



Reader's Theater, Collaboration, and You, the Library Literacy Partner

Toni Buzzeeo, MA, MLIS

www.tonibuzzeeo.com

Pages 1–6 may not be reproduced without written consent of the author.

What Is Reader's Theater?

Definitions

“Reader's Theater is a **rehearsed group presentation** of a script that is **read aloud rather than memorized.**” (Flynn, 2004)

“Reader's Theater is an **interpretive activity** in which children practice and perform for others a **scripted reading.**” (Rinehart, 1999)

“Reader's Theater is **dramatic oral expression** that focuses on reading aloud rather than memorization.” (O'Neill, 2001)

“Reader's Theater is an **interpretive reading activity** in which readers **use their voices to bring characters to life.**” (Martinez, Roser, and Strecker, 1999)

“The goal of Reader's Theater is to read a script in which the story theme and character development are conveyed to the audience through **intonation, inflection, and fluency.**” (McAndrews, 2004)

Key Components of Reader's Theater

- Scripted reading
 - Dramatic reading
 - Interpretive reading
- intonation, inflection, and fluency

Language activity with authentic communication purpose holistic in nature—integrates language experiences of:

- Reading
- Speaking
- Listening
- Thinking



Differences from Staged Drama

Staged Drama	Reader's Theater
Formal and complex	Informal and simple
Memorized script	Script interpretively read aloud
Emphasis on staged action and stage movement	Emphasis on spoken words and gestures
Scenery, costumes, props	Exists in minds of audience only

Levels of Instructional Partnership

Collaborative planning is two or more equal partners who set out to create a unit of study based on content standards in one or more content areas plus information literacy standards, a unit that will be team-designed, team-taught, and team-evaluated.

- In **cooperation**, the teacher and library media specialist work independently but come together briefly for mutual benefit, their relationship is loose.
- In **coordination** there is a more formal working relationship and an understanding of shared missions. The teacher and library media specialist do some advance planning and communicate more.
- In **collaboration**, the two partners have a prolonged and interdependent relationship. They share goals, have carefully defined roles in the process, and plan much more comprehensively.



The Taxonomy

The Library Media Specialist's Taxonomy

by David V. Loertscher

1. NO INVOLVEMENT

The LMC is bypassed entirely.

2. SMOOTHLY OPERATING INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilities, materials, networks, and information resources are available for the self-starter delivered to the point of need.

3. INDIVIDUAL REFERENCE ASSISTANCE

The library media specialist serves as the human interface between information systems and the user.

4. SPONTANEOUS INTERACTION AND GATHERING

Networks respond 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to patron requests, and the LMC facilities can be used by individuals and small groups with no advance notice.

5. CURSORY PLANNING

There is informal and brief planning with teachers and students for LMC facilities or network usage—usually done through casual contact in the LMC, in the hall, in the teacher's lounge, in the lunch room, or by e-mail. [For example: Here's an idea for an activity/Web site/new materials to use. Have you seen...? There's a software upgrade on the network.]

6. PLANNED GATHERING

Gathering of materials/access to important digital resources is done in advance of a class project upon teacher or student request.

7. EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH/ADVOCACY

A concerted effort is made to promote the philosophy of the LMC program.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOUR MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS OF THE LMC PROGRAM

The four LMC program elements—

collaboration,

reading literacy,

enhancing learning through technology, and

information literacy—

are operational in the school. The LMC is on its way to achieving its goal of contributing to academic achievement.

9. THE MATURE LMC PROGRAM

The LMC program reaches the needs of every student and teacher who will accept its offerings in each of the four programmatic elements.

10. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Along with other educators, the library media specialist contributes to the planning and organization of what will actually be taught in the school or district (Loertscher 17).

Collaboration: Where We've Been — Where We're Going 3



Using Reader's Theater as a Springboard/Complement to Instructional Partnership

Cooperation

In **cooperation**, the teacher and library media specialist work independently but come together briefly for mutual benefit, their relationship is loose.

- Use Reader's Theater in the LMC as a part of your regularly scheduled library time with students.
- Use Reader's Theater in the LMC with "Reading Buddy" paired classes.
- Use Reader's Theater in the LMC during a library-initiated author study.
- Recommend Reader's Theater to classroom teachers and supply scripts when requested.

Coordination

In **coordination** there is a more formal working relationship and an understanding of shared missions. The teacher and LMS do some advance planning and communicate more.

- Use Reader's Theater in the LMC as a tie-in to a topic being covered in the classroom.
- Supply Reader's Theater to the classroom teacher as a tie-in to a topic being covered in the classroom.
- Supply Reader's Theater to the classroom teacher as a tie-in to an author study in the classroom.
- Use Reader's Theater to support classroom efforts to improve reading fluency.

Collaboration

In **collaboration**, the two partners have a prolonged and interdependent relationship. They share goals, have carefully defined roles in the process, and plan much more comprehensively.

- Use Reader's Theater as a short-term collaborative project to enhance a content area unit taught in the classroom.
- Use Reader's Theater to introduce a full collaborative unit of study.
- Use Reader's Theater to extend an aspect of a collaborative unit of study.
- Use Reader's Theater as an ongoing collaborative literacy engagement between classroom and LMC to improved fluency.

Methods

Assigning Parts

- Choose scripts within readers' reach.
- Match parts to reading abilities.
- Don't force unwilling readers.
- Ample rehearsal time is essential for struggling readers.
- Pair English Language Learners with fluent readers to read a part chorally.

Rehearsing

- Adequate time for practice and performance are essential.
- Substantial practice leads to substantial improvement.
- Highlight each character's part throughout a script.
- Duplicate scripts for each reader—one to leave at school and one to take home.
- Allow students to determine when they are ready to perform.

Interpretation

- Encourage reading with expression.
- Use voice to communicate character emotions.
- Use facial expression to communicate character emotions.
- Appropriate gestures increase retention.
- Gestures make Reader's Theater more interesting to perform and watch.
- Mime techniques add polish.

Setting the Stage

- Use script binders (½ to 1 inch ring binders).
- Music stands for scripts leave hands free for gesturing.
- Make oak tag name tags with a neck string for each character.
- Use rotating stools for readers (readers face forward only when reading their parts).
- Keep old scripts and props as an LMC "center."



Benefits

Reading Benefits for All

- Repeated oral reading in rehearsals and performances supports text fluency.
- Fluency is reading smoothly at an appropriate rate with accuracy, proper phrasing, and expression.
- When performance is the goal, students are motivated to read, repeat, and review.
- Re-reading is purposeful and fun.
- Anticipation of an audience heightens the commitment to rehearsal.
- Repetition enhances retention.
- Reader's Theater improves sight word recognition.
- Reader's Theater boosts listening and speaking skills.
- Reader's Theater improves reader confidence.
- Effective performance requires focus from all on the script.
- Student ownership and engagement in the process is high.
- Because fluency and comprehension are closely related, fluent readers are high achieving students.
- Supports the learning of Bodily-Kinesthetic learners.

Literature Comprehension/Appreciation Benefits

- Reader's Theater encourages student insight into and appreciation of literature.
- Reader's Theater helps students delve into the thoughts and feelings of characters.
- Students demonstrate what they know about the text.
- Reader's Theater inspires independent reading.

Social Benefits

- The shiest kids often bloom in Reader's Theater.
- Collaboration and teamwork are emphasized skills.
- Reader's Theater promotes cooperative interaction with peers.
- Reader's Theater encourages social interaction during reading time.
- Reader's Theater encourages practice at home with family members and friends.

Reading Benefits for Struggling Readers

- Reader's Theater makes the reading task appealing.
- Scripts are less daunting because students don't have to read them all alone.
- Students have an authentic reason for repetitive reading (which increases fluency).
- Struggling readers listen to and join in with accomplished readers who offer good models of fluent reading.
- Less-skilled readers have an opportunity to be on equal footing with better readers.
- Reader's Theater provides opportunities for instructional support and feedback.
- Successful reading in front of a group empowers struggling readers and increases interest.
- When part of a Chorus, struggling readers see and hear words simultaneously.

Reader's Theater Bibliography

Articles

Carrick, Lila. "Internet Resources for Conducting Readers Theatre." *Reading Online* 5:1 (July/August 2001). www.readingonline.org/electronic/carrick/.

Corcoran, Carol A. Ed.D., and A. Dia Davis. "A Study of the Effects of Readers' Theater on Second and Third Grade Special Education Students' Fluency Growth." *Reading Improvement* 42:2 (Summer 2005): 105–111.

Flynn, Rosalind M. "Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre: Setting the Stage for Reading and Retention." *The Reading Teacher* 58:4 (December 2004–January 2005): 360–365.

Kaaland-Wells, Christie. "Holiday Pick: Readers Theatre." *School Library Media Activities Monthly* XV:3 (November 1998): 34–36.

Larkin, Barbara Ryan. "Can We Act It Out?" *The Reading Teacher* 54:5 (February 2001): 478–481.

Latrobe, Kathy. "Encouraging Reading & Writing through Readers Theatre." *Emergency Librarian* 23:3 (January/February 1996): 16–20.

Martinez, Miriam, Nancy L. Roser, and Susan Strecker. "'I Never Thought I Could Be a Star:' A Readers Theatre Ticket to Fluency." *The Reading Teacher* 52:4 (December 1998/ January 1999): 326–334.

O'Neill, Alexis. "Hassle-Free Drama: The Joy of Reader's Theater." *Book Links* 11:1 (August/September 2001): 57–62.

Prescott, Jennifer O. "The Power of Reader's Theater." *Instructor* 112:5 (January 2003): 22–27.

Rinehart, Steven D. "'Don't Think for a Minute that I'm Getting Up There:' Opportunities for Readers' Theater in a Tutorial for Children with Reading Problems." *Journal of Reading Psychology* 20:1 (January-March 1999): 71–89.

Sanborn, LaVonne Hayes. "Reader's Theatre: A Library Media Specialist's Best Friend." *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 10:9 (May 1994): 31–33.

Schneider, Dean. "Bearing Witness through Reader's Theater." *Book Links* 14:4 (March 2005): 54–57.

Shepard, Aaron. "From Script to Stage: Tips for Readers Theatre." *The Reading Teacher* 48:2 (October 1994): 184–186.

Stromsdorfer, A. G. "Teaching Tips and Memorable Methods Corner." *MIDTESOL Matters* (Fall 20004). www.midtesol.org/Newsletter/2004Fall-Readers.htm.

Tyler, Brenda-Jean, and David J. Chard. "Using Readers Theatre to Foster Fluency in Struggling Readers: A Twist on the Repeated Reading Strategy." *Reading & Writing Quarterly* 16:2 (April-June 2000): 163–168.

Wolf, Shelby Anne. "What's in a Name? Labels and Literacy in Readers Theatre." *The Reading Teacher* 46:7 (April 1993): 540–545.

Worthy, Jo, and Kathryn Prater. "'I Thought About it all Night:' Readers Theatre for Reading Fluency and Motivation." *The Reading Teacher* 56:3 (November 2002): 294–297.

Best Compiled Web Resources with Links

"Aaron Shepard's RT Page: Scripts and Tips for Reader's Theater (or Readers Theater or Reader's Theatre or Readers Theatre or ...)" *Author Online! Aaron Shepard's Home Page: Stories, Scripts, and More*. 21 April 2006. www.aaronshelp.com/rt/index.html#Tips.

"Readers Theater." *Literacy Connections*. 21 April 2006. www.literacyconnections.com/ReadersTheater.php.



Dinosnores

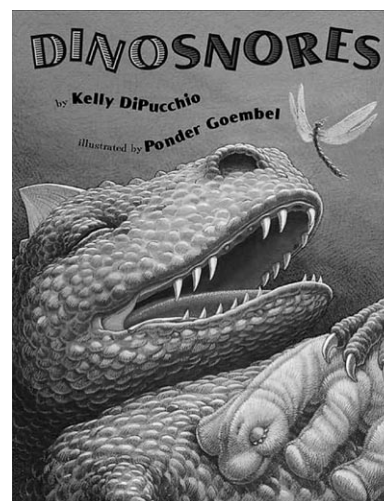
by Kelly DiPucchio

adapted by Toni Buzzeeo from *Read! Perform! Learn!*

Read *Dinosnores* to familiarize yourself with the book. Once you are ready to perform the script with your students, read the book aloud to the children so that they can enjoy the illustrations and become familiar with the story. Then, hand out a set of photocopied scripts to 15 children. Ask the remaining children to be the audience. Have performers face the audience and simply read their parts on the first run-through. Once all readers are comfortable with their parts, have a second reading with the opportunity to use props or costumes, if desired, and to act out the story while reading.

Roles

- Brontosaurus
- Triceratops
- Raptor
- Stegosaurus
- Protoceratops
- Diplodocus
- Allosaurus
- Tyrannosaurus
- Narrator One
- Narrator Two
- Narrator Three
- Narrator Four
- Chorus (Three readers)



Adapted from *Dinosnores* by Kelly DiPucchio. © 2005 by Kelly DiPucchio. Printed with permission of the author.

Snore Fest Activity

Author Kelly DiPucchio chose eight dinosaurs to include in *Dinosnores*. Before reading the reader's theater script (which names the individual dinosaurs), supply small groups of students with a variety of dinosaur resources and the Snore Fest graphic organizer from the following page. Ask them to identify the name of each dinosaur—using the dinosaurs as clues!

Good resources for this activity include:

Print

The Dinosaur Atlas by Don Lessem. Firefly Books, 2003.

Dinosaur Dictionary: An A to Z of Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Reptiles by Rupert Matthews. Blackbirch Press, 2003.

Encyclopedia Prehistorica: Dinosaurs by Robert Sabuda and Matthew Reinhart. Candlewick Press, 2005.

Scholastic Dinosaurs A–Z: The Ultimate Dinosaur Encyclopedia by Don Lessem. Scholastic, 2003.

Electronic

A to Z Glossary — yahooligans.yahoo.com/content/science/dinosaurs/glossary/glossarya.html

Dinosaur Alphabet Book — www.enchantedlearning.com/dinoslphabet

Dinosnores Script

Narrator One: On a super continent many million years ago,

Narrator Two: dinosaurs prepared for sleep on cozy lava flows.

Chorus: YAWN!

Narrator Three: They bathed, and brushed, and fluffed their ferns around the dino site ...

Narrator Four: then laid their horns and spikes to rest and kissed their eggs good night.

Chorus: SMOOOCH!

Narrator One: Reptilian birds and dragonflies drifted through the skies,

Narrator Two: while prehistoric crickets sang Jurassic lullabies.

Chorus: CHIRRUP!

Narrator Three: Soon the peaceful world was rocked, shaken to its shores ...

Narrator Four: from snouts of sleeping dinosaurs boomed mammoth dino-snores!

Chorus: ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

Narrator One: There were ...

Brontosaurus: Bronto-booms,

Triceratops: Tricera-cries,

Raptor: Raptor-rumbles,

Stegosaurus: Stego-sighs ...

Protoceratops: Proto-grunts,

Diplodocus: Diplo-hoots,

Allosaurus: Allo-snorts,

Tyrannosaurus: Tyranno-toots!

Narrator One: While dinos slept, winged lizards leapt and mammals ran to hide.