

## Using the Dialogic Read Aloud Strategy to Teach Refugee Children's Literature

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### Abstract

*Dialogic read alouds feature the teacher facilitating discussions with students about books that the teacher reads aloud to the class. Research indicates that the dialogic read aloud strategy enhances students' reading comprehension, oral language, and vocabulary skills. Moreover, teachers can apply the dialogic read aloud strategy to expose students to various literary genres. In the present article, the authors provide suggestions for primary-level teachers on how to incorporate the dialogic read aloud strategy while teaching a particular genre of multicultural fiction-children's refugee literature. Specifically, the authors elaborate on dialogic read aloud activities for four works: Williams & Mohammed's (2007) *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, Shulevitz's (2008) *How I Learned Geography*, Milner's (2017) *My name is not Refugee*, and Park & Park's (2010) *My Freedom Trip*. The article particularly discusses dialogic read aloud activities related to the reading comprehension strategies of making inferences, self-monitoring one's comprehension, and constructing mental images of texts.*

**Keywords:** Dialogic read alouds, children's refugee literature, making inferences, comprehension monitoring, visualizing

### 1. Introduction

For centuries, stories have been told by word of mouth to children. Children who frequently have meaningful opportunities to hear stories read aloud receive valuable literacy experiences. Indeed, children who participate in dialogic read alouds obtain exposure to various literary genres (Futterman, 2016). Students' literacy experiences in the school setting build upon students' home literacy experiences, fostering a positive attitude towards reading and an overall appreciation for learning (Ledger & Merga, 2018). With the support of family caregivers and classroom teachers, young readers learn how to properly read with directionality, how to hold a book, and how to read with expression. Students further develop vocabulary and comprehension skills (Taylor, 2019). By attentively listening to texts read aloud, children develop essential comprehension strategies such as making predictions, generating questions, and forming connections related to texts.

While read alouds, in general, allow teachers to model reading fluency and prosody, dialogic read alouds involve active conversations between the teacher and students concerning a given text. As part of the dialogic read aloud process, teachers frequently pause during read aloud to pose questions to students and to engage students in a discussion of the text (O'Sullivan, 2021). In addition to the aforementioned benefits of dialogic read alouds, the instructional strategy facilitates deeper levels of comprehension of the text. As the teacher enters into a conversation with children about the book, students' comprehension of the story improves (Flores et al., 2014).

Students' reading fluency, likewise, grows through interactive read alouds, since students observe the teacher read with expression and fluency (Ceyhan & Yildiz, 2021). Teachers can reference students' text-based discussions to assist students to build students' overall reading comprehension (Baker et al., 2013). Dialogic read-alouds further enhance learners' oral language development (Dunst et al., 2007; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2021). The present article provides suggestions for teachers concerning how they can employ the dialogic read aloud strategy to teach refugee children's literature. The suggestions can help develop students' oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The article focuses on the comprehension strategies of making inferences, comprehension monitoring, and constructing mental images of the text. In addition, the authors offer four examples of refugee children's literature texts which teachers can read with students in the classroom: 1) *Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed, 2) *How I Learned Geography* by Uri Shulevitz, 3) *My name is not Refugee* by Kate Milner, and 4) *My Freedom Trip* by Frances Park and Ginger Park. The article concludes with recommendations for teaching refugee children's literature in the elementary classroom.

## 2. Literature Review

Read alouds allow the modeling of fluent reading, expand children's vocabulary, and introduce children to new authors, texts, and genres. Read alouds assist students to develop a connection across various texts, which inspires students to read related texts (Taylor, 2019). Burkins (2017) suggests for teachers to utilize read-alouds to model critical reading by instructing students to brainstorm before reading a story, ask questions while reading, and participate in extended activities after reading. The read-aloud strategy expands students' vocabulary and students' understanding of text structures. Moreover, read-alouds encourage students to develop higher levels of textual comprehension by encouraging students to connect the text to their own lives (Mitchell, 2015).

According to Iturbe (2021), dialogic reading is an interactive process which features teachers leading text-based discussions with students. The reading process supports students' critical analysis of the text while also sparking students' interest in learning (Iturbe, 2021). Watkins (2018) reports that through scaffolded interactions between children and adults, dialogic read alouds heighten students' vocabulary development, understanding of oral language complexity, and narrative skills. Since dialogic read alouds provide students with a model on how to analyze texts, the strategy helps learners become better readers (Watkins, 2018). Iturbe (2021) suggests the PEER technique as a way of implementing dialogic reading. The PEER technique proceeds in the following sequence:

“P”- The teacher prompts the child to say something about the text.

“E” - The teacher evaluates the response.

“E” - The teacher expands on the child's answer by rephrasing it or by adding information.

“R”- The teacher repeats the prompts to see if the child has learned from the expansion (Iturbe, 2021).

Some of the prompts that Iturbe recommends include “completion prompts” in which learners fill in a blank at the end of a sentence. Other prompts feature “recall prompts” which require children to summarize the text in their own words as well as open-ended prompts where children focus on the pictures that accompany a text. “Wh-prompts” ask students to answer questions that begin with the words “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how.” Moreover, distancing prompts support students to reflect on their own experiences relative to the text (Iturbe, 2021).

The most effective way teachers can apply the dialogic read-aloud strategy is through demonstrating reading comprehension strategies such as making predictions, formulating questions, visualizing the text, connecting the text to personal experiences, determining the main idea of texts, and summarizing texts (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2018). Brooke (2019) discusses several benefits of using dialogic read alouds such as developing students' listening comprehension, reading engagement, vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension skills. Brooke (2019) further describes how dialogic read alouds help to build a positive classroom community (Brooke, 2019). As McClure & Fullerton (2017) note, dialogic read alouds even foster a nurturing classroom environment since the entire class engages in discussion of a common text as a whole-class learning activity (McClure & Fullerton, 2017).

Several studies have reported that dialogic read alouds prove beneficial for all age levels. Indeed, teachers should continue to provide dialogic read alouds for older students, although teachers should remember to limit the

number of tasks required for the dialogic read aloud in order to prevent students from losing attention (Mattihessen, 2015, Varlas, 2018). WITS (2019) presented practical tips for teachers of various age levels that focus on increasing students' attention levels, memory, and empathy during read aloud activities. For students ages 0 to 4, teachers should introduce the basic reading process; whereas, teachers of students 5-10 years of age should provide comprehension strategies to help students transition from the skill of "learning to read" to the skill of "reading to learn." When teaching students 10 years and older, educators should give information on how students can understand a broader range of texts (WITS, 2019). According to Mattihessen (2015), teachers should select age-appropriate texts. For younger readers, teachers can choose wordless books or predictable books with beautiful illustrations. For older, more mature readers, teachers can adopt challenging texts that introduce higher levels of vocabulary and comprehension skills (Mattihessen, 2015). The teacher may frequently stop during read alouds and demonstrate the think-aloud strategy, modeling the teacher's thinking when using reading comprehension strategies (McClure & Fullerton, 2017). Moreover, the teacher should also pose critical-thinking questions that require students to analyze the text. The teacher should then listen to students' responses and provide meaningful feedback (McClure & Fullerton, 2017).

Dialogic read alouds should feature explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies. When teachers routinely include comprehension strategies as an explicit reading objective, this form of explicit strategy instruction assists students to become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading (Erekson, Opitz, & Schendel, 2020). Reading comprehension strategies are conscious tactics which include sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text (Adler, 2012). According to Erekson, Opitz, & Schendel (2020), effective reading expands beyond simply identifying words and features the reader constructing meaning from the text. Readers construct meaning in a variety of ways, including identifying cause and effect relationships and determining the sequence of events. Constructing meaning further requires the reader to interact with the text using a variety of skills and strategies, adapting the strategy employed to fit the specific text (Adler, 2012). Good readers often set a goal before beginning to read, note the structure of the text, and create a mental summary of what is happening in the story by rephrasing the reading into their own words (Erekson, Opitz, & Schendel, 2020). Good readers also reflect on what they have read by strategically seeking out further information from other sources, generate questions for clarification or for deeper understanding of the text, and evaluate the text as they read. Comprehension strategies are crucial for students in the classroom. Teaching struggling readers to use strategies improves their comprehension and the ability to learn from a challenging text (Erekson, Opitz, & Schendel, 2020).

Another aim of dialogic read alouds is to strengthen learners' oral language fluency and to expand their vocabulary skills (Worthy et al., 2012; O'Sullivan, 2021). According to Worthy et al. (2012), the use of dialogic read-alouds fosters students' engagement and results in student-led conversations. These discussions allow students to engage with the literature and share ideas with one another. Dialogic read alouds are a priority within the classroom and allow students to develop appreciation for different perspectives. The teachers' incorporation of games and activities during reading instruction, likewise, enhances students' engagement and comprehension of the text (Worthy et al., 2012).

Furthermore, teachers can employ dialogic read alouds as resources to help develop students' vocabulary knowledge and oral language proficiency. When explicitly teaching vocabulary words during dialogic read alouds, Iturbe (2021) contends that teachers should focus on Tier 2 vocabulary words which indicate academic language frequently used across a variety of contexts and content areas. To encourage attentive listening, the teacher can involve students in interactive vocabulary games such as holding up an index card with a check mark on it or shaking bottles or maracas whenever they hear one of the target vocabulary words read aloud from a given text. Students may also clap or snap their fingers each time they hear a target vocabulary word. As a result, the vocabulary instructional activities promote attentive listening skills in a fun way. In order to acquire new vocabulary words and definitions, students can enhance their vocabulary knowledge by practicing with the newly acquired vocabulary through engaging learning games such as vocabulary bingo, word concentration, go fish, old maid, word monopoly, and rhyming games (Bank Street College of Education, 2021).

Teachers can utilize dialogic read alouds to teach a variety of literary genres, including refugee children's fiction. As a form of multicultural literature, refugee children's literature purports to provide students with diverse, international perspectives of refugees and their families. Refugees are people who have fled their homelands due to war, persecution, violence, and/or human rights abuses (U.N. Refugee Agency, 2021a). The United Nations

Refugee Agency estimates that there are approximately 26.4 million refugees in the world, and 1 out of every 95 people across the globe have been displaced by conflict or persecution (UN Refugee Agency, 2021b). Over 340,000 refugees reside in the United States (World Bank, 2021). Refugee children's literature often depicts the harrowing journeys that refugees take to escape their home countries. Some refugee children's literature further documents refugees' experiences in their adopted countries and their experiences with acclimation into a new culture. As a result, refugee children's literature educates students-both refugee and non-refugee-on the plights of refugees, helping students to develop empathy for refugees and respect for other cultures. As the U.S. has become increasingly diverse, many U.S. students may also see elements of their home cultures represented by the families and countries portrayed in refugee literature. Thus, in addition to representing multicultural perspectives and histories, refugee children's literature further provides many students with the opportunity to see their experiences, traditions, and histories represented in the curriculum (Hwang & Coneway, 2017; Hwang & Hindman, 2014).

### ***Applying Dialogic Read Alouds to Support Students' Comprehension of Refugee Children's Literature***

The present article guides teachers on how to utilize the dialogic read aloud strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension abilities. Specifically, the article describes how teachers can use the dialogic read aloud strategy to teach students to make inferences, monitor their comprehension of the text, and construct visual images of the text. The current study models how teachers can use the dialogic reading strategy to teach the aforementioned reading strategies when teaching four refugee children's literature books described below in Table 1.

**Table 1: List of Refugee Literature Employed**

<b>Title of the Book</b>	<b>Author &amp; Publisher</b>	<b>Brief Summary</b>
<i>Four Feet, Two Sandals</i>	Williams, K. L. & Mohammed, K. (2007). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company	Two young Afghani girls living in a refugee camp in Pakistan share a precious pair of sandals brought by relief workers.
<i>How I Learned Geography</i>	Shulevitz, U. (2008). Douglas and McIntyre Ltd.	A small boy and his parents flee war's devastation and travel far east to another country where the boy learns many life lessons beyond geography from his father.
<i>My Name is Not Refugee</i>	Milner, K. (2017). The Bucket List	A young boy discusses the journey he is about to make with his mother to a new country and some of the things they will encounter.
<i>My Freedom Trip</i>	Park, F. & Park, G. (2010). Boyd's Mills Press	Just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, young Soosecretly crosses the 38th parallel, hoping to join her father on the other side. Because it is dangerous for more than one person to cross at a time, her mother waits behind.

#### **a. Making Inferences:**

Inferences are educated guesses that readers make using context clues from the text and students' background knowledge to determine the author's intended meaning (Squarespace, 2019). To make an inference, readers read between the lines to draw conclusions that are not explicitly stated in the text. This process will promote a deeper understanding of the text. Readers use inferences to make connections between what they are learning and their real-life experiences, thus making ideas garnered from the text more concrete to the reader (Edwards, 2012). Squarespace (2019) explains that inferences differ from predictions. When readers make predictions, they guess what will happen next in the story (what readers will read in future sections of the text). When readers make inferences, however, they form a conclusion about events or information previously stated in the text (what readers have already read in the text).

To make proper inferences during the dialogic read aloud session, some questions may be asked such as "What do I already know about the topic or text?" "Which text clues are important to understand what the author is trying to tell the reader?" "What themes does the author present?" "What conclusions can we make about the characters?" "Why did the characters act in this particular way?" For example, on page 3 of the story, *Four Feet, Two Sandals*,

Lina's old shoes have been ruined after walking many miles from her home in Afghanistan to a refugee camp in Peshawar, Pakistan. The part of the text that says “on the many miles of walking” gives the reader a clue that the shoes are probably worn and tattered. The reader can draw this conclusion based on the aforementioned textual evidence as well as with the reader’s previous experiences with her or his own shoes. On page 6 of the same story, the girls practice writing their name in the dirt and brush their marks away, so no one would see their mistakes. During a dialogic read aloud activity, the teacher may demonstrate inferential thinking by asking the class “What do we know about the girls’ writing experiences from reading this section of the text?” Students may answer, “The girls wrote their names in the sand and erased them immediately.” Then, the teacher may ask, “When have you seen someone quickly erase their writing?” Students may respond, “People quickly erase their writing when they have made a mistake or do not like what they wrote.” Finally, the teacher can guide students to forming an inference with the following question: “So, what can we conclude, or infer, about the two girls based on these specific writing actions? Ideally, this think-aloud process may help students to make inferences related to the girls’ insecurity with their writing, perhaps because the girls have not been in school for a significant period after having to flee their homes in Afghanistan.

An impactful strategy to teach inferences is to incorporate graphic organizers to help guide students’ thinking. One beneficial graphic organizer is the “*It says...I say...and so...*” thought flow graphic organizer (Squarespace, 2019). The strategy helps students to remember to connect specific details from the text with their background knowledge to make a reasonable inference about the text. After exercising this thought flow with several picture books, students may complete a graphic organizer related to the strategy on their own. Table 2 shows an example of how teachers can adopt the strategy when teaching *Four Feet, Two Sandals*. When teaching the book *How I Learned Geography*, a similar 3-column graphic organizers can be employed as shown in Table 3.

**Table 2: It says...I say...and so... Thought Flow Graphic Organizer**

IT SAYS ...	I SAY...	AND SO I INFER ...
It says that Lina’s name was on the list.	I say that this means that Lina will be able to come to America.	Since Feroza’s name was not on the list, I infer that Feroza did not get to go to America. Lina and Feroza will be sad to part, as this will make it harder to stay close friends.

**Table 3: 3-Column Graphic Organizer**

What I already know	Words from the text	What I infer
The family had to leave their home.	“We fled empty handed.”	The family members are refugees and they are worried about their future. They also will miss their home because they had to leave all of their friends, memories, and prized possessions behind.

During dialogic read alouds, teachers can demonstrate to students how to make inferences about unknown vocabulary words. For example, in the book *How I Learned Geography*, the teacher can ask students to make an inference on the meaning of “camel” on page 5 of the text. Students who might be unfamiliar with the term “camel,” can use the pictures on the text and textual descriptions to have a better understanding of camels, their appearance, and their habitat. Moreover, students can connect their newfound knowledge of the meaning of “camel” to make an inference about the book’s setting in an arid desert. *My Freedom Trip* further offers opportunities for students to make inferences about the meaning of unknown vocabulary words, which students can use to draw conclusions about the text. Specifically, the reader can interpret the meaning of “invaded” from page 1 and “trembling” from page 3 of the book by using context clues and by activating their background knowledge of the tumultuous nature of war. The reader can then infer that the author intends to express that Soo and her family are experiencing significant fear due to the threat of violence. The reader can conclude from their previous experiences and from reading other examples of refugee children’s literature that the terror caused by this violence and by war will cause the family to flee their home country in search of safety.

Thus, dialogic read-alouds prove excellent opportunities for teachers to guide students to make inferences. The teacher can point out pictures in the story and discuss the pictures with children. The teacher can regularly pause and perform a “think aloud” by modeling the inferences that the teacher is making while she or he reads. Teachers can also pause in the dialogic read aloud to fill in a large graphic organizer such as the “*It says...I say...and so...*” graphic organizer based on students’ input. Eventually, after modeling how to fill out the graphic organizer and guided practice opportunities, the teacher can take anticipated pauses during the read aloud, so that students can complete the graphic organizers on their own, formulating individual inferences about the text. As such, teachers can use dialogic read alouds with refugee children’s literature texts to help students understand the reading comprehension strategy of making inferences. Not only will dialogic students acquire the valuable skill of making inferences, but students will also have the opportunity to read quality refugee children’s literature in the classroom.

### **b. Comprehension Monitoring:**

Students are able to monitor their comprehension by becoming aware of their cognitive processes (Adler, 2012). Comprehension monitoring is often referred to as metacognition, or the process of thinking about one’s thinking. To practice comprehension monitoring during the dialogic read aloud session, students may ask, “What is happening so far in the book?” “What doesn’t make sense to me?” “What do I have questions about?” “What strategies can I use to help me understand?” (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2018). When modeling the comprehension monitoring strategy for students, teachers should begin by demonstrating how to pause frequently when reading to reflect on their comprehension of the text. The teacher can model this strategy by reading a selected text and completing a “think aloud” in which the teacher pauses and asks comprehension reflection questions. When teaching *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, teachers can pause in the story after the teacher reads aloud how Lina will have the opportunity to immigrate to America, but her friend and fellow refugee, Feroza, will have to stay in Pakistan at the refugee camp. Teachers may demonstrate comprehension monitoring by asking the following questions out loud: “What important event in the story just occurred?” “Do I understand what Lina means when she says that she will have a new home? What part of the text can I re-read to better understand how the characters are feeling?” This kind of conversation will boost students’ motivation to read and promote attentive listening skills. Conversations concerning comprehension modeling help to enhance students’ oral language development and comprehension skills (Flores et al., 2014; O’Sullivan, 2021).

Comprehension monitoring can be used together with other reading comprehension strategies such as making inferences, generating questions, constructing visual images, and summarizing text. Specifically, students can practice making inferences and comprehension monitoring during a dialogic read aloud of the book *How I Learned Geography*. After the teacher provides some teacher-created examples, the teacher can encourage students to think of their own questions about the text that require students to reflect on their reading comprehension. Students may ask, “Why did the child think the names on the map were strange sounding?” or “Why did the child make a rhyme out of the names on the map?” Students may also employ sentence stems to practice making inferences and comprehension monitoring at the same time, using the sentence stems “I wonder \_\_\_\_\_,” “I’m curious about \_\_\_\_\_,” and “I am thinking \_\_\_\_\_.”

To make sure that students are thinking about what they are reading, the teacher can introduce additional questions while reading *How I Learned Geography* aloud to students. One question could include the following: “Do I understand why the boy is mad at his father?” After posing the question, teachers and students can look for the answer within the text to further understand a pivotal part of the book in which the narrator’s father chooses a map over food. The teacher can continue with another question in which students reflect on their overall comprehension of the text, such as with the question “What does not make sense so far?” To answer these questions, teachers may suggest that the reader should slow down and reread a somewhat difficult part of the text in which the narrator is suddenly transported to different places in the story. Teachers could ask, “Do you think the character is really going to those places or is he using his imagination?” This will allow the class to discuss how people use their imagination to escape harsh realities and to cope with trauma.

From the pictures in the story *My Freedom Trip*, the class may practice using text features such as illustrations to support their overall comprehension of the text. Two specific illustrations from the book are included in Figure 1 and Figure 2 to exemplify how teachers could model how to analyze text features to help decipher a text’s meaning. Figure 1 depicts a man and a child going through the forest looking about their surroundings. The two

characters seem nervous and suspicious. Figure 2 features a picture of a woman holding a cup of liquid. From context from the story, the reader can assume that the illustration represents a memorial picture of the protagonist, Soo's mother, who Soo never has the opportunity to see again in the story.

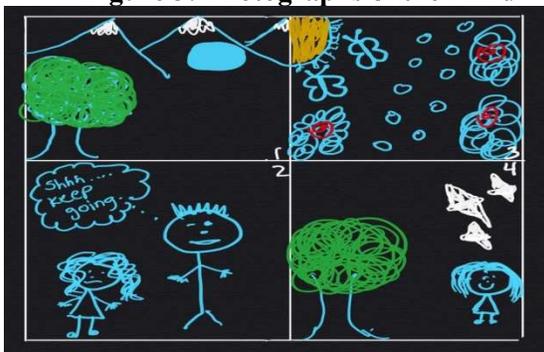
Figure 1: *My Freedom Trip*



Figure 2: *My Freedom Trip*

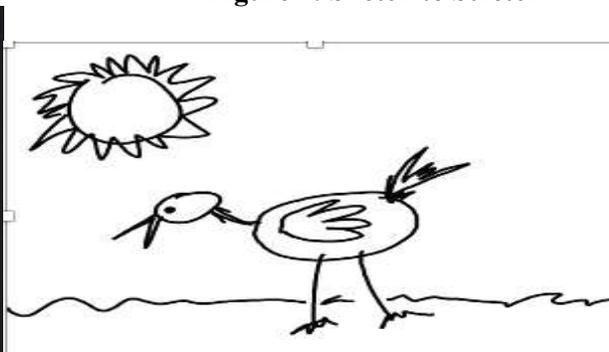


Figure 3: Photographs of the Mind



Source: Cowan, S. 2020

Figure 4: Sketch to Stretch



Source: Chavez, 2020

By interpreting the illustrations with the help of teachers' feedback and guided questions, students will be able to demonstrate whether or not they understand the differences in Soo's feelings during each of these sections of the book. Teachers could model to students how to interpret the illustrations by connecting to specific adjectives related to feelings in the text such as "wail," "scared" and "wildly excited" on page 4. Teachers could further employ the think-aloud strategy to help students improve their comprehension monitoring by having students connect their own experiences to what they have read in the text. In particular, teachers could have students consider how they would feel themselves, if they had to experience a similar situation.

### c. Constructing Mental Images of the Text:

Constructing mental images proves another advantageous reading comprehension strategy. When students construct mental images of what they are reading, students are more likely to make connections with the text and to maintain their engagement in the reading activity. Students' reading comprehension, likewise, improves when students construct their own mental images of the text that they are reading. When teachers demonstrate to students how to construct mental images of the text, teachers encourage students to combine what students already know about the topic with details from the text to form visual images in students' minds. Students use their senses to put themselves in the story. To effectively teach visualization, teachers should model the strategy by reading a portion of the book out loud to students. Teachers subsequently pause while reading to discuss how they will now make a mental image of what was just read. Teachers should then describe their own visualization to students in vivid detail (McLaughlin, 2015). Furthermore, teachers can model to students how to use descriptive words to help effectively express what students see when they create a mental image of their reading. If teachers include opportunities for students to construct mental images during a dialogic read aloud session, students will be able to use their creative imaginations to better comprehend the text. Teachers can encourage students to visualize the text by closing their eyes and imagining a specific section of the text. Teachers can provide guided questions for students to help support students' image construction by asking students to reflect on the various senses that students can use when they create their own mental images. Teachers can further illustrate

how to create mental images by drawing what teachers visualize for students to see. After modeling this skill, teachers can ask students to draw their own images of a different scene from the book.

A specific strategy for constructing mental images is the “Photographs of the Mind” strategy in which students stop at four different places when reading the text and sketch what they are visualizing (McLaughlin, 2015). Teachers could ask students to practice with this strategy when conducting a dialogic read aloud of the story, *My Freedom Trip*. When reading aloud to students the section of the story in which Mr. Han and Soo go through the mountains, teachers can stop and ask students to draw the first image that comes to mind. Students will likely draw images of mountains, trees and the moon. Another stopping point in the text would be when Mr. Han tells Soo to be quiet because Mr. Soo hears footsteps in the distance. Teachers would once again pause their reading and instruct students to draw what they imagine is happening in the story. Teachers can ask students to refer back to their sketches and explain their drawings to the class.

Another strategy to support students’ construction of mental images includes the “Sketch to Stretch” strategy. According to this strategy, students sketch their mental images during read alouds to create, represent, and share personal understandings of text via simple lines and drawings (McLaughlin, 2015). Students may also draw pictures that represent the beginning, middle, and end of the text. Under the drawings, they may write a short explanation and share with their class their inspirations for their drawings, linking their illustrations to descriptive language featured in the text. Figures 3 and 4 provide examples of illustrations used when applying the “Photographs of the Mind” and “Sketch to Stretch” strategies.

“Guided Imagery” proves another useful learning activity to help support students’ construction of mental images of what they are reading. During “Guided Imagery” learning activities, teachers pose questions for students to help facilitate students’ construction of mental images of the text. For the book, *My Freedom Trip*, teachers could ask students the following guided questions: “What would you look like if you were taking this long journey?” “What kind of expression would you have on your face?” “Imagine that you are in the story. What are you experiencing with your five senses?” The teacher can also encourage students to form mental images of the text through a discussion during a dialogic read aloud of *My Freedom Trip* by highlighting in the text where the text says, “You can pack your own bag, but remember, only take what you can carry.” Then, the teacher can lead a discussion in which students visualize what they would put in their own backpacks if they had to embark on a dangerous journey to safety. Thus, when readers construct mental images of the text that they are reading, readers have opportunities to utilize their imagination and creativity, while also increasing their connection to the story. Dialogic read alouds offer valuable opportunities for students to practice constructing mental images in a meaningful way, supporting students’ overall comprehension of a given text.

## **Conclusion**

Read alouds promote students’ attentive listening and improve students’ basic literacy skills particularly in the area of oral language development. Read alouds also build students’ vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Read alouds help students to read with expression and with fluency. Furthermore, read alouds naturally contribute to students’ reading engagement and motivation, inspiring students to read independently for pleasure. Dialogic read alouds prove unique forms of read alouds, as dialogic read alouds promote students to delve deeper in their analysis of a text. Engaging in meaningful conversations about texts as a class, students practice reading comprehension strategies with the support and feedback of their teachers and peers. Dialogic read alouds provide students with authentic literacy experiences and encourage students’ critical thinking, problem solving, and participation in classroom discussions.

In order for dialogic read alouds to be successful, teachers must establish a nurturing classroom environment so that students feel comfortable to openly share their perspectives with their peers. As demonstrated in this article, teachers can use the dialogic read aloud strategy to explicitly teach meaningful reading comprehension strategies. Specifically, through the use of interactive dialogic read alouds, teachers can model for students how to make inferences, how to monitor their comprehension, and how to construct mental images of the text. After learning and practicing these strategies as part of dialogic read aloud instructional activities, students not only develop the aforementioned reading skills, but also enrich their overall reading comprehension abilities.

As discussed in detail in the article, teachers can effectively utilize dialogic read alouds to support students' comprehension of refugee children's literature. The article provides four specific works of refugee children's literature and particular instructional activities for teachers to incorporate in their classrooms. However, teachers should be cognizant of how younger students might interpret some sensitive topics depicted in refugee children's literature. The article's authors recommend for teachers to discuss with students the factors that cause refugees to flee their homelands as well as the arduous journey that refugees face to immigrate to another country. Through these discussions, teachers can build students' awareness of the experiences of refugees, helping students to develop their overall empathy for others. In a similar vein, students benefit from listening to stories about refugees and they help students to become increasingly aware of global events and realities. When planning lessons that incorporate refugee children's literature, teachers should consider the tone in which they present the literature, as teachers may have students who are refugees, themselves, or students who have experienced traumatic incidents referenced in the texts. Teachers would not want students who have experienced violence, discrimination, or other forms of oppression, to relive those experiences in the classroom. Therefore, the authors recommend that teachers introduce the topics presented in refugee literature with sensitive detail and with an outpouring of empathy for refugees. Rather than focusing on specific, vivid details of the harsh realities that refugees experience, teachers can, instead, focus on the strength and bravery that refugees possess to leave their home in search for a better life. Often refugee parents make tremendous sacrifices for their children to excel in their new country and teachers should remind their students of these brave sacrifices.

As with all of their lessons, teachers should remember to respect and represent all cultures in their classrooms, especially students' home cultures. Teachers should further include multicultural literature in the classroom to expand students' appreciation for diversity and broaden students' perspectives. Through regularly incorporating multicultural literature in the classroom, students gain insight and respect for the diverse cultures depicted in classroom-adopted texts (Au, 2006; Gopalakrishnan & Persiani-Becker, 2011; Norton, 2013). Refugee children's literature proves a valuable form of multicultural children's literature, depicting the reality of millions of people across the world who have been displaced from their homes due to violence, famine, war, and/or religious or political persecution (Hwang & Hindman). As explained in the following article, when teachers utilize the dialogic read aloud strategy to teach refugee children's literature, students not only gain valuable cultural understanding, but fundamental reading comprehension skills. Teachers can adopt the instructional activities in this article to help facilitate students' understanding of the text and global cultures.

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