Choral Reading Method

What is choral reading?

Choral reading is an interpretive reading of text by a group of voices. Students may read individual lines or stanzas alone, in pairs or in unison. The teacher also reads to help set the pace, as well as model proper pronunciation.

What reading skills does it help students learn and master?

- It helps students learn to decode.
- It develops effective and fluent read aloud skills.
- It improves sight vocabulary.
- It helps students learn to pronounce new words by hearing others reading aloud at the same time.
- It helps students understand rhythm, meter, patterns, rhymes and characters.
- It demonstrates the importance of oral tradition.

Why is it worth using?

Reading aloud effectively and fluently is a very difficult skill. It takes practice to improve. Unfortunately, this is an activity that causes performance anxiety among many students of all ages. By doing a group reading, students can get the practice they need without having to feel anxious or embarrassed about their reading ability.

How do I pick a story for choral reading?

- Make the selection relatively short.
- Keep it simple. Choose material that the child can read.
- Look for something with a catchy title that will put imaginations to work.
- Select a poem or story that will come alive when read aloud - words with fascinating sounds, contrast of some sort that can be interpreted, mood that can be enhanced through oral interpretation, or dialogue that bears the stamp of personality.

How do students get comfortable with the selection?

To prepare, each reader reads the whole selection that is going to be chorally read. One can read it aloud with the other person following along silently. Then the readers read the piece together. A few repetitions are necessary to fix the piece in the child's mind.
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How do I make the reading fun?

An almost infinite number of possibilities exist for choral reading. Try to select the most appropriate voice elements to reinforce the meaning of the selection. Contrast is the key. Use one or two simple classifications for the voices—high and low, for instance, as well as strong and soft. Here are just a few of the possible strategies:

- Alternate slow and fast lines, stanzas or paragraphs.
- Alternate loud and soft lines.
- Alternate low and high voices.
- Emphasize key words and phrases by reading them in a louder or softer voice.
- Pause for a specified number of silent “beats” before you join in and continue reading.
- Clap or make a certain sound at the end of certain lines, stanzas, or paragraphs.

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americansmasters/education/general.html