

Resource for Parents

This week's article comes from a blog post created by Doug Lemov, an American educator and author. The entire blog can be found here:

<https://teachlikeachampion.com/blog/reading-aloud-students-critical-vocabulary/> and talks about the importance of reading aloud to children regardless of their age.

WHY READING ALOUD TO STUDENTS IS SO CRITICAL TO VOCABULARY

Lemov starts with a quote from an academic Isabel Beck, which explains that hearing someone use a word, helps children learn the word better. This is due to way in which the person uses their voice as this can help to communicate a large amount of additional information about the word and how it is working within the context.

"The source of later vocabulary learning shifts [as students get older] to written texts-what children read [as opposed to what they hear]. The problem is that it is not so easy to learn [vocabulary] from written context. Written context lacks many of the features of oral language that support learning new word meanings..."

He also states that written language contains far more vocabulary words than oral language. In fact, most of the words that children encounter whilst reading will appear in their lives only in written texts.

So what do you do if the words that are hardest and most powerful for students to learn appear in a setting with less context to help them learn?

You read aloud to them. One of the great benefits of reading aloud to students is that they are exposed to vocabulary at maximum frequency-written text, especially difficult text, multiplies the number of rare words they hear; it ensures exposure to a much wider range of words, with particular emphasis on rare words that only appear in print.

But at the same time they hear those words infused with inflection and expression that communicates more about them about the words and thus enhances meaning. In fact, even hearing a word pronounced correctly is valuable in a way that's often overlooked: it increases the likelihood that a student will use the word, attend to it and or connect it to the previous time they hear it, the next time they encounter it in print.

The importance of reading aloud *does not abate as pupils get older*. In fact, the more critical the vocabulary of a discipline, the more important for older students to occasionally hear it's written terminology read aloud.

