

THE VALUE OF READING ALOUD

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ABSTRACT

In a world where much of a young child's literacy development is facilitated through observation and modeling, The Value of Reading Aloud attempts to prove that reading aloud is essential to supporting children as they develop critical literacy skills. While some suggest that reading aloud is detrimental, educators often defend a read aloud's place in education. Using a variety of sources – scholarly articles, expert opinion, and independent postings - the present research includes information regarding: how literacy is used and manipulated in the classroom, literacy's psychological impact, appropriate teaching practices, inappropriate teaching practices, and the detriments to reading aloud.

Figure 1. Brain Activation During Socialization.

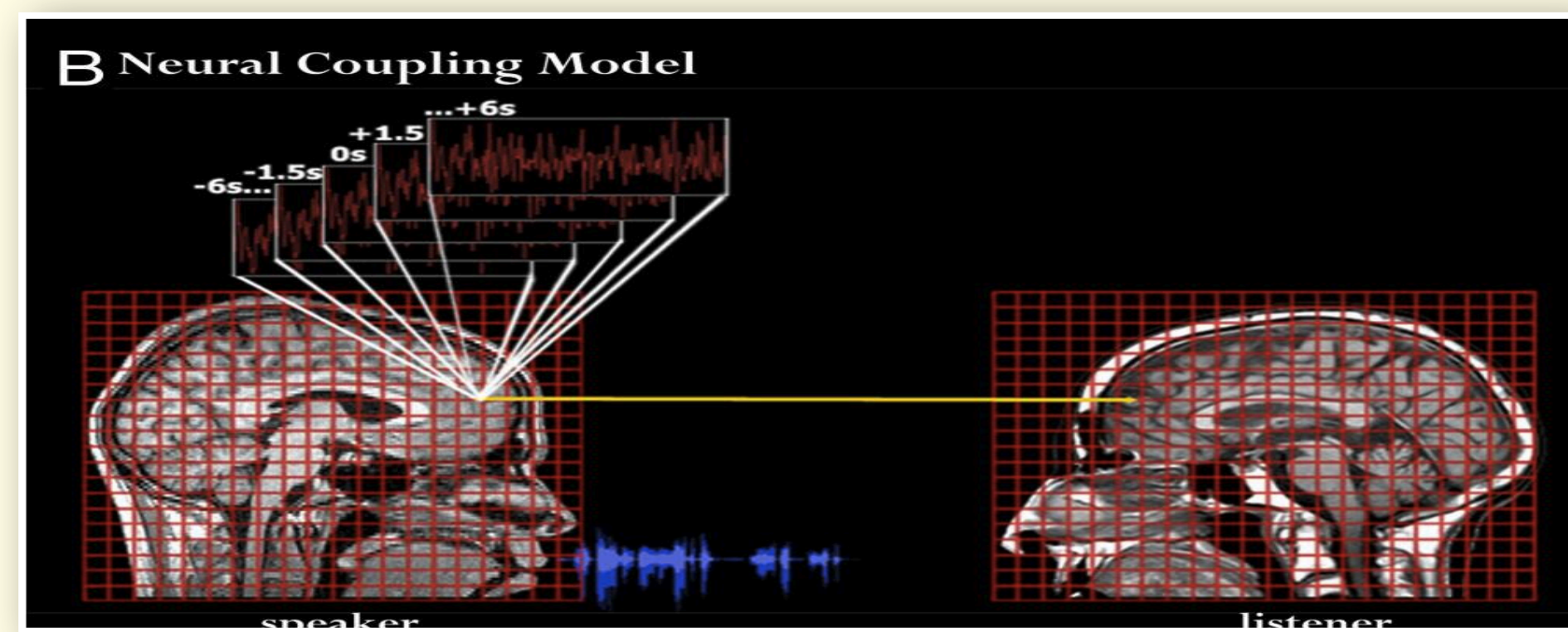


Figure 1. Adapted from “The Science of Storytelling: What Listening to a Story Does to Our Brain,” Welch, Leo. (2012, November 29). The Science of Storytelling: What Listening to a Story Does to Our Brain. Message posted to <https://blog.buffer-app.com/science-of-storytelling-why-telling-a-story-is-the-most-powerful-way-to-activate-our-brains>

INTRODUCTION

One cannot escape literature. Throughout our lives, we find ourselves absorbing information. But when does this skill begin to develop? Some learn from their parents, others learn from their educators. Flashing back to first grade, I remember learning all of the letter sounds, learning how to read, and how to write. Most of the time my classmates and I learned from our teacher, who sat at the head of our circle - leading the group. The relaxing mid-day relief that accompanied a good book has become unforgettable. I, like many others, can close my eyes and remember my first book. Today, that very book, *Little Life Lessons*, has become worn, read multiple times, and cherished. Some suggest that aspects of reading aloud to children are detrimental to their overall literary abilities, but reading aloud provides children with the foundational tools needed to be strong readers, thinkers, analyzers, and speakers.

Figure 2. The Best of Class Read Alouds.



Figure 2. Adapted from “Bilingual Books: Read Them Out Loud,” by LanguageLizard. (2011, August 5) Bilingual Books: Read Them Out Loud. Message posted to <http://blog.language lizard.com/2011/08/05/bilingual-books-read-them-out-loud/>

RESULTS

In essence, The Value of Reading Aloud found that reading aloud is beneficial to all children.

Reading aloud helps children:

- understand appropriate emotions.
- understand basic skills related to how to read.
- learn how to listen and be an appropriate audience member.
- to relax.
- activate multiple regions of the brain.

While multiple pros exist when evaluating the effects of reading aloud, it's important to note that reading aloud must be conducted in a way that's considered masterful. In order for a reading to be well-conducted, an educator must be engaging, thoughtful, well-prepared, and excited (McWilliams, 1998, 1-5). Additionally, it's important to take note of the problems associated with reading aloud.

Detriments to reading aloud include:

- Some students lack the attention skills necessary to listen during a reading.
- Some students don't participate in read alouds, and don't reap the literary rewards associated with the process.
- Some students need to spend more time reading independently, rather than being read to.

Although detriments may exist, effective teachers will ensure their practices meet the needs of all learners; therefore, concerns suggesting that reading aloud is detrimental are easily countered.

METHOD

When attempting to find information to support my hypothesis – reading aloud is essential to supporting children as they develop critical literacy skills – I looked for resources that used unbiased, factual information to support their argument. Each source utilized was retrieved from an expert source that had ties with the field of education. In addition to finding sources that supported my hypothesis, I found sources that contradicted my hypothesis entirely. As shared in *Reading Aloud* by Rhalmi, reading aloud is detrimental to children developing literacy skills (2010, n.p.). While Rhalmi suggests reading aloud is detrimental as it can be difficult to engage all learners, his research allowed me to come up with easy solutions to ensure that reading aloud would be truly beneficial for all children (2010, n.p.). Other sources shared experiences encountered by practicing teachers in the classroom. All of the information found helped me to come up with a clear, supported, logical and truthful conclusion (displayed in the results section).

DISCUSSION

The importance behind read alouds is undeniable. Reading aloud effectively engages students, teaches life lessons, and provides students with some of the skillsets required for creating a successful future. While some suggest reading aloud fails students, most research supports the need for read alouds in the classroom environment.

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