The New Essentials of Literacy Instruction

Maria Walther, First Grade Teacher
Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School
2700 Stonebridge Blvd.
Aurora, IL 60502
maria_walther@ipsd.org
www.mariawalther.com
Twitter:@mariapwalther

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved, Page 1

A Portrait of a Future-Ready Learner

- Becomes a self-directed, independent learner
- Builds strong content area knowledge
- Adjusts communication based on audience, task, purpose, and content
- Comprehends as well as critiques
- Seeks to understand other perspectives and cultures
- Evaluates other points of view critically and constructively
- Values evidence
- Uses technology and digital media strategically and capably

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) *for English Language Arts* (NGA Center/CCSSO, 2010), p. 7

Elevating Reading Workshop

- Read Aloud
- Develop Text Sets
- Incorporate Informational Texts
- Engage in Collaborative Conversations
- Encourage Reading Response
- Guide Readers
- Share and Celebrate

Read Aloud!

Barton, C. (2016). *That's not bunny!* (C. Jack, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion.
Fierce Hawk is perched on his nest ready to snatch his prey but he is outwitted by a clever rabbit.
Teaching Ideas: Pair with *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2005); Three Read Aloud Words: *fierce, dismayed, contents* (See M-by-M Reading p. 15-16)

Jarvis. (2016). *Alan's big, scary teeth.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick.
Alan the alligator is best known for scaring with his "razor-sharp" teeth. Find out what happens when the animals discover Alan's secret—his teeth are fake.
BOOK TRAILER: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTVaTrfzGNE
Teaching Idea: Pair with *Grandpa's Teeth* (Clement, 1999)

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,

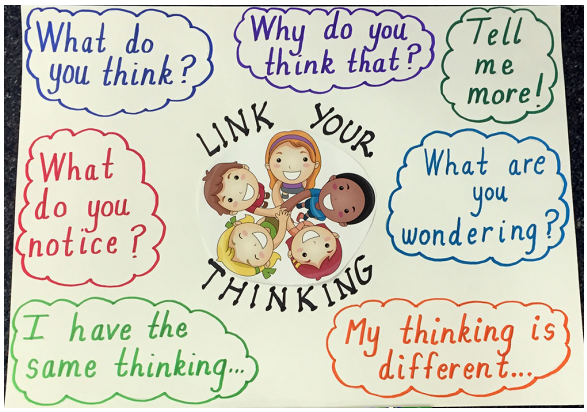
Why Read Aloud?

The Read-Aloud:

- Builds a textual lineage from which to draw when asked to compare and contrast
- Demonstrates how books work so that readers have a better understanding of craft and structure
- Sparks rich discussion and collaborative conversations
- Models how proficient readers read, understand, and interpret complex texts
- Helps all learners, especially English Language Learners, hear the nuances of the English language
- Fosters a strong sense of community

Source: *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, K–2* (Walther, 2015, p. 45)

Engage in Collaborative Conversations



Mini-Lesson found on pages 52-53 of *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom* (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Also see Blog Post by Lois Bridges: The Having of Grand Conversations
http://frizzleblog.scholastic.com/post/having-grand-conversations

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,

BOOKS TO SPARK COMPREHENSION CONVERSATIONS

Predicting

Smith, L. (2010). *The inside tree.* (D. Parkins, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.
Mr. Potter's house is warm and comfortable until he decides to invite a dog and a tree inside.
Teaching Ideas: Peek and Predict (See *M-by-M Reading* p. 116)

Deedy, C. A. (1991). *Agatha's feather bed: Not just another wild goose story.* Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.
I've introduced this story to many teachers and they either like it or they think it is a little odd. Either way, it is ideal for predicting. Agatha is an old woman who believes "everything comes from something." When a gaggle of naked geese appear on her windowsill, she makes them warm cloaks to replace their feathers, which make up her bed. In a surprise ending, we find out that the cloaks were made from her long white hair.
Teaching Ideas: Predict the Title (See *M-by-M Reading* p. 109)

Seeger, L. V. (2010). *What if?* New York: Roaring Brook.
Laura Vaccaro Seeger uses only 6 words in varying combinations to tell a tale three different ways. This book will spark a conversation about friendship and considering the feelings of others. It is also ideal for pointing out the difference between predicting and inferring.
Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Social Studies—Friendship; Inferring (See Predicting vs. Inferring Mini-Lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 185)

Inferring Big Ideas

Boelts, M. (2007). *Those shoes.* (N. Z. Jones, Illus.). Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
Jeremy really wants "those shoes"—the pair of high-tops that everyone else has, but Grandma can't afford them. Later, Jeremy finds a pair in a thrift store that are much too small, but gets them anyway. After much debate, Jeremy ends up giving his too-small shoes to another boy in need.
Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas, (See M-by-M Reading p. 186)

Nelson, K. (2015). *If you plant a seed.* New York: HarperCollins.
Rabbit and Mouse plant seeds, but their selfishness leads to trouble. They discover that planting a seed of kindness is much sweeter.
Teaching Ideas: Spring, Plants, Inferring Big Ideas, (See M-by-M Reading p. 186), Pair with *Each Kindness* (Woodson, 2012)

Questioning

Cole, H. (2012). *Unspoken.* New York: Scholastic.
This wordless picture book depicts a young girl's willingness to help a runaway slave and shows that "everyday people were brave in quiet ways."
Teaching Ideas: Black History; U. S. History (See *M-by-M Reading*, pp. 164-166)

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,

Enhancing Writing Workshop

- Read Aloud Like a Writer
- Engage in Collaborative Conversations
- Share Effective Mini-Lessons
- Develop Engaging Genre Studies
- Guide Writers
- Share and Celebrate

Read Like a Writer: Collaborative Conversations

Reading aloud IS teaching writing, even if no writing activity follows the reading.
Vicki Spandel, *Creating Young Writers* (2008)

Turn and Talk Teaching Tips:
Before you begin, model "turn and talk" with another adult or student. Emphasize the importance of having a two-way conversation with one person speaking at a time. Assign students a "turn and talk" partner or small group.

During read aloud, stop several times at natural breaking points and pose the following queries for students to "turn and talk" about:

- **WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?**
- **WHAT ARE YOU WONDERING?**
- **HOW MIGHT YOU CHOOSE TO DO THIS IN YOUR OWN WRITING?**
- Where do you think this author got his/her ideas for this book?
- Listen to this! Let me reread the beginning of this book. Did the lead make you want to read the story?
- Did you hear any words that you want to remember and use in your writing?
- Can you picture this setting/character/event in your mind? How did the author help you do that? What words did he or she use?
- Notice the way the sentences flow. Talk about how the author did that.
- Does this writing have voice?
- Who is telling this story? How do you know that?

Source: Adapted from Routman, Regie. (2003). *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,

What to look for in the books you enjoy reading aloud	What to say. . . *Source: Choice Words* by Peter H. Johnston (Stenhouse, 2004)
• Various Text Structures • Sensory Language • Creative Conventions • Repetition • Word Play • Onomatopoeia • Interjections • Illustration Techniques	"Oh, I love that line!" "Did anyone notice *any interesting words? *any new punctuation? *any new ways of arranging the words on the page? "Are there any favorite words or phrases, or ones you wish you had written?" "Why would an author do something like that?" "How else could the author have done that?" "Why did the author choose that word?"

A Few of My Favorite Mentor Texts

Byrne, R. (2014). *This book just ate my dog!* New York: Holt.
When Bella takes her dog for a "stroll across the page," he disappears into the gutter of the book along with her friend, the rescue squad, and Bella herself. Quick-thinking Bella writes a note to the readers telling them to shake the book and get everyone out.
Teaching Ideas: Parts of a Book—Gutter (See morning message in M-by-M Reading p. 40); Reading-Writing Connection

Byrne, R. (2015). *We're in the wrong book.* New York: Holt.
Bella and Ben, the characters from *This Book Just Ate My Dog* (2014), get bumped off the page and end up on a journey through books of different genres including comic books, fairy tales, and more.
Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Introduction to different writing genres

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,

Dotlich, R. K. (2015). *One day, the end: Short, very short, shorter-than-ever stories.* (F. Koehler, Illus.). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills.
"For every story there is a beginning and an end, but what happens in between makes all the difference." So begins this one-of-a-kind book where the middle of each story is told solely with illustrations.
Teaching Idea: CCSS Standard 7—Use illustrations to understand characters, setting, or plot; Launching Writing Workshop—Little Book Ideas

Professional Books That Have Shaped My Thinking

Atwell, N. (2007). *The Reading Zone: How to Help Kids Become Skilled, Passionate, Habitual, Critical Readers*. Scholastic.

Biggs-Tucker, K., & Tucker, B. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, 3-5.* Scholastic.

Fuhler, C. J., & Walther, M. P. (2007). *Literature Is Back! Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres.* Scholastic.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good First Teaching for All Children.* Heinemann.

Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning.* Stenhouse.

Johnston, P. H. (2012). *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives.* Stenhouse.

Keene, E. O. (2012). *Talk About Understanding: Rethinking Classroom Talk to Enhance Comprehension.* Heinemann.

Miller, D. (2013). *Reading With Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades* (2nd ed.). Stenhouse.

Ray, K. W., & Cleaveland, L. B. (2004*). About the Authors: Writing Workshop with our Youngest Writers*. Heinemann.

Richardson, J. (2009). *The Next Step in Guided Reading: Focused Assessment and Targeted Lessons for Helping Every Student Become a Better Reader.* Scholastic.

Richardson, J., & Walther, M. P. (2013). *The Next Step Guided Reading Assessment, K-2.* New York: Scholastic.

Richardson, J., & Walther, M. P. (2013). *The Next Step Guided Reading Assessment, 3-6.* New York: Scholastic.

Routman, R. (2005). *Writing Essentials.* Heinemann.

Spandel, V. (2007). *Creating Young Writers (2nd ed.).* Allyn & Bacon.

Taberski, S. (2011). *Comprehension From The Ground Up.* Heinemann.

Thompson, T. (2015). *The Construction Zone: Building Scaffolds for Readers and Writers.* Stenhouse.

Walther, M. P. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, K-2.* Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry.* Scholastic.

Walther, M. P. & Phillips, K. A. (2009). *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction.* Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Phillips, K. A. (2012). *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom.* Scholastic.

©Dr. Maria P. Walther, 2016, All Rights Reserved,