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## Read Alouds in Elementary School

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## **Read Alouds in Elementary School**

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Master of Arts in Education – Educational Leadership

ED 590: Researching and Completing the Capstone

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## **DEDICATION**

This paper is dedicated to my husband, Nicholas. He has been right beside me throughout this process to hold my hand and give me the motivation I needed to persevere. I know that I could not have completed this program without him by my side motivating me every step of the way.

I also dedicate this paper to the students I have had in the past, and the students I will have in the future. I promise to be a teacher who always reads aloud to and helps them to feel seen in the classroom no matter what their background looks like.

Lastly, I dedicate this paper to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has given me the strength, patience, and wisdom to be able to complete this research. Without Him, none of this would have been completed. I praise His name for the work He has done in my life.

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined research in regards to the effects of read alouds in the elementary school setting. Read alouds provided educators a way to equitably and inclusively introduce stories to students that will ultimately enhance their reading ability, comprehension, and overall enjoyment of literacy. The research analyzed in this paper consisted of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. The research looked at the different aspects of read alouds such as interactive strategies, repeated readings, and shared readings; as well as how read alouds impact vocabulary acquisition and social-emotional wellbeing. The research suggested parents and teachers are role models to young children when reading first becomes interesting. A child is more likely to become a life-long reader if they have parents and teachers to look up to. In regards to reading ability and comprehension, read alouds impacted English Language Learners in a positive way, as well as other students. As teachers read stories, students hear inflections and what fluent reading sounds like. Research concluded that read alouds positively impact enjoyment of literacy as students are exposed to new stories and genres that may spark a new interest in reading. Read alouds allow for educators to share stories with students that could impact them for the rest of their lives. Read alouds should be considered a necessary component when planning classroom routines. Future studies can also be conducted to investigate the effect of read alouds when it comes to writing and individual reading comprehension.

*Keywords:* read alouds, fluency, comprehension, enjoyment of literacy, elementary

## Read Alouds in Elementary School

### Chapter One: Introduction

Sitting on the carpet in elementary school and listening to a story being read aloud is one of many elementary school memories. The anticipation of each page turn was enough to quiet a whole room and leave the listeners hanging on to the edge of their seats. Hearing stories read aloud filled you with curiosity, wonder, and joy which made reading seem so appealing. From the wonders of Dr. Suess to the sadness of *Charlotte's Web*, stories have opened new and exciting possibilities within the minds of children. Being able to listen to a story being read aloud has helped children achieve more in an academic setting. Not only do children learn how to sit and listen to a story being read to them, but they are also hearing new vocabulary and integrating it into their own vernacular. The stories they hear could impact them for the rest of their schooling and possibly their lives. A child is never too young to be read aloud to. They can start understanding what it looks like to engage with a text and apply it to their own lives. It is the role of the parents first, to model reading engagement. And then it becomes the role of the teacher once the child is school-aged. Literacy creates a life-long opportunity to learn new things and to glance into the world around oneself.

#### Importance of the Topic

Reading aloud to students in elementary school has had many benefits. Anderson (2022) identified, “5 benefits of reading out loud in your classroom are: building vocabulary, improves comprehension and active listening, reduced stress, strengthened fluency, and improving working memory” (Anderson, 2022). This topic is important to education because of the impact it can have on student achievement. It is vital for an educational leader to lead equitably and inclusively to impact students. One way to do this is by reading aloud. Reading aloud is a

gateway to other cultures, worlds, and beliefs. A single story can include many important topics that students may not hear any other way. It is important to choose books that are going to stir up a student's imagination as well as their compassion. The books we read to students can impact their lives in many ways. It is important to be equitable in the books we choose by picking books that relate to issues that may arise in the classroom. Inclusivity can be brought in by reading books to students that share about other places, peoples, and cultures. A student who feels seen in a classroom will be more engaged in the classroom, especially in terms of relationships with their teacher and peers.

Read alouds in the elementary setting can improve a student's reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. Firstly, reading ability is a necessary skill to be continually improved throughout elementary school and beyond. Hearing someone else read aloud can impact a student's reading ability because they hear inflections and pauses when reading made by the teacher. This allows for a smoother reading process and makes for a more fluent reader. Secondly, comprehension is also a necessary skill for readers because the meaning behind a story can be even more important than the words themselves. A story can be fun and exciting while also having a deeper meaning behind it. If students can comprehend what is being read to them, and then what they themselves are reading, there will be much more gained from their reading. Finally, enjoyment of literacy is an important factor in reading because if a student can learn to love the stories they are hearing, they may seek out more literature that appeals to them. Many people grow up disliking reading because of the effect that reading had on them in their elementary years. If more could be done to encourage literacy and love of reading in early years, more children may grow up to love reading.

Reading ability is an indicator of a fluent reader. At certain grade levels, students are expected to be able to read at a certain point of fluidity. That task is harder for students who are learning English as a second language. Research conducted by Omar and Saufi (2015) concluded that teachers were able to meet the needs of their students by using read aloud strategies that worked for their students. The teachers were all focused on improving their students, “pronunciation, stress, and intonation” (p.10). All these attributes make up a fluent reader. Hearing a teacher read aloud using correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation will help students learn how to read fluently.

Comprehension of a story that is being read aloud to students can be easier to detect when research is being conducted. To be able to gauge a student’s comprehension, it is important to read them a story and then ask them questions during and afterwards about what was read. In a quantitative study done by Bartan (2020) in Turkey, research concluded that the method of telling the story also has an impact on the comprehension of the story and the attention span of the students (Bartan, 2020). While reading a story out loud is not always based on the means of comprehension, it can provide practice for students in understanding what is being auditorily presented to them.

Lastly, enjoyment of literacy comes from being able to read fluently and then comprehend what is being read. It is hard for adults to read a story when they are not able to read fluently, comprehend what they are reading, or enjoy what they are reading. Read alouds are a way to introduce students to many different genres of stories and help them find where their interests lie. A quantitative case study conducted by Oueini et al. (2008) concluded that children’s listening and speaking abilities were more developed as well as their reading and



writing abilities (2008). Exposure to many types of stories allowed for children to experience many different types of literature and increase their love of listening to and reading stories.

### **Scope of Research**

The research that has been examined for this review included a mixture of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two is centered around the two themes reading ability and comprehension and enjoyment of literacy. These two themes are then connected by the subtheme of a combination of all three aspects of reading. The first theme of reading ability and comprehension is studied in terms of their effect on read alouds. As a student is read aloud to, they can hear inflections of voice, pace of reading, and they are given the opportunity to answer comprehension questions as the story carries on. The second theme of enjoyment of literacy is studied to see how read alouds in the elementary school setting and reading at home affect how a child perceives literacy. Lastly, the subtheme combines all three aspects of literacy. Studies have shown a correlation between reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. These three components of literacy go hand in hand.

Since read alouds are most common in elementary schools and below, the research that was analyzed was limited to those two settings. It is necessary to also research the effects that reading at home has on students in their future schooling. Parents are models to their children of reading first, and then teachers join in on modeling what fluent readers look and sound like. The research studied took place in many regions of the world, including the United States. Read alouds are an important aspect of all students' education, so looking at how schools around the world conduct read alouds was necessary. Research that was not analyzed for this literature review was the affects of technology in the classroom setting when it comes to read alouds. Only the different strategies used by teachers with a physical text were reviewed.

## Research Question

In light of what is known about pedagogy in the contemporary educational setting, how do read alouds in elementary school impact a student's reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy? This question helps open the door to talk about the possibility of improving student achievement through something as simple as a read aloud. Some children are not read to at home, so having read alouds in school can improve their reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. The research found connected with Concordia University, St. Paul's Educational Leadership Program's Essential Question which states: "In light of what is known about pedagogy in the contemporary educational setting, how shall educators lead equitably and inclusively in order to positively impact student development and learning?" It has connected by helping educators understand that reading aloud can introduce equity and inclusivity in the books chosen by the educator. Research around the topic of read alouds has helped improve the types of stories children are exposed to, and it has supported the improvement of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

## Definition of Terms

***Culturally relevant texts*** provide cultural mirrors into the cultural and personal experiences of the reader (Marquez & Colby, 2021).

***Interactive read alouds*** are when the reader typically uses various strategies and questioning techniques in a dialogic exchange about the book and the provide multiple perspectives (Lopez & Friedman, 2019)

***Read alouds*** are when children listen to an adult read different types and genres of texts and then engage in talking about the book (Oueini et al., 2008).

*Repeated readings* are a term for when pupils were instructed to read the story repeatedly sentence by sentence as a class, in large groups, and individually (Omar & Saufi, 2015).

*Shared reading* is described as reading interactions between an adult and a child, in which the adult primarily reads the text and engages the child in talk or activities relating to the book (Lusby & Heinz, 2020).

## **Summary**

Read alouds are an essential learning tool that should be used in classrooms every day. It is important for children to be read to because it increases their reading ability, reading comprehension, and their overall enjoyment of literacy. The research conducted explored even more about this topic by researching how read alouds have affected classrooms around the world. Hopefully by shedding light onto read alouds and their impact on student achievement, which can often be overlooked, more teachers will begin to understand the benefits of read alouds in their everyday routines. It is necessary for an educational leader to lead equitably and inclusively. Read alouds are a way to represent students in the classroom as well as introduce them to cultures around the world. Students will feel accepted and welcomed in a school that has a focus on equity and inclusivity. Read alouds can be a gateway to achieving equity and inclusivity.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Teachers reading aloud to students has been a practice for decades. Research has been conducted within the elementary school setting to determine how reading aloud affects student learning and achievement as well as their overall enjoyment of literacy. Firstly, reading aloud has been a significant helper in increasing students' reading ability and comprehension. Studies have occurred around the world looking at the impact of read alouds on reading ability and comprehension. Research has also looked at the delivery method of stories to students to be most impactful when stories are read aloud (Bartan, 2020). Secondly, reading aloud has also been studied as a potential indicator of a child's enjoyment of literacy. Reading aloud provides an opportunity for students to learn about numerous topics to keep them engaged with reading as they grow up. These are the two themes of research that have been identified for this review, while a sub-theme of the overlap between the two themes is also noted, that correlates to the research question, how do read alouds in elementary school impact a student's reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy?

The first theme of reading ability and comprehension studied research conducted by Bartan (2020), Ceron (2014), Omar & Saufi (2015), Oueini et al. (2008), Giroir et al. (2015), Okyay & Kandir (2017), and Witte (2016). These studies were conducted around the world to gauge how various learners obtain information through read alouds. They all worked to find a correlation between reading ability and comprehension when it comes to having read alouds in the classroom.

The second theme of enjoyment of literacy has had numerous studies as well including De Naeghal et al. (2014), Lopez & Friedman (2019), Marquez & Colby (2021), Oliveira (2015), and Yurdakal (2019). These studies looked at how reading impacts a student's overall view of

reading and how connections can be made across the world. Read alouds help to spark the minds of students and engage them in a lifelong love of reading.

Lastly, research has overlapped and found benefits to support the combination of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy and is supported by Bano et al. (2018), Lusby (2020), and Collins (2022). It is vital to include the combination of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy when looking at how read alouds impact students. These variables can help determine students who will grow up loving to read because of their ability and comprehension, while others will likely not enjoy reading because of the challenges that exist in their reading ability and comprehension. The three factors of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy set the stage for future reading. Read alouds help to improve each factor and increase student achievement.

### **Reading Ability and Comprehension**

Reading ability and comprehension were studied in a qualitative research study done by Ceron (2014). The main objective of the study was to “develop critical thinking skills which allow them to analyze facts, organize and generate ideas, defend opinions and solve problems” (p. 84). This study was conducted in Colombia and the children who participated were all English Language Learners (ELL) whose ages ranged from seven to twelve years old. Students would come to what they refer to as “Reading Corner sessions” once a week and they lasted for 50 minutes (Ceron, 2014). The ages of the learners impacted the information that was collected. The ages were separated by seven to nine and ten to twelve respectively. At the end of the nine total Reading Corner sessions, surveys were used to gauge the students’ ability and comprehension. The study concluded that “reading aloud provides students with opportunities to interact with others while they are reinforcing their knowledge of English” (p. 96). It is important

for a student to be able to comprehend what they are reading and use it to help them make sense of the world around them. It can be especially challenging for ELL populations to make connections when a language barrier is involved. Ceron (2014) used this study to help students be able to gain new vocabulary and verbally process what they were hearing from the stories. So, read alouds positively affect the reading ability and comprehension of elementary students.

Next, a qualitative research study was conducted by Giroir et al. (2015) in a rural school district to assess the impact of interactive read alouds for ELL populations. This study connected with the research conducted by Ceron (2014) in the aspect of understanding how read alouds impact English Language Learner populations. The study included students that ranged from kindergarten up to third grade. When the study was conducted, the district identified 31.9% of the students as having “limited English proficiency” (p. 648). The process in which new books were introduced to students included previewing the story, introducing vocabulary words, and guided comprehension discussions. While the teacher read the story to the students for the first time, they were to only listen to the story. The teacher on another day would reread the story to the students and focus on vocabulary words and have the students more engaged while the teacher was reading. Discussion between students about what was being read was an important aspect of the study to help further the students’ comprehension of the story and to think beyond the book. Results came back showing that reading a story more than once to students who are ELL can help increase their comprehension of a story. Thinking about how read alouds affect the ELL population and considering practices that make read alouds more accessible helps increase equity and inclusivity.

Another research study conducted by Witte (2016), found a significant correlation between the increase of reading ability and comprehension and reading aloud to students. The

study was a qualitative study in which a group of 23 first graders from various backgrounds, languages, socioeconomic status, and with varying levels of support needed for success in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. The study was conducted throughout six weeks. Each lesson lasted from 30-40 minutes and the level of difficulty increased with each new week. Witte (2016) used a Complex Text Analysis (CTA) instructional strategy to increase the students' overall reading ability and comprehension. In the CTA instructional strategy, the students were broken into three different subgroups based on ability: explorational, emergent, and early readers. The study found that each subgroup of students made significant gains in their reading abilities and comprehension. According to Witte (2016), the average score that was taken at the beginning of the study as a baseline for reading ability and comprehension for the whole-class mean score was 7.71 out of 20. At the end of the study, another assessment was completed which showed a new mean score of 15.52 out of 20. This study's results showed that reading aloud to the students increased their reading ability and comprehension. There is a limitation to this study however. This study was only conducted on a very small group of children and the teacher had all year to work with them on their reading ability and comprehension. This study could be easily replicated which would be important to keep in mind when wanting to see if another group of children would respond in a similar way.

A study related to Witte (2016) researched how interacting with students during a read aloud also increased their reading ability and comprehension. In a mixed methods study, Okyay & Kandir (2017) conducted research to understand how talking to children while reading aloud can be beneficial in the development of their reading ability and comprehension. The study was conducted in Turkey and involved 52 students who ranged from 48-72 months old (p. 396). The students were selected based on their current reading ability and then placed into four different

classes based on need. The study was conducted throughout the school year and at the end of the year, research and data concluded, "... the interactive story reading method have a fundamental impact on receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge of 48-72 months old children" (p. 404). Students enjoyed talking about books being read to them. Engaging in conversations not only increased comprehension of the text, but also allowed for students to gain vocabulary that can be incorporated in their everyday lives.

The importance of vocabulary acquisition through read alouds, as expressed in Witte (2016) was also researched in Lebanon through qualitative research conducted by Oueini et al. (2008) studied the impact that read alouds had within two kindergarten classrooms. The ten-week study involved fifty-three 5- and 6-year-olds. They defined read alouds as, "when children listen to an adult read different types and genres of texts and then engage in talking about the book" (p. 141). Over the ten-week study, the kindergarten teachers read various books to the kindergarteners including fiction and nonfiction. After the ten weeks was completed, conferences were held with seven randomly chosen students about the stories that were read to them. This allowed for the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of what each student was taking away from the read alouds, especially concerning vocabulary acquisition. Over the course of the conferences with students, it was identified that "all students were defining words in context; they were relating most of the words to the story characters" (p.147). Oueini et al. (2008) concluded that read alouds in the elementary setting helped to increase students' reading ability and comprehension (p. 153).

Also, in three different English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms in rural Malaysia, Omar & Saufi (2015) used qualitative research methods to see how read alouds helped increase the students' reading ability. They found that all three classrooms used drilling,



prompting, vocabulary building, and print referencing strategies, while only one of the three used translations as an accommodation (p. 105). These strategies were put in place by the teachers to help students with fluency and comprehension. The three classroom teachers implemented the before mentioned strategies to increase the fluency of their students' reading. The study concluded with testimonies from all three teachers and each affirmed that reading aloud to their students increased their reading ability and comprehension. Teachers in the study were encouraged to make read alouds interactive so that the students would be able to connect with what they are being presented with. This study does have limitations in that there were only three classrooms in which research was conducted. The strategies of drilling, prompting, vocabulary building, print referencing, and translations could have been expanded with more teachers using what they have found to work best in their classrooms.

Omar & Saufi (2015) emphasized the importance of multiple methods of instruction to increase reading ability and comprehension. In a two-part quantitative study conducted by Bartan (2020), 72 preschool teachers were asked what storytelling strategy they most often used with their students. All 72 teachers identified that they use reading from a book as their main method of storytelling to students. Altogether there were 14 different storytelling methods. In the second part of the study, 40 children were read to using the top four methods of storytelling which included, reading from a book, finger puppets, story cards, and by using the computer. The research was able to conclude that reading to the children from an actual book increased the students' understanding of the story and increased the attention span of the students compared to a story told by finger puppets, story cards, or by a computer. It was also identified by Bartan (2020) that, "it was determined that the children in each group had a high level of understanding of the story when the technique of "reading from the story-tale book" was used" (p. 81). The

comprehension of each story was increased as well as the attention span of students when an actual book was read to them. This helped the students to become better and more engaged readers.

In conclusion, the above studies by Bartan (2020), Ceron (2014), Omar & Saufi (2015), Oueini et al. (2008), Giroir et al. (2015), Okyay (2017), and Witte (2016) focused on the idea of read alouds helping to increase a student's reading ability and comprehension. Each study concluded that comprehension increased from the beginning of the studies to the end. Ceron (2014) and Girior (2015) had an interesting angle of discussion when it comes to ELL populations. Both concluded that with extra supports provided through read alouds, ELL students were able to comprehend stories better. Witte (2016) also concluded that younger students that come from differing backgrounds benefit from read alouds in comprehension and reading ability. As texts became more complex students critical thinking skills increased. Okyay & Kandir (2017) and Oueini et al. (2008) detailed the importance of vocabulary acquisition in terms of reading ability and comprehension as well. Lastly, Omar & Saufi (2015) and Bartan (2020) emphasized the importance of different methods of delivery of read alouds to help students increase their reading ability and comprehension. As students are read to, new vocabulary is being introduced and they can incorporate it into their everyday lives. It is helpful to see how reading aloud to students, no matter where they came from or what school they attended, increased their overall reading ability as well as comprehension. With the increase of read alouds in the classroom, reading ability and comprehension will also increase.

### **Enjoyment of Literacy**

A student's enjoyment of reading and literacy overall can be the deciding factor of them picking up a book once their schooling is over. In a mixed methodology study of qualitative and

quantitative research study conducted by De Naeghel et al. (2014), they looked at the different strategies for promoting reading motivation, including read alouds, for elementary students in Belgium. The study examined 1,270 fifth-grade students and the 67 teachers of those students. Of those 67 teachers, three were chosen to do an additional component of the study. These three teachers had answered a questionnaire identifying themselves as “applying several reading promotion strategies in their classroom (e.g., book promotion, reading aloud, small-group reading activities)” (p.87). The students of these three teachers also had data collected on them that showed “high levels of recreational autonomous reading motivation” (p. 87). Interviews took place with the three selected teachers to see what their own reading motivation was. The study concluded that instructional strategies, such as read alouds, increased a students’ autonomous reading motivation. Students who had teachers read aloud to them showed an increase in the number of students reading on their own and enjoying what they are reading. De Naeghel et al. (2014) brought up the importance of reading at home to influence reading, but later stated, “teachers can play a crucial role in positively motivating all of their students to read” (p. 95). This study was able to conduct in-depth research into the motivations of teachers and their students to read. A student can be taught to read, but a whole new level of understanding comes when a student enjoys reading.

Teachers are a great source of motivation when it comes to reading. When a teacher is reading themselves, their students are more likely to enjoy reading as concluded in De Naeghal et al. (2014). In a qualitative study by Oliveira (2015) nonfiction texts, specifically science-based books, were chosen as read alouds to gain a perception of how students felt in regards to factual texts rather than narrative. Oliveira (2015) noted, “Reading engagement with factual texts is also often complicated by the presence of illustrations that are unclear and difficult to interpret” (p.

431). The study involved first and second grade students from three different schools in New York. Teachers were then tasked to read aloud one of three choices of books to their students. Video recordings were taken in each classroom to gain insight as to student responses and engagement. It was concluded that “the present study will provide science educators with much needed insight on how to effectively integrate reading with science instruction and offer young learners with richer and more engaging science reading experiences that transcend transmission of factual content” (p. 448). Many students will shy away from reading nonfiction texts for the simple reason of it being too challenging. With more read alouds based on nonfiction or scientific texts, students will become acclimated with a more complex text and be able to understand and enjoy what is being presented to them.

Next, a study was conducted by Yurdakal (2019), in Turkey that was researching the “correlation between the attitude towards reading and the perception of creative reading” (p. 443). Creative reading is defined in the study as “the process of creating/producing a new interpretation for himself/herself by using the past experiences and analytical thinking processes of the reader” (p. 443). This was a quantitative research study that consisted of 319 students in fourth grade with 175 being female and 144 being male (Yurdakal, 2019). Students were to answer 25 questions in a Likert scale format. The answers of the students were then analyzed to determine which sub-dimension of the scale they would be placed in. These sub-dimensions included: contributions of reading, meaning of reading, activities of reading, process of reading, attitude towards reading, text information, author information, character information, and perception of creative reading (Yurdakal, 2019). At the end of the study, Yurdakal (2019) concluded that “as the attitude towards reading increases, the perception of creative reading decreases” (p. 449). For many elementary school students, reading is a subject that is either loved

or hated. If a classroom environment supports reading and has a positive attitude surrounding reading in general, it is potentially more likely that students will begin to enjoy reading more and follow the model that is being set up for them. This study does not explicitly mention read alouds as an instructional strategy used in the classroom, but it does show many students as they begin to enjoy literacy, start to view creative reading and reading outside of school hours in a more positive light.

Students who have a positive view of reading will enjoy reading as they grow up. Read alouds can be picture books, but an impactful way to read aloud can also be from a novel. In a qualitative study conducted by Lopez & Friedman (2019) in an urban school in the Southwest region of the United States. The study involved a classroom of 22 Black and Latino second-graders in a Title 1 school (p. 34). In the classroom, the teacher read the novel *Wonder* aloud and had students respond to what they were hearing. As the teacher would read aloud, the students were actively engaged in interactive read alouds. After reading sections of the book, the students were asked to respond through spoken words and writing. The study was able to conclude through conversations and writing samples that “engaging in the interactive read aloud with *Wonder* fostered a sense of community and empathy, increased engagement and motivation to read...” (p. 35). When teachers introduce new stories to students, doors are opened up in regards to finding a new genre to enjoy, or engaging emotions regarding the book. This has helped children grow in their enjoyment of literacy.

In the study of Lopez & Friedman (2019), the researchers tapped into the emotional impact read alouds can have on students. In another case study researched by Marquez & Colby (2021) qualitative methods were employed in a Texas school with a large population of dual language students to better understand how read alouds can affect a student culturally. The study

looked at six dual language learners in a fourth-grade classroom (p. 208). The study focused on how culturally relevant texts impacted dual language students through read alouds. The study lasted for six weeks and required the teachers to choose books that are culturally relevant to the population. The students participated in writing journal entries about the read alouds, as well as three 30-minute interviews (p. 210). The study found “students demonstrated strong emotional responses when the narratives related to personal experiences and cultural remembrances such as foods and rituals...” (p. 214). Enjoyment of literacy spans more than just literally enjoying to read. Read alouds are an opportunity to make connections cross-culturally and to help students feel seen and heard. It is important to choose read alouds that are equitable and inclusive to increase students’ enjoyment of literacy.

In conclusion, De Naeghal et al. (2014), Lopez & Friedman (2019), Marquez & Colby (2021), Oliveira (2015), and Yurdakal (2019) researched how children start to enjoy literacy more and more through the modeling and guidance of the teacher. It is so important that students see that reading is a life-long skill that can continually be improved over time. The study conducted by De Naeghel et al. (2014) and the study by Yurdakal (2019) differed in that De Naeghel looked more at the teachers and the methods in which they read aloud to their students to promote autonomous reading. Yurdakal had students answer a scaled document to gauge their current views of reading and how their attitudes affected their view of creative reading and reading in general. It would be interesting to see if the students that were chosen have teachers that read aloud to them or not and what the teachers’ views of reading and literacy are as well. In the cases of Lopez & Friedman (2019) and Marquez & Colby (2021), research was conducted to gain more insight on how read alouds affect students social-emotionally as well as culturally. Read alouds can help students gain knowledge when it comes to social-emotional wellbeing. The

characters in a story are usually relatable and often a lesson is taught. The characters can also be relatable in terms of culture and give students opportunities to see themselves in the books that are being read to them.

### ***Combination***

Many case studies have researched the correlation between reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. Life-long readers are going to have aspects of all three which will increase the likelihood of reading inside and outside of the school setting. One study that focused on outside of the school setting was Bano et al. (2018) which used qualitative research methods in Pakistan, to identify the role that parents should play in the reading development of students. Bano et al. (2018) stated, “Parents as first teachers of their children need to focus on developing reading habits such as reading for pleasure and out of school reading, so that it can further help them to read easily at school and beyond” (p. 43). In the case study, two teachers were interviewed to gain an understanding of the teachers’ perspective when it comes to reading at home. The study concluded that parents should be the role models at home as to what reading for pleasure looks like, which in turn helped to improve reading ability and comprehension (p. 56). It is easy to let the sole responsibility fall onto teachers, but Bano et al. (2018) helped uncover that parents are the first gateway to reading at home which will in turn improve reading in school.

Another study involving parents in the process of reading development was conducted by Lusby & Heinz (2020) in Ireland. Mixed methods research was conducted with families of children with Down Syndrome. There were 191 parents who filled out a questionnaire about their shared reading habits at home and the age at which shared reading began with their child (p. 9). As parents read aloud to their child, they would engage in conversation regarding the pictures

and the events that occurred in the text. The study found that parents who engaged their children in shared reading strategies at home had an increase in reading ability, comprehension, and motivation for reading (p. 14). Parents of the children were asked to share their experiences with the researchers and it has helped Lusby & Heinz (2020) to develop an understanding of the two key aspects of their research. Those two key aspects are parental advice/education and parental support (p. 17). The research has helped to identify that families that involve their children in reading from a young age are more likely to have an increased likelihood of becoming a life-long reader. The work that is put in at home is crucial to the bolstering of the work to take place in a school setting. Early read alouds at home, and then followed at school, are going to develop reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

Lastly, it is important to remember, like in the cases of Bano et al. (2018) and Lusby & Heinz (2020), the development of literacy skills can never be started too early. The skills that are implemented at home, help increase reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy in the long run. Another qualitative case study conducted by Collins (2022) emphasized the importance of developing literacy skills in preschool. The younger children are when they begin to incorporate literacy into their everyday lives, the more successful in literacy they will be. The case looked at three preschool teachers in an urban school in the southern region of the United States. The teachers attended seminars to develop their understanding of read alouds and how to engage readers beyond passive listening. The teachers were recorded as they read to their students and engaged in conversation about the text. Collins (2022) identified six aspects of read alouds that “deepen comprehension beyond questioning” (p. 401). These six aspects are: choosing good literature, planning discussions, introducing stories, providing comprehension asides, hosting inferential discussions, and implementing multiple readings and discussions (p.



401). The study concluded that the preschoolers involved in the study saw increased comprehension and inferential thinking after listening to a read aloud (p. 410). When the teachers began a read aloud for the preschoolers, each student was actively engaged in the text. This increased the students' reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

In summary, Bano et al. (2018), Lusby & Heinz (2020), and Collins (2022) all sought to discover the correlation between reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy when it comes to read alouds. Bano et al. (2018) and Lusby & Heinz (2020) highlighted the important role that parents had in the development of their child's early reading habits and opinions. The research found that the more families read together, reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy was more prevalent. Parents are the first models of reading for children and then teachers become the new model once the children become school-aged. It is vital for parents and teachers to model fluent reading so that students have an increased interest in reading as they continue in their learning career. Like Bano et al. (2018) and Lusby & Heinz (2020), Collins (2022) reflected how read alouds, even at the preschool level, are still a necessary tool to help improve reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. All three studies concluded that there is never a point where a child is too young to be exposed to read alouds and conversations about the stories they have heard read to them by parents or teachers.

### **Review of the Proposed Problem**

In light of what is known about pedagogy in the contemporary educational setting, how do read alouds in elementary school impact a student's reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy? The research above supported this question in the three key areas of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. The first theme discussed was focused on reading ability and comprehension being promoted through read alouds. The second theme

discussed was in regards to how read alouds impact a students' enjoyment of literacy and how it helped create students who are life-long learners and readers. The above sub-theme was a combination of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. These three aspects were found to go together by the provided research. Read alouds have been an educational practice for decades and the above research supported the idea that read alouds should continue to be included in the everyday schedule of a classroom to help improve reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

### **Review of the Importance of Topic**

Reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy can be a deciding factor in the future learning of a student. Reading is apart of everyday life. To promote reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy, educators need to implement read alouds into their daily routines. Read alouds also open new doors to students about the world around them. It is important to introduce new ways of life and ways of thinking. This can be simply accomplished through a read aloud. Students will feel seen in a classroom that engages listeners with stories of different cultures and backgrounds. An educator can lead equitably and inclusively by reading aloud to their students and choosing text that give students a mirror into their own culture. Read alouds will help students identify areas of interest in reading and enable them to become life-long learners and readers.

### **Summary of Findings**

In the studies conducted above by Bartan (2020), Ceron (2014), Omar & Saufi (2015), Oueini et al. (2008), Giroir et al. (2015), Okyay & Kandir (2017), and Witte (2016) research indicated that read alouds had a positive affect on students' reading ability and comprehension. The studies conducted interviews to gauge what students were taking away from the stories

being read aloud to them. The research has given backing to the question of how read alouds can impact reading ability and comprehension. As students listen to an adult read to them, they are not only hearing the content, but also gaining more understanding of inflections of voice and how to use questions to better understand a text. All studies concluded that read alouds are a helpful educational practice that allowed teachers to engage their students with the text and increase reading ability and comprehension which answered the research question which looked at how read alouds in the elementary school setting positively impact a students' reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

In the studies conducted by De Naeghal et al. (2014), Lopez & Friedman (2019), Marquez & Colby (2021), Oliveira (2015), and Yurdakal (2019) research concluded that read alouds had a positive affect on students' overall enjoyment of literacy. The research used questionnaires, interviews, and surveys to better understand the impact that read aloud had on students. As educators read aloud to students, the stories captivated all listeners. To be able to read well and understand what one is reading is important, but to be able to enjoy the process of reading is going to impact their lives for years to come. Each study concluded that read alouds increased the students' enjoyment of literacy and shifted attitudes towards reading and help set the trajectory for being a life-long learner and reader.

Finally, in the studies conducted by Bano et al. (2018), Lusby (2020), and Collins (2022) which looked at the correlation between the themes of reading ability and comprehension and enjoyment of literacy. These three areas of literacy are affected by read alouds in a positive manner. The studies concluded that when educators read aloud to their students, reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy all increased. The two of the three studies looked at the impact that parents have on attitudes toward reading. They emphasized the importance of

parents being the first role model in terms of reading outside of school. It was also concluded that there is never too young of an age to implement read alouds. Even if a child is too young to read, there is still opportunities for them to engage with the text being read to them and instill a positive attitude towards literacy from a very young age. The studies helped to identify read alouds as a key component in a students' increased reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. All three sections of Chapter Two support the research question discussed in this review. Read alouds are an educational practice that should be implemented in every elementary classroom to develop reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

## **Conclusion**

All children should get to experience what it feels like to hear a story read aloud to them, whether it is by a parent or their teacher. The feeling of being on the edge of your seat waiting for the page to turn or laughing at a hilarious character is what makes reading intriguing. To promote reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy, teachers can employ various methods in their instruction that will promote autonomous reading inside and outside of school. Reading is a life-long skill that, if promoted in elementary years, will likely be an enjoyed task throughout adulthood as well. Student reading, as well as achievement, will increase and new vocabulary will be introduced that may not be otherwise. Reading opens doors to other worlds, real or not, and gives students a chance to make connections and identify with the characters they are reading about. To ensure an equitable and inclusive experience, teachers should be choosing books from various authors with differing cultures and backgrounds to then read aloud to their students and have them learn that differences are what make us all special. Reading books can either be seen as a dreaded chore or it can be the new lens that allows a student to see beyond just themselves. In the chapter to follow, the insights gained from the research will be discussed

and how it applies to current educational practice. The chapter will also discuss future studies to conduct that will help solidify the importance of read alouds in the elementary school setting when it comes to the advancement of reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

## **Chapter Three: Discussion, Application, and Future Studies**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the research reviewed in Chapter Two will help investigate the insights gained from the research in regards to read alouds in the elementary setting and how they positively impact reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. Secondly, applications for educational practice will be reviewed as read alouds provide a practical example of a strategy to improve students' reading skills. Lastly, studies for the future will be discussed to detail further investigation that could be done around read alouds and their affect on reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy.

### **Insights Gained from Research**

From the research completed in Chapter Two, a first insight that was gained was how important read alouds can be for English Language Learners (ELL). The research took place all around the world and that created a rich sample of students of various languages. Read alouds are an instructional strategy implemented by educators that can help improve English Language Learners reading ability and comprehension as noted in Chapter Two. So many classrooms around the world have ELL students who need extra practice and support in the subject of reading. Read alouds allow for educators to interact with students by asking questions about the text being read. ELL students and other students in the room are simultaneously being exposed to what fluent reading looks and sounds like. This insight helps to promote read alouds in the elementary school setting because of the benefits they have on ELL students and their peers alike.

A second insight gained from the research in the literature review is the importance of vocabulary acquisition during read alouds. It is easy to simply read a story and move on, but it is

even more important to ask questions while students are listening to engage them with the text. As the educator is asking questions, students can better comprehend the text as well as use new vocabulary from the story. Vocabulary acquisition is a key component of elementary school. Students are learning many new words every day. Read alouds can have a major impact on the number of new words they learn and help them better comprehend stories they read on their own, as well including them into their everyday vernacular. Read alouds in the elementary school setting ensure that students are being exposed to multiple new words and in turn, increase their reading ability and comprehension.

The last insight gained from this research is the importance of parents and teachers modeling to students what reading for pleasure looks like. The research above concluded that parents are the first role models to students when it comes to reading outside of the school setting. The research above also concluded that students are never too young to be exposed to read alouds. Children of all ages benefit from being read to, both at home and at school. Once students reach school age, teachers are the next role models when it comes to reading for pleasure. Many students look up to their teachers and want to impress them. If teachers incorporate reading in their classrooms in a positive way, students are going to have a more positive attitude when it comes to literacy.

The research that was reviewed in Chapter Two presented insights into the importance of read alouds in the elementary school setting. Read alouds are an instructional strategy that all teachers should be implementing in their classrooms. There are many benefits to students' reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy that are bolstered by the presence of read alouds. All students should be given the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge of the world around them. This can be done through reading aloud to students starting at a young age.

## **Application of Research**

When it comes to application in educational practice, read alouds are an intentional strategy that can help promote increases in reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. English Language Learners (ELL) have been found to show increases in reading ability and comprehension when their teachers have incorporated read alouds in their everyday routines. Read alouds do not have to take up much time in the classroom, but they can provide lasting effects on students who are ELL or not. Teachers use strategies such as interactive read alouds and repeated reading, as discussed above, to promote literacy as well as fluency among ELL students.

Another application to educational practice tied to read alouds are the improvements in vocabulary acquisition for all students. Read alouds introduce students to many different words and terms that may not come up anywhere else. Teachers can use these opportunities to further increase their students' vocabulary, which in turn increases reading ability and comprehension. Teachers should take the extra minutes that are necessary to discuss what new words mean and have students practice using those words in their everyday conversations and writing. Read alouds are an effective strategy when it comes to the acquisition of new vocabulary words and strengthening already known words.

The final application to educational practice is the importance of modeling what fluent reading and enjoyment of reading looks like at a young age. The research above found that parents are the first source of modeling when it comes to reading aloud and developing attitudes towards reading. When students are entering school, it is important for teachers to continue modeling what fluent reading and enjoyment of reading looks like outside the home. As teachers incorporate read alouds into their educational routines and practices, students are beginning to



either develop or shift attitudes towards literacy that can affect them for years to come. Life long learners and readers are developed at a young age. It is vital that teachers implement read alouds to promote and encourage the enjoyment of literacy.

### **Future Studies**

When it comes to future studies to be conducted around read alouds, a study could consist of quantitative research, which was found to be lacking in the research above. Few studies have been conducted about read alouds that have sampled many students. It would be beneficial to the overall effectiveness of read alouds to have numerous students and teachers studied when it comes to read alouds and their effect on reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. With the results from future quantitative studies, teachers and administration will be able to see the affects that read alouds have on students and promote their use in the everyday routines of the classroom.

Another future study that could be conducted to further the research on read alouds could be the impact read alouds have on writing in elementary school. Writing was briefly mentioned above by Oueini et al. (2008) and Lopez & Friedman (2019) in regards to students reflecting on the text being read to them through writing. A future study could look for correlation between reading aloud to students and an increase in writing skills. As students are exposed to new texts, they are also learning new vocabulary words. Given the opportunity to reflect on stories they are hearing can be a great way to improve overall writing achievement. Read alouds also give students new ideas and create a sense of imagination which in turn can improve their writing abilities.

Lastly, a future study could be conducted to research how read alouds affect comprehension of stories students must read themselves. It is often easier to understand and

comprehend a text being read aloud. As someone reads, natural pauses in speaking and images are created in the mind to help make sense of what is being read. While there are numerous times allowed for students to be read to, there are also necessary times when a student must read a text or passage to themselves and then comprehend what they have just read themselves. A future study could compare classrooms with regular read alouds to classrooms with infrequent read alouds to see how they potentially affect reading comprehension when students read individually. This study can help teachers understand the power read alouds have and give them the opportunity to see the impact they have on reading comprehension.

The three future studies mentioned above in regards to read alouds can help further identify the importance of read alouds in the elementary school setting. These studies can expand upon the already known research and help teachers and administration understand why read alouds should be occurring in their classrooms every day. Read alouds help increase reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. With these future studies, more can be understood when it comes to writing and comprehension of a text not read aloud. These are skills students will need for the rest of their lives. If effective strategies can be implemented while students are still in elementary school, they are more likely to become life-long learners and lovers of reading.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper looked closely at the impact of read alouds within the elementary classroom setting. Two themes were identified and a subtheme as well. The two themes were reading ability and comprehension and enjoyment of literacy. A subtheme looked at the overlap of these two themes and how they work simultaneously through read alouds. It is important that all teachers in the elementary setting are using read alouds as an educational

practice to help improve their students' reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. With the use of read alouds, students are more likely to become life-long learners and readers. The research also identified how read alouds build up a students social-emotional well-being as well as their cultural identity. Read alouds create new opportunities for students to see themselves represented in the classroom and this can be achieved through reading diverse books to students. An educator can lead equitably and inclusively by reading aloud to students from numerous authors and genres to promote a sense of belonging within the classroom.

Every student should be able to experience sitting on the carpet or at their desks while a teacher reads aloud to them. Read alouds are a vessel that teachers can use to promote reading ability, comprehension, and enjoyment of literacy. The teacher also gets to experience the true joy that comes from reading Dr. Suess and getting wrapped up in a tongue twister. It is a beautiful experience to be authentic and shed a tear when Charlotte passes away at the end of *Charlotte's Web*. Read alouds allow for true emotion to be expressed while also allowing for students to hear what fluent and joyful readers sound like. When reading aloud to students, teachers should do the voices, roar like the lions, and quack like the Ugly Duckling. This is a true experience of the joy that comes from reading aloud to students every day.

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## Appendix

### Article Tracking Matrix

Articles	Methods	Reading Ability and Comprehension	Enjoyment of Literacy	Combination
Bano et al. (2018)	Qualitative			X
Bartan (2020)	Quantitative	X		
Ceron (2014)	Qualitative	X		
Collins (2022)	Qualitative			X
De Naeghal et al. (2014)	Mixed- Methods		X	
Giroir et al. (2015)	Qualitative	X		
Lopez & Friedman (2019)	Qualitative		X	
Lusby (2020)	Mixed- Methods			X

Marquez & Colby (2021)	Qualitative		X	
Okay & Kandir (2017)	Mixed- Methods	X		
Oliveira (2015)	Qualitative		X	
Omar & Saufi (2015)	Qualitative	X		
Oueini et al. (2008)	Qualitative	X		
Witte (2016)	Qualitative	X		
Yurdakal (2019)	Quantitative		X	