

Have you ever found yourself...

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- Using books to teach skills rather than using books to engage readers?
- Asking higher level questions only to receive literal recall from books?
- Faced with passive quiet listeners?
- Trying to endlessly elicit responses that don't come?
- Prepared for and excited about a read aloud that did not quite live up to your hopes and expectations?
- Generally frustrated that what you know is possible seems so unattainable?

A Case for More Read Aloud

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- The best place to immerse children in the experience of high quality reading
- A heavily supported opportunity for richer comprehension
- An arena for growing and talking about, and possibly changing our thoughts and interpretations (of books and of life)
- A place to assess the kinds of thinking our students are doing when *they* read

Read Aloud: Not Just For our Youngest Readers!

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- Fight the misconception that picture books are too simple in content and structure for fluent readers
- Follow the complete arc of a story in a shorter period of time, giving room to explore narrative complexity in ways that support independent reading
- Provide older elementary students with a vehicle to explore complex social issues together
- Use chapter book read alouds (with purposeful talk) to help students understand what reading their own chapter books should feel like

Various Purposes for Reading Aloud

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- Enjoying great books and loving reading
- Learning about content
- Giving children access to books they may not be able to read independently

Today's purpose:

- Engaging with texts and classmates and the world in ways that make an impact and leave us pondering things that matter
 - "For me, this book really spoke to the issue of...."
 - "Having read this book, I am left thinking a lot about..."

Defining High Quality Reading

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Harold Bloom (How to Read and Why)

We read deeply for varied reasons:

- That we cannot know enough people profoundly enough
- That we need to know ourselves better
- That we require knowledge, not just of self and others, but of the way things are

- The search for a difficult pleasure

Impact on Student Reading Quality

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Only literal understanding	Increased inferential thinking
Lack of engagement	Increased empathy, visualization, questioning, etc.
Unresponsive reading	Increased ability to "talk back" to the book and to other readers

Powerful Interactive Read Alouds	
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Comprehension and Meaning Making	Talk and Discourse
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively engaging readers in the mental “busyness” of reading well• Implicitly engaging readers in employing comprehension strategies while making meaning of text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modeling and engaging readers in the use of specific types of talk structures• Modeling and engaging readers in increasingly complex and higher levels of conversation

Some Ways to Support Engagement, Inquiry and Collaboration
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dramatization• Unanswerable Questions and Debate• Critical Literacy and Digging Deep• Possibilities Across the Day

Dramatization: Breathing Life into Reading
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect• Feel• Comprehend• Interpret• Empathize

Dramatization with Fiction

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- Becoming characters; saying what is not being said
- Advising characters
- Filling in missing scenes
- Reenacting heightened, tense, confusing, or otherwise stand-out scenes

Dramatization with Nonfiction

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- Use gestures to better understand traits/ descriptors
- Use gestures to better understand action/ movement
- Visualize descriptors and actions/ movement

Opportunities for Practice

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- Think across the **To-With-By** continuum
- Habituate this work- help it become natural and automatic (this later leads to higher quality visualization and connections)
- Make the transfer to independence explicit- this isn't just something we do together

The Interplay of Meaning Making

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- Literal ~ Holding onto the gist of the story
- Inferential ~ Making sense of and thinking more about the story, especially what's *not* on the page
- Unanswerable ~ Pondering something bigger launched by the story

Critical Literacy and the *Unanswerable*

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- Readers need to think about and beyond texts
- Readers need to grapple with and ponder meaning in texts
- Readers need to develop a comfort in modifying meaning as they read
- Readers need to come to expect that reading makes an impact on them in some way

Concepts for Critical Reading/Thinking

From, "For a Better World" 2001; Bomer and Bomer; Pages 28 – 37

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups • Power • Taking Things for Granted <small>(Naturalization)</small> • Fairness/Justice • Voice/Silence • Multiple Perspectives <small>(Different Sides of Stories)</small> • Representation <small>(Showing What People Are Like)</small> • Gender • Race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class • Money • Labor • Language • Intimate Relationships and Families • Relationships to Nature • Violence and Peace • Acting Alone or Together <small>(Individualism/Collectivism)</small>
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Eyeing the Possibilities

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- When planning for lots of talk around critical literacy lenses and the unanswerable, keep an eye on/think about:
 - Character decisions
 - Character interactions/conflict
 - Themes
 - Lenses
 - Perspectives

Give Them a Little Substance

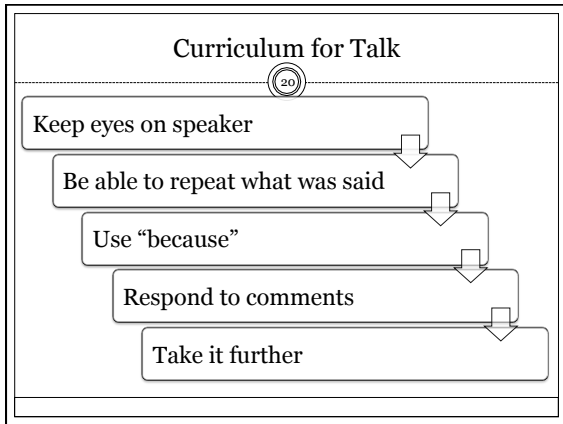
18

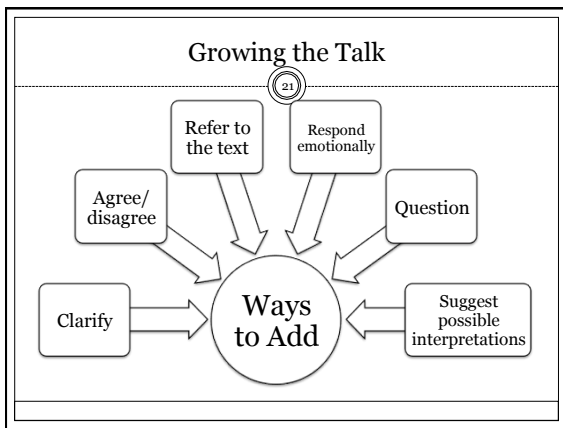
- Move beyond the obvious
- Imagine possible interpretations
- Plan thinking through lenses for critical thinking/analysis
- Embrace the unanswerable
- Consider the symbiotic relationship between content and form of conversations

Continuum of Talk Skills

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The diagram illustrates a continuum of talk skills. It consists of five rounded rectangular boxes arranged in an upward-sloping line from left to right. The boxes contain the following text from left to right: 'Say Nothing', 'Say Anything', 'Say something that relates', 'Say something that responds', and 'Say something that adds'. Lines connect the boxes in a sequence, and a larger line connects the first and last boxes, forming a shape that suggests a path or progression.





Something to Think About

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Ignorance is not so much about not knowing an answer as it is about not knowing that there is a question, not being able to think when thinking is required.

Frank Smith
Essays into Literacy; 1983
