Increasing comprehension in a kindergarten classroom through read-alouds

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Increasing Comprehension in a Kindergarten Classroom

Through Read-Alouds

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Abstract:

This study was conducted in a kindergarten classroom to see if teacher read alouds would increase overall comprehension. This study was conducted over a six-week period during the 2011-2012 academic school year. The kindergarten classroom that participated in the study was located in Cambridge, Wisconsin. The researcher found a correlation between increased read aloud practice and increased comprehension and retelling scores. The data collected concluded that as read alouds increased, so did comprehension and retelling scores.
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature Page</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Theories and Research</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Training</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud Strategies</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Interactive Read Alouds</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Procedures</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Sample Population</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Population Used</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Data Collected</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Results</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation and Analysis of Data</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Conclusions</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting to Existing Research</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of Results</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths and Limitations</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

I have been an educator for the past six years and found that my greatest struggle surrounded the area of reading. When is the right time to start literacy instruction? What are the most crucial skills that young learners need to have? What can I do as an educator to ensure that I am using best practice to teach my students about reading? Constant reflection and questioning is what led me to focus on reading instruction with early learners.

Reading Comprehension

Instructing elementary age students in all academic areas has been my job description for the past six years. I firmly believe that the foundation of all education is reading. Literacy knowledge is needed for success in all academic areas. It has been my experience that comprehension is one of the greatest early literacy skills needed by elementary students. Without this crucial skill, students are unable to make connections and fully understand any area of academics. According to the Wisconsin Common Core Standards, by the end of kindergarten students should be able to support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text with support. The Wisconsin Common Core Standards also state that by the end of Kindergarten that with prompting and support students should be able to retell familiar stories while including detail. This shows that starting early children are required to learn the skill of comprehension. As I began to think about my topic for action research, I knew that I wanted to look at the topic of comprehension in kindergarten students. I knew that the foundation of this skill was crucial for their future reading success. I decided to look into the most commonly used format for reading instruction with elementary aged students, read alouds. I then looked
at research and data that had already been conducted regarding read alouds and comprehension with early elementary students.

Over the years several studies have been conducted where read alouds was the main focus. Many of the articles I found suggested that read alouds held a crucial role in supporting the skill of comprehension. I was interested to see if any of the strategies or methods used in previous studies could help with my research with kindergarten aged students.

Pentimonti and Justice (2009), Holland (2007), and Barnyak (2011) all conducted studies that looked into the role that parents and teachers play when it comes to read alouds and comprehension. Pentimonti and Justice found in their study that teachers tend to only use low support scaffolding skills during read alouds. This led them to suggest the need for more professional development. Professional development would make teachers aware and capable of providing the best read aloud instruction for their students. Holland and Barnyak, on the other hand took a closer look at parental involvement. Barnyak looked at the physical and verbal interactions of children as they read and discussed picture books with their parents. The study found that parents believed that it was necessary to read and discuss picture books with their children, but when doing so very few actually asked questions and had their children retell the story. Overall, the studies conducted in this area acknowledged the need for parental and teacher read aloud interaction as well as proper knowledge for both teachers and parents on the process of read alouds.

Justice, McGinity, Piasta, Kaderavek, and Fan (2010); Greenawalt (2010); Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani (2008); Leung (2008); Cummins & Gerard (2011); and Kraemer,
MCcabe, & Sinatra (2012) all conducted studies that looked into specific read aloud strategies and the effects they had on students’ literacy growth. These researchers looked into strategies such as print referencing, small group instruction, repeated read alouds, and direct instruction of informational text. They all came to the same conclusions that suggested repeated instruction on specific strategies helped improve students’ literacy skills.

Other authors such as Adomat (2010) and Wiseman (2010), conducted studies that looked directly at shared interactive read alouds and the impact they had on students’ comprehension. Both researchers found that it was crucial for teachers to be aware of the different responses that students use to understand text. Teachers need to understand these responses and allow for the opportunity to use them. The research I found was very valuable but I needed to develop a plan of my own that could be conducted and analyzed in a short amount of time.

I decided to focus my research specifically on read-alouds and comprehension. The question I wanted to answer was: do small group read alouds increase kindergarten comprehension abilities? I chose to evaluate comprehension by retelling, explicit questioning and implicit questioning. Once I had this question in mind, I designed and implemented a six-week intervention process with 16 kindergarteners in a small village in Southeastern, Wisconsin. The population of this rural elementary school was 420 students. Ninety-one percent of the students were Caucasian, 4% were Hispanic, 3% were Black, a little more than 1% were Asian and less than 1% were American Indian. Twenty-five percent of the school’s population was reported as economically disadvantaged. The qualitative study itself included 17 kindergarten students, all from the
same class. Twelve of the students were female and five of the students were male. The student’s range of ages was between 5 and 6. The mean age was 5.2. One student was Hispanic and 16 students were Caucasian. All students that participated in this study were part of the regular education classroom. Two of the students had Individual Education Plans for speech. Once the population sample was selected, the procedures and interventions were put into place and data was collected.

I wanted to see if there was a positive correlation between small group read alouds and comprehension skills. I collected data in two ways. The first was informal and collected at each intervention (Appendix H). I charted to see if students were answering explicit and implicit questions and if they were able to retell stories. This chart let me see who was participating and who wasn’t. It helped guide my intervention instruction to meet the needs of each student in the groups. The data collection assessment I used to see if there was a positive correlation was the QRI-5 by Lesli and Caldwell (Appendix A & B). I used both the retelling and explicit/implicit questioning for both the pre and post-tests.

Conclusion

The next chapter will focus more on the studies I used to help design my research action plan. There will be more complete summaries of the studies with clear conclusions that came from the data collected. These studies are what helped guide my research plan on the relationship between read alouds and comprehension with kindergarten students.
Key Terms:

**Constant comparison method**: A process in which any newly collected data is compared with previous data that was collected in one or more earlier studies.

**Print referencing**: Specifically refers to the use of verbal and nonverbal cues to encourage children’s attention to and interactions with print.

**Mann-Whitney U test**: A non-parametric statistical hypothesis test for assessing whether one of two samples of independent observations tends to have larger values than the other.

**MANOVA**: (multivariate analysis of variance) A type of multivariate analysis used to analyze data that involves more than one dependent variable at a time.

**Chi square analysis**: A statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data that would be expected to be obtained according to a specific hypothesis.

**Paired samples t-test**: A test that compares the means of two variables. It computes the difference between the two variables for each case, and tests to see if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

**Point-biserial correlation t-test**: Tests are conducted when one of the variables is dichotomous. A dichotomous variable is when the categorical variable has only two categories, such as gender: male, female.

**Expository Text**: Texts that are meant to inform, describe explain or define something.

**Informational Text**: This type of text is used to inform students about the natural or social world. Characters are not used.
Narrative Text: The telling of a story or an account of a sequence of events

Explicit Questions: They have a clear and obvious answer and leave no doubt as to the intended meaning.

Implicit Questions: These are questions that require the reader to infer, and the answers may not be clear within the text.

Read Alouds: A story that is read aloud to students.
CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Reading has become the main focus of elementary classrooms over the years and researchers have been looking for instructional methods that meet the needs of all students successfully. Comprehension is a strong component of reading and is often taught through read alouds. Research has proven that read alouds are an effective way to build comprehension (Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker, 2008). The purpose of this action research project was to explore the area of read alouds and their relation to comprehension in a kindergarten setting. The research question was: Do read alouds increase students’ ability to retell a fictional story and comprehend the literal meaning of the text. The study was quantitative in design and took place in a kindergarten classroom located in the Midwest. The independent variable was incorporating small group read alouds in addition to whole group read alouds for 17 kindergarten students. The dependent variable was the QRI-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). The study lasted 6 weeks.

The literature reviews contain twelve articles relating to the issue of read alouds. These articles are divided up into sub-categories. The first section contains three articles that explore the need for teacher training as well as parent knowledge in order to provide quality read aloud practice. The second section contains seven articles that discuss read aloud strategies that promote stronger vocabulary, print knowledge, and questioning to better comprehend texts. The last section includes two articles that explores the issue of involving students in read aloud practice. Teacher training and parent knowledge, comprehension strategies and creating opportunities for interactive responses with students will help build comprehension in kindergarten students.
Qualified Training

The articles in this section focus on the importance of teacher training in order to teach using quality read alouds. The articles identified the need for more training with early elementary staff in order to provide read alouds that promote comprehension. The articles also identify a need for teacher reflection. The reflection allows teachers to recognize areas that need improvement in respects to read alouds and the importance of using them with emergent readers.

Pentimonti and Justice (2009) conducted a study that explored the effects of using six different types of scaffolds (generalizing, reasoning, predicting, co-participating, reducing choices, eliciting) in preschool classrooms. Two questions were addressed in this study: (1) to what extent do preschool teachers use high and low support scaffolds during whole group read aloud sessions? And (2) To what extent does preschool teachers’ perceived frequency of use of specific scaffolds correspond to their actual use of scaffolds. The purpose of this study was to support the hypothesis that high-support scaffolds are important for children who are struggling to acquire language and literacy concepts. The independent variable was the use of whole group read alouds in five preschool classrooms. The dependent variables were videotaped observations showing the frequency of six types of scaffolds using the systematic observation procedure.

The research conducted took place in five Head Start classrooms in a rural region of a midwestern state. All five participating teachers were Caucasian females. Four out of the five teachers held a two-year Associate’s degree. The fifth teacher held a Bachelor’s degree. All teachers involved had nine years of experience or more. Four of the participating classrooms had an enrollment of 18 children. The other classroom had
17 children enrolled. The average age of students participating in this research was four years and ten months old. Fifty eight percent of the children’s families had an annual income of less than $20,000.

The study lasted the entire academic year (2008-2009). Before the study began teachers involved participated in a one-day training workshop. The training included an explanation of the study procedures as well as strategies for book use in the classroom. Teachers were given ideas for how to foster learning during read alouds as well as suggestions for how to use scaffolding strategies. During the one-day training there was a two-hour block that discussed the six scaffolding strategies that would be assessed in the study. Explicit definitions and examples were given of both low and high-level support strategies. The strategies were taken from the *Ladders to Literacy* instructional manual (O’Connor et al. 2005). The low level strategies include: Generalizing, or to form a conclusion based on a few facts; Reasoning, or to form conclusions based on facts and; Predicting, or to make a guess before reading. All of these strategies help children continue to be successful with reading texts at their independent levels. This means the read the text at a level that they can are able to without the help of others. High level strategies include: Eliciting, or drawing a conclusion based on facts; Reducing choices, or narrowing down your choices based on information and; Co-participation, when others help children to participate in activities that may be too difficult to complete independently.

As the school year began, the study examined teachers’ use of the six scaffolding strategies. The setting that was examined was a single whole class read aloud session. The session was collected and analyzed in February for each of the five teachers.
participating in the study. Each teacher read the same book and was videotaped. Once
the videotape was collected trained scorers coded it. They identified each occurrence of
each of the six strategies used. Two scorers looked at the videotapes for two of the five
sessions to assure reliability of the coding. Teachers were also given a questionnaire at
the end of the study. This questionnaire aimed to document the teachers’ perception of
their use of scaffolding during their read aloud sessions. It focused on if they utilized the
six strategies and if so which type did they tend to use (low or high).

There were two goals of this research study. The first was to determine the extent
to which preschool teachers used six specific types of scaffolding strategies. The results
from the coding showed that there were a total of 138 scaffolding strategies used. The
majority (96%) of strategies used were low support strategies. Teachers only used 4% of
high support strategies during their read aloud sessions. There was not one
documentation of the use of the high support strategy, eliciting. The second goal of this
research study was to determine if teachers’ could self-report their use of scaffolding.
The results of the questionnaire showed that 80% felt that they used both high and low
support strategies about the same amount. Twenty percent felt that they utilized high
support strategies more frequently. The results of this study revealed that teachers
actually utilized varying types of low support strategies during read alouds despite
thinking they were using both types: high and low support strategies. The study also
revealed that high support strategies were rarely used. In addition this study revealed that
teachers’ perception of use of scaffolding strategies differed greatly from their actual use.
The overall findings of this study suggest that there is a need for greater professional
development to increase teacher awareness of scaffolding strategies. These strategies in turn will help support a variety of language and literacy goals.

Holland (2007) conducted a case study that explored the importance of parent and/or caregiver led read alouds with infants. There is controversy between educators, researchers and health care professionals as to the benefits of reading aloud with infants. According to Nino (1983) and Snow and Goldfield (1983) (as cited in Holland, 2007), educators and reading researchers believe that read alouds provide positive experiences for infants in the area of literacy. Health care professionals suggest that children under the age of six months do not have the ability to attend to stories read aloud. Holland’s purpose in this case study was to support the idea that parents and/or caregivers should nurture the use of daily read alouds in order to support the development of their baby’s language.

The case study was conducted with an infant girl over the period of six months. The study took place from before birth until she turned six months old. The study took place in a low-income area located in Mississippi with a middle-income family. Both parents held college degrees. The infant was considered average by her pediatrician in all areas of growth and development. Holland (2010) observed the infant during the first two months in the care of her parents. The second, third, and fourth months in the care of her grandmother, and last two months of the case study were observed at a parochial childcare center which was part of the church the family attended.

The method for this case study consisted of daily observations. The observations were targeted to examine the read aloud opportunities that parents and caregivers provided to a six month old from before birth to the time she reached six months. During
the first four months of the infant’s life, she was observed in her home environment usually during the late afternoon. During her fifth and sixth month she continued to be observed in her home environment in the late afternoons as well as in her child care environment during the early part of the day. The two environments were observed respectively to determine if reading aloud could promote literacy development with infants. The observations were gauged on the infants’ reactions and physical engagements (eye movement/contact, babbling, touching the book, etc.) to the book being read aloud.

The reading environment that the infant was brought into consisted of a mother and a father that read at least three books aloud daily. This occurred in utero and continued for the first six months of her life. The mother frequently would sing songs with rhythmic tunes, recited Mother Goose rhymes, and orally described daily activities to the infant. During the three months that the grandmother cared for the infant, similar literacy experiences occurred. The grandmother recited rhymes and read books aloud to the infant. The environment changed when the infant started attending the parochial childcare. The reading opportunities during the day were not as extensive. There were very few books available in the classroom and they were used more for toys than reading tools. The read alouds that occurred were from local newspapers and were not age appropriate. During this time the parents were still reading to the infant three times daily.

The research question in this case study was: Does reading aloud to an infant (in the home environment and child care) promote language development? After six months of daily observations in both environments, Holland found that reading aloud to infants does indeed benefit the child in the area of literacy development. Holland found that the
infant showed signs of pleasure by cooing and snuggling with the parent that was reading aloud to her. She also began to make eye contact with the parent that was reading. During her second, third, and fourth month, the infant began to “talk” along with her parents and grandmother when a book was being read aloud. The infant was constantly babbling and mimicking sounds of the rhythmic words. She also watched intently as her parents and grandmother pointed to pictures. During the infants fifth and sixth month, she began to grab for the book and help turn pages. Holland also concluded, after this research, that childcare teachers need to provide more literacy experience for infants. She observed few occasions where the infant interacted with books during her time at the child care center and when the interactions did take place they were passive. Overall this case study validates that of past researchers and educators and demonstrates the necessity to provide language opportunities for infants.

Barnyak (2011) conducted a quantitative study that looked at the physical and verbal interactions of children as they read and discussed picture books with their parents. It also explored the literacy attitudes and beliefs of rural parents and their children. The researcher based part of this study off Bronfenbrenners’s Ecological Model (1979), which identifies four different and interrelated spheres of influence. The one sphere of influence that was the focus of this study, however, was that of the microsystem: or a system that includes parents and children sharing literacy experiences. Barnyak wanted to see the impact parents have on their children’s literacy acquisition. She focused her research on this relationship. This study specifically addressed four questions. The first being, what are rural parents’ attitudes and beliefs about reading books together aloud with children? The second question was, what are the young children’s attitudes and
beliefs about sharing books together at home with their parents or guardians? The next question was, what physical and verbal interactions occur between the parent and child during read alouds? The final question was, are the observed interactions of parents and children aligned with their self-reported attitudes and beliefs of reading aloud?

This study aimed to examine the literacy practices of rural families in Western Pennsylvania. The director of a small educational center was contacted in order to find participants that had children between the ages of 2-7. Six families agreed to work in this collective case study. The first family had both parents participate as well as a 6-year-old girl and a 2-year-old girl. The second family included a mother, a 5-year-old girl and a 3-year-old boy. The third family consisted of a mother and a 4-year-old boy. The next family included a mother and a 5-year-old boy. The fifth family was comprised of a mother and a 3-year-old girl. The final family consisted of a mother and a 7-year-old boy. All together this study included seven adults and eight children ranging from 2-7 years in age. All the participants belonged to the educational center, but met at different places for the study to take place. One family wanted to conduct the study in their home, two used the public library and the other four used the educational center.

The methods that were used for data collection included interview and observations. The interviews were used to gain information regarding parents’ and children’s attitudes and beliefs about sharing books together. These semi-structured interviews with parents and children were conducted and video recorded. The observer took notes during the interviews and each parent was able to review these and clarify any responses they deemed necessary. The questions all revolved around attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding reading aloud between parents and children. Children were also
asked to bring their favorite storybook to the interview. The observations were the second method used during this study. The researcher observed parents and children sharing storybooks. The researcher looked for physical and verbal interactions between the parents and children. In order to ensure the interactions were as close to normal as possible, a video recorder was used. The researcher was not directly in the room during the observation. Parents and children could pick the books they wanted to read and where they wanted to read them.

Data analysis was conducted when the interviews and observations were through. The data from the all the videotapes (interviews with parents and children, and observation of parent and child storybook sharing) was transcribed. An instrument called the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory based on the works of DeBruin-Parecki, (1999,2004,2007), was used to help in the observations of book sharing sessions. The data was coded and categorized. Each transcription was read several times to search for commonalities. The interviews were analyzed first, followed by the observations. Once everything was analyzed and coded, the attitudes, and beliefs were compared. This form is called the constant comparison method and helped the investigator look for similarities in the data and define categories and themes. The common themes found within the parents’ interviews were: reading within families’ everyday lives; reading supported through parent’s positive outlook; and reading supported through fostering storybook extensions. The common themes found with in the children’s interviews were: sharing books, and attitudes and beliefs. The categories that the observations were based came from the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory (DeBruin-Parecki, 2004). The categories included: increasing attention to the text; encouraging interactive reading and
assisting comprehension; and applying literacy strategies. Once the data was collected and analyzed, some interesting findings appeared.

The first research question in this study was: what are the rural parents’ attitudes and beliefs about reading books together aloud with their children? The interviews that took place revealed that although parents had diverse experiences, they reported sharing storybooks as an important part of their everyday lives. Six out of the 7 parents shared that they enjoyed reading at home. Five out of the 7 shared that reading was important in order to have a positive impact on their children. Five out of 7 supported the use of prediction in sharing books, and all 7 out of 7 discussed the importance of retelling. Overall the parents mostly shared positive attitudes and beliefs about reading as well as goals for their children.

The second research question in this study was: what are the children’s attitudes and beliefs about sharing books together at home with their parents or guardians? The interviews revealed that children noticed the illustrations, vocabulary and generals of books. They all expressed a positive feeling in regards to reading storybooks, and enthusiastically described their favorite storybook. Five of the eight children ended up sharing more than one of their favorite books. Overall, the children showed great enthusiasm for reading.

The third research question in this study was: while reading aloud, what observable interactions occurred between the adult and child? All of the children were observed sitting in close proximity to the reader (3 on laps, and 5 sat beside). Three out of the 8 children helped their parent turn the pages of the book. Two out of those 3 helped try and read the book as well. All of the parents were observed sustaining the
children’s interest throughout the book sharing session. All of the adults were observed allowing their children to actively participate. The parents were also all observed using books that were of interest to their children. When reading the books, parents pointed to text/illustrations to help their children understand the books. Six out of the 7 parents were observed asking questions about the content of the story. Only three of the children were observed asking questions. Four of the parents were observed asking their children to make predictions. None of the parents were observed asking children to recall or retell any of the texts. Overall, the observations gave the researcher some good information on what key literacy events took place during the read alouds.

The final research question in the study was: are the observed interactions of the parents and children aligned with their self-reported attitudes and beliefs? The information that was collected through the interviews was compared to the observations of parents and children sharing storybooks. All seven adults reported the importance of retelling, but not one of them encouraged their children to retell during storytime. This was the only area that there was a significant difference between the interview and the observation. For the most part, the findings show that the parents’ and children’s self-reported attitudes and beliefs about reading were aligned with their physical and verbal interactions during the storybook time.

This study was unique in that it was a qualitative study that focused on parents and children’s literacy in a rural setting. Many studies are conducted in urban or suburban settings, not usually rural. Also, very few observations have been studied regarding children and parents sharing storybooks. This study helps to make connections between children’s literacy among families within rural communities, as well as compare
self-reports and observations of parents and their children. Barnyak (2011) states, “Positive literacy experiences between parents and children can enhance children’s desire to become avid readers themselves” (p. 153). One of the greatest things in education is reflection. It makes a person take a look at what they are doing and compare it to what they should be doing. It in turn helps a person grow. The parents and children in this study had that very same opportunity. They had a chance to share what they thought was important about reading and compare it to what they actually share with their children. It gives them a chance to focus on areas that they might not have strongly supported and in turn help their children gain a strong foundation in literacy. Barnyak, (2011) reiterates the importance of continually reading aloud to students at home. She stated, “Parents play a vital role in their children’s literacy development and reading aloud to children is a beneficial experience to enhance their literacy learning. (Barnyak, 2011. p. 156).

Another source of interest in the field of read alouds is that of introducing specific strategies as students encounter texts. Print focused read alouds, vocabulary focused read alouds, expository focused read alouds and repeated interactive read alouds help reach out to all students. These strategies when used on a regular basis can help increase comprehension in early readers.

**Read Aloud Strategies**

The seven articles in this section focus on reading strategies that help build comprehension through read alouds. The articles establish a need for vocabulary support, print focused activities and questioning. The articles also discuss the need for opportunities. Students will learn differently and a variety of strategies need to be provided continuously for them to be successful.
Justice, McGinity, Piasta, Kaderavek and Fan (2010) conducted a study that explored the effects of print referencing during whole group read alouds. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of print referencing with 4 and 5 year old children. The study also examined 8 specific child-and setting-level moderators to determine whether these influenced the relationship between teachers’ use of print referencing style and children’s print-knowledge development. The authors’ hypothesis was that print-focused read-alouds would have a positive impact on children's literacy development. The independent variable was the implementation of print-focused read-alouds along with a comparison group that did not receive extra implementations. The dependent variables consisted of students' scores on both the Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Preschool Version (CLASS-PreK) (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool 2 (CELF-P2) (Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004).

The research study occurred in the Northeastern part of the United States. Approximately half of the classrooms were located in Ohio and the other half were in Virginia. The teaching participants consisted of 59 lead classroom teachers (23 from Head Start Programs, 19 from subsidized pre-K programs supported through Title One, 5 from early childhood special education programs, and 12 from fee-supported independent programs). The student participants consisted of 379 randomly selected children, 175 male and 204 female. Forty two percent of the students were reported as white, 37% were of African American, 8% were Hispanic, 11% were multiracial or other and 2% were not reported. The age requirement for this study was between the ages of three years
and 6 months and four years and eleven months. Students that participated also could not be under an individualized education plan (IEP).

Teachers were randomly assigned to study conditions, including the high-dose print-referencing group and the comparison group. The high-dose print-referencing group required teachers to receive training prior to the beginning of the year. The training included specific directions and materials related to print referencing. This training familiarized teachers with using verbal and non-verbal cues to get children to interact with print. The comparison group received training as well but it was not related to print referencing. Both groups participated in a 30-week read-aloud program. During the 30 weeks the high-dose print-referencing group integrated explicit references to specified print within the 120 read-aloud sessions. Teachers were instructed to read each book four times a week, only having one read aloud session per day. The teachers were also asked to present the book as a whole group session instead of small groups. At the end of each week the read aloud book was placed in the library but not read as a group again. The comparison group read the same 120 read-alouds but used their normal everyday routine.

Following the 30-week read-aloud programs both groups were assessed to address the original research question. The researchers investigated the gains in children’s print knowledge by using two different assessments. The first assessment was in relation to instructional quality. Direct observation using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Preschool Version (CLASS–PreK) (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) was used. This assessment measured the quality of instruction based on adult-child interaction. Each classroom was scored on three areas, concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. This test was given both in the fall and again in the spring. The
second assessment administered measured the child’s language ability. The assessment used was the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool (CELF P2; Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004). There are three subtests that comprise this evaluation, sentence structure, word structure, and expressive vocabulary. When the score was recorded collectively it measured vocabulary, syntax and morphology.

As a result of their research, Justice, McGinity, Piasta, Kaderavek and Fan (2010) concluded that the use of print referencing style has a positive impact on children’s print knowledge. Students that participated in the print-referencing group had slightly higher scores than the comparison group. Students that participated in the print-referencing group scored -.10 on the fall assessment and .02 on the spring assessment. Children in the comparison group scored -.03 in the fall and -.11 in the spring. They also found that children enrolled in higher quality classrooms demonstrated greater gains in print knowledge during the year. Results from this research demonstrated that teachers could make modest adjustments in their instruction styles that increase the knowledge children have with print. The group that explicitly referenced print during their instruction saw increases with their students when compared to the group that was not exposed.

Fien, Santoro, Baker, Park, Chard, Williams, and Haria (2011) predicted that small group instruction that is used as a supplement to whole class instruction with a read aloud curriculum will improve one’s vocabulary and retelling. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of small group instruction on the vocabulary and comprehension of first-grade students that have been identified with low language and low vocabulary skills. The independent variables for this research was the implementation of whole group and small group read aloud instruction along with a
comparison group which only received whole-group instruction. The dependent variables consisted of student’s scores on the Relational Vocabulary subtest of the Test of Oral Language Development-Primary, 3rd edition (TOLD-P-3) (Newcomer & Hammill, 1997), Strong Narrative Assessment Procedure (Strong, 1998), and the Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge a researcher-developed measure.

The research performed occurred in the Pacific Northwest. Eighteen first-grade classrooms from nine Title I schools participated in this study. Overall there were 106 first-grade students that were between the ages of six and seven. Fifty-four students were in the group that received the extra small-group interventions and 52 students were in the control group that just received the whole-group instruction. The intervention group consisted of 55.6% female students and 44.4% male students; 74.1% were white, 1.9% were African American, 18.5% were Hispanic, 1.9% were Native American, and 3.7% declined to answer. Within the intervention group 18.5% were eligible for special education and 7.4% were English language learners. The control group consisted of 40.4% females and 59.6% males; 69.2% were white, 3.8% were African American, 19.2% were Hispanic, 3.8% were Native American, 1.9% were Asian and 1.9% declined to answer. Within the control group 23.1% were eligible for special education and 5.8% were English language learners.

Students were randomly assigned to either the intervention group or the control group. All 18 classrooms used the Read Aloud Curriculum (Coyne, Zipoli et al., 2009) in whole group instruction. The Read Aloud Curriculum was used for eight weeks. The curriculum contained four units and each unit contained three expository and four narrative lessons that focused on science-related content. All read-alouds also included
before, during and after reading components with explicit comprehension and vocabulary instruction. Each lesson was between 28 and 30 minutes in duration and lasted for 40 days. The intervention group utilized an identical structure and added interventions two times a week. The interventions were about 20 minutes in length and occurred for the duration of 8 weeks. Each small group consisted of anywhere between two and five students. The purpose of the small group instruction was to increase student comprehension of, and vocabulary related to, expository content. The books that were used for the intervention group were Big Books that were written by a local science teacher. The content and vocabulary were strategically integrated to match the whole group Read Aloud Curriculum.

Each small group intervention was set up the same way. The first lesson began with a short warm-up discussion to build background knowledge. Next the students would be shown a picture that would relate to the topic they would be earning about during the day. Students would then be given a chance to share their connections. Sample questions such as, “what do you know about this animal?” or “Have you seen this animal before?” were asked. The next step involved the educator informing students on the challenging vocabulary that they would be introduced to during the lesson. Students would say and repeat the daily words in order to become familiar with them. Students would also practice the definition of the word, practice using it in their expressive language, and create examples and non-examples of the word.

The second lesson began with a review of vocabulary discussed in lesson one. Additional words would be added and discussed. The new component added was discussing the main idea. The purpose of this was to focus the students on
comprehension. Finally the educator would read the first part of the Big Book and guide students to discussion on important components.

The third lesson consisted of reviewing content from the previous lessons and finishing the Big Book read aloud. After the book was read, a review took place in the format of a game. The fourth and final lesson began with the discussion of the notes and content from the previous lessons. The educator would then have students sort and categorize the content. The lesson concluded with a summary of the content from the current unit and a preview of the unit to come next.

Data were analyzed with TOLD-P-3. (Newcomer & Hammill, 1997). This method measured the language proficiency, and assessed skills in the area of semantics, syntax, and phonology. The Relational Vocabulary subtest was administered to all students before the intervention began and was used to identify students at risk for language difficulties. At the end of the eight weeks, students were asked to retell a narrative story they had heard. Standardized prompts from the Strong Narrative Assessment Procedure (Strong 1998) were used to elicit the retell. The information provided gave an estimate on the students’ narrative comprehension. Students were audio recorded and were assessed on a scale of 20 possible points. Teachers that were not part of the study scored the retelling. The same assessment was used to assess the expository retellings. The only difference was that students were asked to tell everything they could about the information they had learned. There were only ten possible points to earn on each retelling. Once again trained staff were used to score these retellings, not teachers involved in the study. The last piece of data collected was vocabulary knowledge. The data was collected by a research-developed measure. Students were
assessed on 16 taught and untaught vocabulary words from the expository text used during the whole group read alouds. Eight of the words were taken from vocabulary words that were explicitly taught and the other eight were taken from the text but not individually taught. Each child was asked to tell the meaning of the vocabulary word and use it in context. The definition and use were both worth a possible of two points.

As a result of their research, Fien, Santoro, Baker, Park, Chard, Williams, and Haria (2011) concluded that in respect to narrative retelling, the intervention had no effect on the outcome. In respects to expository retelling the research presented that those who received the intervention scored 0.89 point higher than those in the control group. When analyzing the vocabulary section of the study, students that received the interventions scored 5.98 points higher than those that did not receive the intervention. The results from this study preliminarily support that small-group instruction, when accompanied by quality whole group read alouds, enhances the vocabulary knowledge and expository retellings of students identified with low vocabulary and language skills.

Greenawalt (2010), conducted a study that explored the effects of repeated interactive read alouds using non-fiction text on comprehension and vocabulary. The purpose of this study was to answer two research questions. The first question was, “Is it effective for teachers to employ three repeated interactive read-alouds of a sophisticated non-fiction text to promote comprehension and vocabulary usage in students?” The second question was, “Will repeated read-alouds help students engage higher-level thinking skills and promote their ability to incorporate vocabulary words from the text into their own vocabularies?” The researcher’s hypothesis stated that repeated interactive read alouds would increase comprehension and vocabulary with non-fiction texts. The
independent variable in this study was the implementation of three interactive read alouds. All three used the same book *Elephants Can Paint Too!* (Arnold, 2005). They also used the same eight vocabulary words. The dependent variables were a teacher created yes or no quiz that was used to figure out literal knowledge, and transcriptions of videotapes to figure out the number of vocabulary prompts needed.

The research that took place occurred in two different elementary schools in the Northeastern part of the United States. The first group that participated was a kindergarten classroom from a rural school district. This group was comprised of fifteen afternoon kindergarten students. Eight of the students were girls and the other seven were boys. All students included in this group came from homes where English was their first language. The second group that participated was a first grade classroom from an urban school district. This group was comprised of twenty-five students. Fourteen of the students were girls and eleven were boys. Five of the students were English Language Learners.

This study took was completed in less than two weeks. The kindergarten received their first intervention on a Monday and the other two interventions a couple days later. The first-grade students received their first intervention on a Friday and the other two during the following week. The intervention started with an interactive read aloud of *Elephants Can Paint Too!* To ensure that the kindergarten and first grade interventions were similar, Greenawalt pre-read the book and wrote down interactive questions and comments to use with both groups. The interventions for both kindergarten and first grade started with an introduction of the book and discussing the pictures on the cover. Following the discussion, predictions were made as to what would happen in the story.
Greenawalt followed up by introducing the students to the word non-fiction. The next step was reading the book. While reading the book to the students, Greenawalt modeled analytical thoughts and questions. During the read-aloud vocabulary support was provided as well. Eight pre-selected words were chosen from the text and supported throughout the session. The support was conducted by providing definitions and showing additional pictures to help students create images and make connections. The second intervention occurred in both rooms a few days later and consisted of the same format the first intervention did. The only difference was that this time more analytical questions were used as well as continued support with the eight vocabulary words. The last intervention continued to follow the same format as the first two. In addition to continued support with questioning and vocabulary there was a focus on retelling. Greenawalt supported and prompted the students as they retold the story that they had heard for the third time.

Once each individual intervention was completed there was a small assessment that the students individually participated in. Each child was given a note card. One side said the word “yes” and the other side said “no.” The same nine literal comprehension questions were asked to all the students. While the students answered the questions, Greenawalt tallied up their responses. This same method of data collection was used after all three interventions. The other method of data collection included the transcription of the audio taped sessions. The transcription was of the open-ended questions that were utilized as well as the students’ responses. From the audiotapes, data was also collected on the amount of times that Greenawalt had to prompt the students to
use the eight vocabulary words. The students’ reactions to these prompts were also recorded.

There were three areas that were targeted during this study, literal comprehension, critical thinking skills and vocabulary usage. In respects to literal comprehension both the kindergarten and first grade students scored 100% on the questions after each of the three interventions. This implies that repeated interactive read-alouds might not promote further literal comprehension skills. The second area where data was collected was with critical thinking skills. Open-ended questions were asked and the number of critical thinking responses was documented. The kindergarten students were presented 14 questions and had 84 responses with the first intervention. By the last intervention they were presented with 19 questions and responded with 202 responses. The first grade students had a similar outcome. With their first intervention they were asked 14 questions and responded with 121 responses. By the last intervention they were presented with 19 questions and responded 277 responses. These results show that the use of critical thinking skills increased after each read-aloud intervention. This implies that the frequency of students using critical thinking skills increases with subsequent read-alouds. The last area of focus was with vocabulary. The data collected showed that both groups of students’ vocabulary usage increased after subsequent interactive read alouds. For example, the kindergarteners responded 23 times with vocabulary after the first read aloud and 65 times after the third read aloud. The results were similar with the first graders as well. They responded 128 times after the first read aloud and 177 after the third one. These results suggest that the number of students who contextually understood the vocabulary words was increasing after each interactive read-aloud.
Overall, this study preliminarily suggests that repeated interactive read-alouds help build critical thinking skills and vocabulary but do not have as much of an effect on literal comprehension.

One last area of difficulty that students exhibit when gaining literacy comprehension is the interactions they have with read alouds. All students are unique. They bring different background knowledge to text as well as learn in different ways. It is important to create several opportunities for students to build upon the strengths of the students around them (Adomat, 2010).

Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani (2008) conducted a case study exploring the impact of read-alouds in the classroom. This case study aimed to answer two questions. The first being, what is the impact of a read-aloud strategy on young children’s vocabulary development? The other question was, what is the impact of a read-aloud strategy on young children’s comprehension skills? The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a read-aloud strategy on children’s vocabulary development and comprehension skills. The researchers collected their data through observation, children’s writing samples, and conferences with children.

Fifty-three five and six year-old kindergarteners participated in this case study. This included twenty-seven girls and twenty-six boys. All of the children came from economically disadvantaged homes in Beirut, Lebanon. The children spoke Arabic as their first language and learned French as a second one. The children were taught in two different classrooms. The majority of the children lacked the basic literacy experiences that children are provided at home by their parents.
The read-aloud sessions were conducted on a daily basis over a period of ten weeks. They took place from mid February until the end of April. The children listened to five fiction stories. Four of the stories were read over a two-week timeline. The fifth book was read in only one week. This means that children listened to repeated readings and reviewed vocabulary words throughout a whole week. The last week was devoted to conferences. During the read-aloud sessions each class was divided into two groups. This allowed the teachers to read to smaller group sizes (three groups of thirteen, one group of fourteen). The two teachers involved in this study, planned their lessons together ahead of time with the aid of the language coordinator. Vocabulary, and comprehension questions were planned together so that all children were getting the same exposure. Questions used were meant to make the children make inferences and were to be open-ended. Each session started out with predictions about the story, and introductions to literary terms such as author, illustrator, title, and cover page. The children were encouraged to take an interactive role. By the end of each week, students were asked to draw their favorite part of the story and write something about it.

Data was collected during this case study consistently through observation, student writing, and conferences. One researcher acted as a non-participant for eight weeks to show increased reliability of the observations. The children were familiar with this researcher because she had conducted observations before this case study began. The research used a diary and audio-tape to transcribe the conversations that occurred during the read-aloud sessions. The main focus of the researcher was to observe the responses that the children provided. The second form of collecting data was student writing. The children wrote freely in response journals after each story. The researcher looked for the
use of newly learned words in context. They also put the written responses in two piles that showed the comprehension of major or minor events in the stories. The mechanics and spelling used in the writing were not examined. The last form of data collection was short conferences with seven students from both classes. These students were chosen randomly. Each story was reread to these students separately and then they were asked to define vocabulary words in his/her own words. The conferences were audiotaped and then transcribed.

The data that was collected provided sufficient data to answer the initial research questions. The first question was, what is the impact of a read-aloud strategy on young children’s vocabulary. The data collection recorded during observations revealed that children were able to explain target words when they were asked to. The student was able to recall the meaning of the target words indicating the importance of repeated readings and reviewing of vocabulary words. Students also used key vocabulary words from one book when describing another book. This showed that they could understand the meaning of the words and could synthesize information from two stories. The data collected during the students writing showed that the majority of students (34 our of 53) used the targeted vocabulary words in their journal entries each week. Some students used the targeted words successfully in several pieces of writing. The students that did not include the targeted vocabulary words, did however use words they already knew to describe the story. The last form of data collection, which was conferencing, revealed that even the lower achieving students in the class were able to correctly define 25-28 of the 38 words correctly. The students that were labeled average answered 33-34 words correctly and the children labeled high achieving were able to identify 37 out of the 38
words correctly. This once again supported the idea that read-alouds can be beneficial to vocabulary development.

The second research question that was asked was, what is the impact of a read aloud strategy on young children’s comprehension skills? The data collected during the observations revealed that students were able to give reasonable hypotheses or answers to open-ended questions. Students also were able to freely express their points of view on opinion and point of view questions, suggesting comprehension of the story and characters. Students were also encouraged to think about personal experiences, background knowledge, and discuss with peers in order to make connections. These interactions helped develop their reading strategies and construct meaning, which are necessary when building comprehension. The second form of data collection, students’ writing, revealed that the majority of students (42 out of 53) wrote about major or key events in the story. There were very few students that wrote about minor events. This suggested that students were able to comprehend the major events within a story.

The researchers explored the impact that reading storybooks aloud to children have on their vocabulary and comprehension skills. They found that students were able to define words, use the learned words to describe characters and story events and use picture and context clues to figure out unknown words. Their findings were similar to Beck, McKeown, And Kucan (2002), who stated that children can easily develop vocabulary through listening to stories. The researchers in this case study also found that repeated exposure to read alouds was helpful. This relates well to the findings of Elley (1989), and Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley (1996), which found that vocabulary acquisition increased when unfamiliar words were explained during storybook reading. Overall, the
researchers came to the conclusion that read-alouds should be used with students of all ages in school and homes because of the multiple benefits they provide.

Leung (2008) conducted a study that explored the development of children’s scientific vocabulary from participation in repeated interactive read-aloud events and retelling of three informational picture books. The picture books were related to light and color, and hands on science activities accompanied these books. These experiences provided opportunities for the children to encounter new words in rich contexts and better comprehend the information. The purpose of this study was to (a) explore the depth of 3-4 year old children’s learning of scientific vocabulary through small group repeated interactive read-alouds, (b) determine whether children’s retelling immediately after participating in read-aloud activities would enhance their vocabulary, (c) determine whether hands-on science activities related to the book concepts would improve vocabulary retention, (d) investigate the effects of such activities on children’s scores on standardized vocabulary tests Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT –III, Dunn & Dunn, 1997), and the Expressive Vocabulary test (EVT, Williams, 1997), and (e) determine whether children’s general level of vocabulary knowledge would influence the rate and ways they learned vocabulary from participating in shared reading and retelling of information books. The independent variable in this study was the implementation of small group interactive read alouds with a comparison group that participated in the same small group interactive read alouds plus an immediate retelling activity. The dependent variables were pre and post vocabulary test using the PPVT III, the EVT and a free recall target words test that was created by the investigator.
This research study was conducted in a YWCA Child Development Center located in the southeastern part of the United States. There were 37 participants that began this study, and 32 children were able to complete all phases of the study. The children involved come from socially and economically diverse backgrounds. Children came from families of university students and faculty, and others came from families that live at the homeless shelter. There was one class of fourteen 3-year-olds and one class of eighteen 4-year-olds that participated in this study. There were 66% European American students, 25% African American students, 6% Asian American students and 3% Hispanic students.

The study began by identifying were children were on a scale based on high, average, and low vocabulary knowledge. Children’s levels were found by using both the PPVT-II and EVT vocabulary assessments. The PPVT-II was used to help measure receptive vocabulary and the EVT was used to measure expressive vocabulary. If a child scored a year or more above their age equivalent they were considered at a high level. Children that scored at the equivalent to their age were considered average on the scale and those that scored a year or more below their age equivalent were at the low level.

The assistant director was trained in test administration and was given practice prior to testing with children not involved in the study. One other test was used to measure the knowledge of target words that students would be focusing on during the read alouds. This test was created by the investigator and was called the Free Recall Target Word Test. Children were asked the meaning of 32 target words that would appear in the read alouds. This test was administered 3 times. Once before the read alouds, once after the
read alouds and retellings, and one more time after the hands-on-activities took place. After the pre-tests were completed, the read alouds and retelling interventions began.

There were three interventions that took place during this study. They all revolved around the theme of light and color. The first intervention was the read alouds. The investigator and university scientists chose three non-fiction books on the topic of light and color. Each book was read aloud 3 times during the week to a small group (3 or 4) of students. The first book that was read was *What is a Rainbow?* (Arvetis & Palmer, 1983). The second book was *All the Colors of the Rainbow* (Fowler, 1998), and the last book; *The Wonder of Light* (Adkins, 1997) was read over a 2-week period, with part of the book being read each week. When it was time for a small group to hear the book read aloud, the instructor would take them into a separate room that was used for special events. The readings took place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays each week. The books were read aloud and then children were given time to respond. The two teachers that provided the read alouds followed the same procedures. They (a) pointed to illustrations that depicted target vocabulary words, (b) asked children to repeat target words, (c) asked questions related specifically to the text, and (d) used gestures and body language to exemplify concepts and encouraged students to imitate the movements. The teachers practiced these readings before hand in order to provide consistency.

The second intervention was only done with half of the students. These students were chosen at random and came from all different vocabulary backgrounds. They were asked to participate in a retelling activity immediately following the read aloud. University students helped with this process. The 3 and 4- year olds were taken individually and asked to retell the story to the best of their ability. These retellings were
audiotaped. If children had difficulty retelling the book, they were prompted to use the pictures to help them.

The last intervention to take place was three days of hands-on activities. This intervention took place after all of the read alouds and retelling events and before the final post-tests. On day 1, a prism and color wheel were demonstrated. Children were able to touch and observe this activity and make connections with the books they read. On day 2, all of the concepts were reviewed from the day before and then a small water tank was used to demonstrate transparent and translucent. On day 3, all previously demonstrated concepts were reviewed and followed up by light being reflected into a water tank. This was used to demonstrate refraction. All of the activities were hands-on and interactive with the students.

The study concluded in the same way it began, with a series of assessments. The assessments that were used for the post-tests were the same that were used for the pre-tests (PPVT-II, EVT- and Free Recall Target Word Test). The PPVT-II post-test showed no significant difference in scores from the pretest. The EVT scores on the post-test, however, revealed a significant difference. There was a statistically significant increase from the pre-test to the post-test. The increased scores are attributed to the instructional interventions since there was no control group used that were not involved in the interactive readings and hands-on activities. As for the students that participated in the one-on-one book retellings, they were better able to explain the meaning of target words related to the science concepts and used significantly more target words from the first to the second and the second to the third retellings. The students that participated in
retellings had higher post-scores overall, than those that only participated in the interactive read alouds and hands-on-activities.

Overall, the results of this study support the idea that repeated readings and small group interactive discussions are crucial for developing vocabulary knowledge and in turn help with comprehension. This study also concluded that no matter what level of vocabulary knowledge a student started with, they were able to make gains with repeated practice.

Cummins & Gerard (2011), conducted a qualitative study that explored the influence of reading informational texts aloud to students on a regular basis and nurturing their synthesis of the content in these texts through written and sketched responses. Comprehension of informational texts that are comprised of a variety of text features and text structures can be more cognitively demanding than fictional texts. The focus of this study was to see how using read alouds and assessment-driven instruction can facilitate the synthesis of ideas in order to form comprehension of informational texts.

This qualitative study took place in a small midwestern city that is also home to a large university. One of the researchers was a literacy professor and the other was a third-grade teacher. There were 21 participants in this study. Fifty-four percent of the students were white, 28% were African American, 2.9% were Latino, 14% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.5% were Native American. One third of the students that participated qualified for free or reduced lunch. This study took place in the researchers third-grade classroom. The study started in September and went until May. Both researchers met to co-teach and collect data at least once a week for the entire school year.
The study began by administering two informal assessments of the students’ written responses following independent reading and a read aloud, respectively. These assessments revealed that with prompting only 5 out of the 21 students showed a level of synthesis in their writing. Following the assessments, children were read aloud a piece of informational text every other week and asked to write and sketch in responses to the text. Two 45-minute periods were used for these read alouds and responses. In May, similar informal assessments were administered as post-tests. The researchers used qualitative methods for collecting and analyzing data. This included copies of students’ written and sketched responses, lesson transcripts, and extensive field notes. Responses were analyzed regularly looking for patterns that helped determine the next step for instruction.

The pre-assessments showed a need for teaching synthesis of key ideas while reading aloud. The interventions consisted of three particular instructional approaches to help students gain the ability to synthesis important information. The approaches consisted of explicit instruction on synthesizing, interactive read alouds, and think-aloud mini lessons. The first component that the researchers focused on was explicit direction. They split the lesson up into four parts, (1) explanation of synthesis, (2) shared reading and discussion of students’ written responses, (3) read-aloud of a new text, and (4) assessment of independent writing. The researchers basically told the students what they were looking for; they practiced it together, tried the strategy with a new book, and then finally assessed students independently. The second component was focused on getting the students to be interactive during the read alouds. The teacher modeled and helped students question and make connections and as the study progressed students started to
become more interactive. The last component was think-aloud minilessons with new texts. The first two components helped the children to be able to identify the big ideas that were surfacing in the texts, but students were still lacking the ability to add detail to support their ideas. The teacher used real examples and led students through a think-aloud to show them how to question and dig in deeper. The teacher started off by modeling but then began to engage the students in the discussions as well.

The qualitative study lead by Cummins and Gerard last for one school year. The students were given two pre-tests to reveal where they were in respect to synthesizing informational text ideas. The initial assessments revealed that students were able to restate facts but not elaborate or describe the big ideas. They were not able to synthesize. The researchers explicitly taught students about synthesizing; the study included ongoing assessments of students’ responses and work. After the researchers intervened with their three components, the assessments started to show that the majority of students were synthesizing. They were thinking about the big idea, which was something they were lacking during the pre-assessments. In May the students’ writing was analyzed again. Eighteen out of the 21 students revealed thinking related to the big ideas in the text and elaborated using details from the texts. The other three students still only stated facts. The assessments also showed that 20 students were independently synthesizing or engaging in identifying the big idea. Only one student listed facts exclusively. These results indicated that the majority of students grew in their ability to synthesize ideas related to the meaning of the text, develop their ideas with support from the text, and convey thinking in a written format. Overall, this study concluded that using read alouds
along with assessment-driven instruction could facilitate the synthesis of ideas in order to form comprehension of informational texts.

Kraemer, McCabe, & Sinatra (2012), conducted a quantitative study that investigated the effects of listening to expository text in regard to listening comprehension and book choice. In the primary grades the majority of texts that are used are narrative. As students grow they begin to encounter difficulties with reading because the genres change and they are less familiar with the expository/informational (EI) text. It is often thought that children need to learn how to read first, but this study is looking at the effects of exposing children to EI text at an early age. There were four purposes that framed this study. The first was determining whether first graders were more likely to choose EI or narrative text for independent reading before or after exposure to this type of text through read alouds. The second was to determine how children would perform on tests of listening comprehension of narrative compared to EI passages prior to any interventions. Another purpose was examining the relationship between the students’ book choices and listening comprehension ability, and the last purpose was to determine if first graders who received a regimen of EI read-alouds improved their listening comprehension compared to those first graders who did not. The independent variables were the implementation of expository read-alouds to two groups, along with two control groups that did not receive any intervention (only followed the regular narrative read-aloud schedule). The dependent variables were the Qualitative Reading Inventory 3 (QRI-3) (QRI-3, Leslie & Caldwell, 2001) for listening comprehension, and an investigator created book choice test. This study lasted four weeks.
The population of this study was made up of 77 first grade participants (42 boys and 35 girls). They were split into four heterogeneous groups. Two groups that had a total of 27 children in it were assigned to the experimental conditions. The other two classes, totaling in 40 children, were assigned to the control conditions. None of the participants received special education services. The school district was located in an urban area in southeastern New York. The demographics matched those of the school population. Ninety-seven percent of the family incomes were above poverty level, 7% were Hispanic, 4% were African-American, 3% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 84% were white and 2% were identified as racially mixed.

The interventions took place over a four-week period. The main research focused on two experimental groups three times a week. While there she read on EI book or article to the students. The read-alouds were structured in a similar way to what the children were used to. The children gathered on the carpet area in the corner of the classroom for each session. There was a brief discussion about the topic of the text before the read-aloud began. The dialogue was based around what the children already knew. The children were also encouraged to ask questions about things they would like to learn. During the read aloud there was a small amount of time available for comments and questions. During the closing of the read-aloud, the researcher asked the class to share new ideas that they had learned. It was the same procedure that the classroom teachers used during their read-alouds. The control groups did not receive any visitations from the researcher. They were only exposed to first grade narrative emails.

The methods for data collection consisted of pre and posttests with all 77 students involved in the study. One of the assessments focused on book choice. The students
were shown three sets of two books. Each set consisted of one narrative and one EI text. Once the child was able to see the books, the researcher turned the pages and provided an opportunity for a picture walk. Brief discussion took place whether the story was fictional or non-fictional. The child was then asked which book they preferred to read and the responses were recorded. This same assessment was administered as the post-test after interventions. The only difference was different narrative and EI books were used.

The other form of assessment was the QRI-3. The primary researcher read two passages from Form A of the first grade level of the QRI-3 aloud to all students individually. She followed that up with asking the accompanying questions immediately. Responses to the 6 open-ended questions were recorded. Six of the participants had to listen to additional narrative passages from the second grade level because they achieved perfect scores on the first-grade questions. This was not necessary with the EI passages. The posttest was exactly the same, but used Form B passages instead. Both the pre-test and post-test were administered over eight school days.

Data were analyzed using a Mann-Whitney U test to compare participant book choice prior to and after intervention, and a 2x2x2 MANOVA was used to compare listening comprehension scores of the experimental and control group, the pre and post scores, and the EI narrative passages. Prior to interventions three analytical techniques were used as well. They were: (a) a chi square analysis to test for a difference between choices of text, (b) a paired samples t-test to analyze narrative and EI comprehension scores, and (c) a point-biserial correlation to examine the relationship between book choice and comprehension.
The results of pre-intervention showed that 59 of the 77 chose EI text (books or articles) compared to narrative. The chi square test showed a significant difference occurred in favor of EI texts. Prior to interventions the t-test showed that comprehension scores of narrative text were higher than that of EI. In addition the point-biserial correlation showed that book choice was not related to either narrative or EI listening comprehension.

The results of post-intervention showed relatively no change in book choice after the intervention. Only one less student chose EI text compared to narrative (58 of the 77). A MANOVA indicated a significant change in both experimental and control groups on the EI listening comprehension text. The experimental group increased from 2.89 to 4.24; the control group decreased from 3.17 to 2.63. This indicated that reading EI materials aloud to participants increased their listening comprehension.

The evidence presented in this study suggests that EI texts need to be more available for young readers. The experimental participants in this study who listened to EI text scored significantly higher on the QRI-3 listening tests compared to the control participants. Also, when given the opportunity to choose a text, participants favored EI text, both before and after interventions. Overall, the findings in this study support the idea that young children can achieve success with early exposure to EI texts, as well as build background knowledge, vocabulary and conceptual understanding.
Shared Interactive Read Alouds

The articles in this section identify the need for variety within read alouds. Text need to vary from time to time to meet the interests of different students, but more importantly students need to be allowed to discuss and respond to read alouds in a variety of ways.

Adomat (2010) conducted a qualitative study that explored how young readers build literary understandings through performative responses in picture book read-alouds. Performative responses are creative ways to express understanding such as: gestures, movements, vocal intonation, and dramatization. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of using performative responses to build literary understanding. Adomat argues that performative responses can allow for children to open up their imaginative world, contribute actively to the construction of meaning, give children a way to create their own curriculum, and allow for a collaborative environment that builds on the strengths of the students in the group.

This study occurred in a small rural area outside a metropolitan area on the east coast of the United States. The study involved eight second-grade children who were part of the school’s Title I program. Five of the children were boys and the other three were girls. The children represented a diversity of ethnic and socioeconomic groups and five of the children received speech and language services. Once a week these children participated in a small group picture book read-aloud with their classroom teacher. The students in this small group were allowed to choose the read aloud books and take the lead on the group discussions. The discussions lasted about 20-30 minutes.
Fifteen small group-read-aloud sessions were videotaped, audio taped and transcribed over the six-month period. The oral responses of all children involved were categorized according to Sipe’s five categories (2008). These categories of creating meaning include: analytical responses, intertextual responses, personal responses, transparent responses, and performative responses. Analytical responses include the discussion of narrative elements. Intertextual responses are when children make links to other books or texts. Personal responses are the connections that children make to their own lives. Transparent responses indicate a deep involvement with the story world. Performative responses are when children use creative ways to manipulate the story. The oral responses were analyzed and 33% of the responses were analytical, 6% were intertextual, 26% were personal, 2% were transparent and 33% were performative. All students involved showed a blend of these categories in building their literary knowledge. One child, however, showed a consistent pattern with 54% performative responses. The fact that performative responses were used to create the majority of this child’s literary understanding deemed it important to investigate further.

Adomat (2010) went back and further analyzed the characteristics of performative responses and showed how the modalities of gesture, mime, vocal intonations, sound effects, and dramatization contributed to the child’s literary understanding of the text. The videotapes, audiotapes and transcriptions showed how this child created meaning not only for herself but also for others in her small group by using performative responses. The child used hand gestures to act out the story, changed her voice to match with the mood of the story, and also pulled other into an impromptu skit that related to the story being read.
As a result of this study, it is clear to see the importance of being aware of the different forms of responses that children have to literature. Children tend to find a specific response that helps them best create an understanding of a text. In this study the category of response used most was performative. This type of response required the teacher to take more of a “back seat” role. Children need to feel comfortable sharing and acting and not be afraid that they are making a mistake. They also need encouragement to continue when they start using a performative response. Overall, this study preliminarily supports that performative responses open up the imaginative world for children, allow them to contribute to the construction of meaning, give them a way to create their own curriculum and allow them to collaborate with others and build on the strengths of the others in their group.

Wiseman (2010), conducted a study to explore the importance of interactive read alouds. Based on related research, reading instruction is meant for helping students comprehend different texts and apply varying reading strategies. Wiseman believed that interactive read alouds were important learning opportunities for emergent readers. She saw interactive read alouds as a way for teachers and students to actively model, scaffold comprehension, engage and build knowledge together. The research team consisted of three people collecting ethnographic data in the form of field notes on the teacher’s instruction and students’ interactions and responses to read alouds, Data was also collected from student journals and informal interviews with teachers and students.

Twenty-one kindergarten students from an urban public school located in a major metropolitan city in the Northeast participated in this research. All students that took part in this study were African American. In addition, ninety five percent were eligible for
free and reduced lunch. The teacher involved in administering the instruction had been teaching for ten years and was Caucasian-American.

The study consisted of collecting data during a nine-month period. Three people made up the research team and collected ethnographic data in the kindergarten classroom. The research team observed in the classroom four times a week during morning meeting, interactive read aloud, and journal writing time. They also stayed for three full days, where they followed students to recess, lunch and electives, noting the literacy practices and student responses used. Information was collected in the form of field notes that focused on the teacher’s instruction, students’ interactions and responses to read alouds. Information was also collected in the form of audiotapes, which were then transcribed by the research team. One other form of data collection was the observation of student journals and informal interviews with the students and teachers. Analysis of the data consisted of reading through transcripts and field notes and finding common themes. Software called NVivo was used to aid in the coding and categorizing of information, as well as linking overall themes and events.

The procedure that was being analyzed by the research team was that of the specific interactive read alouds. The teacher started each read aloud in the same way. She followed the pattern of introducing the book and discussing the front cover, looking at the dedication and copyright page, and then leading students into a conversation about the text and making predictions. The teacher showed students repeatedly how both visual and textual features contributed to the meaning of the story. After each story, children were prompted to discuss their thoughts with a neighbor. After peer discussion, they went to tables and wrote in their journals about their responses or anything that was on
their mind. Students were encouraged to question events, make connections, and interact with each other to build meaning.

The results of this study showed that interactive read alouds are crucial in an emergent reader’s classroom. It also showed that in this classroom there were four main ways that knowledge was constructed. The first way was by the use of confirming. The teacher showed support and provided encouraging feedback during students’ conversations. The second way was through modeling. The teacher showed certain ways of thinking and comprehending through explicit modeling of how to read, understand, and analyze a story. She did this in a way that also gave the students opportunities to contribute. The next way that knowledge was constructed was through the use of extending meaning. The teacher took what the students already knew and guided them to a deeper meaning. This was simply done by helping students focus on a theme or idea that they might not have discussed before. The last way that knowledge was constructed was through building meaning together. Students were given the opportunity to discuss and contribute to the conversations surrounding the texts. The overall findings of this research is that interactive read alouds are important learning opportunities for emergent readers because they provide opportunities for students to build on their strengths and extend their knowledge.

**Conclusion**

Literacy development begins prior to formal reading instruction and in many classrooms starts in the form of read alouds (Pentimonti & Justice, 2010). Several studies have proven that read aloud experiences are influential to the development of emergent literacy skills with young children. The importance of teacher training and
knowledge is a crucial component to quality read alouds. The research has shown that teachers without proper training miss the opportunity to differentiate and get the most out of each read aloud. Research has also indicated that a deep level of word knowledge is necessary for complete comprehension by a reader (Fien, et al., 2011). Readers also need print awareness and questioning. Read alouds that include vocabulary, print awareness and questioning strategies help to build better comprehension. Read alouds also benefit from student interaction and responses. Teachers often get caught up in talking too much. It is more beneficial when a guidance role is taken, and children become in control of their learning. Overall, read alouds are an essential part of the elementary school day. Research has indicated that with the correct training, strategy tools, and instructional practice, can be beneficial in building comprehension.

CHAPTER THREE

Procedures

Read alouds are a common component of elementary classrooms. The amount and quality of these read alouds vary from teacher to teacher. This qualitative study took a look at how consistent read alouds affected students in a kindergarten classroom. The study also looked at the relationship between read alouds and comprehension. There were three important components that existed within this qualitative study. The first was the population, the individuals that participated in the study. The second component was the actual procedures used in the kindergarten classroom, the interventions that took place. And finally, the data collection and measurement of the intervention’s effectiveness was the last component.
Description of Sample Population

This qualitative study took place in a small village in Southeastern Wisconsin. This rural elementary school was comprised of 420 students: Ninety-one percent of the students were Caucasian, 4% were Hispanic, 3% were Black, a little more than 1% were Asian and less than 1% were American Indian. Twenty-five percent of the school’s population was reported as economically disadvantaged. The qualitative study itself included 17 kindergarten students, all from the same class. Twelve of the students were female and five of the students were male. The student’s range of ages was between 5 and 6. The mean age was 5.2. One student was Hispanic and 16 students were Caucasian. All students who participated in this study were part of the regular education classroom. Two of the students had Individual Education Plans for speech. The students that were a part of the population sample had already been working for part of the year in small reading groups. These groups were formed based on reading needs. The same groups were used for the small group interventions in hopes to keep children as comfortable in their environment as possible. Once the population sample was selected, the procedures and interventions were put into place and data was collected.

Description of Procedure Used

The literacy intervention started at the beginning of January as soon as the students returned from Winter Break. The Qualitative Reading Inventory, 5th addition (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) was administered to all 17 students before the interventions began. Children were assessed on their current comprehension and retelling levels. The scores from the pre-test allowed the researcher to place students flexibly into groups according to their strengths and weaknesses. Children were put into four small groups
and stayed within the same group for all six weeks of interventions. Three of the groups consisted of four students and one group consisted of five students. The literacy interventions consisted of two-20 minute periods per week over the course of six weeks. This totaled in each child receiving 12 intervention sessions.

Intervention sessions were structured for all four groups. Each lesson included a combination of modeling and cooperative learning (Appendix G). As each session commenced, the students began by activating prior knowledge through discussion. This consisted of picture walks and discussing background knowledge. Following this discussion was the actual teacher read aloud. The researcher read the story aloud to the small group of students while modeling good reading behaviors. Once the read aloud was over, the researcher modeled how to retell the story using tools like picture cards (Appendix H) and word cards. The students were then given a chance to retell the story individually. They were allowed to use the picture and word cards as well. Each intervention ended with explicit and implicit questions. Children’s answers to these questions were collected for data.

**Description of Data Collected**

Data collection took place throughout the six weeks of intervention. Comprehension and retelling levels were assessed using the QRI-5 (Lesli & Caldwell, 2011). This was used both as a pre-test and post-test. The assessment consisted of a story being read aloud, followed by the student retelling the points they remembered and answering implicit and explicit questions (Appendix A,B,C,& D). This assessment was administered orally and with one student at a time. The same assessment with the same
read aloud text was given at the end of the six weeks to see if read aloud practice and retelling enhanced comprehension.

The other form of data collection that was used throughout this study was informal observation throughout the intervention sessions. The researcher used a spreadsheet and made tally marks and notes next to each student throughout their session (Appendix F). The researcher would document each time a child would retell the story. This allowed the researcher to see which students were participating and which students needed encouragement. The researcher also documented each child’s response to explicit and implicit questions. Each intervention session ended with explicit and implicit questioning and children were given the opportunity to volunteer their answers. This data collection let the researcher know which areas the students were strong in and which areas needed to be modeled more throughout the read alouds.

**Conclusion**

The researcher used two different methods for assessment throughout this study. The first was the QRI-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). This assessment gave the researcher insight to students’ comprehension and retelling levels. The same assessment was used at the end of the interventions to see if any improvement was made as it pertains to comprehension and retelling skills. The other form of assessment used was informal observations during intervention sessions regarding retelling and comprehension. These assessments gave the researcher information on where the students were making gains and where they still needed modeling. Overall, these assessments gave the researcher insight on the effects read alouds have on comprehension.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In the previous chapter the main focus was the interventions and assessments that were used to gather data on read aloud comprehension. The research and data collected led to the focus of this chapter, which is a direct result from the lesson interventions and assessments. In this chapter readers will see pre and post assessment scores.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

In January when the research study began, the researcher individually assessed each student. Each of the 16 children met with the researcher to take the QRI-5 Comprehension Assessment (Lesli & Caldwell). The researcher read the story “Fox and Mouse” aloud to the students and then had them orally complete the assessment. The assessment was comprised of two parts. The first section was focused on retelling. The students were prompted to tell the researcher everything they remembered about the story. For each idea retold, the child received one point. There were a total of 30 points available in this section. The second section was answering explicit and implicit questions about the story. The researcher transcribed the students’ answers. It was either scored correct or incorrect. There were a total of 4 explicit questions and 2 implicit questions.

After the six weeks of interventions were over, the same assessment was given to the students individually. The researcher performed the assessments identically to how it was done before the interventions took place. The same book and questions were used. In addition, the researcher also chose to give a second assessment (Appendix B). The
story that was used for this portion was titled “The Pig Who Learned to Read.” This was the same assessment format with retelling and explicit/implicit questions, but a new story was used. The researcher chose to do this, to see if the read aloud comprehension skills increased as well when new books were used.

Scores were documented and compared from pre-test to post test. The researcher compared scores from pre-test to post-test. There were three different categories that were compared. They were retelling, explicit questioning, and implicit questioning. After the scores were collected in the area of retelling, 100% of the students showed an increase from pre to post-testing. The average score on the retelling section went from 23% on the pre-test to 51% on the post-test. When comparing the retelling pre-test to the new story post-test, 100% of the students increased as well; although, they did not increase as much with the new story as they did with the original story. The average score on the retelling section went from 23% on the pre-test to 44% on the new story post-test.

The retelling section of the assessment was not the only area that showed increase. The explicit questioning portion also showed growth. The average score on the explicit questioning pre-test was 67%. The average increased to 92% on the post-test. Every student that could make an increase did, except one. That child scored the same on both pre and post-tests. Some children did not show an increase because they scored 100% on the pre-test. When comparing the explicit questioning pre-test to the new story post-test, 100% of the students that could increase in score, did. The average score on the explicit questioning section went from 67% on the pre-test to 98% on the new story post-test.
The retelling and explicit questioning sections of the assessment showed much growth over the period of six weeks. The area of implicit questioning which was the last section of the assessment, also showed positive increases. The average score on the implicit questioning section of the pre-test was 69%. This made a huge increase to 97% on the implicit questioning post-test. Every student, other than those that scored 100% on the pre-test made an increase. As for comparing the pre-test to the new story post-test, the average went from 69% to 75%. There was an increase but not as much as when using the same texts. On the new story post-test two children showed a decrease in score and four students stayed the same. The others increased their scores.

The tables below show the areas of increase from pre-testing to post-testing, including post-testing with the new story. The post-testing scores were taken immediately after the six weeks of interventions.
QRI-5 Retelling Scores

Participating Students

Pre Test Percentage

Post Test Percentage

Post Test Percentage

New Story

Percent Correct

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
QRI-5 Explicit Questioning Scores

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<th>Participating Students</th>
<th>Pre Test Percentage</th>
<th>Post Test Percentage</th>
<th>New Story Post Test Percentage</th>
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</table>
QRI-5 Implicit Questioning Scores

Percent Correct

Participating Students

Pre Test Percentage
Post Test Percentage
New Story
Conclusions

The results of the six-week interventions during this study clearly showed an increase in the kindergarten participants’ ability to retell stories, as well as answer explicit and implicit questions. Most students showed an increase in all three sections from pre to post-testing using the same novel. The only students that did not show an increase were those that scored perfectly the first time. Their scores stayed the same for both tests. Most students also showed an increase in all three sections from pre to post-testing using a new text. The section that showed the least amount of growth was the implicit questioning. There were two students that showed a decrease from pre-test to post-test with the new story and four children that stayed the same. The study showed no indication why the students showed a decrease. Through the pre and post-tests scores on retelling, explicit questioning and implicit questioning, researchers can conclude that structured small group read alouds lead to better comprehension with kindergarten students.

Summary

The results from the data conclude that there were increases in all three areas tested. Retelling, explicit questioning, and implicit questioning all increased from the pre-post tests as well as from the pre-post tests using a new text. Data also points to a greater increase made from pre- to post test when the same text was used, compared to pre-post testing with the new novel. With this data, the researcher was able to draw conclusions about the results as well as make recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

Connections to Existing Research

According to the Wisconsin Common Core Standards, kindergarten students should be able to support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text with support by the end of the year. The Wisconsin Common Core Standards also state that kindergarten students should be able to, with prompting and support, retell familiar stories while including detail. This shows that starting at an early age children need to acquire the skills of reading including comprehension. There has been a lot of research done trying to pin point the best way to instruct young learners on the skill of reading comprehension. The one method that was most frequently discussed was read alouds. When it came time to designing the interventions used in my research study, the exiting research became very influential.

Pentimonti and Justice (2009), conducted a study that looked directly at teacher scaffolding during read alouds. In this study they found that teachers were only using low scaffolding skills with their students. This information helped me to be conscious during my intervention groups to use a variety of scaffolding skills. Justice, McGinity, Piasta, Kaderavek, and Fan (2010); Greenawalt (2010); Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani (2008); Leung (2008); Cummins & Gerard (2011); and Kraemer, McCabe, & Sinatra (2012) all conducted studies that looked into specific strategies to use when reading aloud with students. These researchers made me think about what my actual interventions would look like. The research helped me structure my groups to make sure they were small. The research also made me realize the importance of including repeated read
alouds in my small group and also using specific skills such as print referencing. All of these strategies, when used together, have been known to help build comprehension in past research so I wanted this to help guide my research. I quickly realized that the skills I was modeling for my student were picked up instantly. When we repeated the read alouds together, students started participating. This wasn’t the case when we talked about comprehension after the first read through.

Finally, Adomat(2010), and Wiseman(2010) were two researchers that studied interactive read alouds. These studies made me realize that it was important in my intervention groups to get the students involved in the read alouds. Not all children learn the same way and incorporating some interactive experiences could help those that need the hands-on work to comprehend. I found this worked especially well with my students who have a hard time staying in one spot. My overall goal was to increase comprehension through small group read alouds, and these researchers helped me guide my study to do just that.

**Explanation of Results**

The results of this study show after six weeks of intense intervention comprehension levels among the 16 kindergarteners rose. The data suggested that when small group read alouds increased so did comprehension and retelling scores. Students met two times a week in small groups to read a story, participated in retelling the story, and discuss explicit and implicit questions. This was in addition to everyday whole group read alouds conducted in the classroom. After the six weeks of interventions, most students showed an increase in all three sections (retelling, explicit questioning, and implicit questioning) using the same text they were pre-tested with. The only students
that did not show an increase were those that scored perfectly the first time. Their scores stayed the same for both tests.

In addition another post-test was given. This time a brand new text was used, that the children had never seen. This was done to see how their comprehension and retelling levels were when a fresh book was used. Most students showed an increase in all 3 sections when using the brand new novel. The section that showed the least amount of growth was the implicit questioning. This is typical because the answers are not stated in the text. Children need to infer and think critically about the answer, and that is a skill that takes more practice. There were 2 students who showed a decrease from pre-test to post-test with the new story and 4 children that stayed the same. The reasons could be simply because the students were not focused during the test, or that the skill had not been mastered. This suggests that implicit questioning would still be an area for continual work. The other 10 students all showed increases. This also suggests that retelling and explicit questioning were areas of success.

**Strengths and Limitations**

There are several strengths that accompanied my study and made the process extremely beneficial. A strength that this study possessed was that of the participants. The 16 students that participated in this study were a part of my classroom for the entire school year. This gave me insight into their instructional needs as well as their home lives, and also allowed them to be comfortable working with me. Another strength with this study was the timing. I had a reading block that was uninterrupted in the morning and allowed me to work with all of my small groups throughout the week. The morning time allowed me to work with the students before they became too fatigued throughout
the day. It was also crucial to meet at the same time each day so that students knew the routine and what to expect. The study was short and the timing helped for everything to run smoothly. One other strength that accompanied this study was the consistent teaching style. I was the only teacher in the room throughout the day and this helped to assure that the study was not disrupted by different teaching styles. The small group interventions were conducted with the same vocabulary and organization. Although there are several strengths with the conduction of this study, there are also a few limitations.

One limitation that this study possessed was the number of participants. There were only 16 students that participated in this study. A larger number of participants would have provided more data and would have given more insight into the research questions. One other limitation was the amount of time available for the study. I would have liked to conduct this study over a longer period of time and seen the gains that the participants made over the period of a school year.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

For future research on read alouds and how they can affect comprehension, I would highly recommend looking into the plethora of research that is related to this topic. Read alouds are a crucial part of education and there is a plethora of research that recognizes the importance of read alouds at all ages. The study of read alouds would benefit from having a wider range of age levels participate. Kindergarten is a crucial age and provided great information, but it would be beneficial for the study to be administered in several elementary level classrooms. This way the researcher could see if different age levels are a factor in comprehension progress with read alouds. Future research would also benefit from a longer intervention time. It would be beneficial to
start the study at the beginning of the year and end around the time the last report cards go out at the end of the year. The data would then show long-term growth rather than over a 6 week period. Another recommendation for future research would be to look at the correlation between read alouds at school and read alouds at home. Having parents complete a survey on what reading sessions at home look like could possibly do this. This data can then help compare students who have structured reading time at home to those that don’t. One other recommendation would be to research other pedagogical approaches to teaching inferences. Students in this study showed struggles with implicit questioning. Further research on this topic could help to building better interventions during read alouds. There are so many factors that play a part in future research on read alouds.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion is that read alouds need to be consistent, structured and hands on in order for students to comprehend the knowledge that is necessary. Teachers and parents need to be on board with this structured format, so that students are constantly being engaged in the texts that surround them. Ultimately, students who are supported and engaged begin to comprehend, which is necessary for literacy success.
References


Teacher, 59(4), 302-312.


Appendix A

QRI-5 Pre and Post Test Assessment

Level: Primer

Narrative

Concept Questions:
What are seeds?

(3-2-1-0)
What do gardens need to grow?

(2-2-1-0)
What do mice eat?

(3-2-1-0)

Score: __ _ _ /9 = ___%

PAM UNPAM

Prediction:

The seed looked good to eat.
“It is only one seed,” thought Mouse.
“Fox will not know who ate the seed.”
The next night Mouse went to the garden again.
He dug up one seed and ate it.
He did this every night.
After a few weeks all the seeds were gone.
“I wonder why the seeds didn’t grow,” said Fox.
Mouse didn’t say a word.
So Fox planted more seeds.
And Mouse helped him. (122 words)

Number of Total Miscues
(Total Accuracy): — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
Number of Meaning-Change Miscues
(Total Acceptability): — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —

Total Accuracy Total Acceptability
0-3 miscues Independent 0-3 miscues
4-12 miscues Instructional 4-6 miscues
13+ miscues Frustration 7+ miscues
rate: \(122 \times 60 = 7,320\) seconds = ___ WPM
Correct WPM: \((122 - ___ errors) \times 60 = \frac{\text{seconds}}{\text{WPM}}\)

Retelling Scoring Sheet for “Fox and Mouse”

Setting/Background

— Fox wanted to plant a garden.
— Mouse helped him.
— They put seeds
— in the ground.
— They watered the seeds.
— Then they waited.
Level: Primer

Goal
- One night
- Mouse went to the garden.
- He dug up one of the seeds.
- He wanted to see
  - if it was growing.

Events
- The seed looked good to eat.
  - "It is only one seed," thought Mouse.
  - "Fox will not know who ate the seed."
- The next night
- Mouse went to the garden again.
- He dug up one seed
  - and ate it.
  - He did this
    - every night.
    - After a few weeks
      - all the seeds were gone.

Resolution
- "I wonder why the seeds didn't grow?" said Fox.
- Mouse didn't say a word.
- So Fox planted more seeds.
- And Mouse helped him.
30 Ideas
Number of ideas recalled ______
Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

Questions for "Fox and Mouse"

1. What did Fox want to do?
   Explicit: to plant a garden

2. What did Fox and Mouse do?
   Explicit: put seeds in the ground and watered them. If child says only one part ask, "What else did they do?"

3. Why did Mouse dig up the first seed?
   Explicit: to see if it was growing

4. What did Mouse do with the first seed that he dug up?
   Explicit: ate it

5. Why didn't the garden grow?
   Implicit: because Mouse ate all the seeds in the garden

6. Why did Mouse help Fox plant the garden again?
   Implicit: because he had eaten all the seeds; or he felt bad; or he was Fox's friend; or so he can have more seeds to eat

Number Correct Explicit: ______
Number Correct Implicit: ______
Total: ______

Independent: 6 correct
Instructional: 4-5 correct
Frustration: 0-3 correct
Appendix B

QRI-5 Post-Test Assessment (New Story)

Level: Primer

Concept Questions:

What is doing something new?

What is learning to read?

What does it mean when people read stories to you?

Score: ___ out of ___

Prediction:

“One day Pete went to a boy who lived on the farm. "Teach me to read," he said. The boy said, "But you're a pig. I don't know if I can. But I'll do what my mother and father did with me." Every night before bed, the boy read to the pig. The pig loved the stories. He liked one called "Pat the Bunny" best. A week later Pete asked to take the book to the barn. He looked at the words. He thought about what the boy had said. He did that every day. One day he read a story to the boy. He was so happy! After that he read to the other animals every night. The boy was happy too, because he'd taught his first pig to read. (176 words)

Number of Total Miscues (Total Accuracy)

Number of Meaning-Change Miscues (Total Acceptability)

Total Accuracy Total Acceptability

0-4 miscues ___ Independent ___ 0-4 miscues

5-18 miscues ___ Transitional ___ 5-9 miscues

19+ miscues ___ Frustration ___ 10+ miscues

Rate: 176 × 60 = ___ seconds = ___ WPM

Correct WPM: (176 - ___ errors) × 60 = ___/second = ___ CWPM

Retelling Scoring Sheet for "The Pig Who Learned to Read"

Setting/Background

___ There was a pig

___ named Pete
Level: Primer

Goal
- He wanted to learn
- to read.
- His father said,
- "Pigs can't read."
- Pete said,
- "I don't care."

Events
- He went to a boy
- who lived on a farm.
- He said,
- "Teach me
to read."
- The boy said,
- "I'll do
what my mother
and father did."
- Every night
- before bed,
- the boy read
to the pig.
- The pig loved the stories.
- Pete took the book
to the barn.
- He looked at the words
every day.
- One day
- the pig read a story
to the boy.
- He was so happy.

Resolution
- He read
to the animals
every night.
- The boy was happy.
- He taught the pig
to read.

36 Ideas
Number of ideas recalled
Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

Questions for “The Pig Who Learned to Read”

1. Who was this story about?
   Explicit: Pete the pig

2. What did Pete want?
   Explicit: to learn to read

3. What did Pete do to get what he wanted?
   Explicit: he asked the boy who lived on the farm to teach him

4. Why was the boy not sure he could teach the pig to read?
   Implicit: because pigs didn’t learn to read or because the boy had never taught anyone to read before

5. What did the boy do to teach Pete to read?
   Explicit: he read to him every night

6. What did the pig do in order to learn how to read?
   Implicit: he matched the words with what the boy had said. He did that every day

Number Correct Explicit: ___
Number Correct Implicit: ___
Total: ___
   Independent: ___ correct
   Instructional: 4-5 correct
   Frustration: ___ correct
Appendix C

QRI Pre-Testing Results 2012

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Appendix D

QRI Post-Testing Results
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Appendix E

QRI Post-Testing Results (New Story)
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## Sample Tally Sheet From Group Interventions

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<td>With pictures and prompting</td>
<td>tree</td>
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<td>“Gotten eaten”</td>
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<td>With prompting</td>
<td>Missed a few details</td>
<td>hole</td>
<td>Hard time thinking deeper</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>With prompting</td>
<td>Dinner river</td>
<td>Didn’t participate</td>
<td>“Just the spider would have eaten.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>With prompting</td>
<td>bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Asked what was for dinner.”</td>
<td>“Too big”</td>
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Appendix G

Sample Lesson Plan

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<th>Lesson Plans For February 2nd</th>
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<td><strong>Book Title:</strong> Where is My Dad?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Reading Activity:</strong> Prior Knowledge - What do we know about dads? What do we know about someone being lost?</td>
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</table>
| **Retelling Points:** “Where is dad? “ said Tim  
- In the barn  
- No  
- In the hen house  
- No  
- In the kitchen  
- No  
- In the bedroom  
- No  
- In the den  
- Yes – fast asleep |
| **Explicit Questions:** (answers are in the text)  
1.) Where did Tim look first? (barn)  
2.) Where did Tim look second? (hen house)  
3.) What was dad doing? (sleeping in the den) |
| **Implicit Questions:** (have to think deeper, answers are not written in the text)  
1.) What was the problem at the beginning of the story?  
2.) Why was dad tired?  
3.) Why was Tim looking for dad? |
| **Closing Activity:** Group Retell with sequence cards. |
Appendix H

Sample Sequencing Picture Cards