

Engaging students using Picture Books

Building comprehension skills
through the use of
strategically planned
interactive read alouds



The power of well-written picture books cannot be overestimated. Traditionally viewed as a genre reserved solely for younger children, picture books lend themselves to comprehension strategy instruction at EVERY grade level.

~Harvey & Goudvis 2000



Perhaps the most important function of picture books is the emotional content....When students' emotions are involved, the lessons are more memorable, and the level of understanding is broader and deeper....Using these stories can add a completely new dimension to any unit.

~ Pearson (2005)



Engagement with learning is essential, because it is engagement that leads to sustained interaction and practice. Coaching, instruction, and feedback become critical to ensure that students develop good habits and increase their proficiency.

~Irvin (2007)



Purposefully Planning

When planning with a purpose , the purpose “guides” the instruction.



Benefits of purposeful planning of Interactive read alouds

- Activates Background Knowledge
- Develops vocabulary
- Scaffolds Strategic Thinking
- Encourages genre study
- Connects text with visuals
- Stimulates critical thinking



Activates Background Knowledge

According to Pearson (1982), background knowledge (schemata) is the single most important factor related to a student's ability to comprehend a particular piece of text.



Develops vocabulary

Picture books use expressive words to textually illustrate meaning. Therefore, they are a rich source for language and vocabulary development.



Scaffolds Strategic Thinking

Think alouds encourage students to ask probing questions, find their own answers, and transfer that learning to new situations. In this way they develop tactical thinking skills.



Encourages genre study

Using picture books strategically gives teachers an opportunity to expose students to numerous genres in a comfortable environment. Students will become familiar with different text structures.



Connects text with visuals

The combination of inspiring artwork, accessible language, and manageable text is very appealing to students of all ages. "When students emotions and values become involved, they are much more likely to be engaged with the material and remember it longer." (Rosenblatt)



Stimulates critical thinking

Picture books typically focus on a specific topic. Specific topics lead to richer discussions, and this promotes deep thinking. Deep thinking leads to applying new-found knowledge across the content areas.



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