Think-Alouds

Think-alouds have been described as “eavesdropping on someone’s thinking. With this strategy, teachers verbalize aloud while reading a section orally. This includes describing things they are doing as they read to monitor comprehension. The purpose of this strategy is to model for students how skilled readers construct meaning from a text.

Why use think-alouds?

* It helps students learn to monitor their thinking as they read and improves their comprehension.
* It teaches students to re-read a sentence, read ahead to clarify and/or look for context clues to make sense of what they read.
* It slows down the reading process and allows students to monitor their understanding of a text.

How to use think-alouds

1. Begin by modeling this strategy. Model your thinking as you read. Do this at points in the text that may be confusing for students (new vocabulary, unusual sentence construction).
2. Introduce the assigned text and discuss the purpose of the Think-Aloud strategy. Develop the set of questions to support thinking aloud (examples follow).
* What do I know about this topic?
* What do I think I will learn about this topic?
* Do I understand what I just read?
* Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
* What more can I do to understand this?
* What were the most important points in this reading?
* What new information did I learn?
* How does it fit in with what I already know?
1. Give students opportunities to practice the technique, and offer structured feedback to students.
2. Read the selected passage aloud as the students read the same text silently. At certain points stop and “think aloud” the answers to some of the pre-selected questions.
3. Demonstrate how good readers monitor their understanding by rereading a sentence, reading ahead to clarify, and/or looking for context clues. Students then learn to offer answers to the questions as the teacher leads the Think-Aloud.

Think-Aloud Checklist

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| **Strategy Think Aloud** | **Tally Mark for Each Time Strategy Used** | **Cue Words** |
| Predicting |  | I predict… In the next part I think… I think this is…  |
| Questioning |  | Why did… What did… How did… Where was… Should there…  |
| Visualizing |  | I see…I picture… |
| Personal Response |  | I feel… My favorite part… I liked/disliked…  |
| Clarifying |  | I got confused when… I’m not sure of… I didn’t expect…  |
| Summarizing |  | I think this is mainly about… The most important idea is…  |
| Reflecting |  | I think I’ll… next time. Maybe I’ll need to… next time. I realized that… I wonder if… |
| Making Connections* Personal connections
* Text-to-text connections
 |  | This is like… This reminds me of… This is similar to… If it were me…  |

Video of Think-Aloud in action

Template based on activity in Schoenbach, R., Greenleaf, C. L., Cziko, C., Hurwitz, L. (2000). Reading for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High School Classrooms. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 78.

Adapted by CAST <http://www.cast.org>

http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/think\_alouds