



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Using Thinkalouds With Fiction and Nonfiction Text

Kim Callison • November 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension

Practice: Teach Comprehension Strategies

Highlights

- Thinkalouds are oral verbalizations of underlying cognitive processes. Students or teachers read a text, stopping occasionally to explain what they are thinking and how they are approaching the text.
- Thinkalouds can be used effectively by teachers to model particular reading strategies, and students may be asked to think aloud during reading as a kind of formative assessment to guide instruction.
- Kim Callison who served on the IES panel that developed the *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade Practice Guide*, demonstrates techniques for using thinkalouds with first grade students.
- Callison, Coordinator of Elementary Reading/Language Arts in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, defines thinkalouds and shows how thinkalouds can be used with both fiction and nonfiction texts.
- She demonstrates three specific opportunities for thinkalouds—asking questions, making connections, and predicting—using a visual that reinforces student understanding of how thinkalouds contribute to reading comprehension.

About the Interviewee

Kim Callison is coordinator of elementary reading/language arts for Anne Arundel County (Maryland) public schools. Her responsibilities include implementing and monitoring a comprehensive reading curriculum and providing professional development for teachers, including reading teachers, and administrators. An educator for 32 years and a National Board Certified Teacher in Literacy, Ms. Callison has focused her career on reading instruction, curriculum development, and school improvement leadership. Her rich variety of teaching experience includes teaching special education students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, serving as an instructor for graduate-level reading courses, presenting at local and state reading conferences, and promoting literacy as a regional reading teacher specialist.

Full Transcript

Callison: I'm Kim Callison. I'm the coordinator of elementary reading in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, in Maryland.

The thinkaloud is a strategy that shows learners what is going on in someone else's thinking. It's making your thinking public and problem solving public. So I am explicitly demonstrating for students how to go about solving their problem.

Asking Questions

Callison: I'm wondering, "Did I remember who Lupita was?" I'm thinking, "Do I remember who Lupita was?" So good readers sometimes have to go back and look. Oh, Lupita was her little sister. Right?

Student: Yes.

Callison: That's right. "So she went back to say she was going to teach Lupita a new word." And you're thinking in your head, "What's that word?"

Making Connections

Callison: I'm going to make a connection about this one. In my mind, I remember when I—

Student: What's hopscotch?

Callison: "What's hopscotch?" Good point. Hopscotch is a game, right here, that is written on the sidewalk with chalk. And when I was a teacher here, I used to take the kids out for recess, and we would draw hopscotch, and you would hop on it. And you try to hop right on the numbers without putting your feet on the lines. Have any of you played hopscotch?

[Students raise hands]

Callison: Oh good, you do know that.

Student: I tried. But I did it.

Callison: And you did it. So that was made a connection. And you did, too. I like the way you're making sense of the story.

Predicting

Callison: I'm thinking she's liking school. I'm predicting good things are going to happen for this girl. I'm predicting that.

Student: She's going to learn English.

Callison: I think she is.

Callison: When using thinkaloud with narrative or expository text, there are many similarities. However, there are some differences. Again, depending on the text you're using and the age group you're using, you would change up your strategies and your timing for your thinkalouds.

Callison: What does a *nonfiction* book mean? Allison?

Allison: It gives you information.

Callison: Okay. It gives you information. What were you going to say, Demani?

Demani: Nonfiction is real.

Callison: It's real. So I'm going to share with you a book that is real. And what attracted me about this book is the title, first of all: *Orangutans Are Ticklish*.

[Students giggle]

Callison: Don't you just love that picture?

Students: Yes.

Callison: So I'm going to be thinking in my head, "Facts." That gives me a clue doesn't it? That it's real, that it's real.

Callison: With both texts, narrative or nonfiction, you can clarify certain vocabulary that we are not sure of. So when you are reading out loud and we come across a word that we are sure that the students do not know, or a concept that isn't familiar to these students, I can stop for a minute and say, "Wow, I am really not sure what that's all about" or "I am not sure about that word."

Callison: "The kangaroo's hop is called"—here's a new word I never knew—"a saltation." A saltation. So I have to think, "What is a saltation?" I'm not sure what that is, so I need to read on. "That means that the animal hops with two feet, both pushing off the ground at the same time. Kangaroos can't hop backwards"—that's an interesting fact—"but they can hop forward as fast as 30 miles per hour."

Student: Cool.

Callison: The benefits for students when you're using a thinkaloud is that the students really are—everything's out in the open. Students aren't trying to guess what's going on. Many times, students, when they are trying to understand, they really don't know what *understand* means when we say, "Do you understand?" But they really don't have that vocabulary to say, "I don't understand." So they are actually seeing what a teacher is doing and putting some vocabulary to it and helping them build that deeper meaning.