



Literacy Connects

A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-Issue IX



The Power of Reading Aloud in all Areas

Although language arts teachers across the grade levels often read aloud to their students, content-area teachers hesitate to explore this avenue of teaching and learning their subject matter. There are numerous benefits to reading aloud to your students, at all levels and in all content areas. Reading aloud...

- Provides a format in which teachers can demonstrate for their students the mental processes they use to make sense of complex text (see think-aloud strategy in *Literacy Connects Issue I*)
- Provides inexperienced readers access to information in the more difficult texts
- Motivates students to read on their own
- Provides background and links to student prior knowledge
- Creates group and individual connections
- Provides a springboard for discussion and writing
- Help students experience a variety of genres
- Allows students to focus on comprehension rather than decoding
- Develops an appreciation for language

Methods and Suggestions:

1. First determine your instructional purpose for reading aloud: To peak student interest; to introduce a topic; to expose students to certain types of information; to encourage a love for language and reading; to build background knowledge or link with prior knowledge.
2. Choose an excerpt from a book, text, magazine or newspaper article, anything that supports your purpose; before reading, share your purpose with your students.
3. Read aloud the chosen selection, pausing to comment, question, connect, and explain concepts (think-aloud strategy). Encouraging discussion and reflective writing after the reading demonstrates to students that reading is a social and interactive activity.
4. Have students search for reading selections from your content area to share with the class. Encourage them to bring in pamphlets, brochures, articles, handbills, instructions, maps, picture books, novels...the list is endless.

Picture Books:

A discussion of reading aloud would not be complete without a sentence or two in support of using picture books as a way to build background knowledge, introduce new concepts, facts, themes, or to simply build motivation and a love of reading. Used as an anticipatory set to initiate learning, picture books can provide factual information and accurate illustrations, especially in science. They are more likely to focus on a single topic and explore it in more depth than most textbooks. The selection of picture books available in all the content areas is as vast as it is varied. Following are a few resources to get you started.

- <http://www.uiowa.edu/~crl/bibliographies/picbooks.htm>;
- <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/yapictind.htm>;
- http://www.rupert.net/~rtoor/Library_SecondaryPictureBooks.htm
- Using *Picture Books for Secondary* as a key word search on Yahoo reveals hundreds of sources.
- E-mail SJLasley@Interact.ccsd.net for content specific booklists

NOTE: Scholastic Warehouse on Pecos and Craig Road is having their annual half priced book sale, December 7 – December 14.