Bringing the Ice Maiden to life: Engaging adolescents in learning through picture book read-alouds in content areas

This conversation among students in a seventh-grade social studies class occurred while listening to and discussing Discovering the Inca Ice Maiden: My Adventures on Ampato (Reinhard, 1998), a picture book about the discovery of the frozen remains of a young girl who lived over 500 years ago. The comments illustrate the potential that teacher read-alouds of picture books have for content-area instruction beyond the primary grades. The focus of this article is on supplementing content-area instruction with read-alouds and discussions of picture books that engage adolescents, enrich content knowledge, and stimulate higher order thinking. My goal is to provide a rationale and framework for reading aloud and discussing picture books with older students through a discussion of the planning and organization of the read-aloud of Discovering the Inca Ice Maiden. To illustrate the engagement and learning of students, I will also provide excerpts of the discussion held during the read-aloud. This model may be helpful to other educators who strive to engage adolescents in content-area learning.
Why read picture books aloud in content areas?

Reading picture books aloud is an ideal strategy for content-area teachers because of the short format, in-depth treatment of topics, and visual and content appeal of the books (Alvermann & Phelps, 1998; Farris & Fuhlcr, 1994; Neal & Moore, 1991). In addition, picture books attend to a wide variety of topics and can be used in any content area (Alvermann & Phelps, 1998; Vacca & Vacca, 1999). Picture books are a diverse genre of literature that includes fiction, informational books, and poetry, and can be defined as “profusely illustrated books in which the illustrations are, to varying degrees, essential to the enjoyment and understanding of the story” (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999, p. 68). Although many intermediate and middle school teachers do not consider using them because they believe they are for younger children (Kiefer, 1995), numerous picture books are better suited for older readers, because they address more mature issues (Neal & Moore, 1991).

There are multiple advantages to reading aloud to students in content areas. According to Alvermann and Phelps (1998), short read-alouds “can be used to develop interest and motivation, to introduce a new topic, to illustrate practical applications of content-area concepts, and to inject a measure of humor into the classroom” (p. 325). Reading aloud informational books, in particular, provides several benefits to students (Moss, 1995). It contributes to students’ store of knowledge and promotes personal growth and social response, as well as introduces students to expository text structure. Moreover, it can stimulate children’s appetite for information and lead to independent reading of nonfiction material.

Reading picture books aloud in content areas provides opportunities for students to respond to literature and to content knowledge. Tomlinson, Tunnell, and Richgels (1993) contended that “because of differences in content emphasis, readers are far more likely to encounter opportunities for individual, affective response when they read historical trade books than when they read history textbooks” (p. 54). They also noted that students learn information from reading text. These two types of response are consistent with the aesthetic and efferent stances framed by Louise Rosenblatt (1995). In aesthetic responses, readers focus on what they are living through during the reading and respond to thoughts, ideas, and feelings that arise as a result. In efferent responses, readers focus on information to be remembered after the reading.

Unfortunately, many content-area teachers concentrate almost exclusively on reading efficiently, ignoring the importance of making personal connections to the reading. Encouraging both aesthetic and efferent responses can lead to more effective engagement of students and richer understanding of the content of the text (Vacca & Vacca, 1999).

Classroom discussions of books allow for responses that engage students and enhance learning. “Through the power of talk...students are able to transcend the information encountered in text; and in doing so, they are in a better position to transform knowledge and make it their own” (Vacca & Vacca, 1999, p. 212). Leal (1991) found that peer discussions resulted in more complex meaning construction than knowledge held by individual students. Moreover, children’s talk about text related to content areas has been shown to result in deeper understanding of content, higher level thinking, and improved communication skills (Gambrell, 1997).

Such desirable outcomes mirror curriculum standards designed by the National Council for the Social Studies (1994). These standards “emphasize an integrated, hands-on approach to learning the processes and content of...social studies... Standards propose that there be less emphasis on drill and skill exercises and more emphasis on learning concepts and the acquisition of critical-thinking skills” (Freeman & Person, 1998, p. 51). Active learning involving inquiry, questioning, exploring materials, problem solving, and decision making is recommended, and students are encouraged to describe “ideas, issues, and theories they encounter” (Freeman & Person, 1998, p. 48). Incorporating read-alouds and discussions of picture books into social studies instruction promotes the type of learning advocated in these curriculum standards.

These ideas served as the foundation for my model of reading aloud picture books in content areas. In the following section, I will describe the model by explaining how I incorporated a read-aloud and lively, student-centered discussion of a picture book into a seventh-grade study of Latin America.
Picture books about Latin America


Planning and implementing read-aloud sessions in content areas

To supplement a textbook-based unit on Latin American countries, I read aloud picture books (see Sidebar “Picture Books About Latin America”) twice weekly to three classes of 20–25 seventh-grade geography students. I was formerly a teacher in the junior high school these students attended, located in the mid-Atlantic United States, and was conducting a research study (Albright, 2000) on the effects on achievement and attitude of reading aloud picture books in content-area middle-level classes. The questions in this article are different from those of the larger study, although one relevant finding from the study will be discussed later. During these read-aloud sessions, my role was that of a classroom teacher. The read-aloud sessions replaced time spent completing study guides, answering textbook questions, and watching related videotapes.

To encourage content-area teachers to incorporate read-alouds into their classes, I will describe the three stages involved in planning and implementing a read-aloud of Discovering the Inca Ice Maiden: My Adventures on Ama?ato (Reinhard, 1998). This book is an account of the author’s discovery and the subsequent scientific analysis of a frozen Inca mummy. It served as the introduction to a study of Peru. In stage 1, planning, I chose the book and designed “starter questions” to stimulate discussion. Stage 2, preparing, entailed designing a time and place for the session and acquainting students with the read-aloud. In stage 3, producing, I read aloud to the students and engaged them in a discussion about the book.

Stage 1: Planning

I chose the picture book to read aloud and selected “starter questions” to activate prior knowledge and interest, set purposes for reading, encourage students’ responses, and reinforce content knowledge.

Choosing the books. I selected Ice Maiden using the following criteria: (a) quality of literature, including integrity of the author; (b) relevance to and accuracy of topics and concepts being studied; and (c) interest to students (Moss, 1995). I found the book by searching lists of “Notable Children’s Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies” (published by the National Council for the Social Studies, annually in the April/May issue of the journal Social Education) (see Sidebar “Sources for Picture Books” for other references for quality literature). I checked the book for evidence of the author’s qualifications for writing the text, including sources consulted, and then ensured that the book reinforced topics and concepts the students
were studying, was well organized, and provided accurate and up-to-date information. The book had an interesting appearance, judged by the size of print and the arrangement of text and graphics on the pages. I decided the book was appropriate to the developmental level of the listeners and the topic of a frozen mummy would be of interest to them. (If teachers are unfamiliar with interests of their students, they can administer interest inventories to gain information about appealing topics.)

**Selecting starter questions.** To encourage discussion during the read-aloud, I selected starter questions from a list I had constructed for classroom discussions (see Sidebar “Framework for Starter Questions” on next page), drawing from suggestions of others (Bleich, 1978; Carter & Abrahamson, 1991; Leal, 1991; Leal & Moss, 1999; Levstik, 1995; Moss, 1995). Starter questions addressed interest, prior knowledge and background, purpose for reading, aesthetic response, effertent response, and content of the curriculum. They addressed all levels of comprehension: textually explicit (stated in the text), textually implicit (not directly stated but implied), and scriptally implicit (based on prior knowledge or beliefs of the reader) (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). I selected specific questions for *Ice Maiden* guided by the book’s nonfiction genre and tone of adventure and by content knowledge it reinforced.

**Stage 2: Preparing**

During the second phase, I designated the time and place for the sessions and acquainted students with the purposes for the read-aloud.

**Designating the time and place.** The routine of a specific time and place was established so that the sessions would “be expected...and...assume a place of importance” (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993, p. 501). The read-alouds occurred at the beginning of two 45-minute class periods and lasted approximately 20 minutes each. (While other read-alouds were conducted during one session, the discussion of *Ice Maiden* was conducted over two periods because of its length and complexity.) I invited students to sit on the floor around my chair, which was positioned in one corner of the room. Most students sat on the floor near me, although several chose to sit at desks on the periphery.

**Sources for picture books**


**Introducing the sessions.** At the beginning of the first session, I explained to students that I would read a picture book related to some geography topics they were studying and we would discuss the book. I told the students that we could talk about things such as what was important to them in the book, what they liked and disliked, what they learned, and what they didn’t understand.

**Stage 3: Producing**

In this stage, I read the picture book aloud to the students, and we engaged in a discussion to promote response and reinforce content knowledge.
Framework for starter questions

Questions for discussion prior to the read-aloud

What can you tell me about (topic)?
Who can tell me what a (...) is?
Has anyone ever seen a (...)? Tell us about it.
Has anyone ever (...)? Tell us about it.
Why do you think I chose this book to read to you?
Why might we want to read this book?
What do you think this book might be about?
What do you want to find out about (...)?

Questions for discussion during the read-aloud

Does this remind you of anything you've read in your textbook or discussed in class? How does it relate to that?
What does (...) mean?
Why do you think that happened the way it did?
What do you think will happen next?
Why do you think they (said/did) that?
Do you think that is important? Why?
What do you notice in this illustration?
How is that information different than what you read in (source)? Why do you think these books have different information? (Levstik, 1995; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998)

Reading aloud. As I read *Ice Maiden*, I practiced the following recommendations for reading picture books aloud (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999). I introduced the book by sharing its title and author and asked the students to predict what the book might be about. I began reading the book "enthusiastically and provide[d] drama through taking on different voices for different characters, pausing for effect at exciting moments, and varying...pitch...volume...and...pace" (p. 252). I also maintained eye contact with the students and was aware of their nonverbal as well as their verbal responses. Finally, I attempted to make the pictures visible to students at all times.

Discussing the book. During the read-aloud, the students and I discussed the book. The overriding goals of the discussion were to foster interest in and learning about the topics. Specific purposes included enhancing understanding by generating students' interest and linking their prior knowledge of the topic with the text (Moss, 1995), and eliciting personal, aesthetic responses (Hoffman et al., 1993). Others included focusing on content knowledge by asking or answering questions, clarifying terms, helping students understand abstract concepts (Moss, 1995), and linking information to the curriculum.

To achieve these goals, I used the starter questions and encouraged students' questions and comments before, during, and after the reading (Oyler & Barry, 1996). Students' responses contributed to a "child-centered" reading in which students assumed a larger role in initiating and determining the content of the discussions (Martinez & Teale, 1993). The result was an interactive read-aloud and discussion that engaged students, promoted higher level thinking, and extended content learning.

Producing the *Ice Maiden*. The following transcript from the *Ice Maiden* read-aloud illustrates how this engagement and reinforcement of content knowledge occurred through the use of starter questions and student-initiated conversation. This read-aloud was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The excerpts exemplify how students constructed meaning from the text by responding aesthetically and efferently and by making connections to social studies content.

Each line in the transcript represents a speaker's comment or question. Students are identified by number (e.g., S1) within each excerpt to indicate different speakers; however, the designation does not necessarily refer to the same student across excerpts. The Table on page 424 identifies the transcription symbols used to represent other dimensions of the conversation (Silverman, 1993). Interpretive comments are inserted throughout the transcript.

Excerpt 1

1: T: (I read the title and author and showed the cover of the book.) Who wants to predict why it's called *Discovering the Inca Ice Maiden*?

2: S1: Because they're finding the mummy.

3: S2: I think it's called that because it was from the Ice Age.
I saw a "National Geographic" show where they’re climbing a mountain to find a secret spot of the Incas where they sacrificed maidens.

Okay, so you saw a TV show about this story?

Yes.

I think it’s about an Ice Maiden from the Ice Age.

You all are partly right and made good guesses. It’s the story of two guys who were climbing a mountain for fun and also to find some ancient Inca ceremonial sites. They didn’t know this Ice Maiden existed, but they came across her.

When they say Ice Maiden, are they referring to somebody that they found in the snow or tomb or something?

Yes, and they kind of named her “The Ice Maiden.” What they found was a mummy. Does everyone know what a mummy is?

That movie is awesome!

They’re taped up in white stuff and they walk around.

They don’t walk around.

Yeah, they do.

In some movies they do.

They clean their bodies and use stuff from bottles. They cover their bodies, then they wrap them up and put them in a chest.

Do they empty the body first?

They take out all the guts.

They kind of pack the insides.

They embalm them.

When people die today, they are filled up with embalming fluid in funeral homes. I don’t think they used a fluid when they mummified.

This excerpt shows how students responded both efferently and aesthetically in the same conversational exchange. Efferent responses involved drawing upon prior knowledge to make predictions and elaborate on others’ comments and questions. Aesthetic responses by Students 3 and 6 addressed their associations and feelings. The next four excerpts consist of mostly efferent responses as the students and I discussed Inca culture and other concepts from the curriculum. However, the occasional personal, aesthetic response was also included.

They’re climbing Mount Ampato. Can anyone tell me the chain of mountains that runs through Peru?

The Alps?

They’re over in Europe. It starts with an A, though.

Appalachian?

The Andes Mountains.

Oh, yeah!

That’s why chapter 9 is called “The Andean Countries,” because the Andes Mountains run through the countries.

Oh, yeah!
Transcript abbreviations and symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Many</td>
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<td>[]</td>
<td>Yeah!</td>
<td>The point at which the current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That movie is awesome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>They killed her. =</td>
<td>One equal sign at the end of a line and at the beginning of the next line indicate no gap between the two lines.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They sacrificed her.</td>
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<td>( )</td>
<td>(reading)</td>
<td>Parentheses contain the teacher's descriptions rather than talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>.. ?!</td>
<td>That movie is awesome!</td>
<td>Indicates speaker's intonation.</td>
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Note. Adapted from Silverman (1993).

9 T:  (There was an outline mural of the continents painted on the classroom wall.) Can somebody close to the mural show me where Peru is, in South America? I know you haven't read Chapter 9 yet.

10 S3: It's in South America, down at the bottom.

11 T: (No one could locate Peru.) It's way over there. It's right here (pointing).... They were climbing a mountain in Peru. Let's find out what happened.

Excerpt 3

1 T:  (reading) "The mountains at such altitudes..." (p. 7). What does altitude mean?

2 S:  Height above sea level.

Excerpt 4

1 T:  What do you know about the Incas already? (There was no verbal response.) Okay, you're going to read about the Inca Empire. Does anybody know what an empire is?

2 S1:  It's like a civilization.

3 T:  Okay, it's a civilization or group of countries that is ruled by a ruler or a group of rulers. So, the Incas ruled lots of land around them, so it was called the Inca Empire.

4 T:  (We read about and saw a picture of the ruins of Machu Picchu.) There's a picture just like this in your textbook. See if you can find it.

Two boys who often resisted engaging in the discussions (e.g., sitting at the edge of the group, quietly trading sarcastic remarks about others and their responses) voluntarily hunted through a textbook and began softly debating about a picture. When I asked them if they had found it, one of the boys said yes and held up the picture.

5 T:  That's it.

6 S2:  (to the other boy) Told you!

The aesthetic stances of the boys to the read-aloud and discussion became the basis for an eff erent, intertextual connection between the picture book and their textbook.

Excerpt 5

1 T:  (reading) "We had to break through a mile of ice pinnacles to reach one of the lower summits at 20,400 feet" (p. 11). What do they mean by summit?

2 S1:  The top.

Excerpt 6

Pictures often prompted aesthetic responses from the students.

1 T:  Here's the mummy bundle that they found.

2 S1:  Ugh!
3 S2: Cool!
4 S3: It's disgusting!

The following excerpts further exemplify how engagement enriches learning in students. Responses in excerpts 7, 9, 10, and 13 are mostly efferent, involving content knowledge, higher order thinking, and collaborative meaning-construction. However, the students' active participation in the discussion suggests an aesthetic experience as well. Excerpts 8, 11, and 12 show how aesthetic responses reinforce content knowledge.

**Excerpt 7**
1 T: (reading) "They had performed a human sacrifice on the ridgetop" (p. 17). What does that mean?
2 S1: They killed her. =
3 S2: = They sacrificed her. =
4 S3: = They made an offering. =
5 S4: = They killed someone to offer her to the gods.
6 S5: Were they really specific about who they sacrificed? Like, was normally the woman that was sacrificed important?
7 T: That's a good question. =
8 S5: = because you think it'd be important who was sacrificed.
9 T: Yeah. She was a girl, about your age. I think it tells us later exactly how old she was. That'd be a good thing to find out.
10 S5: This sounds kind of stupid, but I remember something about the younger you are, the more pure you are, so maybe that's why they sacrificed her.
11 T: I think you might be right. How could you find the answer to your question?
12 S5: From the book.
13 S6: Look it up.
14 T: Look it up where?
15 M: [The encyclopedia.
16 M: [The Internet.

**Excerpt 8**
1 T: (reading) "Both of us were momentarily stunned as the body turned. We looked straight into the face of a young girl" (pp. 17–18). Do you want to see the face?
2 S1: Yeah.
3 S2: Whoa! =
4 S3: = That is what I saw on "National Geographic."
5 S4: Cool!
6 T: If you look closely, you can even see her fingers. =
7 S3: = That's exactly what I watched!
8 S5: Neat!
9 S6: Ooh! =
10 S7: = That's, like, awesome!

**Excerpt 9**
After the author explained why he couldn't leave the mummy on the mountain, I asked the students what they thought he should do.
1 S1: Take it.
2 S2: = Take it and hide it.
3 T: What might be some of the problems with taking the mummy?
4 S3: He wouldn't have a permit to take it back into the United States. It would be considered stealing.
5 T: How about the journey down?
6 S4: I don't really think he'd want to carry it all the way down.
7 S5: Just tie it on his back.
8 S6: = It'd be harder because he might slip. He should carry it in front of him.

**Excerpt 10**
I asked students if they had any suggestions for solving the author's dilemma of how to keep the mummy frozen as it was brought down the mountain.
1 S1: They could put her in a cooler.
2 S2: If they had a book bag or something that was big enough, they could get some chunks of ice and put it in there.
3 S3: I don't know how this would work, but if they tried, they could probably make a lot of shade to shade it.
4 S4: They could put it in something and put a lot of insulation around it to keep it cold.
5 T: Okay, you guys are very smart!

As we continued reading, we discovered that the students' solutions were very similar to the author's.
Excerpt 11
We read how scientists determined, by examining a piece of tissue from the mummy's stomach, that she ate a meal of vegetables 6 hours before she died.

1 S1: Cool!
2 S2: = Gosh! =
3 S3: = I'd rather eat chocolate before I died.

Excerpt 12
1 T: (after the reading) So, what did you think of the book? Did you like it?
2 S1: Cool!
3 S2: Yeah!
4 S3: It was fun.
5 T: What's an interesting fact, or incident, or theory that you'll remember from this book?
6 S4: When they took that little tool and they could figure out what she ate.
7 S5: That was nasty.

Excerpt 13
In response to one student's misconception that the author had been looking for the Ice Maiden on his initial mountain climb, other students reminded him of details.

1 S1: They didn't go looking for her.
2 S2: Yeah, they didn't go look for her. =
3 S3: = They were looking for artifacts. =
4 S2: = They were looking for anything that had to do with the Incas.

Excerpt 14
A quiet conversation between two girls during the above exchange accentuates the importance of allowing students time and freedom to collaboratively reflect and discuss aesthetically, efferently, or in some combination. The girls' talk led to clarification of a misunderstanding and further talk among participants. After their discussion, the girls turned to me.

1 S1: Can we see the hand?
2 S2: We were wondering what's in that little bag.
3 T: Okay. (We looked at the picture of the mummy's hand.) The little bag that they found with her.
4 S2: The one that she was holding when they found her.
5 T: She was holding on to the textile, what she was wearing.
6 S2: Oh!
7 T: But they did find a little bag with her that had all kinds of pottery and dolls in it.
8 S1: I wonder how they would figure out how and what she wore.
9 T: That was interesting. [What did they say about that?
10 S3: [Maybe she was wearing it.
11 T: Remember, the clothing, the textiles, were still on her, but they did have to do some work to figure out what it was.
12 S4: A lot of work.
13 T: Any other interesting facts or things you think you'll remember?
14 S5: Just the whole book!... I liked the book!

Closing lessons from the stages
These excerpts illustrate how a teacher read-aloud and collaborative picture book discussion enhanced students' engagement and content learning. By using the three stages of planning, preparing, and producing, teachers can supplement their content-area instruction with a technique that captivates students while reinforcing content and promoting higher level thinking. These outcomes reflect the standards for social studies instruction recommended by the National Council for the Social Studies (1994).

Several aspects of the model are particularly important to its success as an effective content-area technique: enrichment of content knowledge and higher order thinking skills, aesthetic response, collaborative talk, pictures and illustrations, and role of the teacher. These factors promoted the students' construction of meaning during the read-alouds, which we now understand is a crucial aspect of learning. I will briefly discuss these aspects and provide examples from the read-aloud illustration and from the larger study in which it occurred.

The read-aloud sessions reinforced content knowledge. As part of the larger research study (Albright, 2000), achievement of students in the three classes who participated in the read-alouds was compared to achievement of students in three
classes who received only regular instruction. Achievement was measured by percentages on assignments and tests. Results showed that students who participated in the read-alouds earned statistically the same grades as students who received regular instruction, even though they spent less time completing study guides and answering textbook questions.

Moreover, students perceived that they had learned more from the read-alouds. Written reactions collected at the conclusion of the study included the following:

It helped us learn more about our lessons.
I was able to learn more about the topics we were learning in Geography.
It was a good opportunity to learn about different cultures and countries.

The read-aloud of Ice Maiden provided many opportunities to enrich content knowledge as students responded both efferently and aesthetically. Major concepts from the curriculum that were reinforced included the location and landforms of Peru (see Excerpts 2 and 5 in the transcript), aspects of the Inca Empire and culture (Excerpts 1 L4; 8; 4 L1–4; 7 L1–10; 11; and 14 L2–7), Machu Picchu (Excerpt 4 L4–6), and vocabulary terms (Excerpts 3 and 5). In addition, students made intertextual links between information in the book and other sources (Excerpts 1 L4–6, 12; 4 L4–6; 7 L1–16; and 8 L4, 7).

Students in the read-aloud groups learned as much content knowledge as students receiving regular instruction. This may have occurred because the read-aloud sessions promoted higher order thinking and engagement, even though they allowed less time for seatwork. Examples of higher level thinking are provided in the read-aloud illustration. Students made predictions (Excerpt 1 L2–3, 7) and relied on prior knowledge to construct meaning (Excerpts 1; 2; 3; and 7 L2–5, 10). They asked questions when information was confusing (Excerpts 1 L9, 18; 7 L6; and 14 L1, 8). They also practiced complex thinking by analyzing and proposing solutions to problems (Excerpts 7 L10–16; 9; 10; and 14 L10).

Students continually demonstrated engagement through aesthetic responses to the read-alouds. Comments written at the end of the study included the following:

I had a lot of fun listening to her read and I learned a lot of stuff.
It was a fun way to learn.
I got to say how I felt about the book, and I got to know how everyone else felt, too.
It's a fascinating experience.

During the read-aloud, students repeatedly made aesthetic responses (Excerpts 1 L4, 12; 6; 8; 11; 12; and 14 L14) that demonstrated their engagement with the book and the discussion. Aesthetic and efferent stances were often interwoven (Excerpts 1; 4; 11; and 12), which shows the value of addressing both types of response in content classes.

An essential component of the learning and engagement was the collaborative talk among students. While discussing the text or pictures, students negotiated shared meanings by offering prior knowledge (Excerpt 1 L13–17); answering one another's questions (Excerpts 1 L18–21 and 14 L8, 10); and challenging, clarifying (Excerpts 1 L14–16; 9 L7, 8; and 13), and extending (Excerpts 1 L3–7, 19–21; 7 L2–5; and 10) others' ideas. Collaborative talk was an essential element in meaning construction during the read-aloud.

In addition, the illustrations and photographs in the book were important catalysts for both aesthetic and efferent responses and contributed to the collaborative meaning the students were constructing (Excerpts 4 L4–6; 6; 8; and 14 L1–7). This finding supports recent recommendations to use picture books with older students (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 2000; Tiedt, 2000).

Finally, the role I as the teacher played in these stages was a key component. I selected appropriate material to read, modeled effective reading, and set the tone for the discussion. I also orchestrated, encouraged, and guided the conversation through the use of starter questions and spontaneous comments, but I did not dominate or control it. Because of this, students were allowed to negotiate shared meanings by responding both efferently and aesthetically to the content and to the text.

Content-area teachers are encouraged to use this model of reading aloud picture books by including the essential components while adapting it for their classes. For example, the students and I discussed the books but other opportunities for response are also valuable, such as writing, drama, and art (Hoffman et al., 1993). Moreover,
read-alouds and accompanying opportunities for response need not be limited to social studies or language arts classes but can be used in any content area, such as science, math, art, music, and physical education.

This article describes how I integrated enjoyable and effective read-alouds of picture books into content instruction. By using the stages of planning, preparing, and producing, content-area teachers can promote engagement and higher level thinking in their students, while reinforcing understanding of content knowledge. They can allow for both individual and collaborative meaning construction through aesthetic and efferent responses to literature and content. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have learning accompanied by a chorus of “Ooh!” and “Cool!” in every content-area classroom?

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REFERENCES


