


Using Think ALOUDs to Build Comprehension

www.drmmollyness.com
@drmmollyness

1

My True Love of Reading Comprehension



WE DO SUPPOSE TO HAVE THIS MAKE STUDIOS BOOK READ BY TOMORROW.


FLIP-IP-IP-IP-IP!

THESE! ITS GOOD TO GET THEM OUT OF THE WAY!

READING GOES FASTER IF YOU DON'T SHARE COMPREHENSION.

WHERE'S THE THUMBSEL?

2



8 million students in Grades 4-12 read below grade level:
70% of those struggle with comprehension

3

"Too much of our instructional time focuses on *assessing* comprehension. Let's shift that to *building* comprehension."

WWW.DRMMOLLYNESS.COM




4

The Data Show....

- In 3,000 minutes of elementary instruction, there was practically no comprehension instruction – but plenty of comprehension assessment (Durkin, 1978)
- In 2,400 minutes of secondary content-area classrooms, only 3% of instructional time was allotted for explicit comprehension instruction. (Ness, 2006)

5



6

Copyright Molly Ness

Reading comprehension questions are a horse of a different color. There is no reason to think that practicing answering particular types of comprehension questions would improve test performance.

TIMOTHY SHANAHAN

7

"We all know how effective think alouds are, but we also know that they are not yet commonplace in classrooms today"

- Doug Fisher

8

My Nagging Questions

- How well do we prepare teachers to think aloud?
- Where do teachers struggle to think aloud? Where do they succeed?
- Are there factors that hold teachers back from thinking aloud?
- Why have think alouds not caught on like wildfire?

9

What is a think aloud?

When a proficient reader verbally reports or models his/her thinking as he/she approaches the text

10

Think alouds do not emerge extemporaneously. They require thoughtful preparation and deep knowledge of the text.

11

Think Alouds ARE NOT...

- Turn and talks
- Comprehension checks / check for understanding
- Extemporaneous

12

Copyright Molly Ness

Think Alouds ARE...


- Teacher modeling thought "I" language
- Key element in teaching skills & strategies
- Quick explanation to transparently show how to navigate text
- Relevant to all text genres, all grade levels, all content areas



www.drtolpeters.com

13

LEARNING




Think alouds positively impact student achievement...

- Preschoolers to secondary students
- Across text genre and format (online too!)
- Promising for struggling readers and on FLETC Language Learners

www.drtolpeters.com

14

Quite a Quandary!

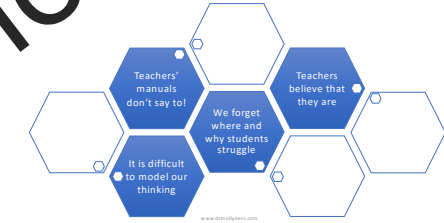


- Think alouds produce significant gains in reading achievement
- Think alouds are not yet commonplace in today's classrooms
- Why are think alouds not more commonplace?

www.drtolpeters.com

15

The Lack of Think Alouds



- Teachers' manuals don't say so!
- Teachers believe that they are
- We forget where and why students struggle
- It is difficult to model our thinking

www.drtolpeters.com

16

Think Alouds Apply to All Kinds of Texts at All Different Levels




As proficient readers, we aren't even aware that we are seamlessly doing all these things!

www.drtolpeters.com

17

"It is better to focus and really address a few goals rather than diffusing energy by trying to address too many"

- Jeffery Wilhelm



www.drtolpeters.com

18

Copyright Molly Ness

Five Essential Comprehension Strategies

- GENERATING QUESTIONS
- MAKING INFERENCES
- SYNTHESIZING
- UNDERSTANDING THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE
- MONITORING & CLARIFYING

www.dnolyness.com

19

Generating Questions

Purposeful readers are naturally curious. They ask questions about what is happening in the text. Sometimes the answers to their questions are found in the text, and sometimes they are not.

- I wonder....
- I'd like to ask the author...
- I hope I find out....
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

www.dnolyness.com

20

The average 4 year old asks 437 questions a day.

437. Enough said.

somecards.com

21

Making Inferences

An inference is something that is probably true. The author doesn't tell us exactly, but purposeful readers take clues from the text and think about what they already know. An inference is when the reader says, "This is probably true".

- From the text clues, I can conclude that....
- I'm getting the sense that....
- This information makes me think....
- The author doesn't come right out and say it, but I can probably conclude that....
- Based on what I know about this character, I can guess that....
- That is probably why....
- Maybe / perhaps / it could be that...

22

Miss Nelson is Missing

"Something will have to be done," said Miss Nelson.

www.dnolyness.com

23

Back home Miss Nelson took off her coat and hung it in the closet (right next to an ugly black dress). When it was time for bed she sang a little song. "I'll never tell," she said to herself with a smile.


www.dnolyness.com

24

Copyright Molly Ness

MAKING INFERENCES: MISS NELSON IS MISSING

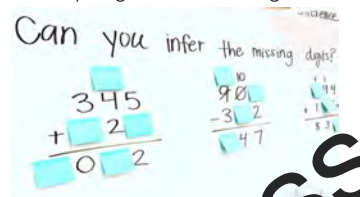
Throughout the end of the story, the author has given me **some important clues**. I'm going to add up those clues to **make an inference** about the identity of Miss Nelson.



25

Spotlight on Inferencing

Can you infer the missing digits?



26

Synthesizing

Purposeful readers are always changing their minds as they read. They use new information from the text to adapt their thoughts and opinions. Readers synthesize to get the most important ideas from the text and to draw a conclusion about what they've learned.

- Before I thought...now I think....
- Now I understand / think...
- The most important ideas here are....
- The basic gist / the key information I've learned is...
- In a nutshell, this text tells me....

27

Understanding the Author's Purpose

Purposeful readers try to figure out the reason that the author wrote a text. They try to figure out the purpose of the text or the message the author is sending.

- The author wants me to learn about...
- I wonder why the author....
- The author's purpose is...based on....
- A golden line for me is....
- I like how the author usesto show....
- This word / phrase stands out for me....

28

Monitoring & Clarifying

Purposeful readers know when they stop understanding what they are reading. They slow down and take steps to get their reading back on track. A reader uses 'fix it' strategies to repair his or her understanding.

- I had to slow down....
- I had to go back and reread....
- I was confused by....
- I still don't understand....
- I used (XXXX) to help me understand....
- I got lost here because....
- I need to reread the part....

29

A Three-Step Process to Thinking Aloud

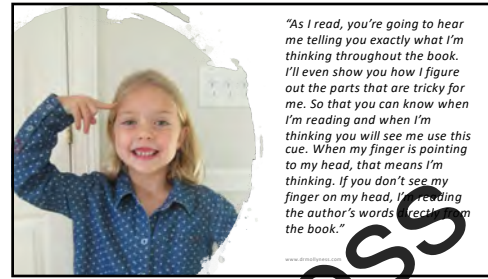
Step #1	Step #2	Step #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peruse the text searching for the comprehension opportunities • Mark 'juicy stopping spots' with sticky notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically examine each stopping spot • Narrow down our stopping points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sentence starters (I language) to identify exactly what we will say in front of students.

30

Copyright Molly Ness

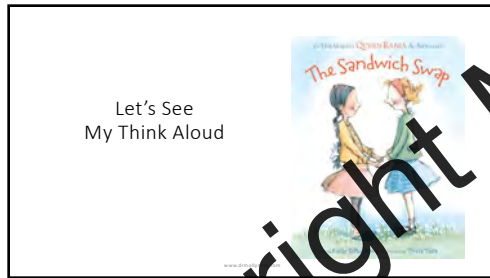


31

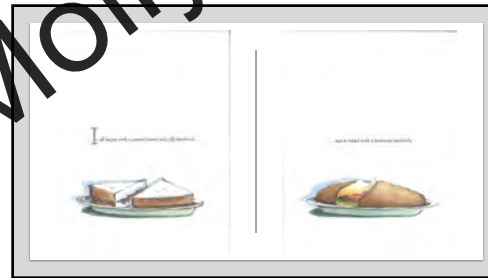


32

"As I read, you're going to hear me telling you exactly what I'm thinking throughout the book. I'll even show you how I figure out the parts that are tricky for me. So that you can know when I'm reading and when I'm thinking you will see me use this cue. When my finger is pointing to my head, that means I'm thinking. If you don't see my finger on my head, I'm reading the author's words from the book."



33



34

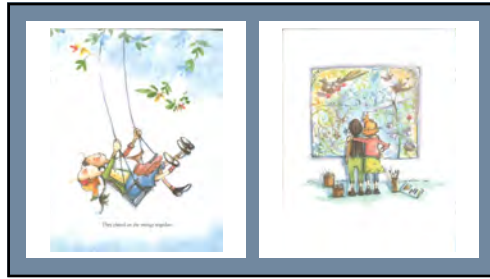


35



36

Copyright Molly Ness



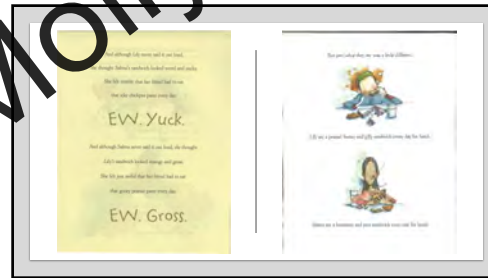
37



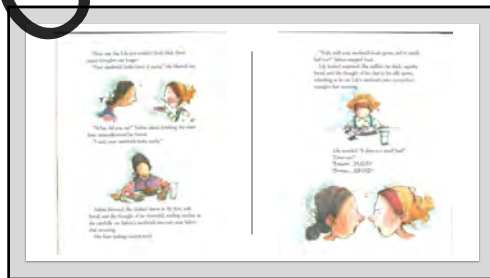
38



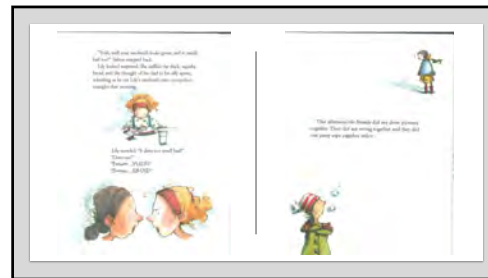
39



40

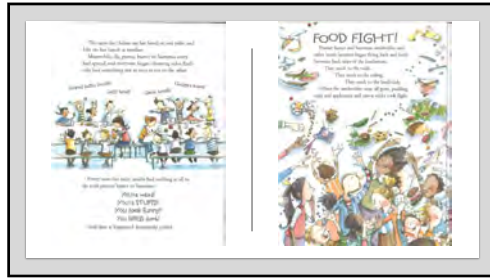


41



42

Copyright Molly Ness



43



44



45



46



47



48

Copyright Molly Ness

More Key Ideas...

- Don't name the strategy
- Can include both think alouds and turn and talks!

49

10th Grade

Organisms use energy to grow, develop, respond to stimuli, and maintain homeostasis. Energy is the ability to cause change. Organisms get their energy from food. Any behavior, structure, or internal process that allows an organism to make changes in response to environmental factors and live long enough to reproduce is called an adaptation.

50

I really need to understand that energy is what keeps organisms alive, and that energy plays an important role in the process called adaptation. I must remember that adaptation is how things change.

51

Thinking Aloud in SS

A new leader came to power in 1933: Adolf Hitler. He was the head of the National Socialist, or Nazi, party.

This part makes me ask all sorts of questions. Was Hitler elected the head, like we elect a president? Or was he born into a family of leader, like the queen and king in England?

52

To Start Think Aloud Instruction

- One strategy at a time
- Anchor charts to introduce strategy
- Use a variety of "I" language sentence starters...
- Use the Gradual Release of Responsibility

53

The Gradual Release of Responsibility

I Do Think Aloud

We Do Think Along

You Do Think Alone

54

Copyright Molly Ness

Think Along

Guided practice

Teacher provides stopping point and strategy

Students use sentence starters to provide "I" language

Eventually, teacher just provides the stopping point

55

Sick by Shel Silverstein

"I cannot go to school today"
Said little Peggy Ann McKay

Ask a question

56

*I have the measles and the mumps,
A gash, a rash, and purple bumps.
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry.
I'm going blind in my right eye.
My tonsils are as big as rocks,
I've counted sixteen chicken pox
And there's one more - that's seventeen.
And don't you think my face looks green?*

Ask a question / make an inference

- From the clues, I can conclude...
- I'm wondering...
- This makes me think...
- It could be that...

57

*My nose is cut - my eyes are blue
I'm getting dramatic flu,
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
I've got that my left leg is broke -
My hip hurts when I move my chin,
My belly button's caving in,
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained
My 'pendix pains each time in rains,
My nose is cold, my toes are numb.
I have a silver in my thumb*

Monitor and clarify

- I need to know more about...
- I had difficulty with...
- I got lost here...
- I wasn't sure about...so here's what I did...

58

*My neck is stiff, my voice is weak
I hardly whisper when I speak.
My tongue is filling up my mouth.
I think my hair is falling out.
My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,
My temperature is 108.
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,
There is a hole inside my ear.*

Synthesizing OR Author's Purpose

- Now I think...
- The most important ideas are...
- A golden line for me is...
- I'm thinking that the author...

59

*I have a hangnail, and my heart is - what?
What's that? What's that you say?
You say today is...Saturday?*

Synthesizing

- Before I read, I thought...Now I think...
- Now I understand...

60

Copyright Molly Ness

G'bye, I'm going out to play!

Author's Purpose

- The author's purpose in this poem was...
- I like how the author...
- I'm thinking that the author...

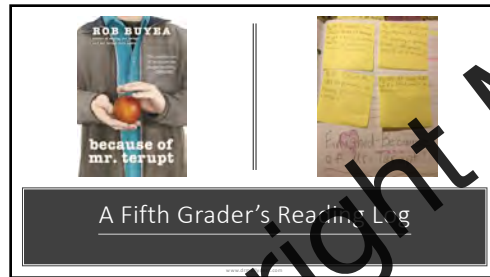
61

Think Alones – Strategy Tracker

How often did I... ?

	Most often	Sometimes	Often
Ask questions			
Make inferences			
Synthesize			
Understand the author's purpose			
Monitor and clarify			

62




A Fifth Grader's Reading Log

63

An Invitation to Classroom Teachers

- See every read aloud is an opportunity for thinking aloud.
- Shift instructional time from *assessing* comprehension to *building* comprehension.
- Build your capacity to think aloud using sentence starters with "I" language
- Use the GRR to shift from think alouds – think alongs – think alones



64

Copyright Molly Ness