

Read/Think/Write Aloud

Standards: Virginia English Standards of Learning for Grade 4

- 4.1 The student will use effective oral communication skills in a variety of settings.
- b) Contribute to group discussions across content areas.
 - d) Use evidence to support opinions.
 - f) Communicate new ideas to others.
 - h) Demonstrate the ability to work independently.
- 4.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction texts, and poetry.
- c) Identify the main idea.
 - d) Summarize supporting details.
 - e) Identify the problem and solution.
 - h) Draw conclusions/make inferences about text.
 - i) Make, confirm, or revise predictions.
 - j) Identify cause and effect relationships.
- 4.7 The student will write cohesively for a variety of purposes.
- b) Focus on one aspect of a topic.
 - d) Organize writing to convey a central idea.
 - f) Write a clear topic sentence focusing on the main idea.
 - g) Write two or more related paragraphs on the same topic.
 - h) Use transition words for sentence variety.
 - i) Utilize elements of style, including word choice and sentence variation.
 - k) Include supporting details that elaborate the main idea.

Intended Audience:

The intended audience is the fourth grade students in Mrs. Washington's class at DJ Montague Elementary School. These students have participated in many different read alouds. They understand the process of thinking about the details in a text. They also understand the turn-and-talk process. In regards to writing, they also are working on writing details when they create their own piece of text. They use the foursquare method to think about how to write about a topic within the five-paragraph essay model. In regards to independent reading, these students are at different levels. They all control the basic reading skills like reading from left to right, the return sweep, and one-to-one matching. However, there is a mix of different comprehension levels within the class. Some of the special education students are reading on a second grade level while some the gifted students are reading on a fifth or sixth grade level.

Behavioral Objectives:

- Students will participate in the read aloud of *Just A Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg.
- While the teacher is reading, students will answer questions and participate in discussion by turning and talking to a partner.
- Students will listen to the teacher's writing aloud.
- Students will create their own piece of writing based on what the teacher has modeled and based on the book chosen for the read aloud.

Materials/Time/Space:

One copy of *Just A Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg, paper for the teacher, pencil or pen, document camera, projector screen, paper for the students, tripod, video camera, battery in the camera charged, memory on the camera. This lesson will take place in Mrs. Washington's room as a whole group and will take 40 minutes to complete.

Book Description: *Just A Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg is a book about a boy named Walter who does not care about the environment. In the beginning of the book, Walter throws trash on the ground and later dumps all of his trash into one trashcan instead of sorting it. That night he is taken into the future on his bed. He sees trash piles, cut down trees, tall smoke stacks, a hotel at the top of Mount Everest, to a crowded highway, the smog of the Grand Canyon, until it returned back to his home. He wakes up and realizes that he needs to fix his actions to help save the environment. He reorganized the trash and threw away his litter. He planted a tree on his birthday. That night his bed takes him to the future again and he sees a different place. The grass is green and the trees are tall and he realizes that his actions can save the environment.

Lesson Description:

Begin the lesson by calling the students to the front of the classroom. Students sitting in the front row should continue sitting in their seats. Students in the back of the classroom should sit closer to be able to see the pictures and contribute to the 'turn-and-talk' discussions.

Introduce the book: Hold the copy of *Just A Dream* so that everyone can see the front cover. Explain that the read aloud today will focus on the dream of a boy named Walter. Ask the students to share a dream that they had with a partner.

Instructional Strategies during the Read Aloud: Begin reading the book aloud. Students should be attentive during this process. After reading page 2 ask: "Why would anyone want a tree for their birthday?" and ask for responses as a whole group. Continue reading. After reading page 6 ask: "Predict what you think the future holds" and ask the students to turn and talk with a partner. Read until the end of page 10 and ask: "What do you think Walter will find when he wakes up?" and allow the students to turn and talk to a partner. Continue reading until page 18. By this point students should see a pattern in the book. Page 17 has a very ironic moment in it. Draw student's attention to this moment (a factory is producing medicine for itchy eyes and throats, yet is creating an environment that produces those same symptoms). Ask the students to explain how it makes them feel and how it makes Walter feel. By the end of page 33 Walter has been to many different places and seen how the environment has been damaged. Ask the students to infer how Walter is feeling at the end of page 33 by turning and talking to a partner and then discussing this as a whole group. On page 41, Walter has a tree for a birthday present. Explain to the students that you remember this from the beginning of the book. Ask the students to recall their ideas about why someone would want a tree for their birthday. Then with these thoughts in mind, ask the students to explain why Walter wanted a tree for his birthday. Finish the book.

Instructional Strategies during the Write Aloud: Transition to the write aloud by asking students to return to their seats. Explain that the next part of the lesson will focus on creative writing. Tell the students that they will write a creative piece based on something they saw in the book or something that they liked about the book. Tell the students that they will work on adding in

descriptive details in their writing. Explain that in order to achieve this goal, that they will watch the teacher modeling this process. Take out a sheet of notebook paper and place it on the document camera. Model good paper heading by writing your name, date, and a tentative title. Begin writing about something that resonated with you. Misspell words and circle those words that you are unsure are spelled correctly. Explain that the reason you are circling the words is so you can fix the spelling later and not lose your train of thought. Skip lines to show the students that they can skip lines to add even more details or change words without erasing everything. Do not finish your writing. Pass out the paper and ask the students to write their own story. Help students that are having trouble.

My Script: One part of the book that grabbed my attention was when the fishermen caught the little fish. I like to go fishing and I sometimes keep the little fish. So that made me think what would happen if most of the little fish were gone. (write name, date, and heading) Write this and read it aloud so students can hear the process: As I sit in my fishing boat, I begin to doze (struggle with this word and circle it for later) off in the bright, warm sunshine. As soon as my eye are closed, I am whisked (circle this word as well) to a new land. The air is cold (but explain that you don't like that work and think of another one like atmosphere) and I am unsure of my location. As I look past my boat, I can see another person trying to catch something... leave the rest of the story open and allow the students to being to write their own story.

Differentiation: Because the students are not reading the book themselves and because the writing piece is more creative in nature, differentiation for specific levels of readers naturally occurs. Students will naturally be interested in the hearing a new book read to them and write creatively about events in the book. However, some students may need scaffolding when discussing topics during the read aloud and especially when writing. If students need help, brainstorm ideas with the students. Using a clean sheet of paper, ask the students questions about their ideas, and write them down. Then show the students that they do have ideas and can now write them into their own story.

Accommodations: Since this activity will occur during the class's writing time, the special education teacher's aide should come into the classroom to help the special education students work on their writing piece. If the aide does not come or is scheduled to come at a different time, then the pre-service teacher will help these students. However, since the students know that this is just a draft, they should not be pressured to have a perfect product.

Evaluation Procedure: Evaluation will occur throughout the lesson. Students will orally answer questions about the text during the read aloud. Students should be discussing the book not just sitting quietly or talking about other topics. During the modeling section, students will be attentive. If students are not attentive, the teacher should take notes on the improper behavior. During the writing section, students will be creating their own story.

Self-Reflection: Overall, I am happy with how my lesson went. I planned a lesson for my students, gave a read aloud, and engaged them in a learning activity. While I made mistakes along the way and realize that I could have made some changes to the lesson, I am still happy with the lesson.

The students were extremely engaged in the lesson. I began by telling them that we were going to do a read-think-write aloud. Most of them listened to my quick introduction of the

activity and seemed interested in a new activity. I called most of the students to the front of the classroom. Some of the students sit in the front row and therefore they did not need to come any closer. I introduced the book and asked if anyone wanted to share a dream that they had. Most students did not want to share but I did have about three students share their dreams. This was a very vulnerable moment and I am proud of my students for opening up. I began the read aloud and asked questions along the way. Students were very engaged in this portion of the lesson and wanted to share everything they were thinking. Students who normally do not participate much in class were raising their hands to share their ideas. However, I did notice that some students were calling out during the read aloud not only with their predictions or hypotheses but also with their opinions. I realize now that I should have asked the students who were calling out to not call out while others were talking or while I was showing the pictures. This would have allowed me to maintain a more positive and structured learning environment.

I asked the students to return to their seats after the read aloud. I did not ask specific students to return to their seats but just freely let the students return to their seats. My cooperating teacher suggested that next time I do an activity where students are all in the front of the classroom, that I asked groups of students to return to their seats instead of the whole group. When I had the students' attention, I began the write aloud portion of the lesson. I told the students that they would be writing a creative story based on something that they saw in the book. I showed them my thinking while I was writing and they eagerly gave me input on how to make my writing better. In addition, students were asking very engaging questions about how they should do their writing. One student asked why I was skipping lines. I told her that I wanted to have room to edit or add details into my writing piece. Another student asked if this was the final draft. I told them of course it was not the final draft and that I would never expect them to have a perfect writing piece the first time. A third student asked if they could create their own title, which I enthusiastically told them that they could. I was happy that the students were helping me and asking questions. However, I think that I could have made my writing assignment much more clear. I did not necessarily scaffold my writing assignment enough. While all students wrote about a dream sequence, some students took ideas directly from the book while others used my example. However, some students wrote much more than I thought they would. For example, my struggling reader did not write much during our one-on-one sessions, but wrote almost a page in this writing assignment. I believe that I had a good concept for their writing but that I was not very clear when describing my idea.

I believe that I met my objectives when doing this assignment. As previously stated, the students were very engaged in the read aloud process. Even one of my special education students, who does not participate in class much, was very excited about the ending of *Just A Dream*. During the read aloud, most of the students were discussing the questions I asked. The special education student did not talk to anyone. However, I noticed that some students were so excited that they were yelling their ideas to each other. All students who were present participated in the read aloud. One student was pulled during the end of the lesson and therefore did not participate. While some students wrote more than other students did, each student was trying to think of a story. I collected student work to see what they focused on and plan to give it back to the students to work on later in the school year.

Overall, I think that my lesson went well. I would definitely be clearer when giving directions to my students. I need to give clear directions in these creative writing pieces. I would

also change some of my management strategies. After talking with my cooperating teacher, I need to be more aware of what students are doing while I am giving a lesson. Some students were playing with things in their desk, while others were digging in their pencil boxes. During the writing modeling, some students seemed like they were not engaged. They were lying on their desks and sharpening their pencils. Next time I do an assignment like this, I will try to make the modeling more engaging and ask the students who are lying down to sit up and look like learners. However, I would definitely do this lesson again. I plan to repeat this activity in the spring with another book. I want to try to find a book that can incorporate some of the topics that they already have into a creative writing piece.