

# Interactive Think Aloud Lessons:

## Sure Fire Ways to Engage Students and Improve Comprehension



(Lori Oczkus- Scholastic, 2009)

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What's Hot in Comprehension	Engage Students /Improve Comprehension
<p>1. <b>Comprehension strategies</b> can be taught to improve reading comprehension. (Duke and Pearson, 2002)</p>	<p>Teach research-based comprehension strategies include: connecting, predicting, inferring, questioning, monitoring/clarifying, synthesizing, and evaluating.  <b>Teaching idea:</b> Post the strategies in your classroom. Use bookmarks and posters as reference tools.</p>
<p>2. <b>Think Alouds</b> are an effective teaching technique for making thinking public and improving comprehension. (Pressley and Afflerbach)</p> <p>"Scaffolding is the art of teaching." P. David Pearson</p>	<p>Think aloud steps help you scaffold your lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Introduce</b> the strategy/Define it/Ask students what they know about it</li> <li>•<b>Model</b> the strategy using a mentor text, props, gestures, drama, etc.</li> <li>•<b>Support Guided Practice-</b> in teams/pairs</li> <li>•<b>Provide Independent Practice</b></li> <li>•<b>Wrap Up the Lesson</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching Idea:</b> Try using the steps for any lesson. </p> <p><i>Example: Questioning Flip It. Model how to turn sentences into questions while reading.</i></p>
<p>3. <b>Metaphors</b> help students create new understandings. (Gallagher, 2004, Wormeli, 2009)</p> <p><b>Connect</b> </p> <p><b>Predict/Infer</b> </p> <p><b>Question</b> </p> <p><b>Monitor/Clarify</b> </p> <p><b>Summarize</b> </p> <p><b>Evaluate</b> </p>	<p>Assign metaphors/ props/ characters to each of the comprehension strategies to help cue the students to understand and use these tools as they read.</p> <p><b>Connect-</b> chains  <b>Predict-</b> crystal ball/weights  <b>Infer-</b> magnifying glass  <b>Question-</b> microphone  <b>Monitor/Clarify-</b> glasses, pause /rewind, forward  <b>Summarize-</b> rope, lasso  <b>Synthesis-</b> chef's hat  <b>Evaluate-</b> scale, judge's gavel</p> <p><b>Teaching Idea-</b> Use a prop in your think aloud lesson, then make a graphic organizer of that prop for students to record their team's strategy use. ( example- questioning/microphone)</p>
<p>4. <b>Mentor Texts</b> are carefully selected texts that we return to time and time again to learn from. We might chose author's craft, voice, genre, or comprehension strategies to teach or reinforce. (Oczkus 2009, Laminack 2007, Ray 1999)</p>	<p>Use powerful mentor text to model, and practice strategies  <b>Teaching Idea-</b> Select one mentor text and use it over a few days to model and demonstrate each of the comprehension strategies. OR select a different mentor text for each strategy.  <i>Be sure to include nonfiction texts as well.</i>  <i>Nim and the War Effort by Millie Lee</i>  <i>Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Pollaco</i>  <b>Connect-</b> Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge (Fox)  <b>Predict</b> Dog Breath ( Pilkey)  <b>Infer</b> My Brother Martin by Christine King Farris  <b>Question</b> Knut by Hatkoffs and Uhlich  <b>Monitor/Clarify</b> – Owl Moon ( Yolen)  <b>Summarize</b> Wilma Rudolph ( Krull)</p>



	<p><b>Synthesis- <i>Something Beautiful</i> (Wyeth)</b>  <b>Evaluate <i>John, Paul, George, &amp; Ben</i> ( Smith)</b></p>
<p>5. <b><u>Kinesthetic motions</u></b> are effective tools for helping students create mental representations for abstract concepts. (Collins Block, 2005)</p>	<p>Use hand motions to represent the strategies or key vocabulary in the text.  <b>Teaching Idea:</b>   <i>Hand motion summary- Students work in pairs or teams to identify a limited number of key words or points from the reading. They then assign hand motions to go with their key word summary and they perform it for the class. Option: make a poster to go with the summary</i></p>
<p>6. <b><u>Strategy starters</u></b> scaffold the language of the comprehension strategies to support all learners.</p>	<p>For each of the comprehension strategies use strategy starters to encourage the students to talk about their thinking.  <b>Teaching Idea:</b> <i>Use the strategy starter “I can tell that... because....” to encourage students to make inferences.</i> </p>
<p>7. <b><u>Drama</u></b> provides students an alternate way to work through and think about the text in nonlinguistic representations. (Wilhelm, 2002 Marzano, 2008)  Students learn when having fun. (Bloom, 1976; Ciskszentmihalyi, 1990)</p>	<p>Use drama often to provide an alternate mode of understanding. Encourage impromptu quick dramas throughout reading. Students can turn to partners and quickly dramatize a conversation or scene. Use pantomimes and other nonverbal drama techniques with ELL students.  <b>Teaching Idea:</b> <i>Students pantomime a scene and classmates guess what page in the book it is from. Or Students try a “Bewitched” scene where they freeze in a scene from the text and a leader snaps his or her fingers and the group shifts to another scene.</i></p>
<p>8. <b><u>Music</u></b> provides a brain compatible nonlinguistic modality for expressing and inspiring learning. (Campobello,, 2002)</p>	<p>Ask students to use the tune to a familiar song to make up a verse about either the strategy ( ie making connections) or make up a verse to summarize the reading content.  <b>Teaching Tip:</b> <i>Write a free verse poem about a character.</i></p>
<p>9. <b><u>Cooperative learning</u></b> Learning is social. (Vgotsky, 1978)</p>	<p>Use a variety of cooperative learning structures .  <b>Teaching Idea:</b> <i>Train big buddies to read to little buddies. Select a focus strategy for both classes to work on such as predicting or making connections. The older child pauses during the reading to encourage the younger child to take turns using the strategy.</i></p>

### Strategy Starters

from *Interactive Think Aloud Lessons: Oczkus, Scholastic 2009*

<p><b>Connect</b>   <i>I think I already know...  This reminds me of..</i></p>	<p><b>Infer</b>   <i>I can tell that... because..  Book clues....My clues...</i></p>
<p><b>Predict</b>   <i>I think .. will happen because..  I think I will learn because..</i></p>	<p><b>Summarize</b>  <i>This is about....  First, next, then, finally.</i> </p>
<p><b>Question</b>   <i>I wonder... Who, What, When, Where..</i></p>	<p><b>Synthesis</b>   <i>I now think... because..</i></p>

Why, How Why do you think? Clarify/ Monitor <i>I didn't get the .... so I.....</i>	My "ahha" is.. because... Evaluate <i>I rate... because.... I disagree.. agree..</i>
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## Interactive Think Aloud Lesson Menu

Lori Oczkus (2009)

<b>Connect</b>  <i>I think I already know...</i> <i>This reminds me of..</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Connection Chains</li> <li>•One Minute Book Look</li> <li>•Find Someone Who..</li> </ul>	<b>Infer</b>  <i>I can tell that... because..</i> <i>Book clues....</i> <i>My clues...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•I can tell that... because..</li> <li>•Feelings Check</li> <li>• Predict/Question/Infer</li> </ul>
<b>Predict</b>  <i>I think I will learn.. because..</i> <i>I think.. will happen .. because</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cube it!</li> <li>•So Far, Next!</li> <li>• Whisper Skim and Scan</li> <li>• Partner Picture Prediction</li> </ul>	<b>Summarize</b>  <i>This is about.... First, next, then, finally.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Pantomime a scene. Bewitched frozen scenes.</li> <li>•Hand Motion Summary</li> <li>•Cover, Remember, Retell (Hoyt)</li> <li>•Main Idea Hand</li> </ul>
<b>Question</b>  <i>I wonder... Who</i> <i>Who, What, When, Where, Why, How Why do you think?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•I Know and I Wonder</li> <li>•Flip It</li> <li>•Ask the Author</li> <li>•Question While You Read!</li> </ul>	<b>Synthesis</b> <i>I now think... because..</i> <i>My "ahha" is.. because...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Write a free verse poem.</li> <li>•Key word dance (Preble)</li> <li>•Mark the Spot</li> </ul>
<b>Clarify/ Monitor</b>  <i>I didn't get the .... so I.....</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•One Word, One Idea</li> <li>•Can You See it?</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluate</b>  <i>I rate... because....</i> <i>I agree/disagree with.. beca</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rate and rank the reading</li> <li>•Judge it, Award it, Score it!</li> </ul>

### Books and Materials by Lori Oczkus ( [www.lorioczkus.com](http://www.lorioczkus.com))

Interactive Think Aloud Lessons: 25 Ways to Engage Students and Improve Comprehension (book and DVD- Scholastic, 2009 and IRA)

Reciprocal Teaching at Work ( book and DVD-International Reading Association, 2010)

Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results ( Heinemann, 2007)

Fabulous Four Reading Comprehension Puppets (*Primary Concepts*, 2008)

Super Six Comprehension Strategies: 35 Lessons and More for Reading Success (Christopher Gordon, 2004)