

The Reading Workshop: Research to Practice
Dr. Frank Serafini
Associate Professor - University of Nevada, Las Vegas
www.frankserafini.com

The Reading Workshop (Defined)

Not a Program or Script to Follow
An Organizational Framework
A Structure to Locate Reading Instruction Within
An Array of Learning Experiences
A Space for Student Interaction
A Time for Engaged Reading

The Reading Workshop (3 Primary Goals)

Change the Way We Think and Talk about Texts and Literature
Expand What it Means to Comprehend
Develop Novice Readers' Abilities to Manage the Challenges of Reading

The Reading Workshop (Pedagogical Principles)

Readers need TIME to read and discuss texts, ACCESS to a wide variety of quality reading materials, CHOICE in what they read, informative RESPONSE to their efforts, and quality DEMONSTRATIONS of literate behaviors.

Essential Components

A Literate Environment
Reading Aloud
Interactive Discussions
Extensive & Intensive Reading
Explicit Instruction
Reading Assessments

A Literate Environment: Three Considerations

1. An Extensive Classroom Library
2. The Role of the Reading Teacher
3. Classroom Discourse Patterns

Principles of a Classroom Library

Accessible
Balanced Variety
Relevant
High Quality
Authentic
Organized
Inviting

Warranted Assertions: Literate Environment

Few classroom libraries meet the ALA guidelines of a minimum of 20-25 books per child.

Libraries need to be evaluated for their representations (who is omitted or marginalized).

Leveling books has created as many challenges as it has provided support.

Funds used for commercial programs drain resources for classroom libraries.

The Role of the Reading Teacher: Joyfully Literate Human Being

Multi-Literate

Shares Reading Life

Promotes Reading

Conduct Book Talks

Sense of Humor

Enjoys Children

Provides Resources

Serves as Literary Docent

The Literary Docent

Has an Extensive Knowledge of Literature and Literacy Processes

Develops Students' Interpretive Repertoires

Challenges Readers to "Go Deeper"

Facilitates Discussions and Inquiry

Keeps Current on Research and Pedagogy

Warranted Assertions: The Role of the Reading Teacher

Fewer than 6 states in the U.S. require a course in children's literature for initial licensure.

Elementary and middle school teachers rarely take a course in literary theory or criticism.

A majority of classroom teachers are technologically "challenged".

Teachers report difficulties in extending students' discussions about literature and literary elements.

Traditional Classroom Discourse

Initiate-Respond-Evaluate

Residual of Experience

Default Setting

Authoritarian Discourse

Transmission of Knowledge

Learned through Apprenticeship

5 Principles of Dialogic Talk: Robin Alexander

Collective - teachers and children learn and address issues together

Reciprocal - teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas

Supportive - children articulate ideas freely without fear of reprisal

Cumulative - teachers and children build on each other's ideas

Purposeful - teachers steer talk with educational goals in mind

Warranted Assertions: Classroom Interaction Patterns

The IRE interaction pattern is still the dominant form of interaction.

Simply asking more Open-Ended Questions will not change the quality of children's thinking if they continue to think there is only one correct answer

Student Responses are Reflective of the Questions Teachers Ask and The Expectations Set for Discussion.

Most literature discussions focus on literal level of texts and rarely extend beyond the literal to more complex ways of thinking and talking.

Common Sense Reasons to Read Aloud to Children

Reading Aloud introduces readers to new titles, authors, illustrators, text , etc

Reading Aloud provides space for extended, interactive discussions

Reading Aloud provides demonstrations of how to respond to a text

Reading Aloud increases interest in selecting literature for independent reading

Reading Aloud provides access to books and ideas

Reading Aloud provides demonstrations of oral fluency, phrasing and intonation

Reading Aloud provides demonstrations of quality writing

Reading Aloud is an enjoyable experience that can build classroom communities.

Warranted Assertions: Reading Aloud

The amount of time spent reading aloud decreases after primary grades, and shifts from picture books to chapter books.

Reading aloud builds students' vocabularies.

The amount of time teachers report Reading Aloud has decreased significantly since 2000.

Fictional literature dominates expository texts during classroom read alouds.

Research has focused on the level of "interactivity" during read alouds.

Warranted Assertions: Engaged Reading

Teachers must know readers' abilities and preferences to ensure manageable challenge (appropriate "levels").

Must have an extensive array of reading materials to ensure choice, meet interests and provide enjoyment.

Extensive reading reinforces reading strategies and skills demonstrated during explicit instruction.

There is more to Engaged reading than dropping everything or sustaining silence.

Interactive Discussions

Each student is responsible for Articulating their interpretations & ideas to others
The Lines of Communication are from student to student as well as from student to teacher

Readers need to be Active Listeners during the discussion

Meaning is Negotiated during the interactions

Warranted Assertions: Interactive Discussions

As little as ONE Minute of discussion per day can have significant results in students' reading abilities.

There are important differences between Centripetal & Centrifugal discussions.

There is a fine line between Grand Conversations and "Gentle" Inquisitions.

Without conscious attention to patterns of classroom discourse, teachers revert to IRE patterns throughout discussions.

Effective Comprehension Lessons

Retain an Expanded Definition of what it means to comprehend

Are Focused Demonstrations of literate behaviors

Build upon the Knowledge and Prior Experiences of readers

Call Conscious Attention to what successful readers do

Are based on a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Warranted Assertions: Comprehension Instruction

Time to read, access to reading materials, explicit instruction, and time to talk correlate with improved comprehension.

Strategies in isolation are not as effective as repertoires or routines of comprehension strategies.

Critical and literary perspectives have taken a back seat to cognitive strategies.

We need to expand our definition of what it means to comprehend, if we expect our instructional practices to go beyond literal recall and decoding strategies.

Some Concerns...

Reading Aloud & Discussion is being Pushed to the Periphery of the Instructional Framework

Reading Comprehension is too often reduced to Literal Recall and Oral Performance

Comprehension Strategies become an End in Themselves

Lack of Attention to the Quality of the Literate Environment & Resources

Some Additional Concerns...

Limited Choice for Teachers in Instructional Approaches and Texts

Teachers Lack of Knowledge about the Texts they Incorporate in the RW

Overemphasis on Print Based Comprehension Strategies and Lack of Emphasis on Visual Literacies

Research in Support of Workshop Approaches to Reading

A Literate Environment / Classroom Libraries / Extensive Reading

- Allington, R.L. (2001). What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Arya, P., Martens, P., Wilson, G. P., Altwerger, B., Lijun, J., Laster, B., et al. (2005). Reclaiming literacy instruction: Evidence in support of literature-based programs. *Language Arts, 83*(1), 63-73.
- Chambers, A. (1996). *The reading environment: How adults help children enjoy books*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Hoewisch, A. K. (2000). Children's literature in teacher-preparation programs. *Reading Online*. Available: <http://www.readingonline.org/critical/hoewisch/index.html>.
- Krashen, S. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Lehman, B. A., Freeman, E. B., & Allen, V. G. (1994). Children's literature and literacy instruction: "Literature-based" elementary teachers' beliefs and practices. *Reading Horizons, 35*, 3-23.
- Neuman, S.B. (1999). Books make a difference: A study of access to literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 34*, 286-311.
- Reutzel, D.R., & Fawson, P.C. (2002). *Your classroom library: New ways to give it more teaching power*. New York: Scholastic.
- Sadoski, M., Norton, D. E., Rodriguez, M., Nichols, W. D., & Gerla, J. P. (1998). Preservice and inservice teachers' knowledge of literary concepts and literary analysis. *Reading Psychology, 19*, 267-286.
- Scharer, P. L. (1992). Teachers in transition: An exploration of changes in teachers and classrooms during implementation of literature-based reading instruction. *Research in the Teaching of English, 26*(4), 408-445.

Reading Aloud

- Barrentine, S. (1996). Engaging with reading through interactive read-alouds. *The Reading Teacher, 50*(1), 36-43.
- Campbell, R. (2001). *Read-alouds with young children*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Elley, W. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly, 24*, 174-187.
- Fisher, D., Flood, J., Lapp, D., & Frey, N. (2004). Interactive read-alouds: Is there a common set of implementation practices? *The Reading Teacher, 58*(1), 8-17.
- Jacobs, J. S., Morrison, T. G., & Swinyard, W. R. (2000). Reading aloud to students: A national probability study of classroom reading practices of elementary school teachers. *Reading Psychology, 21*, 171-193.

- Robbins, C., & Ehri, L. (1994). Reading storybooks to kindergartners helps them learn new vocabulary words. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86*(1), 54-64.
- Roser, N., Martinez, M., McDonnald, K., & Fuhrken, C. (2004). *Helping young children learn to read chapter books: The role of the teacher in reading aloud*. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference.
- Serafini, F., & Giorgis, C. (2003). *Reading aloud and beyond: Fostering the intellectual life with older readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Sipe, L. (2001a). A palimpsest of stories: Young children's intertextual links during readalouds of fairytale variants. *Reading Research and Instruction, 40*(4), 333-352.
- Sipe, L. (2001b). Scaffolding first and second grader's developing literary understanding of storybook readalouds. *The California Reader, 34*(3), 9-18.
- Sipe, L. (2002). Talking back and taking over: Young children's expressive engagement during story-book readalouds. *The Reading Teacher, 55*(5), 476-483.

Classroom Discourse

- Alexander, R. (2006). *Towards dialogic teaching: Rethinking classroom talk* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Dialogos.
- Barnes, D. (1992). *From communication to curriculum* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook.
- Boyd, M., & Rubin, D. (2006). How contingent questioning promotes extended student talk: A function of display questions. *Journal of Literacy Research, 28*(2), 141-169.
- Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Dillon, J. T. (1988). *Questioning and teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Foreman-Peck, L. (1985). Evaluating children's talk about literature: A theoretical perspective. *Children's Literature in Education, 16*(4), 203-218.
- Heyman, R. D. (1983). Clarifying meaning through classroom talk. *Curriculum Inquiry, 13*(1), 23-42.
- Hughes, M., & Westgate, D. (1998). Possible enabling strategies in teacher-led talk with young pupils. *Language and Education, 12*(3), 174-191.
- Johnston, P. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Maloch, B. (2002). Scaffolding student talk: One teacher's role in literature discussion groups. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*(1), 94-112.
- Mercer, N. (2000). *Words and minds: How we use language to think together*. London: Routledge.
- Mroz, M., Smith, F., & Hardman, F. (2000). The discourse of the literacy hour.

- Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30(3), 379-390.
- Myhill, D. (2006). Talk, talk, talk: Teaching and learning in whole class discourse. *Research Papers in Education*, 21(1), 19-41.
- Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Hopper, R. (2006). *Talking, listening, learning: Effective talk in the primary classroom*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Myhill, D., & Warren, P. (2005). Scaffolds or straightjackets?: Critical moments in classroom discourse. *Educational Review*, 57(1), 55-69.
- Nystrand, M. (1997). *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nystrand, M., Wu, L., Gamoran, A., Zeiser, S., & Long, D. (2003). Questions in time: Investigating the structure and dynamics of unfolding classroom discourse. *Discourse Processes*, 35(2), 135-198.
- Nystrand, M. (2006). Research on the role of classroom discourse as it affects reading comprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 40(4), 392-412.
- O'Connor, M. C., & Michaels, S. (1993). Aligning academic task and participation status through revoicing: Analysis of a classroom discourse strategy. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 24(4), 318-335.
- Seedhouse, P. (1996). Classroom interaction: possibilities and impossibilities. *ELT Journal*, 50(1), 16-24.
- Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, R. M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Wells, G. (1989). Language in the classroom: Literacy and collaborative talk. *Language and Education*, 3(4), 251-273.
- Westgate, D., & Hughes, M. (1997). Identifying 'quality' in classroom talk: An enduring research task. *Language and Education*, 11(2), 125-139.

Interactive Discussions

- Almasci, J., McKeown, M., & Beck, I. (1996). The nature of engaged reading in classroom discussions of literature. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 28(1), 107-146.
- Almasci, J., O'Flahavan, J. F., & Arya, P. (2001). A comparative analysis of student and teacher development in more and less proficient discussions of literature. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(2), 96-120.
- Eeds, M., & Wells, D. (1989). Grand conversations: An exploration of meaning construction in literature study groups. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23, 4-29.
- Evans, K. S. (1996). Creating spaces for equity? The role of positioning in peer-led literature discussions. *Language Arts*, 73, 194-202.
- Marshall, J. D., Smagorinsky, P., & Smith, M. W. (1995). *The language of interpretation: Patterns of discourse in discussions of literature*. Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.
- Scharer, P. L., & Peters, D. (1996). An exploration of literature discussions

conducted by two teachers moving towards literature-based reading instruction. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 36(1), 33-50.

Comprehension Instruction

- Barton, J., & Sawyer, D. M. (2003). Our students are ready for this: Comprehension instruction in the elementary school. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(4), 334-347
- Block, C. C., Gambrell, L. A., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Improving comprehension instruction: Rethinking research, theory, and classroom practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Block, C. C., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*. New York: Guilford.
- Dole, J., Duffy, G., Roehler, L., & Pearson, P. D. (1991). Moving from the old to the new: Research on reading comprehension instruction. *Review of Educational Research*, 61, 239-264.
- Duke, N., & Pearson, D. P. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In A. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (pp. 205-242). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Durkin, D. (1978). What classroom observations reveal about reading comprehension instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 14(4), 481-553.
- Hammerberg, D. (2004). Comprehension instruction for socioculturally diverse classrooms: A review of what we know. *The Reading Teacher*, 57, 648-658.
- Kucan, L., & Beck, I. (1997). Thinking aloud and reading comprehension research: Inquiry, instruction, and social interaction. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(3), 271-299.
- Pressley, M., & Block, C. C. (2001). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*. New York: Guilford.
- Pressley, M., Block, C. C., & Gambrell, L. (2002). *Improving comprehension instruction: Rethinking research, theory, and classroom practice*. Indianapolis, IN: Jossey-Bass.