

Reflections on Interactive Read-Aloud

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LISA: I view interactive read-aloud as the heart and soul of the literacy block. It's where students experience book joy, and it's where they learn to grow a love of reading. It's where they learn to think strategically about texts, and it's where they can really learn how to build rich conversations with their fellow readers. It's where they build compassion, and empathy, when they listen to stories about characters whose lived experiences are different from their own. And at the heart of it all, it's where a rich, vibrant literacy community is created.

When I think about planning a high-quality interactive read-aloud, I think about two things first, that I think we often forget about. The first is that I want to pick a book that I love. If I love the book, my students are much more likely to love the book as well. And the second thing is, I want to read the book and respond first as an authentic reader: really think about where I'm drawn into the story, where I'm thinking and wondering, what might have surprised me, and use those places to start planning my interactive read-aloud; really to think deeply about what messages this book holds for truths about how to be human, how to be in the world as readers. And I look for two to three places to take my students to really sink down in and think deeply about the text.

And I like to use four different broad questions. The first is, what are you thinking? The second is, what are you wondering? The third is, what are you noticing? And finally, what are you feeling? And I find when I use those broad questions, the students' thinking starts broad, and then they narrow our interactions into the book—rather than me picking one standard and then narrowing their thinking from the outset.

So, there you go! Interactive read-aloud, the heart and soul of book joy and developing a love of reading.