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**Bringing (back) Wonder: Read alouds for more than just skill development**

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We know that high quality children's literature can provide a window into other worlds as well as a mirror of our own experiences (Bishop, 1990). Yet in the current educational climate in the United States, opportunities are seldom offered for students to read high quality, meaningful literature. This research focuses on how teachers can read aloud to foster enjoyment and reading skills as well as build community and promote socioemotional health in their classrooms. We argue that reading books above students' instructional levels is imperative to their development as readers. We used qualitative methods to uncover how Hannah and her twenty-two Black and Latinx students grew as a community in this second-grade classroom in an urban Title I school in Texas. We collected and analysed several types of qualitative data, including artefacts such as lesson plans, student responses and journals, and we wrote field notes and reflective journals, and interviewed students. Our research suggests that reading compelling, high interest children's literature is a joyful, pleasurable experience and can indeed motivate students to read on their own while also creating a humanising effect.