

A Survey of Teachers' Read-Aloud Practices in Middle Schools

Mary Ariail
Georgia State University

Lettie K. Albright
Texas Woman's University

Abstract

Two university researchers conducted a survey of middle school teachers' read-aloud practices at a large state conference for middle level educators. Results of this survey provide a beginning step toward evaluating the ways in which middle school teachers use read-alouds in the classroom. This paper shares the results of the survey and offers insight into the extent and nature of teacher read-aloud practices in middle grades.

Researchers have documented numerous benefits of reading aloud to young children in the areas of language growth and reading achievement (e.g., Chomsky, 1972; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Durkin, 1966). Although the practice of reading aloud to older children is less well-researched, a few studies have shown that the benefits of reading aloud to middle school students are also significant. Among the benefits are increases in students' accessibility to texts, motivation, engagement in learning, positive attitudes toward reading, background knowledge in content areas, and fluency.

Reading aloud has been shown to increase accessibility to texts for students who are unable to read the text for themselves. In a study of more than 1700 middle school students, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that students saw read-alouds as "scaffolds to understanding because the teacher helped to make the text more comprehensible or more interesting to them" (p. 367). Rief's (2000) account of Max, an eighth-grade struggling reader, illustrates one of the ways that reading aloud helped him gain access to texts that he would not otherwise have been able to comprehend: "As a struggling reader who won't admit how little he understands, reading aloud helps Max hear and understand the pronunciation of single words, as well as whole sentences that lead to layers of meaning" (p. 51). Rief goes on to say, "It's because of the struggling readers, who don't really read on their own when given the choice, that I must find time to read the stories aloud" (p. 52). Teachers like Linda Rief understand that reading aloud makes texts available to students who could not read for themselves.

When teachers read engaging texts aloud, aliterate students (able to read but choose not to) often become more motivated to read on their own. In addressing aliteracy among seventh-graders, Beers (1996) identified three types of aliterate students: Dormant (they like to read but don't often make the time to do it), uncommitted (they don't like to read but say they may read in the future), and unmotivated (they don't like to read and don't ever expect to change their mind). Beers found that all three types of aliterate students became more motivated to read when the teacher read aloud to them. Furthermore, Ivey & Broaddus (2001) explored motivation in their study of middle school students and found that teacher read-alouds were one of the most important factors in motivating them to read. Reading aloud can also lead to increases in motivation for students who do choose to read. Lesesne (2001), for example, noted that teacher read-alouds, in addition to motivating aliterate students to read, can also introduce avid readers to a world of books they might not otherwise find on their own.

Albright (2002) described how seventh-grade students who participated in an interactive read-aloud of picture books during social studies were engaged in learning and demonstrated higher-level thinking skills. The students responded both aesthetically and efferently (Rosenblatt, 1978) to the read-alouds, made intertextual connections, and engaged in collaborative meaning-making. They asked questions and analyzed and offered solutions to problems posed in the text or in their discussions. This study reinforced the important role of the teacher who used open-ended "starter" questions to stimulate discussion but did not dominate the conversation.

Listening to teachers read is a pleasurable activity for students and leads to more positive attitudes toward reading. In a survey of over 1700 students' best reading experiences, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found that 62% indicated a preference for teacher read-alouds. Furthermore, an increase in positive attitudes toward reading was associated with a program of reading adolescent "classics" aloud to middle school students (Herrold, Stanchfield, & Serabian, 1989). Because of the potential for this practice to have positive effects in middle grades, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) urge future investigation of whether teacher read-alouds foster interest and learning in content classes such as social studies or math.

Further benefits to reading aloud to middle school students include enhanced background knowledge in content areas (Albright, 2002; Fisher, Frey, & Williams, 2002), increased reading fluency (Fisher, et al., 2002; Rief, 2000), and increased ability to make informed decisions

(Ivey, 2003). In spite of the documented benefits of reading aloud to middle school students, studies that have explored the extent and nature of read-aloud practices in middle school classrooms are almost nonexistent. It has been shown that the rate of read-alouds decreases from kindergarten through sixth grade (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000), but a thorough review of the literature revealed few studies that have specifically and systematically studied the nature of the read-aloud practices of middle school teachers. The Jacobs et al. study included elementary teachers of grades five and six, but it did not include fifth and sixth grade teachers who taught in middle schools. An additional study of read-alouds (Lacedonia, 1999) that included higher grades reported results from only 16 teachers in grades 7 through 12. Albright and Ariail (2005) made an initial attempt to address this lack of research data as they conducted a small exploratory study of 141 middle school teachers in one Texas school district. They found that many of the teachers reported reading aloud to their students, although they often defined "reading aloud" as reading textbooks, directions, and worksheets, which they read for mostly instrumental purposes. Clearly, little research has documented teacher read-alouds in middle grades and examined the role of read-alouds in improving instructional practices for early adolescents. Our survey of middle school teachers' read-aloud practices builds on our initial survey and continues to add to the knowledge base of teachers' classroom read-aloud practices.

Methods

The research questions that guided our study can be summarized as follows: To what extent do middle school teachers read aloud to their students, and what are the characteristics of teachers who do? What reasons do teachers give for reading aloud or not reading aloud? What types of texts do teachers read aloud? What opportunities for response are teachers providing students? To address these questions, we designed a 17-item survey (see Appendix) that we administered at an annual meeting of a state affiliate of the National Middle School Association.

Design of Survey

The design of the survey instrument was guided by our primary research questions and by the results of a similar but smaller study that we had conducted previously (See Albright & Ariail, 2005). We incorporated what we learned from the pilot study (which had been

based on similar research questions, other read-aloud surveys in the literature, and the teaching experience of the authors) to revise and refine the survey items in the current survey. The design of some items (e.g., *Why do you read aloud to your students?*) was based on answers from teachers' responses to open-ended questions that we had used earlier.

The first part of the survey was intended to solicit demographic and characteristic data on the respondents (see Appendix, items 1-12). We quickly realized that designing a survey instrument to target the teaching practices of middle school teachers is difficult because of the complexity of middle school configurations. For example, the predominant grade configuration is 6-8, but middle schools may also include various combinations of grades four through nine (e.g., 5-6, 5-8, 6-7, 7-8, 7-9). Therefore, a fifth grade teacher may teach in a middle school in one district and an elementary school in another, and a ninth-grade teacher may teach in a middle school in one district and a high school in another. We decided to survey teachers of grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 because the National Middle School Association considers middle schools most commonly to be grades 5-8 or grades 6-8 (Lucas & Valentine, 2001).

Another issue was that teachers in middle schools may teach one or multiple subjects or grades. The complexity and variety of subjects and grade levels taught was addressed by asking teachers to identify the subject area and grade they teach the largest percentage of their time. We limited subject areas to the four main content areas (English/language arts/reading; mathematics, history/social studies, and science) and "other," which we asked respondents to specify. The construction of this question allowed for a clearer survey for participant completion and for data analysis. While this limitation may have excluded some relevant responses, we believe that the loss of data was minimal and would not have had a significant effect on the overall statistics.

The second half of the survey queried participants about their read-aloud practices. The directions instructed respondents to answer the remaining questions based on the subject area and grade they had indicated. We first asked teachers if they read aloud to students in these classes (Item 13). Because our pilot study had revealed that teachers defined reading aloud in many ways, and teachers had reported that they "read aloud" when they read textbooks, announcements, instructions, etc., we included the following definition of reading aloud on the survey: "Reading aloud refers to the teacher reading aloud texts such as fictional

and nonfictional literature, poetry, magazines, newspapers, etc. to students. We do not include reading aloud selections from textbooks, with the exception of literature anthologies. We also do not include reading aloud items such as directions or announcements." The questions that followed were contingent upon the teachers' answer to this item. Those who answered "no" were directed to a question that asked them to select the most important reason they do not read aloud (Item 14). These participants were then thanked for their participation and told they were finished with the survey. All others were directed to three additional questions (Items 15-17), which asked them to select the most important reason they read aloud, the type of text they most frequently read aloud, and the main type of response opportunity they provided.

Participants

Participants were teachers in attendance at an annual meeting of the Texas Middle School Association (TMSA), a state affiliate of the National Middle School Association, the world's largest association of middle level educators. TMSA provides services to more than 10,000 middle level educators annually (Texas Middle School Association, n.d.), representing approximately 14% of the state's 71,030 middle school teachers (United States Bureau of Statistics). Approximately 4000 attended the conference, and 65-70% of attendees were teachers (M. Floyd, personal communication, August 5, 2005). Thus, this conference seemed an ideal opportunity to obtain a large convenience sample of middle school teachers.

We (authors Mary and Lettie), both middle level reading researchers in Texas, had observed few teachers reading aloud to middle school students in the local schools where we had worked. We selected the annual meeting of TMSA because we wanted to know if our observations were unique to the schools we had visited or whether the paucity of read-alouds was statewide. The annual meeting of TMSA provided a cross-section of the state, with every regional Educational Service Center of the state represented, and we believed that a survey of the attendees at this meeting would provide a reasonable representation of the read-aloud practices of Texas middle school teachers. In addition, because Texas is such a large state, its educational practices often influence those in other states, thereby rendering the results of the survey useful to educators across the county.

At the general session on the second day of the conference, attended by approximately 1000 conferees, copies of the survey were

distributed to all attendees. At the beginning of the session, Lettie explained the research to the audience and asked that only those who were currently teaching grades 5, 6, 7, and/or 8 in the state of Texas complete the survey. She read the directions aloud and asked participants to complete the surveys and to leave them on their seats when they left the session.

Data Analysis

Data from the surveys were entered and coded using a statistical analysis software program. Indeterminate responses within usable surveys were coded as missing data (for example, an "other" response to item 17 was indecipherable and other items were left blank). Because 21 respondents disregarded the instructions and checked more than one subject area taught, we added a code of "multiple subjects" to item 10 for data analysis. For the same reason, we created the additional category, "multiple responses," to items 14 through 17. The category was included in the analyses for items 10 and 14 through 17. Similarly, responses to the choice of "Other" for items 2, 8, 10, 14, 16, and 17, were grouped together and analyzed as an answer choice for each item. Chi square analyses were then conducted to determine characteristics of teachers who read aloud to their students. Research questions such as *Why do teachers read aloud?* were explored through descriptive statistics. Additionally, the content of the multiple responses and of the "Other" choices was qualitatively examined to identify information that was new or that reinforced existing themes.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

We received 476 usable surveys. The mean age of the sample was 41 years (SD = 10), with a range of 22 to 72, and the average years of teaching experience was 11.8 (SD = 8.5), ranging from 1 to 38. Other demographic characteristics of the respondents are highlighted in Table 1. The overwhelming majority (83.8%) of the respondents were female and Caucasian (80.9%), and approximately 10% were Hispanic. The highest degree earned by more than two-thirds (69.3%) was a bachelors degree. Approximately 47% taught in suburban districts, and the remaining teachers were divided fairly evenly between rural and urban areas. More than half of the teachers taught in schools with a grade configuration of grades 6 through 8. Every regional Educational Service Center in the state was represented by at least three respondents.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics (N = 476)*

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Female	399	83.8
Male	77	16.2
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	18	3.8
Asian/ Asian American	4	0.8
Caucasian	385	80.9
Hispanic	48	10.1
Native American	4	0.8
Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic	7	1.5
Other	2	0.4
Highest educational degree		
Bachelors with concurrent teaching certification	276	58.0
Bachelors with alternative teaching certification	54	11.3
Masters with first teaching certification	45	9.5
Masters only or Masters with additional teaching certification	94	19.7
Metropolitan status		
Urban	107	22.5
Suburban	223	46.8
Rural	132	27.7
Grade configuration of school		
4-8	3	0.6
5-8	15	3.2
6-8	291	61.1
6-7 or 7-8	122	25.6
7-9	24	5.0
Other	19	4.0

Note: Frequencies that do not total 476 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

We received responses from 14 fifth grade teachers, 87 sixth grade teachers, 98 seventh grade teachers, 120 eighth grade teachers, and 152 teachers of a combination of grades (five respondents did not indicate grade taught). Over three-fourths of the teachers taught either seventh

grade, eighth grade, or a combination of grades, and nearly 100 % of the combinations included seventh or eighth grade.

Over one-third of the respondents taught English, language arts, and/or reading, followed by a fairly even distribution of the other major content areas (See Table 2). The majority of "other" subjects taught were special education, technology/keyboarding, and reading resource, although other areas such as foreign language, health/physical education, counselor, theatre, and art were represented. Furthermore, since the majority of respondents teaching multiple subjects (4% of the participants) marked *yes* to item 12, and several wrote the words "resource" or "special education" beside their subject, it is reasonable to assume that many of the teachers of multiple subjects taught in a special education program.

Who Reads Aloud?

Overall, 344 of the 476 respondents (72.2%) reported that they read aloud to their students. Some teachers were more likely to read aloud than others. Significant differences among teachers in various categories who read aloud compared to those who did not read aloud are summarized in Table 2. Women were more likely to read aloud (75.2%) than men (55.6%), $p < .01$. Those who taught English/language arts or reading read aloud more (95.8%); than those who taught other subjects (history/social studies: 80.8%; science: 52.9%; mathematics: 32.1%; other: 70.6), $p < .05$. Of the teachers who had taken a course, workshop or in-service in which reading aloud was stressed, 81.4% read aloud to their students; but of the teachers who had not taken a course, workshop, or in-service, only 57.4% read aloud to their students ($p < .05$). Finally, those who taught a majority of at-risk students read aloud more (77.2%) than those who did not teach a majority of at-risk students (67.9%), $p < .05$. The analysis did not reveal any significant differences among the other characteristics of race/ethnicity, years of teaching experience, age, educational degree, metropolitan status, area of state, grade configuration of school, or grade level taught, although a greater percentage of fifth-grade teachers did read aloud (92.9%) than teachers of grades six (73.6%), seven (72.4%) and eight (71.7%).

Table 2. *Who Reads Aloud? (Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers Who Read Aloud Versus Teachers Who Did Not Read Aloud by Gender, Subject, Read Aloud Training, Teachers of At-Risk Students)*

Variable	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Overall	344	72.3	132	27.7
Sex**				
Male	44	55.6	33	42.9
Female	300	75.2	99	24.8
Subject*				
English/Language Arts	159	95.8	7	46.0
History/Social Studies	42	80.8	10	19.2
Science	37	52.9	33	47.1
Mathematics	26	32.1	55	67.9
Other	60	70.6	25	29.4
Multiple subjects	20	90.9	2	6.1
Read aloud training*				
Yes	236	81.4	54	18.6
No	105	57.4	78	42.6
At risk students*				
Yes	159	77.2	47	22.8
No	180	67.9	85	32.1

Note: Frequencies that do not total 476 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

Chi-square test of association, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Why Do Teachers Read Aloud?

We were interested in why teachers chose to read aloud (See Table 3 for a summary of the responses). Of the 344 respondents, the answers chosen most often were *to promote a love of literature and/or reading* (18%) and *to enhance understanding/comprehension* (15%). Many respondents also indicated multiple reasons (17%). Within disciplines, English/language arts/reading teachers most often read aloud *to promote a love of reading* (30%), although *modeling fluent reading or pronunciation* (14%) and *enhancing understanding/comprehension* (11%) were also high priorities. Teachers of the remaining subject areas most often selected *enhancing understanding/comprehension* (33%). Other top reasons for these teachers included *building interest in/introducing a topic, exposing students to texts they may not read otherwise, and reinforcing/emphasizing content*.

Table 3. *Why Do Teachers Read Aloud?* (N = 344)

Reasons Given	Frequency	Percent
My students enjoy it	24	7.0
To build interest in a topic or to introduce a topic	28	8.1
To enhance understanding/comprehension	51	14.9
To create a community	4	1.2
To enrich students' lives	16	4.7
To expose students to texts they may not read otherwise	25	7.3
To improve listening skills	6	1.7
To increase general knowledge	5	1.5
To increase/improve vocabulary	5	1.5
To make the text more accessible to my students	7	2.0
To manage the students/class	3	0.9
To model fluent reading or to model word/vocabulary pronunciation	29	8.4
To promote a love of literature and/or reading	63	18.3
To reinforce/emphasize content	19	5.5
Multiple responses ^a	57	16.6

Note: Frequencies that do not total 344 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

^a Reasons selected included all choices, ranging from 42 selections for enhancing comprehension/understanding to 9 for building vocabulary.

Why Do Teachers Not Read Aloud?

Of the 132 teachers (27.7%) who said that they did not read aloud, the most frequent response was *not appropriate for the subject* (39%) (See Table 4). Teachers of math and "other" subjects were highest in this response. The second most frequent response was *I never think about including read-alouds as a part of my curriculum* (20%), followed by *not enough time in the day* (19%). Science teachers most often chose *I never think about including read-alouds as a part of their curriculum*, and history/social studies teachers most often reported that there is *not enough time in the day*. None of the respondents chose *I do not think that reading aloud is an important instructional practice*, and only one teacher responded *I am uncomfortable reading aloud, or I do not know how to read aloud effectively*.

Table 4. *Reasons Teachers Gave for Not Reading Aloud (N = 132)*

Reasons Given	Frequency	Percent
Reading aloud is not appropriate for the subject I teach.	52	39.4
Reading aloud is not appropriate for the age level of the students I teach.	3	2.3
I do not think that reading aloud is an important instructional practice.	0	0
I never think about including read-alouds as a part of my curriculum.	26	19.7
There is not enough time in the day.	25	18.9
I am uncomfortable reading aloud, or I do not know how to read aloud effectively.	1	0.8
Other	21	15.9
Multiple responses ^a	2	1.5

Note: Frequencies that do not total 132 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

^aThe majority of multiple responses were whole-class discussion, journal writing, and small-group discussion.

What Types of Texts Do Teachers Read Aloud?

Question 16 (*Select the type of text you most frequently read aloud to your students*) indicated a limited repertoire of text types (see Table 5). Overall, teachers who read aloud tended to read novels/chapter books (39%), with English/language arts/reading teachers and teachers of multiple subjects most likely to choose this type of text. Information/nonfiction books, including biographies, were the second type most often read aloud (16%) and were the favorite choice of teachers of history/social studies and science. Math teachers most often selected picture books (6 out of 25 math teachers), although English/language arts/reading teachers read picture books aloud more than any other teachers. Magazines and newspapers were not often read aloud by any of these teachers. Teachers who marked multiple responses also most often read novels/chapter books, information/nonfiction books, and picture books.

Table 5. *Types of Text Read Aloud (N = 344)*

Type of Text	Frequency	Percent
Information/nonfiction books, including	56	16.3
Literature anthologies	22	6.4
Magazines	3	0.9
Newspapers	13	3.8
Novel/chapter books, including historical fiction, science fiction, and fanstasy	133	38.7
Picture books	37	10.8
Poetry books	3	0.9
Other	30	8.7
Multiple responses ^a	46	13.4

Note: Frequencies that do not total 344 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

^a Types of texts selected included all choices, ranging from 25 selections for novel/chapter books to 12 selections for anthologies and newspapers.

How Do Teachers Extend the Read-Aloud Event?

Because a read-aloud event is maximized by related discussions and activities (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004), we asked teachers to indicate the kinds of opportunities for response they offered before, during, or after the read-aloud (see Table 6). We found that teachers most often allowed for *whole class discussion* (61%). The second highest percentage was 11% for the category of "Multiple Responses." Within this category, *whole-class discussion* was also the leader, followed by *journal writing* and *small-group discussion*. Interestingly, *journal writing* and *small-group discussion* were also the third and fourth most popular responses overall (8% and 7%, respectively).

Table 6. *Extending the Read-Aloud Event: Main Types of Response Opportunity (N = 344)*

Type of Response	Frequency	Percent
None. I just read aloud the text.	10	2.9
Art/Music/Drama activities	11	3.2
Examination/Quizzes	11	3.2
Journal writing	26	7.6
Research/Inquiry	7	2.0
Small-group discussion	23	6.7
Whole-class discussion	208	60.5
Other	8	2.3
Multiple responses ^a	37	10.8

Note: Frequencies that do not total 476 and percentages that do not total 100% reflect missing data.

^aThe majority of multiple responses were whole-class discussion, journal writing, and small-group discussion.

Discussion

The good news is that teachers *are* reading aloud in middle schools. Considering earlier research suggesting that the practice of reading aloud diminishes as students move up in grades (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000), our survey showed that many teachers in all subject areas were choosing to read aloud to their students. Although the survey did suggest that the practice of reading aloud decreases somewhat as students move through the middle grades, the decreases were smaller than we had predicted. We were especially pleased to find that greater percentages of teachers in the content areas of social studies, science, and math were reading aloud than we had predicted. Less encouraging, however, is the result that 52 teachers indicated that reading aloud is not appropriate for the subjects they taught, 26 never thought about reading aloud, and 25 did not believe that there was enough time in the day to read aloud. These responses, which comprise almost a fourth of the teachers surveyed (primarily in the content areas), suggest that for many teachers, reading aloud continues to be seen as the purview of elementary and/or English/language arts/reading teachers and holds less importance in the content area classrooms. On a positive note, however, more training may be effective in encouraging teachers who are reluctant to read aloud, since teachers who had taken an in-service,

class, or workshop in which reading aloud was stressed read significantly more than those who had not had such a course,

We were somewhat concerned about the large percentage (60.5%) of teachers who chose whole-class discussion as their first choice for encouraging students to respond to read-alouds (question 17). Of the 344 teachers who read aloud, 208 teachers selected whole-class discussion from the eight choices offered as their "main type of response opportunity"; of the teachers who checked multiple answers, whole class discussion was also the most frequent choice. When these two figures are combined, we estimate that approximately two-thirds of the teachers chose whole-class discussion as their primary means of encouraging student response to the readings. Upon further reflection, however, we realized that this result is not necessarily problematic. Whole-class discussion can be a highly effective means of encouraging students' response to literature. Under the direction of a capable teacher, students can benefit in numerous ways from the open exchange of ideas following a read-aloud. In addition, the wording of the question required teachers to select their *main* type of response; therefore, we reasoned that many of the respondents could also be using other forms of response as secondary choices. Finally, the design of the question did not make it possible for participants to distinguish between responses to narrative and expository read-aloud texts. If the survey had made this distinction, it is possible that the opportunities for response to the two categories of texts could have yielded different results; however, the overwhelming percentage of teachers who chose "whole-class discussion" as their main response option suggests that whole-class discussion is often the *only* means of response offered.

Whether the text is expository or narrative, we would suggest response opportunities in multiple modes as teachers encourage students to reflect on and extend their understandings of read-aloud texts. For example, in our survey, only 2% of the teachers selected *research/inquiry*, and only 4% selected art/music/drama as choices for response. In order for teachers to more effectively reach their goals of promoting a love of reading and enhancing comprehension (the two most commonly cited reasons for reading aloud), we would encourage teachers to accompany read-aloud events with a variety of engaging and meaningful response opportunities.

We recognize that this work is only a first step and that certain limitations must be kept in mind when considering the results. The limitations include the use of closed-ended questions in the survey, a limited geographical area, and data that allowed limited statistical

testing. We also realize that our convenience sample, albeit a large one, consisted of teachers who chose to attend the conference and may not reflect the practices of the general population of teachers in the state or across the nation. We firmly believe that more research into middle school teachers' read-aloud practices is needed and we would make the following recommendations: First, we would suggest additional quantitative research (e.g., a larger sample of middle school teachers across the country) and qualitative research (e.g., ongoing observations of teachers reading aloud, interviews of teachers and students). Future research might also include a survey that could be designed to allow for more correlational statistical tests rather than frequency distributions. In addition, we need research that will tell us more about the ways in which read-aloud texts are embedded in the curriculum and the ways that teachers engage students in conversations about texts. Finally, closer analyses of the types of texts that teachers read aloud and the ways in which teachers use read-aloud texts to enhance classroom instruction would be useful in making recommendations for instruction. The many benefits of reading aloud to middle school students strongly support ample and rigorous research in this area.

At presentations across the country, we have found that teachers are eager to talk to us and to share their ideas about their read-aloud experiences. One teacher told us that she has been reading aloud for years and she welcomed a rationale for supporting her practice. We believe that the results of this study offer an important first step in documenting and understanding the read-aloud practices of middle school teachers and for supporting those who are aware of the multiple benefits. From the survey, we gathered heretofore unknown data about *who* reads aloud, *what* they read aloud, *why* they read aloud, and *how* they use read-alouds in the middle school classroom.

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http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_TX.htm#b25-0000 (sections 25-2022 and 25-2023).

Appendix

Survey of Read-Aloud Practices of Texas Middle School Teachers

1. Sex

- Female
- Male

2. Race/Ethnicity

- African-American
- Asian/Asian-American
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Multi-racial/multi-ethnic
- Other: Please specify: _____

3. Years of teaching experience (including the current academic year)

4. Age _____

5. Highest educational degree

- Bachelors with concurrent teaching certification
- Bachelors with alternative teaching certification
- Masters with first teaching certification
- Masters only or Masters with additional teaching certification
- Doctorate

6. Metropolitan status of school district

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

7. In which Texas Education Service Center region is your school located?

(1-20) _____

8. Grade configuration of school

- 4-8
- 5-8
- 6-8
- 6-7 or 7-8
- 7-9
- Other: Please specify. _____

9. Have you ever taken a course, workshop, or in-service in which the importance of reading aloud to students was stressed?

- Yes
- No

10. What academic subject do you teach? (If you teach more than one subject, please select the subject in which you spend the most time.)

- English/language arts/reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- History/social studies
- Other: Please specify. _____

11. To what grade(s) do you teach the subject selected in Question #10?

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- Some combination of 5, 6, 7, 8. (Please specify) _____

Please answer the remaining questions about the subject area and grade(s) selected in Questions 10 and 11.

12. Are the majority of the students you teach considered to be “at-risk,” “remedial,” or “special education”?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you **read aloud** to the students in these classes? (*Reading aloud refers to the teacher reading aloud texts such as fictional and nonfictional literature, poetry, magazines, newspapers, etc. to students. We do **not** include reading aloud selections from textbooks, with the exception of literature anthologies. We also do not include reading aloud items such as directions or announcements.*)

- Yes (**Please skip question #14 and proceed to Questions 15-17**)
- No (**Please proceed to Question 14**)

14. If no, select the **one** item that best describes why you do **not** read aloud to your students.

- Reading aloud is not appropriate for the subject I teach.
- Reading aloud is not appropriate for the age level of the students I teach.
- I do not think that reading aloud is an important instructional practice.
- I never think about including read-alouds as a part of my curriculum.
- There is not enough time in the day.
- I am uncomfortable reading aloud, or I do not know how to read aloud effectively.
- Other: Please specify. _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. YOU ARE FINISHED WITH THE SURVEY.

15. If you selected "yes" for Question # 13, select the **most important** reason why you read aloud to your students.

- My students enjoy it
- To build interest in a topic or to introduce a topic
- To enhance understanding/comprehension
- To create a community
- To enrich students' lives
- To expose students to texts they may not read otherwise
- To improve listening skills
- To increase general knowledge
- To increase/improve vocabulary
- To make the text more accessible to my students
- To manage the students/class
- To model fluent reading or to model word/vocabulary pronunciation
- To promote a love of literature and/or reading
- To reinforce/emphasize content

16. Select the type of text you **most frequently** read aloud to your students.

- Information/nonfiction books, including biographies
- Literature anthologies
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Novel/chapter books, including historical fiction, science fiction, and fantasy
- Picture books
- Poetry books
- Other: Please specify. _____

17. Select the **main** type of opportunity you provide your students for responding to the text before, during, and/or after the read-aloud.

- None. I just read aloud the text.
- Art/music/drama activities
- Examinations/quizzes
- Journal writing
- Research/inquiry
- Small-group discussion
- Whole-class discussion
- Other: Please specify. _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.

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