



Good-bye Round Robin

25 Effective Oral Reading Strategies

Updated Edition

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*To all children
who will find joy and satisfaction
through authentic oral reading*

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Preface to Updated Edition

Silent reading is the way we most often read in everyday life. So why is this book about purposeful and meaningful oral reading strategies? And if we are to value *oral* reading, why are we saying good-bye to *round robin reading*, “the outmoded practice of calling on students to read orally one after the other” (Harris and Hodges 1995, 222)?

Answers to these two questions form the foundation of this text. But our desire to round out the answers to these most important questions leads us to emphasize six points in this preface. First, consider the National Reading Panel’s findings (2000) on oral reading. As a result of investigating the topic, the panel concluded, “guided repeated oral reading procedures that included guidance from teachers, peers, or parents had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of levels.” They continued, “These results also apply to all students—good readers as well as those experiencing reading difficulties.” Given that we want to help children to become the best possible readers, oral reading appears anything but a choice.

But choice *does* enter when we think about the types of oral reading activities we use and why we should use them in place of others. As we emphasize in Chapter 1, there are specific reasons for using oral reading yet there are also numerous reasons for ridding ourselves of *round robin reading*. Clearly, in this text, we say “Hello!” to meaningful, purposeful oral reading strategies and “Good-bye!” to the rest.

Second, we realize that English language learners (ELLs) are the norm rather than the exception in most classrooms, leaving many teachers to search out the best ways to help these children acquire English in authentic contexts. Using specific oral reading strategies shown in this book is one way to do just that. Figure A provides the stages of language proficiencies along with a description of each, implications for oral reading instruction, and specific, appropriate oral reading strategies

Figure A. English Language Proficiency Levels, Descriptions, Implications, and Purposeful Oral Reading Strategies

Stages of Language Proficiency	Description	Implications for Using Oral Reading	Purposeful Oral Reading Strategies
Stage 1: Preproduction (Emerging)	Students are in a silent period in which they listen but do not speak in English. They may respond using nonverbal cues in attempt to communicate basic needs.	Oral reading should be modeled by the teacher and other students. Students in the silent period should not be forced to speak but should be given the opportunity to try, if they want, in a group activity where they won't be singled out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Book Experience • Choral Reading • Read-Aloud • Recorded Text • Fast Start (Slight accommodations may need to be made so as not to force production.)
Stage 2: Early Production (Beginning)	Students are beginning to understand more oral language. They respond using one- or two-word phrases and start to produce simple sentences for basic social interactions and to meet basic needs.	Teacher and students should continue to model oral reading. Students should be encouraged to begin taking risks with simple, rehearsed oral reading in non-threatening situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read to Discover • Shared Book Experience • Choral Reading • Mentor Reading • Paired Reading • Read-Aloud • Recorded Text • Fast Start
Stage 3: Speech Emergence (Developing)	Students' listening comprehension improves, and they can understand written English. Students are fairly comfortable engaging in social conversations using simple sentences, but they are just beginning to develop their academic language proficiency.	Students continue to learn through modeling. Students should be participating in whole-class, small-group, partner, and rehearsed oral reading activities. They will need support and opportunities to practice with feedback before independent or paired oral reading for an audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think-Aloud • Induced Imagery • Directed Listening Thinking Activity • Revised Radio • Reading • Choral Reading • Mentor Reading • Readers Theatre • Poetry Club • Paired Reading • Listen to Children Read • Fluency Development Lessons • Fast Start

Stages of Language Proficiency	Description	Implications for Using Oral Reading	Purposeful Oral Reading Strategies
Stage 4: Intermediate Fluency (Expanding)	Students understand and frequently use conversational English with relatively high accuracy. They are able to communicate their ideas in both oral and written contexts.	With scaffolding, students can successfully participate in most all oral reading activities that native speakers are expected to complete. Open-ended questions will allow students to demonstrate comprehension and academic language development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think-Aloud • Induced Imagery • Directed Listening Thinking Activity • Look for the Signals • Say It Like the Character • Rapid Retrieval of Information • Revised Radio Reading • Readers Theatre • Read Around • Poetry Club • Read-Aloud • Paired Reading
Stage 5: Advanced Fluency (Bridging)	Students comprehend and engage in conversational and academic English with proficiency. They perform near grade level in reading, writing, and other content areas.	Students should be encouraged to use higher-level thinking skills during their oral reading. They are near native-like proficiency in oral reading, but may still need support with analyzing, inferring, and evaluating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induced Imagery • Directed Listening Thinking Activity • Look for the Signals • Say It Like the Character • Rapid Retrieval of Information • Read-Aloud • Paired Reading • Read Around • Poetry Club

included in this book for each stage. Figure B illustrates how the strategies cut across the various stages. Taken together, both figures serve as reminders that there is much language variation among ELLs. While some oral reading strategies cut across these levels, others are more germane to the distinct stages. Recognizing that there are different stages of language proficiency, teachers can select the most appropriate strategies to maximize students' learning.

Figure B. English Language Proficiency Levels and Oral Reading Strategies

Oral Reading Strategies	Stage 1: Preproduction Silent Period (Entering)	Stage 2: Early Production (Beginning)	Stage 3: Speech Emergence (Developing)	Stage 4: Intermediate Fluency (Expanding)	Stage 5: Advanced Fluency (Bridging)
Think-Aloud	•	•	•	•	•
Induced Imagery		•	•	•	•
Directed Listening Thinking Activity		•	•	•	•
Look for the Signals		•	•	•	•
Say It Like the Character			•	•	•
Rapid Retrieval of Information			•	•	•
Read to Discover				•	•
Revised Radio Reading		•	•	•	
Shared Book Experience	•	•	•		
Choral Reading	•	•	•		
Mentor Reading		•	•	•	
Readers Theater		•	•	•	
Read Around		•	•	•	•
Poetry Club			•	•	•
Read-Aloud	•	•	•	•	•
Paired Reading		•	•	•	•
Recorded Texts	•	•	•		
Listen to Children Read		•	•	•	
Fluency Development Lessons		•	•	•	
Modified Miscue Analysis		•	•	•	•
Retrospective Miscue Analysis		•	•	•	•
Student Self-Evaluation		•	•	•	•
Multidimensional Fluency Scale		•	•	•	•
Reading Rate		•	•	•	•
Fast Start	•	•	•		

Third, there are elementary school teachers who champion oral reading as one way to help children maximize their full potential as readers yet abhor round robin reading, the one and only oral reading strategy they recall from childhood. From them come some valuable insights into the strategies we showcase in this text. Patty comments, “Very often we teachers get stuck in a practice like round robin reading because it is so prevalent. But just because a practice is prevalent doesn’t mean it is OK! The strategies in *Good-bye Round Robin* are like little eye-openers, reminding me that reading fluently is an important skill, but there are effective and ineffective ways to best help my students learn it.” Julia adds, “The strategies in this book provide authentic read-aloud experiences for students that naturally lead to repeated readings, which strengthens fluency.” But perhaps the real clincher comes from Ashley, a first-grade teacher who admonishes, “Throw the popcorn to the robins! It’s a new day.” What these representative comments help us to see is that more teachers than not are on a quest to discover better ways to instruct the students they are fortunate to teach.

Fourth, with nearly 5,000 children’s books published annually, we are not at a loss for fitting authentic books that can assist teachers in teaching the specific oral reading strategies herein. We provide ten titles for each oral reading strategy in this text, each carefully and thoughtfully selected to best coincide with the oral reading strategy. Along with these titles is a new appendix that features more than 100 titles. Taken together, then, we provide approximately 300 of what we consider the best titles to help you teach the oral reading strategies in this text. The majority of these books have 2007–2008 copyright dates.

Fifth, perhaps one of the best ways for children to feel a part of a classroom community is to provide them with opportunities to interact with all students in the class in different grouping configurations. Figure C shows the oral reading strategies in this book and the grouping size you can use for each activity. Some call for more than one group size within a lesson. As you can see, the oral reading strategies lend themselves well to this flexible grouping arrangement.

Figure C. Oral Reading Strategies and Group Sizes

Oral Reading Activities/ Possible Group Sizes	Whole Class	Small Group	Partner	Solo
Developing Comprehension				
• Think-Aloud	•	•	•	•
• Imagery	•	•	•	•
• Directed Listening Thinking Activity	•	•		
• Look for the Signals	•	•		•
• Say It Like the Character				•
• Rapid Retrieval of Information		•		•
• Read to Discover		•	•	•
Sharing and Performing				
• Revised Radio Reading	•	•		
• Shared Book Experience	•			
• Choral Reading	•	•		
• Readers Theatre	•	•		•
• Read Around		•		•
• Poetry Club	•			•
Struggling Reader				
• Read-Aloud	•			
• Paired Reading			•	
• Recorded Texts		•		•
• Fluency Development Lesson	•	•	•	•

Finally, there are several websites that provide some practical ideas for ways to extend the ideas we present in this book. We feature several of these websites in Appendix B. We make no claim that this list is exhaustive. Rather we offer it as a starter list of what we consider to be some of the best sites to assist you in teaching your students.

In 1925, Nila Banton Smith stated, “Our present social needs demand more efficient methods of reading than those which have been employed in the past” (iii). Without question, these words ring true in the new millennium, particularly as they relate to using the purposeful and meaningful oral reading strategies that form the content of this book. We wish to underscore, however, that oral reading supplements and complements silent reading rather than replaces it. Instead of positioning ourselves on an either/or continuum, we suggest using both modes of reading to best help children become avid readers who not only have the skill to read, but the will, too!

Michael F. Opitz

Think-Aloud

Grade Levels: K–5

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Developing
Comprehension

Description

Much research has revealed that students who have difficulty comprehending often fail to realize that the purpose of reading is to understand a message (Johns 1984, 1986; Opitz 1989). The *Think-Aloud* is one of the best ways to help them see that reading is about comprehending and that readers can and do use a variety of strategies to overcome hurdles that interfere with meaning. During a Think-Aloud, the teacher verbalizes her thoughts while reading aloud, which shows students what experienced readers actually do to ensure comprehension. Davey (1983) lists five strategies that poor comprehenders appear to lack: predicting, forming mental images while reading, using what they already know about the topic (prior knowledge), monitoring how well they are comprehending during reading, and fixing problems as they occur when reading. You can highlight these strategies during the Think-Aloud.

Teaching Suggestions (based on Davey 1983)

1. Select a passage to read aloud. The passage should have points that will pose some difficulties, such as ambiguity and unknown words.
2. Begin reading the passage aloud while students follow along. When you come to a trouble spot, stop and think through it aloud while students listen to what you have to offer.
3. Once you have completed reading orally, invite students to add their thoughts to yours.
4. Pair up students and have them practice the procedure with one another. Each can take turns reading and responding to the other.
5. Have students use the procedure when they are reading silently. Readers could use a form such as Figure 2–2 to remind themselves of what they need to be doing to ensure comprehension and to evaluate themselves.

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Good-bye
Round Robin

How Did I Do When Reading?			
Name _____	Date _____		
Title of selection _____			
	never	sometimes	a lot
1. I made predictions.	_____	_____	_____
2. I was able to form a picture in my mind.	_____	_____	_____
3. I made connections.	_____	_____	_____
4. I knew when I was having problems.	_____	_____	_____
5. I did something to fix my problems.	_____	_____	_____

Figure 2–2. *How Did I Do When Reading?*

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Suggested Titles

Title	Author (Last, First)	Publisher/Year ISBN	Suggested Grade Levels
<i>Copper Sun</i>	Draper, Sharon M.	Simon Pulse/2006 9781416953487	6–8
<i>The Birthday Tree</i>	Fleischman, Paul	Candlewick/2008 9780763626044	2–4
<i>Oh, Brother!</i>	Grimes, Nikki	Greenwillow/2008 9780688172954	K–5
<i>A Sweet Smell of Roses</i>	Johnson, Angela	Aladdin/2005 9781416953616	2–5
<i>The Jupiter Stone</i>	Lewis, Paul O.	Tricycle/2003 1582461074	1–4
<i>The Mozart Question</i>	Morpurgo, Michael	Candlewick/2006 9780763635527	4–8
<i>Colors of Mexico</i>	Olawsky, Lynn A.	First Avenue Editions/1997 1575052164	2–3
<i>Tulip Sees America</i>	Rylant, Cynthia	Scholastic/2002 0439399785	1–2
<i>I Love My Hair</i>	Tarpley, Natasha	Little, Brown/2003 0316525588	2
<i>Old Turtle and the Broken Truth</i>	Wood, Douglas	Scholastic/2003 0439321093	3–6

Teacher Voices

To demonstrate the Think-Aloud procedure to his fourth graders, Michael used a legend from *Eagle Walking Turtle's Full Moon Stories: Thirteen Native American Legends* (1997). Because the class was reading legends, he felt that the demonstration would better help students apply what they had learned to their actual reading experiences. After looking at the cover, he commented, “Just from reading this title, I can

tell that this is going to be a book filled with legends. In fact, the author even tells me that there will be thirteen legends in this book.” He then stated, “I already know something about legends. Legends are stories that state traditions and beliefs of a given group of people. I’ll bet that these stories will be about some of the traditions and beliefs of Native American people.” He then provided students with a copy of “The Magpie,” the first legend in the book and the one that he would use for the remainder of his Think-Aloud. He began reading aloud as the students followed along. He read the first two paragraphs, stopped, and commented, “I’m getting a picture of the house where the story is told. It is made of logs and it has a wood stove to keep everyone warm.” He then read the next paragraph and once again stopped and commented, “This reminds me of how my cousin used to tell me stories. Instead of sitting in a circle on the floor, though, we sat on the bed.” He read the next paragraph, stopped, and commented, “Wow! I am surprised that the Thunder-beings would think that the people were not worth saving. I expected them to believe this already.” He then continued reading and stopped after reading the word *astonished*, at which point he stated, “‘Astonished.’ Hmm. I wonder what that means. This is a new word for me. I better read that sentence again and see if the other words can help me figure out what it means.”

A close analysis of this scenario reveals that Michael focused on several strategies that poor comprehenders often need to be taught to use. The first comment helps students to see how an experienced reader *makes predictions*, whereas the second shows students how a reader *uses prior knowledge* to make connections with new reading material. The third shows that good readers *form visual images* when they read. The fourth comment once again shows how a reader uses *prior knowledge* to make connections with the reading. The last two comments demonstrate *monitoring* one’s comprehension and *fixing* a part that interferes with meaning.

Extensions/Tips/Connections

- While several strategies were modeled in Michael’s Think-Aloud, keep in mind that not all need to be present in all Think-Aloud sessions. In fact, you may want to focus on one or two of the strategies

to better help students use them when reading on their own—the ultimate goal of this instruction.

- *Reverse Think-Alouds* (Block 1997) add some variety and can help you determine whether students are internalizing the specific strategies they need to use when reading. With this procedure, students ask you what you are thinking rather than being told. You ask the student(s) to follow along silently while you read orally and to stop you during your reading to ask questions about what you are thinking at a given time. These questions can focus on how you figured out a given word, clarify what the author is trying to say, or summarize a given section. The types of questions that students ask can reveal which strategies they are focusing on and which need to be developed further.