M. (2004). *A celebration of literature and response: Children, books, and*

    teachers in K-8 classrooms (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ:

    Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Hoffman, J., Roser, N., & Battle, J. (1993). Reading aloud in classrooms: From the modal

    toward a "model". *The Reading Teacher, 46*(6), 496-503. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/20201116

Ivey, G. (2003). The intermediate grades: "The teacher makes it more explainable" and

    other reasons to read aloud in the intermediate grades. *The Reading Teacher,*

    56(8), 812-814. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20205300

Johnston, V. (2016). Successful read-alouds in today's classroom. *Kappa Delta Pi*

    Record, 52(1), 39-42. doi: 10.1080/00228958.2016.1123051

Kelting-Gibson, L. M. (2005). Comparison of curriculum development practices.

    Educational Research Quarterly, 29(1), 26-36. Retrieved from Academic Search

    Premier.

Laminack, L., & Wadsworth, R. (2006). *Learning under the influence of language and*

    literature: Making the most of read-alouds across the day. Portsmouth, NH:

    Heinemann.

Levesque, J. (1989). ELVES: A read-aloud strategy to develop listening

    comprehension. *The Reading Teacher, 43*(1), 93-94. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/20140223

Long, T. W., & Gove, M. K. (2003). How engagement strategies and literature circles

    promote critical response in a fourth-grade, urban classroom. *The Reading*

    Teacher, 57(4), 350-361. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20205370

Minnesota Department of Education. (2010). *Minnesota academic standards: English*

    language arts K-12. Roseville, MN: Minnesota Department of Education.

Morrison, V., & Wlodarczyk, L. (2009). Revisiting read-aloud: Instructional strategies

    that encourage students' engagement with texts. *Reading Teacher, 63*(2), 110-118.

    Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40347661

Northeast Foundation for Children. (2005). *Fifth graders: Common developmental*

    characteristics of 9, 10, and 11-year-olds [Brochure]. Turners Falls, MA: Author.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the*

    literary work. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Spiegel, D. L. (1998). Reader response approaches and the growth of readers. *Language*

    Arts, 76(1), 41-48. Retrieved from National Council of Teachers of English

    (NCTE)

Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction &*

    understanding by design. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and

    Curriculum Development.

Trelease, J. (2006). *The read-aloud handbook* (6th ed., Completely rev. and updated

    2006-2007 ed.). New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Wadsworth, R. (2008). Using read alouds in today's classrooms: Read alouds benefit

    children of all ages and in all subjects. *Leadership Compass, 5*(3). Retrieved from

    http://d6test.naesp.org/resources/2/Leadership_Compass/2008/LC2008v5n3a4.pdf

Whitin, P. E. (1996). Exploring visual response to literature. *Research in the Teaching of English, 30*(1), 114-40. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40171545

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Worthy, J., Chamberlain, K., Peterson, K., Sharp, C., & Shih, P. (2012). The importance of read-aloud and dialogue in an era of narrowed curriculum: An examination of literature discussions in a second-grade classroom. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 51*(4), 308-322. doi: 10.1080/19388071.2012.685387

Yocom, J. A. (1993). What's a bustle? In K. E. Holland, R. A. Hungerford, & S. B. Ernst (Eds.), *Journeying: Children responding to literature* (91-113). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendix A

Lesson Plan Template

Date:	Lesson Subject and Topic:
Standards:	
Essential Question(s):	
Lesson Objective:	
Teacher Preparation:	
Prior learning activities completed in this unit or lesson design:	
Lesson Format: (How will students learn?)	
Assessment: (How will I know what the students have learned?)	
Connection to next lesson:	
How does this lesson tie into the unit you are teaching?	
Additional Materials Needed:	