

Reading Aloud – Developing Readers

Learning Outcome: Students will practice autonomous learning, will be encouraged to speak, and to develop writing skills by using reading aloud as oral proofreading.

Summary: A student reads aloud a short piece of text in front of the rest of class, while the rest of the students read the same text quietly. This exercise can be performed in any class when one paragraph (or more) of written text needs to be read. After the text is completely read by one or more students, all the students answer analytic questions that refer to the written material. Reading and comprehension skills are practiced in this exercise.

Procedure:

1. The instructor assigns a piece of text to be read and analyzed during class. The assigned piece of text can be provided by the instructor, or may be part of the student's textbook.
2. The instructor explains that all students will read the assigned piece of text quietly while one of their peers reads the same piece aloud.
3. The instructor asks a student in the classroom to stand-up, introduce him/herself, and read the assigned written text. Once the student finishes reading the assigned section, the instructor thanks the student and asks him/her to sit back down.
4. If the text to be read is longer than one or two paragraphs, the instructor may ask other students to read sections in order, following the same procedure.
5. Once the piece of text is completely read, the instructor asks the students to complete the relevant exercises based on the read text. These can include answering analytical questions, solving problems, etc.

Example Application: This exercise is particularly useful to analyze short pieces of text in class, such as sections of a chapter in a book. During the Freshman Seminar "Strangers among us: the microbiota" Fall 2014 semester, this exercise was applied in several instances to read sections of *Good Germs, Bad Germs* by Jessica Snyder Sachs.

Outcome and Impressions: This was a very useful exercise; while not required, most students in the Freshman Seminar chose to participate, including the quiet and timid ones. The exercise helped some students to overcome their fear of speaking in public, allowing them to introduce themselves to the class, and facilitated personal interactions. This technique also permitted the instructor to identify one student with reading deficiencies; the student was referred to the Writing and Reading Center. The student attended tutoring sessions at the WRC, and later in the semester thanked the instructor for the early intervention and referral to appropriate support offices.

References:

On Course I workshop, Spring 2014.

Reading aloud: a useful learning tool?, Sally Gibson, English Language Teaching Journal (2008) 62 (1): 29-36.