

Go beyond telling: *Think Alouds* move students toward mastery

Go beyond a model; Reveal a *Think Aloud*

When introducing any literacy skill, teachers typically tell students what it is and show them some examples. However, effective teaching goes beyond telling. It reveals more than just what to do; it reveals the process for how to do it.

As an expert on the skill or subject, the teacher tends to execute the skill without putting much thought into it. But, it's that "automatic" process that needs to be dissected. Before students can master a skill, they need it presented concretely and precisely.

Students need to know more than what the teacher did to achieve the skill. They need to be privy to the thoughts about *how*, *why*, *when*, and *where* to do it as a reader/writer. These behind-the-scenes reader and writer thoughts need to be revealed during instruction and modeled "live" in front of the students.

The difference between telling about an example and teaching through an example is the power of a *Think Aloud*. When integrated into lessons, *Think Alouds* include the teacher's slow-motion self-talk throughout the entire process.

When planning a *Think Aloud* into any lesson, anticipate the struggles, questions, and confusions of students.

- How did you ___?
- Why are you ___?
- What about when ___?
- How come ___?

Done well, *Think Alouds* replace the students' novice thinking with the teacher's expert know-how.

Teaching goes beyond telling: *Think Alouds* move students toward mastery

References

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"...we believe that think alouds provide teachers an effective, useful, and flexible technique for helping students acquire control over their comprehension processing of written texts, that can enhance children's engagement with reading strategies and with the texts themselves." James Bauman, et. al.,
Effect of Think-Aloud Instruction on Elementary Students' Comprehension Monitoring Abilities

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"Think alouds are beneficial for a variety of readers across a variety of texts; these benefits have been documented for struggling readers, for English language learners, for different text genres and content areas, and for students encountering online text."

Molly Ness
Road Tested/3 Steps for Think Alouds

Ness, M., & Fisher, D. (2017). *Think Big with Think Alouds, Grades K-5: A Three-Step Planning Process That Develops Strategic Readers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

"Think Alouds are rich monologues designed to help (students) understand the metacognitive processes of reading (and writing)."

Molly Ness
Think Big with Think Alouds, grades K-5

Wright, W. E. (2015). *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Caslon.