



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Thinkaloud Examples in Comprehension and Phonics

Joseph Dimino, Ph.D. • September 2009

Topic: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading
Practice: Systematic Skill Instruction

Highlights

- Thinkalouds help make the thinking process public through teacher modeling.
- Dr. Joseph Dimino discusses what thinkalouds would look like in a classroom and explains how teachers can use this instructional strategy.
- Dr. Dimino demonstrates how to do a thinkaloud in the area of comprehension related to using text and pictorial clues in the story to answer inferential questions.
- Dr. Dimino demonstrates how to do a thinkaloud in the area of phonics using a silent *e* example.

About the Interviewee

Joseph Dimino, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, Instructional Research Group. Since the early 1970s, Joseph Dimino has had experience as a general education teacher, special education teacher, administrator, behavior consultant, and researcher. He has extensive experience working with teachers, parents, administrators, and instructional assistants in the areas of

instruction and early literacy, reading comprehension strategies, and classroom and behavior management in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Dr. Dimino is a senior research associate at Instructional Research Group, in Los Alamitos, California, where he developed and conducted professional development as part of a national evaluation investigating the effectiveness of reading comprehension programs and is co-principal investigator for a study assessing the impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the comprehension and vocabulary skills of English language learners and English-speaking fifth graders. He is the professional development coordinator for a study investigating the impact of Teacher Study Groups on teaching practices and student vocabulary knowledge. He is also a panel member for the RtI Reading Practice Guide and researcher for the RtI Mathematics Practice Guide, published by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>).

He served as one of the seven professional development staff members for the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, a technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the Office of Special Education Programs within the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Dimino has co-authored books in reading comprehension and early reading intervention. He has published in numerous scholarly journals, including *Elementary School Journal*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Educational Leadership*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *Learning Disability Quarterly*, *Exceptional Children*, *The Journal of Special Education*, and *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. He has delivered papers at numerous state, national, and international conferences, including the American Educational Research Association, the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, the National Reading Conference, the International Reading Association, the Council for Exceptional Children, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the International Association of Applied Psychology, and the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction. He consults nationally in the areas of early literacy and reading comprehension instruction.

Full Transcript

My name is Joe Dimino. I am a senior research associate at the Instructional Research Group, in Los Alamitos, California. When we talk about making the thinking process public, we're talking about the teacher thinking aloud. The thinking process should be made public not only in very simple skills like phonics or phonemic awareness, but it should also be used during comprehension instruction.

Thinkalouds

I'd like to give you an example of what a thinkaloud would look like or sound like in a classroom, and I'd like

to use the comprehension; it is the most difficult. So a teacher is trying to teach students how to answer questions whose responses are not explicitly stated in the text, so they're like inferential questions. So there she tells the students that sometimes the answers to questions are not in the story, and that they have to look at what the author's clues are, and they have to think about what they already know that's already in their head.

So she starts out, and of course they read the story, so this story is about a little girl named Celeste and she loves to read, but she has a lot of brothers and sisters. So one day, she is walking around the house trying to find a place to read, and every time she goes to her favorite places, one of her siblings is there. So as the story continues, one of the clues is that she goes to the bay window and wants to read in the sun and her brother is there, and what happens is she shouts at him. And so the rest of the clues throughout the story talk about her reactions to her siblings every time she goes to a place that she really likes to read. So after the story is over, the teacher says, "Let's look at the clues that the author has given us." So the teacher would start with the first clue; she would call the students' attention to it in the text in the selection and say, "On page 35, look at this clue." She would write the clue on the board and tell the students why it's a good clue. So the teacher would say, "In this clue, Celeste yelled at her brother." Now here is a thinkaloud; she would say, "Now when people yell at other people, I know from what's in my head and what the author said that, you know, maybe she is mad. So we might be on the right track here. So let's look at the next clue, and let's see what we have and if we can find out a little bit more about how Celeste feels about not being able to find a place to read." So the teacher would go through the rest of the clues in the same fashion, and then she would say, "You know, based on these clues—you know she hit her brother, she threw a tantrum, she shouted—I would say she is mad or angry or maybe even frustrated that she can't find a place to read."

Thinkaloud in Phonics

One of the skills that beginning readers learn is the skill where there is an *e* at the end of the word, a silent *e*; it makes the vowel before it long. So in thinking aloud, if the teacher were teaching the long *a* sound as in the word *cake*, the teacher would say, "Let's take this word *cake*, and the rule is when there is a silent *e* at the end of the word, it makes the first vowel say it's own name, which is the long sound." And so the teacher would say, "Let's look at this word, there is the silent *e* at the end. I am going to take my chalk and I am going to put a slash through the *e* because it's silent; it doesn't say its name. Then I am going to look at that first vowel and I am going to put the long sign over it." And she'll say, "Okay, so I have got a silent *e* at the end. The rule tells me that that *a* is going to be long, so I am going to sound it out." So she'll sound it out, *c-a-k*, and then she will say, "Cake." So she is thinking aloud and she will do this, model this two or three times explicitly with the thinkalouds, before she gives the students the opportunities for guided practice.