

Reading aloud to students: The why and how

A professional learning course for
pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers

*.....the most important activity for building the skills
and background for eventual success in reading is
reading aloud to children (Oczkus, 2012).*

August 2024



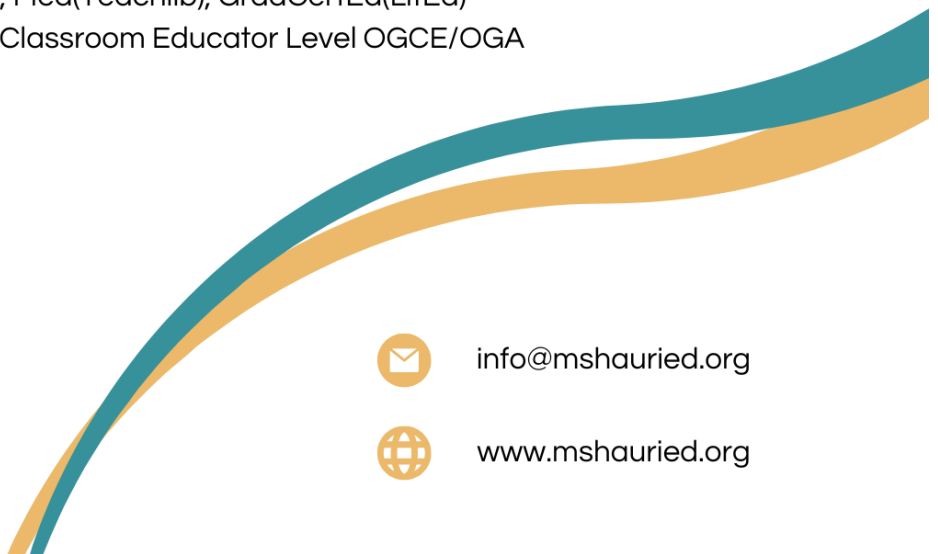
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About the author

Catherine Duffett has over twenty years' experience as a teacher in Australia. She has worked in Hobart, Darwin and Alice Springs in both public and private schools from different cultural backgrounds. She has over ten years' experience as a teacher librarian in both primary and high schools and currently works as a primary school teacher librarian. In 2013 she was awarded Tasmanian Teacher Librarian of the Year. Catherine has also taught Science and Maths to high school students. She is a qualified reading educator.

Catherine is passionate about using high impact evidence-based strategies to improve the educational opportunities for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and sharing her knowledge with others.

Catherine works part time on a pro-bono basis as an educational consultant with NGOs in developing countries to improve the educational outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Her business name, *Mshauri Education* was given to her by her Tanzanian colleagues and *mshauri* is a Swahili word meaning *advisor* or *consultant*.

How to use this course

While this course can be used by educators undertaking solo professional learning, it is recommended that, where possible, educators work collaboratively through it to enable deep discussion and reflection regarding the research described. To facilitate this, the course is divided up into a number of units that provide discussion questions for teachers to reflect on.

The Final Word protocol (Faddis, n.d.) is a good approach for structuring professional learning, as it fosters collaboration and deeper thinking about the text. It works as follows:

1. Teachers are organised into groups of three or four and each teacher in a group is assigned A, B, C or D.
2. The teachers have an opportunity to read the text or a section of it, select a piece of text or quote that resonates with them, and record their selected quote on a sticky note.
3. Teacher A reads aloud their statement or quote to their group and has 3 minutes to explain to their group the reason behind their choice.
4. Teachers B, C & D then have one minute to respond to their teacher A during which time they might express their own perspective, clarify Teacher A's comment or even question Teacher A's assumptions.
5. Teacher A summarises what has been said and also makes a comment about whether they have changed their own thoughts about the topic.
6. Teacher B discusses their selected quote or section that they found pertinent, including whether the discussion of teacher A's quote has affected their own views on their own sticky note and the whole process is repeated with teachers A, C and D

responding to Teacher B's ideas.

7. Finally, Teachers C and D have their turns at sharing the section of the text that resonates with them.

8. The different groups then come together to share their ideas with each other.

9. To further consolidate the learning, time is allocated for teachers to either reflect with a partner, journal their new understandings or plan some action they will take using their newly acquired knowledge.

Acknowledgments

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Why read aloud to students?

Introduction

Reading aloud to students is one of the most effective strategies a teacher can use with their students to build knowledge and literacy skills. While students still need ample opportunity for engaging in independent reading, regularly reading aloud a range of text types to students can form an important and engaging part of the instructional time.

This course was written specifically for teachers in developing countries who have limited access to reading resources for their students to use. By ensuring that reading aloud to students is frequent and incorporates evidence based strategies, teachers can improve the educational outcomes of their students.

Much of the information in this course about reading comprehension also applies when students read texts themselves. The course is suitable for early childhood, primary and secondary teachers and the research and strategies described in this course are suitable for students learning any language.

Why read aloud to students?

Regularly reading aloud to students is a highly effective strategy that positively impacts student achievement in the following ways:

1. *It leads to higher academic achievement.* A study by the Organisation for Economic Change and Development concluded that there is a correlation between the frequency young children are read to and their later academic achievement. The researchers noted that children who are regularly read aloud to by their parents in Grade 1 had higher scores on the International Student Assessment (PISA) exam at age 15,

regardless of students' economic background (Anderson, 2015).

2. *It increases student engagement.* Albright and Ariail (2005) concluded that reading aloud to students in Years 7 and 8 lead to increased engagement.

3. *Exposure to complex texts.* It enables students to access texts that they are unable to read independently, helping them to become better readers and writers (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016).

4. *Modelling comprehension strategies.* While reading aloud, teachers can articulate their thinking about the text, modelling comprehension for students (Furman, 2019).

5. *Exposure to new vocabulary.* It provides an opportunity to expose students to new vocabulary and ideas, enabling them to appreciate that written language is different from oral language (Hedrick and Pearish, 2003 cited by Fisher et al., 2004).

6. *Modelling fluent reading.* Reading aloud provides an opportunity to model fluent reading by reading with expression (Dougherty Stahl, Flanigan and McKenna, 2020). Reading aloud both nonfiction and fiction texts enables students to realise that nonfiction texts have a different rhythm (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016).

The Reading Rope

The Reading Rope (Figure 1) is a metaphor that illustrates what is needed for skilled reading. According to this model, proficient reading requires an individual to master 6 separate skills, which are represented by a strand of

rope. The model also indicates that there are two main strands representing language comprehension and word recognition (Dougherty Stahl, Flanigan and McKenna, 2020). As this course will demonstrate, reading aloud to students has a powerful impact on the different facets of language comprehension.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How much reading aloud do you currently do with your students?
2. In what ways do you believe your students could benefit most if you incorporated more read aloud sessions into your teaching?

3. Holding a reading event that incorporates reading aloud to students is an engaging way to promote literature. Appendix 1 provides a description of different events that can provide inspiration for schools to create their own.

Is there a reading event described in this Appendix that might be suitable for your school to organise?

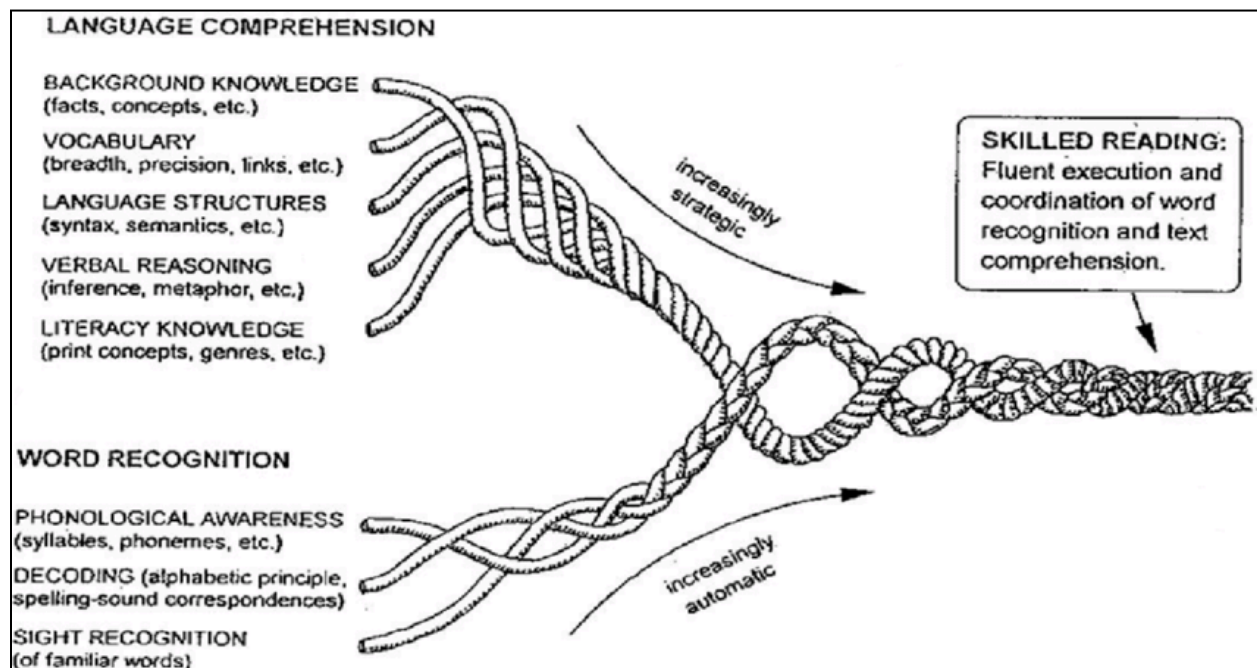


Figure 1: Scarborough's Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)

Building background knowledge

The importance of background knowledge

Background knowledge is the variety of experiences that a reader has had that enables him/her to understand a text (Brody, 2001 cited by Lewis Hennessy, 2021). Background knowledge is necessary for the efficient learning of new material as individuals draw on their previous experiences and knowledge to make sense of new knowledge (The National Research Council (2000 cited by Lewis Hennessy 2021). As Figure 1 illustrates, background knowledge is one of the six skills that contribute to language comprehension.

The effect of poverty on background knowledge

Unfortunately, students who are from less-educated families are likely to be more limited in their background knowledge compared to those from higher socio-economic groups due to having limited funds to spend on books and on educational experiences that help to build knowledge. The knowledge gap that is evident between children from disadvantaged and from advantaged backgrounds tends to widen as students progress through school (Wexler, 2019).

However, by providing a literature-rich learning environment where children are exposed to complex texts, teachers can help close this knowledge gap (Furman, 2019).

Reading aloud to close the knowledge gap

Students' listening comprehension is generally much higher than their reading comprehension. Therefore, reading aloud scientific articles and primary sources that contain concepts, syntax and vocabulary that is above what students are able to read independently, is one important strategy for closing this knowledge gap (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016). Reading aloud such texts can then pave the way for students to be able to read simpler texts on the same subject (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016).

The flash drive that accompanies this professional learning program contains a variety of materials suitable for use with this strategy.

Reflect and discuss

1. Discuss with your colleagues ways in which you could build a collection of materials to read aloud to students. For example, can newspapers or magazines be sourced, for this purpose?
2. Browse through the materials that have been provided on a flashdrive. What texts could you incorporate into your next unit of work to build students' background knowledge?

Teaching vocabulary

Why teach vocabulary?

Figure 1 (The Reading Rope) illustrates that vocabulary knowledge is an important contributor to successful comprehension. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds generally begin school with a more limited vocabulary than those from higher socioeconomic groups, and unfortunately, like with background knowledge, this gap in vocabulary knowledge remains or even widens as children progress through school (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013).

However, teachers can have an impact on closing this gap through the explicit teaching of vocabulary combined with reading rich texts with their students to provide authentic and enjoyable learning experiences.

Strategies for teaching vocabulary

When reading aloud a text, the goal is to ensure that students make meaning from the text, rather than in-depth learning about vocabulary. Therefore, when reading aloud, teachers should limit their discussion about vocabulary by providing a brief explanation of 2 to 3 unknown words as they are encountered in the text (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013). If too many words are discussed, there is a risk that this could adversely affect students' comprehension (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013).

After reading, the goal then shifts to vocabulary development and any additional words that require explanation can then be discussed (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013) and included in follow-up activities to reinforce the meaning of the words.

Instructional routine for teaching vocabulary

Kindle (2009 cited by Lewis Hennessy, 2021) recommends the following instructional routine for teaching vocabulary after a text has been read:

1. Pre-select vocabulary from the text that require explanation.
2. When reading aloud, offer either an explanation, synonym, image or question to convey the meaning of the selected words as they are encountered in the text
3. Continue to weave the vocabulary into discussions and writing tasks.

Using dual language books to teach vocabulary

Cognates are words in two languages that are similar in meaning and spelling. Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2013) recommend that supporting students to notice the similarities between words in both languages may foster students' understanding of the English language. Studies conducted on native Spanish speakers indicate that when students can recognise these cognates in English and Spanish, their English comprehension improves. It seems logical that this would apply to other mother tongue languages. Dual language books are therefore likely to be a useful tool in supporting children to analyse cognates, helping them to develop their understanding of the English language.

García, Sacco and Guerrero-Arias (2020) suggest that teachers can support students by:

- explicitly noticing and discussing the cognates that appear in the text.
- requiring students to keep a written record of the cognates they encounter so the words can be referred to on an ongoing basis.
- modelling how to determine whether a cognate has been correctly identified by inserting it into the sentence and checking whether the meaning makes sense.

Reflect and discuss

1. Browse the resources on the accompanying flash drive.
2. Select a text that would be appropriate to read aloud in an upcoming lesson.
3. Identify any vocabulary worthy of instruction and plan the explicit vocabulary instruction that will occur after the text has been read aloud.

Teaching language structures and literacy knowledge

Language structures and their role in comprehension

Good readers have an understanding of how language is structured and use their knowledge to create meaning from a text. Syntax refers to the role words play within a sentence, for example, whether a word is a noun, verb or adjective. It is syntax that provides a mechanism for categorising parts of speech, enabling storage and retrieval from the memory. In English, sentences are usually arranged so that the subject (whom the sentence is about), otherwise known as *the doer*, is followed by the predicate (the verb that represents the action of the subject (Kambach and Mesmer, 2024).

Understanding language structures is important for comprehension as it enables students to not only understand and connect sentences, but to also comprehend the main idea of the text (Kintsch, 2018 cited by Kambach and Mesmer, 2024).

Strategies for teaching syntax

Regular exposure to complex texts through reading aloud is excellent for supporting students to gain an understanding of syntax (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016). Following up with questions that require students to analyse the text in terms of its syntax is also a useful teaching strategy (Lewis Hennessy, 2021).

Big Idea and Extras strategy

In order for children to find the main idea in a text, initially they need to be able to identify the main idea within a sentence or within a group of 2 to 3 sentences (Kambach and Mesmer (2024) and the *Big Ideas and Extras strategy* aims to do

this in a structured way for beginning readers (Kambach and Mesmer 2024). Prior to reading aloud a text, the teacher identifies sentences that don't follow the normal subject-predicate structure and targets these for explicit instruction.

After being read to, students identify the main idea of a sentence, that is, the subject-predicate (or doer-doing) part and also the extra information that's not necessary for understanding the main idea (Kambach and Mesmer 2024). For example, working with the following sentence, *With excitement, John went to explore the new city*, children would be initially supported to recognise that John is the subject of the sentence and that he is exploring the new city (the predicate). The students would then focus on identifying the extra information which in this case is *with excitement*. Kambach and Mesmer (2024) recommend illustrating the main idea for young children to scaffold the learning, as shown in Figure 2.

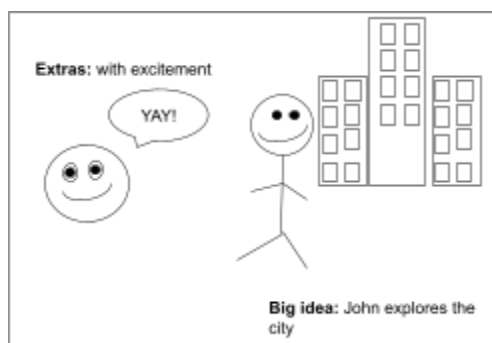


Figure 2: An illustration of the *Big Ideas and Extra strategy* for the sentence *With excitement, John went to explore the new city*.

Once children are familiar with this strategy, they can use the same approach to analyse two or three connected sentences (Kambach and Mesmer, 2024) before moving on to analyse longer pieces of text.

Using graphic organisers

Asking students to respond to a text by asking *who?*, *what?*, *where?* *when?* *why?* *how?* questions is another strategy used for analysing a text in terms of its syntax. If required, teachers can make such questioning more explicit by using a graphic organiser with students, such as that represented by Figure 3.

	The text says...	I know from my prior knowledge...	I infer that...
Who?			
What?			
Where?			
When?			
Why?			
How?			

Figure 3: Graphic organiser to support the teaching of syntax (Lewis Hennessy, 2021).

Literacy knowledge

Literacy knowledge refers to:

print concepts - for example, the understanding that words are read from left to right, that there are spaces between the words and that words consist of letters (Lewis Hennessy, 2021). To support children understand print concepts, the teacher can ask questions such as *Can you find the title on the cover?* Or *Show me where I need to start reading on this page?* A teacher can also use nonverbal cues such as tracking the words with their

finger as they read (Lane and Wright, 2007).

Knowledge of the different writing genres - for example, information reports, persuasive texts and narratives and that these genres are structured differently as they have different purposes.

When reading aloud, teachers can enhance children's literacy knowledge by thinking aloud as they read. For example, While reading aloud a nonfiction text, a teacher can model how they locate information using text features such as headings, captions and contents pages, Similarly, when reading a narrative aloud, a teacher can prompt discussion about the beginning, conflict and resolution of the story to help children understand the basic structure of a narrative (Lane and Wright, 2007).

Reflect and Discuss

1. Choose a text (either fiction or nonfiction text) that will support the learning goals for an upcoming lesson.
2. What text features are worth teaching?
3. Identify any language structures that you anticipate students will find challenging to comprehend. How do you plan to support students in comprehending these sentences?
4. What features of the particular text type you have chosen are worthy of discussion with your students?

Building students' verbal reasoning skills

Verbal reasoning skills and their role in comprehension

Verbal reasoning skills are employed when a reader is required to infer information in a text in order to comprehend it. As the Reading Rope illustrates (Figure 1), such skills are fundamental for proficient reading. Verbal reasoning is needed to sequence events, infer meaning from metaphors, synthesise information and analyse text (Kambach and Mesmer, 2024). A detailed examination of the research into verbal reasoning skills and their role in inferring information is beyond the scope of this course, but it is beneficial to understand some common forms of inference that a reader is required to make.

Local coherence inferences

These occur when the reader is required to infer information in adjacent pieces of text, as is the case with *cohesive devices* when a word or group of words replaces another. The most common of these in English are the pronouns, such as *he* and *she*. English learners may not necessarily track these when reading, leading to comprehension difficulties (Kambach and Mesmer 2024). For example, in the sentences “*Jane got dressed for school. She raced out the door because she was late*” the reader needs to recognise the pronoun *she* refers to Jane.

To support students in tracking pronouns, the teacher can simply draw attention to the pronouns and how they are used to create cohesion. If a picture book is being used, the teacher can also draw attention to the illustrations of the characters as they read aloud to help students track the use of pronouns (Kambach and Mesmer, 2024).

Substituting a word with a synonym is another example of a cohesive device, such as in the following sentences where *car* is replaced by *vehicle* in the second sentence: *The car broke down on the highway during rush hour. Luckily, a tow truck arrived quickly to remove the stranded vehicle.*”

A reader also needs to understand how connectives are used to convey meaning. These are words or phrases that signal relationships between different pieces of text. For example, words such as *furthermore* indicate that additional information is provided and terms such as *before*, *after* or *while* provide information about time (Lewis Hennessy, 2021).

Global coherence inferences

Global coherence inferences require the reader to be able to activate their background knowledge relevant to the topic at hand in order to synthesise and analyse information in a text. For example, to identify the setting in a story, draw conclusions or identify the author's point of view (Lewis Hennessy, 2021).

Building students' verbal reasoning skills

The following strategies can be used to build students' verbal reasoning skills.

Questioning

Teachers can intentionally use read alouds to build students' verbal reasoning skills by asking open-ended questions (Kambach and Mesmer, 2024). Unit 6 of this course provides some evidence-based strategies for scaffolding discussions with students regarding texts incorporating such questions.

Thinking aloud

The teacher can model inference making

by thinking aloud (Lewis Hennessy, 2021).

Graphic organisers

A graphic organiser can also support students to make inferences in a text, such as the table represented by Figure 4.

Question	What does the text say?	What I already know	So, I think...

Figure 4: Graphic organiser adapted from Lewis Hennessy (2021) to support students to make global coherence inferences in a text

Reflect and Discuss

1. Choose an appropriate text to incorporate into an upcoming lesson. Identify any local and global inferences students will be required to understand to comprehend the text.
2. Determine whether students will need support to make these inferences and what type of support that will be.

Read-aloud discussions

To support comprehension, Fisher et al., (2015) emphasise the importance of providing time during lessons for students to discuss texts after they have read or listened to them. Three different frameworks to support effective discussions are described below.

Text talk to improve vocabulary in young children

This strategy is suitable for learning targeted vocabulary from a text. A text talk lesson begins by the teacher reading a story aloud and initiating a discussion regarding the text. The teacher then targets several words from the story to discuss in more depth. Deep learning of these words becomes the focus of the lesson. This might involve providing synonyms for the selected words and using these in a sentence. Discussion should then move to using these words in different contexts that are unrelated to the story (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013).

Text talks using books that contain less sophisticated language

Using written texts to develop students' vocabulary is a very effective strategy because written texts contain more rare words than oral conversations. The flash drive of reading resources that accompany this course contains a large number of free picture books created by volunteers. While some of these books lack sophisticated language because they are designed for children to read themselves, they can still be an effective vocabulary instructional tool and text talks can be modified to ensure that students are still learning important vocabulary. Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2013)

suggest that for books such as these, teachers can select some of the words from the text to teach the more complex synonyms. For example, if a character is described in the text as being *happy*, the teacher can then use synonyms such as *content*, or *delighted* when discussing the character.

Print referencing

Print referencing is appropriate for young children who are developing print concepts. It involves pointing out, or discussing aspects such as the title of the book, or asking the children where to start reading on a page.

Reciprocal Questioning

This strategy involves students asking questions of their teacher or peers, because asking good questions requires a good understanding of the text. Reciprocal questioning can take on various forms, but one suggestion is that it begins by a student asking a question and the teacher then calls on another student to answer it. The second student is to attempt to answer the questions and then create another question for the third student to answer, and so on (Dougherty Stahl, Flanigan and McKenna, 2020).

Habits of Discussion

Described by Lemov, Driggs and Woolway (2016), this routine facilitates different types of discussion including clarifying information and ideas, elaborating, evaluating and synthesising. Students are provided with sentence starters to scaffold their discussions. Some example sentence starters that have been created using ChatGPT are provided in Table 1

below:

<p>Clarifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can you explain what you mean by...?</i> • <i>Could you give an example of...?"</i> • <i>I'm not sure I understand. Could you clarify...?</i>
<p>Elaborating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To expand on your point, I believe...</i> • <i>Another example of this could be...</i> • <i>Furthermore, we could consider...</i>
<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I see your point, but I think...</i> • <i>This idea is strong because...</i> • <i>I'm not sure I agree with that because...</i>
<p>Synthesising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bringing together these different ideas, it appears that...</i> • <i>If we look at all the perspectives shared, a common theme is...</i> • <i>When we consider both arguments, it seems like the main takeaway is...</i>

Table 1: Example sentence starters to support the Habits of Discussion framework

Initially, discussions should focus on literal questions (where answers can be found directly in the text) and then move onto inferential questions (where students are required to make connections with their own background knowledge in order to answer them) (Lemov, Driggs and Woolway, 2016).

Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy

Questioning is an effective strategy for building students' comprehension about a text and the QAR strategy provides a

framework for supporting students to think critically about the texts they are reading (Fisher and Frey, 2018). It sorts questions into one of two categories - book questions (i.e. literal questions) and brain questions (i.e. inferential questions) (Fisher and Frey (2018) and include:

Book questions - right there

These are literal questions where the answers can be found directly in the text, usually in one sentence.

Book questions - think and search

These are literal questions where the answers can be found directly in the text but are extracted from more than one sentence in the text.

Brain questions - author and you

Such questions require students to combine their background knowledge and information from the text to answer.

Brain questions - on your own

Prior knowledge is needed to answer these questions. The text may or may not be needed to answer these questions (Fisher and Frey, 2018).

Teacher prompts for thinking out loud

Oczkus (2012) provides a list of useful prompts to stimulate discussion about narratives between pairs of students. These include:

Before Reading

- I think this is about...because....
- Already this reminds me of...because....
- I think I will learn...because....

During and After Reading

- It was confusing when....
- At first I thought..., then I realised....

- I was surprised by...because....
- So far...has happened....
- This reminds me of...because....
- Something new I learned was....
- I liked the part where...because...
- It was so (funny, sad, wild) when....
- I think the character...was very... because....
- The author probably wrote this because....

Reflect and Discuss

1. Select a text for reading aloud that supports the teaching for an upcoming lesson.
2. Discuss which type of questioning and/or discussion strategy would be most appropriate to meet the lesson's objectives.
3. Create the questions and corresponding answers that will be used to stimulate discussion.

Intellectual preparation for read aloud activities

The intellectual prep process is where you move from a physical lesson plan, to the strategies and teacher moves you are going to use in the moment to make that lesson accessible, engaging, and effective for every individual student in your classroom (Fuhrman, 2024).

Lemov (2021) emphasises the importance of investing time into lesson preparation to maximise learning which also applies to the planning of read aloud sessions. This unit provides a summary of the research to assist in preparing reading sessions that maximise learning. Appendix 2 provides a template for preparing a read aloud session.

Attributes of a quality read aloud experience

(Fisher et al., 2004) observed teachers who were considered experts at reading aloud to students and noted that there were 7 qualities common among such teachers, which are worth considering when preparing read aloud sessions. These are described below.

1. Text selection

Reading aloud is most effective when it's incorporated into units of work (Lane and Wright, 2007), so texts should be chosen based to support the curriculum. Ideally, complex texts are selected as children's listening comprehension skills are more advanced than their written skills. As discussed in Unit 2, it is worth considering whether multiple texts and the inclusion of works of fiction would be appropriate to maximise the absorption of new knowledge.

2. Previewed and Practised

Pre-reading of the selected book is critical to become familiar with the text. Sticky notes with questions on them, can be placed at strategic pages to denote appropriate places to pause and ask questions. New vocabulary can be selected for teaching (Fisher et al., 2004). The text should be evaluated to determine whether students need to be provided with any background knowledge in order to understand the selected text (Lewis Hennessey, 2021). Teachers should write the answers they anticipate receiving from their students, as this process encourages teachers to put their own thinking into words, just as students are required to do. This enables teachers to reflect on the lesson and adjust the teaching material as required (Lemov, 2021).

3. Establishing a purpose for reading

Setting a purpose for reading and explicitly articulating this to students is important (Fisher et al., 2004). This could be, for example, to practise a particular comprehension strategy. If students understand what they are supposed to be learning, it enables them prioritise what is important.

4. Modelling of fluent reading

Fluent reading, where a student has automatic and accurate word recognition and reads with expression, is the ultimate reading goal (Dougherty Stahl, Flannigan and McKenna, 2020). As Figure 1 (The Reading Rope) indicates, fluent (or skilled) reading occurs when a reader is proficient in all of the separate skills that contribute to proficient reading. Reading aloud to students provides an opportunity to

model such reading (Fisher et al., 2004).

5. Read with animation and expression

Fisher et al (2004) noted that when effective teachers read with expression, they used hand gestures and facial expressions to convey meaning which help to engage students in the story.

6. Discussing the text

Unit 6 in this course provides detailed information on scaffolding discussions regarding texts.

7. Independent reading and writing

Fisher et al. (2004) suggest that children could engage in journal writing using the read aloud as a source of inspiration, or it might provide the impetus for research on a particular topic related to the book.

An instructional routine for reading aloud picture books to young children

To maximise the benefits of reading aloud to young children, McGee and Schickedanz (2007) recommend the following instructional routine that involves reading a story multiple times:

During the first reading

Provide support to learn new vocabulary. Select words that are necessary for understanding of that text and for understanding other texts. Briefly elaborate on these pre-selected words as they are encountered in the story but without interrupting the flow of the narrative (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2013). If the book doesn't include any terms that are likely to require explicit instruction, then more complex terms that can be used to describe the story such as *disaster* or *dramatic* could be incorporated into the dialogue when the book is introduced (McGee and Schickedanz, 2007).

Think aloud. To build children's

comprehension of the story (McGee and Schickedanz (2007) recommend that the teacher pauses at sections which require the reader to infer what is happening. The teacher can then model their own analytical thinking by stating *I'm thinking that.....*

Ask 'why?' questions. After reading the story, the teacher asks *why?* questions to encourage students to infer sections of the story, as young children tend to have difficulty inferring information from a text (McGee and Schickedanz 2007).

During the second reading

Ideally, this occurs a day or two later with the purpose of deepening childrens' understanding of the story by engaging them in more analytic discussions. The session begins with a basic recap of the story. Brief explanations of the same vocabulary are again used, but additional words are also identified for instruction. Questioning becomes a more significant component of the read aloud session, with a focus on inferential questions and predictions of what would happen next if the story continued (McGee and Schickedanz 2007).

During the third reading

The session begins with asking students to recall elements of the story. By the third reading, the focus is to increase the amount of analytical discussion that the children engage in (McGee and Schickedanz 2007).

Reflect and discuss

Write a lesson plan using the template provided in Appendix 2 for an upcoming lesson that will incorporate reading aloud one or more texts. Use the *Attributes of a quality read aloud experience* as summarised in this unit to support your planning.

Appendix 1: Read aloud events

Read aloud events are a fun and engaging way of building children's love of literature and developing a culture of reading. Various reading events that are held annually are described below which might provide inspiration to create your own event.

[National simultaneous story time](#)

is an Australian reading event where schools across Australia read the same picture book on the same day at the same time <https://tinyurl.com/aboutNSS>.

[Global Read-Aloud](#)

This event occurs over a 6 week period using a predetermined book for students to study, with the aim of making as many global connections with the text as possible. Schools connect with each other schools around the globe as part of the project. <https://theglobalreadaloud.com>

[World Read Aloud Day](#)

This annual event is a celebration of literature. Organisers may choose to celebrate the day through literature games, creating a story or sharing

stories with their students. A mystery speaker or parents could be invited to read aloud to the students.

<https://www.litworld.org/worldreadaloudday>

[International Children's Book Day](#)

While not specifically a read aloud event, it is designed to encourage a love of reading and read aloud sessions could form part of the planned activities for celebrating this event.

www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/international-childrens-book-day

[Book Raps](#)

This involves students discussing and sharing their ideas about a predetermined book with students from other schools over a number of weeks. This could be a novel for older students or a picture book for young children. Each week, the organiser provides questions for students to discuss and answer after they have read through the story or part thereof. Each class prepares their response to the questions which are then communicated to the other classes through email or social media platform.

Appendix 2: Interactive Reading Lesson Plan Template

Title of the text:
Titles of supporting texts (if any).
Purpose for reading: <i>Which aspect(s) of The Reading Rope will be targeted?</i>
Background knowledge: <i>Does the text build students' background knowledge? If so, in what way?</i> <i>Do students need to acquire additional knowledge in order to to understand the text? If so, what?</i>
Vocabulary: <i>2-3 words that require a brief explanation as they are encountered in the text</i>
Thinking out loud discussion prompts: <i>Before reading:</i> <i>During reading:</i> <i>After reading:</i>
Questions for after reading:

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