

# Module 5: Fitting It All Together– Designing Your Literacy Block

## [TAB PAGE]

Course of Study

Read to be Ready

Selecting High-Quality and Appropriately-Complex Texts for Read Aloud

Planning Repeated Interactive Read Aloud Lessons

Creating Text Sets that Build Knowledge and Vocabulary

**Designing Your Literacy Block**



# Module 5: Designing Your Literacy Block

## Objectives

- Reflect on current literacy practices and curriculum and determine how to best integrate repeated interactive read alouds and text sets into classroom instruction
- Review the components of reading and understand the “Read about it, Think about it, Talk about it, Write about it” framework
- Make key connections to Modules 1-4

## Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

Anchor Standard 10: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.”

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills eventually required for reading appears to be reading aloud to children.”

Adams, 1990, p.46

“Reading to children is the cornerstone of literacy development and classroom practice.”

Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002, p.465

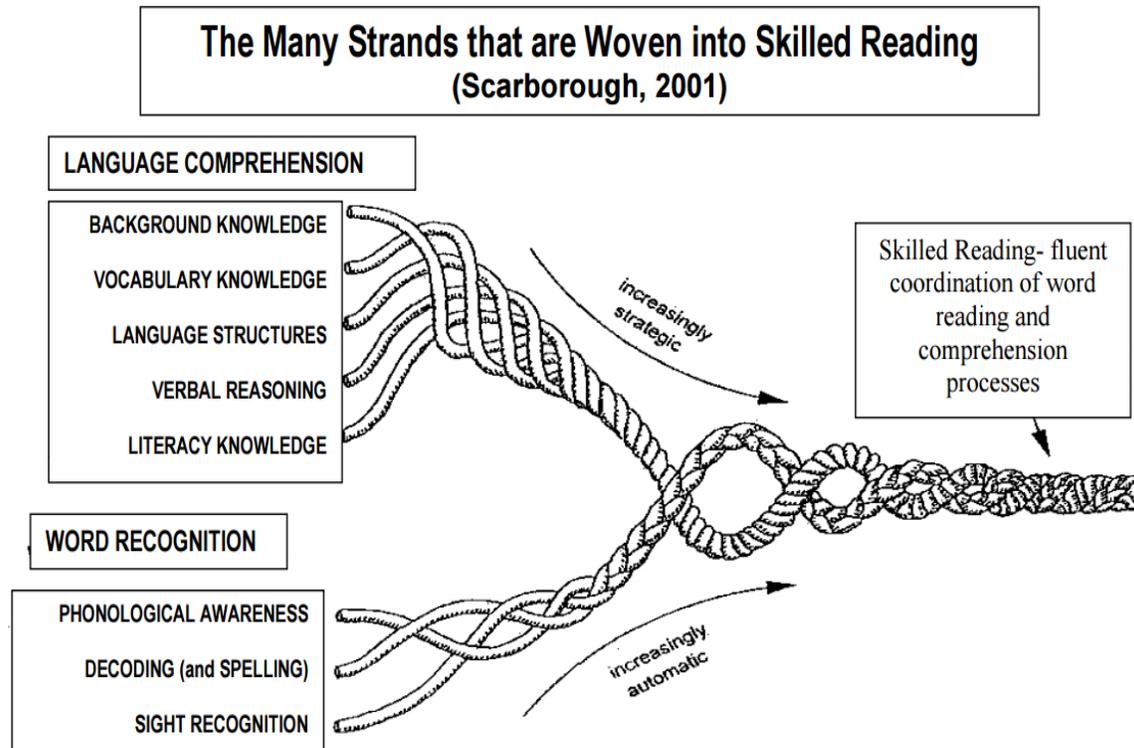
“When teachers read aloud to students, meanings can be negotiated in discussion before, during, and after the story reading.”

Marie Clay

## TEAM Alignment

- Teacher Content Knowledge
- Teacher Knowledge of Students
- Instructional Planning

## Reviewing the Components of Reading



- Retrieved from Florida Center for Reading Research

### Discussion

- How do repeated interactive read alouds and text sets support students in becoming skillful readers? Which strands of the reading rope are taught through read alouds and text sets?

Note: While many skills and standards can be effectively taught through read alouds, students need to experience **comprehensive reading instruction** that includes additional strategies, such as shared reading, small group centers, word study, etc.

## A Framework for Text-based Instruction



Reading is obtaining meaning from printed material (Graves, Juel, & Graves, 2006). Historically, it was held that meaning resided exclusively in the text. However, Rosenblatt (1978) changed this perception when she posited that reading is a transactional process. The transactional theory maintains that the reader must transact with the text to make meaning. According to the transactional view, meaning does not reside in the text itself nor can meaning be found just with the reader; in fact, it is when the two transact that meaning occurs.

- Morrison and Włodarczyk, 2009

Any time students engage with a text they should be given opportunities to engage, or transact, with it. Engagement with text means listening to it, thinking about it, talking about it, drawing or writing about it, or reenacting it through theater or play. This framework can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of any literacy routine.

- **Read About It:** read alouds, readers theater, shared reading, guided reading, partner reading, independent reading
- **Think About It:** teacher think alouds, text-dependent questioning, student think time, etc.
- **Talk About It:** interactive/dialogic reading, retellings, partner discussion, small group or whole class discussion, accountable talk, etc.
- **Draw or Write About It:** interactive writing, modeled writing, shared writing, diagrams, timelines, explanations, summaries, arguments, etc.

## The 6 Ts of Effective Literacy Instruction

Dr. Richard Allington from the University of Tennessee has researched the kind of instruction that best develops students' reading and writing proficiencies. Below is an excerpt from this research:

### Time

These [highly effective] teachers had a "reading and writing vs. stuff" ratio that was far better balanced than is typically found in elementary classrooms (Allington, 2001).

In other words, these teachers routinely had children actually reading and writing for as much a half of the school day – often around a 50/50 ratio of reading and writing to stuff (stuff is all the other things teachers have children do instead of reading and writing). In typical classrooms, it is not unusual to find that kids read and write for as little as ten percent of the day (30 minutes of reading and writing activity in a 300 minute, or five hour, school day).

In many classrooms, a 90 minute "reading block" produces only 10–15 minutes of actual reading, or less than 20 percent of the allocated reading time is spent reading. Worse, in many classrooms, 20 minutes of actual reading across the school day (Knapp, 1995) is a common event, which includes reading in science, social studies, math, and other subjects. Thus, less than ten percent of the day is actually spent reading and 90 percent or more of the time is spent doing stuff.

Extensive reading is critical to the development of reading proficiency (Krashen 2001; Stanovich, 2000). Extensive practice provides the opportunity for students to consolidate the skills and strategies teachers often work so hard to develop. The exemplary elementary teachers we studied recognized this critical aspect of instructional planning. Their students did more guided reading, more independent reading, more social studies and science reading than students in less-effective classrooms.

### Talk

We saw fundamental differences in the nature of the classroom talk in the exemplary teacher classrooms and the talk typically reported in classroom observational studies. First, we observed these teachers fostering much more student talk – teacher-student, student-student – than has been previously reported. In other words, these exemplary teachers encouraged, modeled, and supported lots of talk across the school day. This talk was purposeful talk though,

not simply chatter. This talk was problem-posing, problem-solving talk related to curricular topics (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Johnston, Woodisde-Jiron & Day, 2001).

It wasn't just more talk but a different sort of talk than is commonly heard in classrooms. We described this difference as "more conversational than interrogational." ...In other words, teachers and students discussed ideas, concepts, hypotheses, strategies, and responses with others. The questions teachers posed were more "open" questions, where multiple responses would be appropriate.

## **Tasks**

The work these children in these classrooms completed was more substantive, more challenging, and required more self-regulation than the work that has been more commonly observed in elementary classrooms. We observed far less of the low-level worksheet-type tasks and a greater reliance on more complex tasks across the school day and across subject matter. Perhaps because of the nature of this work, students seemed more often engaged and less often off-task than other researchers reported.

- Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/six-ts-effective-elementary-literacy-instruction>

## **Discussion**

- How does Allington's research align with the Read About It, Think About It, Talk About It, Write About It framework?
- How do repeated interactive read alouds align with this framework?
- How can you increase the amount of reading in your classroom?
- How can you increase the amount of text-based thinking, talking, and writing in your classroom?

# Working with your Schedule and Curriculum

## Curriculum Considerations

Think about the curriculum or basal program you have and answer the following questions. Your responses should help identify action steps you can take to integrate repeated interactive read alouds and text sets into your regular instruction. If possible, sit with peers who use the same curriculum or basal program as you.

Does your curriculum include read aloud texts?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Analyze the texts for complexity, and determine if they are high quality and content rich. If you discover read aloud texts that don't match expectations for complexity and quality, brainstorm read aloud texts you could pull in as replacements.
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Work with colleagues to create a list of read aloud texts you want to use. Use the resources in this manual to help find complex, high-quality, and content-rich texts. Consider sequencing your read alouds to form text sets. Organize them thematically, or to align with the social studies and science standards in your pacing guide.
Does your curriculum provide opportunities to read texts aloud more than once?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Use the resources from this training on repeated interactive read alouds. Review your curriculum, and find ways to make your repeated read alouds even more engaging and rigorous.
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Review your schedule and curriculum. Find places where you could add a second or third reading. Where would you have to spend less time so that you could spend more time on read alouds?
Does your curriculum organize texts thematically, or in another way that promotes depth of study and knowledge building?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Review the number of texts and diversity of text types in these thematic units. If the thematic unit includes only three texts, try integrating a fourth. If the thematic unit only includes narrative texts and informational texts, add a poem or piece of visual media (e.g. map, graph).
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Identify the texts your curriculum does provide that are complex, high quality, and worth building around. Use these texts as anchors. Pull in supporting texts to create a set or thematic unit. Start by adding just one or two texts, and over time add more if possible.
Does your curriculum pair its texts with high-quality and rigorous tasks?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Review the tasks in your curriculum. Edit the tasks as needed to ensure they meet the criteria laid out in this training. Tweak tasks as needed.
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Work with colleagues to create high-quality tasks to pair with the texts in your curriculum. See if you can replace other writing prompts suggested in the curriculum with text-based tasks.

Do your science and social studies curricula provide complex and quality read aloud texts?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Put your science and social studies curricula next to your reading curriculum. Where can you align the content? Are there opportunities to create text sets and build deep knowledge and vocabulary by pulling across curricula?
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Based on your grade level standards, create a list of read aloud books that pair well with your science and social studies curricula. Find ways to build read alouds into your science and social studies blocks. Integrate your social studies, science, and ELA blocks when possible to promote close reading of content area texts.
Are there book rooms, libraries, or other resources in your school or district that can help you create text sets?	<b>Yes</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Research these resources. Find colleagues who are interested in working together to find resources and assemble text sets, such as librarians or literacy specialists.
	<b>No</b> >>	<b>Action:</b> Review the resources provided through this training, especially open source sites like the Tennessee Electronic Library. Create a book wish list and share it with interested stakeholders, like your PTA president or local Rotary Club or Junior League. If possible, encourage a local group to fund these resources for you.

### Reflection

- What questions do you have about your curriculum and how you can find ways to further implement repeated interactive read alouds and text sets?
  
- What other actions do you want to take as a result of attending this training?

# Working with your Schedule and Curriculum

Sometimes a solution is straightforward and doable: Make every moment of classroom time count through quality academic learning time.

- International Reading Association, 2006

## Scheduling Considerations

Think about your daily and weekly schedule. Use the space below to plan when and where you can commit to teaching repeated interactive read alouds and text sets. You may want to sit with peers who use the same curriculum or who have the same kind of schedule as you.

The scenarios listed on the next two pages may help your brainstorming. *(These scenarios are based on feedback from real teachers!)*

## How can I fit repeated interactive read alouds and text sets into my current schedule?

### Teacher A:

My basal includes two shared reading texts each week that have a common theme or topic. One is always literary and the other is always informational. One is the “featured selection” and the other is the “paired selection” (which is shorter) and they’re both usually pretty strong texts. I almost never have time to get to both, though. One solution is to start using the “paired selection” text in my guided reading groups. That way I know my students will have an opportunity to read and engage with it and make content connections to the “featured selection”.

My curriculum doesn’t have read alouds or trade books. I do a read aloud everyday, but I’ve never tried to link it with the topic or theme of the two shared reading pieces. That’s something I can start doing.

Reading fluency is really important for my students and we do repeated readings of a poem every week to build fluency. Similar to the read alouds, I’ve never thought much about how the topic or theme of the poem connects with the rest of my curriculum. I can start looking for poems and songs that share the same topic and theme as the shared reading selections in my basal so that students have another way of building knowledge about the theme/topic.

If my students read two shared reading pieces, a poem, and one or two read alouds each week on the same topic or theme, that feels like a good – and doable – way to start integrating text sets into my classroom.

### Teacher B:

My curriculum is scripted and I’m expected to follow it exactly. If my principal walks in to my classroom she expects it to look the same as the other three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms in our hallway.

Our curriculum runs on six-week units. The first five are scripted, and then the sixth week is for review. During that sixth week my coteachers and I have some flexibility with our plans. We can choose the texts from the unit that are the most complex and high quality and review those through repeated interactive readings. If possible, we could try to review texts that share a common theme or topic. We might be able to bring in additional texts that week that build on that theme or topic.

Our science curriculum is not scripted and my principal doesn’t set firm expectations for how we have to spend those 30 minutes every day. That’s definitely a place where I can bring in texts, build some standards-based text sets, and do some repeated read alouds.

**Teacher C:**

In my district, the curriculum is a resource but teachers make decisions about which texts and activities to use. I'm excited to give my teaching routines more structure, and I think text sets could help with my planning. I teach at a poor, rural school though, and I don't have many resources. I'm going to spend time digging into the text sets that have already been created. My school doesn't have its own library, but the county public library has a pretty good stock of books. I can search the online database at the library and figure out which texts from the already-created sets are available.

I haven't done repeated interactive read alouds before. I'll start with one a week, with two or three readings.

I like the idea of having my students read texts in shared reading and guided reading that connect to the theme or topic of the read aloud text, and I'm glad that some of these already-created text sets have recommended shared reading passages. I'll have to be careful with the digital shared reading texts that I'll need to print out. I have a copy quota and printing off pages and pages of text for my students to read will make me run out of paper quickly! I'll probably have to use some of the leveled readers in my curriculum in place of the recommended digital texts. Or maybe my coteachers and I can take turns printing class sets of texts and share them.

**Teacher D:**

In my district we have curriculum maps with a "skill of the week" every week, like making inferences or summarizing. We're supposed to target that skill in all of our reading activities, like shared reading and guided reading. That means that if I want to use more texts, I'll have to find texts that match the skill of the week. I'll talk with my coteachers and see if they'd be interested in making a list of read alouds books that pair with each week's skill. Then, we can try to find other texts that align to the skill and to a common topic or theme. That may be difficult, and we won't be able to find texts every week, but maybe we can try to do a text set once a month.

**Reflection**

- What questions do you have about your schedule and how you can find time to implement repeated interactive read alouds and text sets?

## Closing Activity: Visualize and Share

1. With your group, think back through the entire training. Review the objectives and key ideas from Modules 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
2. On a piece of chart paper, illustrate what you have learned about text selection, interactive read alouds, and text sets that build knowledge. Your illustration should connect what you've learned to how you will apply it in your classroom.
3. You may want to include: texts and reasons for selecting them, what the teacher is doing, what the children are doing, how read alouds and text sets fit into broader ELA and content area instruction, etc.

# Additional Resources

## Classroom Learning Contexts

Schickedanz, 2008 (p. 5)

<b>Whole Group</b>		
All of the children in the class participate together		
<p><u>Activities/Content/Participation</u>  <b>Teacher</b> determines activities and their content  <b>Child</b> participation is not a choice  <b>Children</b> are expected to join the group</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u>  <b>Story time</b> (15-20 min)  <b>Circle Time</b> (20-25 minutes)</p>	<p><u>Roles</u>  <b>Teacher</b> leads.  <b>Children</b> listen to story and participate in discussion. Actively comment, ask questions, help teacher read title, chime in on familiar portions of the text, engage in literacy and math tasks</p>
<b>Small Group</b>		
Part of the class participates in the activity together, group size between two and ten		
<p><u>Activities/Content/Participation</u>  <b>Teacher</b> determines activities and content, and composes the small groups.  <b>Child</b> participation typically is not a choice. Many activities allow and encourage children to use their own ideas and to express their own thoughts</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u>            Literacy Activities            Math Activities            Science Activities            Duration: 20-30 minutes</p>	<p><u>Roles</u>  <b>Teacher</b> leads and guides, interacts with individuals and responds to individual questions and comments.  <b>Children</b> manipulate materials, answer questions, offer ideas, experiment, solve problems collaboratively and record observations.</p>
<b>Center Time</b>		
Children engage in activities as individuals, peer partners, and self selected groups		
<p><u>Activities/Content/Participation</u>  <b>Teacher</b> determines array of materials and activity choices, but takes children’s interests into consideration when making these decisions.  <b>Children</b> choose where they will work and play, have latitude in directing the use of materials to suit their interests and ideas. Children enter and leave activities as they wish.</p>	<p><u>Examples:</u>            Water and Sand Area            Art Table and Easel            Puzzles, <b>Literacy</b>, Math Manipulatives Area, Book Area, <b>Writing Area</b>, <b>Nature/Science Area</b>, Block Area, <b>Dramatic Play Area</b>            Duration: 55 – 60 minutes</p>	<p><u>Roles</u>  <b>Teacher</b> supports, assists, and provides help and instruction when needed. Teacher converses with children as they pursue their chosen activities.  <b>Children</b> actively engage with materials, interact with other children, and initiate and direct much of their activity. Children engage with teachers to receive help, support with information and to involve them in role play.</p>

## Additional Resources

Finding anchor texts to use as a read aloud and then paired texts to go with them does not have to be a challenge. Here is what you can use:

- 1) Your basal/reading series
- 2) Leveled Literacy Texts
- 3) Websites with already created text sets:
  - <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/k-12-ela-year-long-planning>
  - <https://www.engageny.org/resource/selection-of-authentic-texts-for-common-core-instruction-guidance-and-a-list-of-resources>
  - [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)
  - <http://achievethecore.org/page/642/text-complexity-collection>
- Read Aloud Lesson Matrix
  - Grades K-1
    - [http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E01056/GradeK\\_1LessonMatrix.pdf](http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E01056/GradeK_1LessonMatrix.pdf)
  - Grades 2-3
    - [http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E01056/Hoyt\\_IR23\\_LessonMatrix.pdf](http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E01056/Hoyt_IR23_LessonMatrix.pdf)