



Reading-Aloud as Complex Art, not Simple Activity: A Cautionary Tale, Part II

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the nuanced art of reading aloud, positioning it as a complex, multifaceted practice rather than a mere activity. Drawing on a personal vignette involving a read-aloud session gone awry, the author, a literacy educator with a deep affinity for picturebooks and reading-aloud strategies, delves into the curricular and instructional implications of reading aloud. The discussion extends into a comprehensive review of literature across five major categories, including the significance of picturebooks and their role in engaging diverse readers like emergent bilingual students and special needs students. Through reflective analysis, the author shares insights on selecting picturebooks, employing effective read-aloud strategies, and the overall impact of reading aloud on children's literacy development. Concluding with practical tips for educators and caregivers, the article underscores reading aloud as a sophisticated art that enriches the educational experience, advocating for its thoughtful integration into literacy instruction.

KEYWORDS

reading aloud;
picturebooks;
science read
alouds; emergent
bilingual
students; special
needs students

Charles Darwin, the famous 19th-century scientist, once stated, “If I had my life to live over again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week.” Unlike Darwin, I am not a scientist. I am a teacher educator in literacy education with professional interests in picturebooks and reading aloud strategies. Like Darwin, I also like to listen to music and read poetry, especially poems about fathers, grandfathers, and teachers. One of my favorite poems is “What Is It You Like To Do.”

What is it that you like to do
With someone you care about
In a comfortable place
With a lot of expression
And with no interruptions?
READ ALOUD! (of course)

(Layne, 2001, p. 53)

As a teacher, father, and now grandfather, I have always loved to read aloud to my children, my granddaughter, and my students, be they undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral students. In fact, I conduct a read aloud at the beginning of each class, and students always state that it was one of the most beneficial experiences in the course.

Recently, I spent time reading, rereading, and reflecting on “What Is It That You Like to Do” for a special occasion. I planned to take my 5-year-old granddaughter to a read-aloud session for young children at a local university. I was excited to take her to this session, if only for her to experience a read-aloud from somebody other than her grandfather. Unfortunately, the read-aloud session did not go as expected. What it did was inspire this article.

I begin by sharing a vignette about my experience observing an adult read aloud to a small group of young children, including my granddaughter. Next, I describe several literacy lessons I learned from the whole experience about the process of reading aloud, and the curricular and instructional implications for reading aloud to children. Then, I briefly review research on reading aloud, highlighting five major categories: picturebooks, picturebooks and reading aloud, research on reading aloud, reading aloud picturebooks to older readers, and reading aloud to emergent bilingual students and special needs students. I share tips for selecting picturebooks, tips for using instructional strategies to read aloud, and tips for reading aloud in general. I end with some final thoughts.

Vignette

Recently, I took my 5-year-old granddaughter to a read-aloud session for young children. The session was sponsored by Scholastic Publication and took place in a library/media center at a local university. A total of 9 children attended, each accompanied by at least one parent, grandparent, or caregiver. The guest speaker was an educational administrator.

The children sat in a semi-circle in front of the administrator, who sat in a soft, cozy chair. He introduced himself and his 9-year-old son and identified the picturebook he selected to read that morning. It was *The Good Egg* (John, 2019). Here is a precis.

A good egg is both an idiom and a description of the main character. It tells the story of a verrrrrry good egg who is kind to, generous with, and thoughtful of other eggs. He is perfect and that is the challenge. The good egg lives in a recycled carton with 11 other eggs, all of whom, except for the good egg, get into mischief and trouble. His carton-mates behave rotten. Metaphorically, the good egg starts to crack from the pressure of feeling like he, unlike the other eggs, must be perfect. He decides it's time for a change. The good egg makes time for himself, goes on a road trip, and learns the value of caring for self is as important as caring for others (even if they are rotten).

Before starting, the administrator invited his young son to sit next to him and be his co-reader. Then, he started to read aloud the picturebook, but soon invited his son to take over. His son read the rest of the story aloud to the children in a simple, word-by-word, monotone way. The administrator interjected comments at different points in the story, such as, “See, boys and girls, how well-behaved the good egg is and how all the other eggs behave badly.” However, at one point in the story, one child interrupted the son and interjected her own question, asking, “Can I come up and read now?” Politely, the administrator stated that his son needed to first finish reading the whole story.

Implications for Curricular and Instructional Decisions

I was a grandfather at the read-aloud session. However, I am also a literacy educator specializing in reading education and am familiar with the power and potential of reading aloud to children.

Reading aloud is universally recognized and commonly practiced around the world. The practice is a good thing for teachers and students to do at school and for parents and children to do at home.

At the same time, many adults, including teachers and parents, all too often see reading aloud to children as a simple thing to do. In many ways, this is understandable. Reading aloud only requires one adult (teacher, parent, grandparent, or caregiver) and one picturebook to read to young children. This read-aloud session, however, reminded me that reading aloud is anything but a simple activity; rather, it is a complex art, requiring adults to make important curricular and instructional decisions as part of the process.

To start the process, a curricular decision must be made. This decision is based on the question: *What gets read?* Will it be a picturebook, chapter book, short story, poem, etc.? In this instance, a picturebook was a good curricular decision for this small group of children, all of whom were at or under the age of five years old. At the same time, during and after the read-aloud, I found myself questioning whether *The Good Egg* was a good curricular decision for this session. Here's why.

The major theme of the picturebook is how the good egg has difficulty dealing with being perfect, exacerbated by the fact that his carton-mates are just the opposite. During the reading by both the administrator and his son, the children sat quietly but did not appear highly engaged. The administrator kept pausing his son and reminding the children about how important it is for the bad eggs to be more like the good egg. They need to be perfect, not bad. I suspect the lack of engagement was because this theme was not highly interesting to this group of children. Moreover, the overall tone of the picturebook was didactic, almost moralizing, because of the importance it placed on behaving like the good egg and not like the mischievous eggs.

In addition to curricular, an instructional decision must be made. This decision is based on the question: *How will this book be read?* Many before, during, and after instructional strategies can be used to conduct enjoyable and effective read-alouds. Before reading strategies are particularly important because they are designed to create interest, spark curiosity, and promote inquiry. *Let's Look at the Front Cover* is one such before-reading strategy.

Before reading, the adult displays the front cover of the book to the children. Next, the adult states, "This page is called the front cover of the book. Let's look at the front cover." Silently, the adult slowly shows the front cover so all the children can see it. Then, the adult says, "Let's look at it again. This time, though, let's share with others what you notice or what really catches your eye." Once again, the adult slowly shows the front cover and encourages the children to share what they noticed. Finally, the adult continues to display the front cover but asks the children, "So now, what do we think the story will be about?" Once children share their story predictions, the adult says, "Let's find out!" and begins to read aloud.

Unfortunately, there were no before, during, or after reading strategies used in the read-aloud session I attended with my granddaughter. The administrator provided no engaging introduction to the read-aloud experience other than quickly displaying the front cover and then immediately starting to read. There was no attempt to generate curiosity, no invitation for the children to ponder the front cover and make inferences and predictions about the story, no connection to children's personal experiences, and no wondering about what the title, characters, or story meant.

Lastly, I noticed the son read aloud most of the book but was not prepared to do so. It was clear he had not rehearsed reading aloud the picturebook before his father invited him to join him as a co-reader. For example, at one point in the story, the good egg returns to see his carton-mates, greeting each of them by their first name, e.g., "Hey, Greg." When the son got to the text, which

read, “Aloha, Shelly,” he struggled to read the word aloha. He tried to decode the word several different ways but was not sure which, if any, were correct. Finally, a grandparent in the group helped, offering the correct reading and pronunciation of the word. The son smiled and continued to read.

I share this vignette for two reasons. One, I want to emphasize that reading aloud to children is one of the most important and effective strategies for all readers, especially beginning readers. Two, I want to promote the idea that reading aloud is not a simple activity but a complex art that requires attention to *what book gets read* (curriculum) and *how a book gets read* (instruction). I did not share this vignette to criticize an administrator, much less his son, for the way they read aloud *The Good Egg* to other people’s children. On the contrary, I recognize that they kindly and generously volunteered their time and energy to a community event and asked for nothing in return. I was truly grateful to both of them for their time and commitment to the community.

Picturebooks

Historically, a picturebook has been defined in different ways. Almost fifty years ago, Sutherland and Hearn (1977) defined a picturebook as “one in which the pictures either dominate the text or are as important” (p. 158). Similarly, Marantz (1977) stated that “a picturebook, unlike an illustrated book, is properly conceived of as a unit, a totality that integrates all the designated parts in a sequence in which the relationships among them—the cover, endpapers, typography, pictures—are crucial to understanding the book” (p. 149).

Since then, definitions have continued to change but still emphasize that “a picturebook is the inextricable connection of words and pictures and the unique qualities of the form, always rejecting the notion that a picturebook is not simply a book that happens to have pictures” (Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007, p. 273). From a semiotic perspective, a picturebook is an aesthetic object that involves three sign systems (language, illustration, design), and each system has meaning potential by itself and with each other (Sipe, 2002). Here, I advocate and use the following most cited definition of a picturebook:

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a [reader]. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page. (Bader, 1976, p. 1)

Picturebooks and Reading Aloud

Traditionally, reading aloud has been associated with picturebooks, often referred to as children’s literature. Picturebooks are a staple in most if not all, elementary schools as well as public and private libraries. Recently, they have also become increasingly popular and visible in middle school libraries, as well as in middle school teachers’ classroom libraries.

There are many benefits to using picturebooks as instructional tools to read-alouds. First, they are short in length, only having an average of 32 pages. While some picturebooks are quantitatively sophisticated and have many words per page, the majority are sparse in words when compared to other forms of literature. Thus, most picturebooks are deemed as having a lower text complexity when assessed quantitatively compared to short stories, essays, and novels. Because picturebooks are often short in length, they are excellent tools to provide readers with opportunities to monitor their ongoing comprehension and make sense of their thinking.

Second, picturebooks have deep and multiple meanings. Often, this is shown in their qualitative text complexity and text potential. Qualitative text complexity includes the levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality, and knowledge demands. Picturebooks may be less quantitatively complex, but they have the potential to be complex qualitatively and thus engage readers in high levels of thinking as they create sophisticated meanings.

Third, picturebooks provide opportunities for teachers and students to create a community of learners. They are instructional tools that help students feel connected, valued, and respected. In large part, this is due to the fact that many children personally connect with the characters in picturebooks and also with each other.

Fourth, picturebooks support the process of making intertextual connections. Since these books are shorter in length, teachers can read two or more picturebooks that are related in some way. Text sets are one way to combine picturebooks that are connected in some way, e.g. topic, theme, main character, problem, etc. Afterward, students spend time thinking, recording, and discussing the intertextual connections they see between the picturebooks.

Fifth, despite specific grade levels and grade bands, reading aloud picturebooks provides opportunities that reading other materials cannot do, e.g., basal stories, commercially produced program texts, or textbooks.

Sixth, picturebooks not only can increase student engagement in reading, but also foster a positive disposition about reading (Bintz, 2015).

Lastly, picturebooks have much potential for students of all ages and across all content areas. Braun (2010) states that “picturebooks serve to help middle grade students visualize concepts, become familiar with vocabulary, connect to content, and get excited about science” (p. 46).

Research on Reading Aloud

According to Fox (2008), “Reading aloud to children of any age improves their literacy” (p. 5). This assertion is based on an extensive body of research. In this section, I briefly review research on reading aloud across five categories: reading aloud picturebooks across the curriculum, reading aloud picturebooks to older readers, and reading aloud to emergent bilingual students and special needs students.

Reading Aloud Picturebooks across the Curriculum

Reading aloud nonfiction picturebooks is also important (Hoyt, as cited in Oczkus, 2004; Oczkus, 2012). Specifically, reading aloud nonfiction picturebooks is beneficial when introducing complex content area material across the curriculum. Wadsworth and Laminack (2006) use the idea of a bridge as a metaphor for the role picturebooks can play across the curriculum:

Picturebooks have the very real potential for bringing together ideas, images, content, vocabulary, language, and art in the minds of any learner. Picturebooks often do become a bridge to span the curriculum, connecting each subject and each topic into one interconnected entity. This makes it possible for both teaching and learning to travel freely in the territory of ideas and information. (p. 208)

Picturebooks can be used to introduce a new topic or generate interest in a concept across the curriculum. Science is a good example. Reading aloud nonfiction picturebooks in science helps students better understand scientific ideas (Webster, 2009). They can also “help students develop an interest in science, as well as help them read better” (Lee, 2010, p. 424). Reading aloud

picturebook biographies of scientists can help students understand how scientists think, observe, infer, formulate, and test hypotheses, and draw conclusions (Zarnowski & Turkle, 2011, 2012).

Reading aloud picturebooks in mathematics is also important. Reading aloud nonfiction picturebooks in mathematics can “provide students with opportunities to explore ideas, discuss mathematical concepts, and make connections to their own lives” (Hintz & Smith, 2022, p. 104). Making personal connections in math class helps make mathematics accessible for students. Integrating literature and mathematics also helps students make sense of their lives.

Social studies is yet another good example. Columba et al. (2009) state, “Events in the past are told in stories; we learn about others in remote places through stories; and myths and legends from ancient civilizations are passed down as stories” (p. 21). Nonfiction picturebooks are also ideal for integrating literacy and social studies. They can be used “to promote civic competence, the underlying reason for teaching social studies” (Balantic et al., 2011, p. 2). Lastly, reading aloud picturebooks across the content areas can also increase word knowledge, syntax knowledge, and genre knowledge, and thus motivation to read (Allen, 2000), as well as support student conceptual understanding (Hoffman et al., 2015).

Reading Aloud with Older Readers

Compared to younger readers, less research has been conducted on reading aloud with older readers. And yet, in *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, the Commission on Reading states: “[Reading aloud] is a practice that should continue throughout the grades” (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 51), including middle grades education. Despite this emphasis, little is known about the effectiveness of read-aloud practices beyond elementary school (Ariail & Albright, 2006). This may be because students are exposed to read-alouds less frequently as they move from primary through intermediate grades (Brooks, 2011; Jacobs et al., 2000), and in middle and high school, the practice of reading aloud has all but disappeared (Delo, 2008).

And yet, reading aloud is an instructional strategy teachers can use to encourage literacy for students regardless of their age. In fact, it is one of the most preferred instructional strategies by middle grades teachers (Harvey & Goudvis, 2017). For middle grades students, reading aloud can have positive outcomes for motivation, interest, engagement, and learning (Ariail & Albright, 2006; Ivey & Broadus, 2001). McCormick and McTigue (2011) state that “because students can often comprehend orally presented texts that are normally above their own reading level, teacher read-alouds allow middle school students to experience texts that may be otherwise inaccessible” (p. 46).

Similarly, for middle grade teachers, it allows them to model aspects of fluent reading, such as pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and style, and it makes texts more accessible to students (Ariail & Albright, 2006). It also helps teachers enhance student vocabulary development, especially when teachers pause to go over difficult words and then have conversations with students using the new words after reading (Reutzel & Cooter, 2008).

Reading aloud benefits students at all grade levels including middle grades and high school (Routman, 1994; Zehr, 2019). Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (2019), believes that continuing to read aloud to learners at any age is beneficial. Similarly, Routman (2002) notes that “reading aloud—in all grades—has long been viewed as a critical factor in producing successful readers as well as learners who are interested in reading” (p. 20). In particular, older students who are less fluent readers receive the greatest benefits from teachers reading aloud (Herrold et al., 1989; Meloy et al., 2002). Trelease states that “the first reason to read aloud to older kids is to consider the fact that a child’s reading level does not catch up to his listening level

until about the eighth grade . . . You have to hear it before you can speak it, and you have to speak it before you can read it. Reading at this level happens through the ear” (as cited in Korbey, 2013, pp. 1-2). In addition to children and adolescents, Pitts states that even “college students read more and better books when they are read to” (as cited in Krashen, 2004, p. 78).

Reading Aloud to Emergent Bilingual Students and Special Needs Students

Reading aloud helps emergent bilingual students develop English fluency, word meanings, oral language, and thinking skills (Hickman & Pollard-Durodola, 2004). Interactive read-alouds help emergent bilingual students’ language development, curiosity, vocabulary development, particularly incidental vocabulary acquisition (Hoyt, 2009; Layne, 2001), learning, and comprehension, especially making connections with and across texts (Giroir et al., 2015, p. 647).

Similarly, reading aloud is beneficial with special needs students. The practice helps “build a sense of community in any class that experiences the same shared, secret joy of listening to the same great pieces of literature, be they brief or much longer. The class bonds in such a way that it becomes more like a family than a class” (Fox, 2008, p. 6).

Tips for Selecting Read-Aloud Texts

In real life, selecting anything for the purpose of entertainment, enjoyment, or information is a subjective, if not risky, process. It is not as easy as it sounds. The traditional practice of returning Christmas gifts is a yearly reminder. Selecting picturebooks to read aloud is also a subjective process, and it, too, is not as easy as it sounds. Fortunately, there has been and continues to be, much professional literature on tips for selecting texts to read aloud (see Trelease, 1992). The following tips and rationales are based on the literature included after the reference section of this article.

Table 1: Tips for Selecting Read-Aloud Texts

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|--------------|---|
| Tip 1 | Select picturebooks that are likely to be personally relevant and potentially meaningful to the age and background of the children; that is, select picturebooks that mean more to the children than they do to the reader; |
| Tip 2 | Select familiar and popular picturebooks geared for a particular group of children. Children need to see children like themselves in the books they read and are read to them; |
| Tip 3 | Select picturebooks with colorful and evocative illustrations. Picturebooks integrate, not separate, language and illustrations. Children do not privilege language over illustration. They use both to make sense of the picturebook; |
| Tip 4 | Select picturebooks that reflect examples of good writing. Children internalize story structures from reading and use them in their own writing; |
| Tip 5 | Select picturebooks that introduce different kinds of genres, e.g., stories, biographies, poetry, etc. It is important that children read deeply and broadly; |
| Tip 6 | Select picturebooks that provide natural stopping points to pause during a read-aloud. At each stopping point, share ongoing understanding of the story. Children need to hear not only what good reading sounds like, but also hear how good readers understand stories. |

Tip 7

Select picturebooks in which the author uses authentic, patterned, and predictable language. These three characteristics are fundamental to language and language learning.

Patterned Picturebooks and *Predictable Picturebooks* are two genres that offer a wealth of high-quality and award-winning picturebooks to meet these tips for selecting read-aloud texts. Based on my personal experience, young children find the following patterned and predictable picturebooks enjoyable, engaging, and memorable. *Who Sank the Boat* (Allen, 1996), *The Important Book* (Brown, 1999), *Fortunately* (Charlip, 1993), *Mrs. Wishy Washy's Farm* (Cowley, 2006), *Tough Boris* (Fox, 1998), *It Didn't Frighten Me* (Goss & Harste, 1984), *Don't Forget the Bacon* (Hutchins, 1989), *Dog In, Cat Out* (Rubinstein, 1993), *Gotta Go, Gotta Go* (Swope, 2000), *No Baths for Tabitha* (Thomas & Siegal, 1982), *Noisy Nora* (Wells, 1999), and *Grandpa's Slippers* (Watson, 1989).

Tips for Using Read-Aloud Strategies

There are many strategies adults can use to read aloud. Here, I share several popular and different ways for reading aloud to students.

Traditional Read-Aloud

This is an instructional strategy in which an adult reads aloud a picturebook to a large or small group of children but also to an individual child. In this strategy, the primary role of children is to listen to the story and view the illustrations which are shared visually by the adult. The primary goal of the practice is for the adult to model proficient reading, share rich and authentic language, promote conversation, motivate readers, and support comprehension (see International Literacy Association, 2023).

Interactive Read-Aloud

This is an instructional strategy in which an adult reads aloud a picturebook to a whole group or small group of children. While reading, the adult pauses at predetermined, selective, and strategic places in the picturebook. At these places, the adult invites children to respond to the picturebook and share their responses with others (Fountas & Pinnell, 2019)

Turn & Talk

This is an instructional strategy that can be used with an interactive read-aloud (see Routman, 2002). Children are placed in pairs. Then, the adult starts to read aloud a picturebook, pausing at strategic places. At these places, the adult invites children to turn and talk for a minute or two with their partner about what they are understanding about the picturebook. The talk is informal, conversational, and open-ended. Afterward, pairs of children are invited to share what they talked about.

Echo Reading

This is an instructional strategy that, like Turn and Talk, can be used with an interactive read-aloud. The adult reads a short segment of text, e.g., line by line, sentence by sentence, etc. After

each line, the adult pauses, and a student(s) echoes the line or sentence back. This strategy helps children develop expressive, fluent reading.

Choral Reading

This is an instructional strategy in which the adult reads aloud but pauses at places when students can read aloud a repeated choral line in unison as a whole class or as a small group. *Daisy, Eat Your Peas* (Gray & Sharratt, 2000) is a good example of a picturebook that has a repeating choral line.

Think Aloud

This is an instructional strategy in which an adult reads aloud strategic sections of a picturebook, pausing after each section to share with children what s/he is understanding up to that point and what strategies s/he is using to maintain and extend understanding of the picturebook. This strategy allows adults to share what they understand and what strategies they are using to broaden and extend their understanding. Simply put, this strategy is like adults allowing children to eavesdrop on their reading and thinking. It allows adults to share with children what is going on behind their eyes and demonstrate what is going on in the minds of good readers.

Reverse Think Aloud

Like the Think Aloud, this is an instructional strategy in which an adult reads aloud strategic sections of a picturebook, pausing after each section. Unlike the think aloud, when pausing after each section, the adult invites children to make comments and ask questions to the adult about the picturebook. For example, based on my own experience with this strategy, children make simple comments like, “I really like the way you read. You sound my dad when he reads to me.” They also ask questions like, “I’m liking this book. Are you liking it?” “I love the illustrations. Do you love them?” “What is your favorite part of the story so far?” “Why is that your favorite part?” “Are there any parts of the story you don’t like?” One of my favorite questions was from a little boy who asked me, “Do you ever read stories and not know all of the words?”

Tips for Reading Aloud

Much professional literature exists on tips for effectively reading aloud (see Table 2). Like many other reading teachers, I have been influenced by much of this literature, specifically the work of two authors, Jim Trelease (1992; 2019) and Mem Fox (2008). These authors have informed not only my own beliefs and practices on reading aloud but also those of parents and teachers around the world.

Table 2: Tips for Reading Aloud

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|--------------|---|
| Tip 1 | Practice, practice, practice. Reading aloud is not a simple activity but a complex art; |
| Tip 2 | Preview the picturebook yourself. Look for sections of the story you want to shorten or emphasize; |
| Tip 3 | Do not rush into the read-aloud. Allow children time to get comfortable and ready for the read-aloud; |

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| Tip 4 | Allow yourself time to get comfortable. Your head should be above the heads of your listeners so all children can hear your voice; |
| Tip 5 | Set the stage for reading. Display the cover page, read the title, and introduce the author and illustrator. If applicable, note any special features on the front cover, e.g., won an award, written in interesting and/or multiple font(s), includes unusual colors, etc.; |
| Tip 6 | Don't privilege language over illustrations. Both are integral parts of the process, so make sure the children can see the pictures easily; |
| Tip 7 | Use prosody and reading with expression when reading aloud (see Rasinski & Smith, 2018; Rasinski & Young, 2023). Read fluently and change your tone of voice to fit the language and dialogue; |
| Tip 8 | Don't read too fast or too slow. Adjust your pace to fit the story and the comfort of the children; |
| Tip 9 | Don't be unnerved by questions during the reading. Foster curiosity with patient answers, then resume reading; |
| Tip 10 | Allow time for discussion after reading a picture book. Ask open-ended questions like, <i>How did you like our story? What part of the story did you like the most? How did I do as a reader? What did I do as a reader that you really liked?</i> Do not turn discussions into quizzes. |
| Tip 11 | Most importantly, relax and have fun! |

Final Thought

As noted earlier, the purpose of this article was not to critique one read-aloud session. Rather, it was to offer a cautionary tale. I hope this tale will help promote a big idea; namely, that reading aloud is a complex art, not a simple activity. The fact that it is complex is what makes it such a powerful instructional teaching and learning tool. The fact that it is an art is what makes it such an effective instructional practice, provided it is planned thoughtfully.

I also hope that sharing tips for selecting picturebooks, using instructional strategies to read aloud, and reading aloud will help all adults, especially teachers, put this idea of reading aloud into practice. Let's start reading aloud and having lots of fun.

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Received: October 4, 2023 | Accepted: November 13, 2023 | Published: May 15, 2024