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Using questioning as a strategy intervention to increase reading comprehension in adequate decoders but poor comprehenders: a case study

Theresa Kappes

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Using Questioning as a Strategy Intervention to Increase Reading Comprehension in Adequate Decoders but Poor Comprehenders: A Case Study

By

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QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

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QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

Abstract

A problem that many students who are adequate decoders but poor comprehenders (word callers) have in reading comprehension regards the explicit use of reading strategies. Research in explicit metacognitive strategy training has shown improvements in the area of reading comprehension for these unique students. The present study examined explicit strategy instruction of questioning to help the targeted student increase reading comprehension. A third grade student who reads accurately and fluently but has reading comprehension difficulties was exposed to the explicit teaching of the reading comprehension strategy: questioning. The intervention targeted both implicit and explicit questioning through explicit modeling, think alouds, scaffolding, and the use of graphic organizers. Each week of the six week intervention focused on a different teaching point such as spontaneous questioning, asking before, during, and after questions, coding the answers to those questions, and inferencing/synthesizing the new information. The impact of this reading strategy intervention was measured by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, the Qualitative Reading Inventory, and a student essay for comparison.

The growth from fall to winter Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment records indicated an increase of 75% in literal and 50% for inferential reading comprehension. The Qualitative Reading Inventory also indicated a 25% increase in both explicit and implicit reading comprehension as well as a 23% increase in retelling. Evidence from the post-test short essay, the Star Llama (Mike, 2003) showed that the student increased use of reading comprehension strategies when compared to the pre-test. The additions to the post-intervention
essay indicated the target student was able to make her thinking visible about what she read as opposed to reading the essay without comment as she did on the pre-test.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Comprehension is the primary reason for reading and a crucial factor to all content area learning. A small population of students with reading difficulties exhibit adequate decoding skills but demonstrate low comprehension skills. The present study will explore ways to improve both the literal and inferential reading comprehension of one student in a general education third grade classroom, as a result of teacher modeling and the teacher think-aloud process of the comprehension strategy: questioning. This was reinforced by the Common Core Standard RL.3.1 which states that students be able to “ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers” (WDPI, 2010, p.12).

Since the 1970’s, major changes have been seen in the way students with disabilities are educated. Thirty years ago, students with disabilities were mainly educated in a self-contained special education classroom. In order to best meet student needs, major changes in legislation were addressed. Several laws were enacted since then with the most recent legislation being the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) (WDPI, 2005). The primary focus of this legislation required schools to provide free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This enabled students with special needs to transition from a self-contained classroom to the general education classroom. For the majority of students with special needs, the general education classroom was found to be the least restrictive environment. Due to this shift in special education guidelines, general education
teachers were finding more and more special education students in their classrooms throughout the day. The following is a description of one such student.

The student targeted for this study was an eight year old, Hispanic, female who was referred to as Sam. Sam participated in the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program as well as the Friday snack pack program. She lived in a single parent home and at the time of this study there was no ongoing relationship with the father.

Sam was an eager learner though she struggled in reading and math. She also represented a unique population of student. Sam was considered a word caller, a person who is an adequate decoder but poor comprehender (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007). IDEIA legislation eliminated the requirement of students having to exhibit a “severe discrepancy” between intellectual ability and achievement in order to qualify for special education services as a student with a learning disability (WDPI, 2005). This legislation provided the framework that allowed students like Sam, to receive early intervention services through the Response to Intervention model (RTI) and Title I. Sam participated in Title I Reading intervention for the last two years which focused on reading comprehension strategies.

Sam’s strengths in reading were in fluency and accuracy. Since she was such a competent decoder and had the ability to explain decoding strategies so clearly, Sam was pleased to tutor other students in this area. As her third grade teacher, I noticed that Sam was making progress in reading comprehension but it was slow. She continued to struggle in understanding both literal and inferential comprehension. One of Sam’s greatest strengths was the willingness to read for pleasure. The fact that Sam didn’t dislike reading provided me with hope that she would respond well to intervention. She also did very well in narrative writing. Through the
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voice and imagery she displayed in her writing, Sam created a piece of work in which keep the reader engaged and wanting more. Since she felt great success in this area, which was recognized by both teachers and peers, Sam continued to flourish in this area.

Sam often got frustrated when she was not successful right away at a concept and gave up. During these times, she often rejected both peer and teacher support. This was usually when we started to have behavioral issues in the classroom. Sam was not responding well to Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) model at tier II as a result tier III was implemented. Tier III required that an individual intervention plan be established that included a behavioral plan as well as participation in several small group socialization lessons outside of the 30 minutes a day socialization skills were explicitly modeled in the general education classroom. So, I needed to switch my thinking from discipline to more trauma sensitive thinking; a move from consequences to coaching. Instead of asking “What happened?” the question became “What’s wrong?” What need was not being met at the time of shutdown and non-compliance. Then using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in which basic needs must be met before more complex needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization can be attained (Maslow, 1948), I started asking her questions. “Did you eat breakfast (lunch)?”, “Are you Hungry?”, “Do you need a snack?”, and “Are you tired?” Once I determined this level of needs were met we could progress to the next level which was “Safety”. Was Sam feeling physically and emotionally safe? If not, which one was it? Once it was determined that she felt physically safe, I moved on to emotional needs and found that she was extremely self-conscience during conferring times and would rather meet out in the hall. Whether this anxiety stemmed from low self-esteem and self-confidence and fear of failing, anxiety over learning new skill, or a combination of both was yet to be determined.
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Since, I now had an idea of “what happened”; I needed to find a way to make this intervention work for her.

I began by recognizing the need to build a stronger relationship with Sam and progressed to implementing wait time, foreshadowing conferring meetings and holding the meetings out in the hall. Each week of the intervention contained a different teaching point which created enough anxiety to produce non-compliance issues and shutdowns but also offered Sam the opportunity for growth. By incorporating scaffolding instruction with my reading strategy instruction I had hoped to reduce her anxiety while maintaining her Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Coffey, 2009). The ZPD offers the student the opportunity to leave their academic comfort zone while still maintaining teacher support through scaffolding. It stresses using connections between prior knowledge and the new concept. Once I knew Sam’s prior knowledge about the questioning strategy, I had a starting point to build upon. I scaffolded the strategy through each week’s teaching points, teacher think alouds, and explicit modeling that often related back to her prior knowledge so she could understand the new strategy with support, hopefully, lessening her anxiety. When the anxiety started to overwhelm the student, I recognized the signs and backed off. I allowed the student the “wait time” she needed to process the new information in her own way. I made myself available to her should she seek assistance.

Students, like Sam, who have difficulty comprehending text, are unaware of the most basic reading comprehension strategies to use as a tool to aid them. Researchers have been studying reading comprehension strategies for years. Very little research, however, has been done for the unique population of word callers. Even less research has been completed on students with both learning difficulties in reading comprehension and behavior problems addressed in the general education classroom. The following researchers not only studied the
relationship between fluency and comprehension, they also examined what metacognitive strategies would work best for this population and what types of instruction would benefit students with learning difficulties combined with behavior problems.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

“The ultimate goal of all readers is to understand what they read” (Teele, 2004, p.92).

The purpose of this study was to explore whether or not explicit modeling of the comprehension strategy of questioning would enhance the reading comprehension of students who are adequate decoders but poor comprehenders. Research suggests that fluency and comprehension, though intertwined, does not necessarily correlate to higher thought performance (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007). Teachers are able to help improve student comprehension through the explicit modeling of specific reading strategies. Research has also implied that adequate decoders but poor comprehenders are difficult to identify due to the illusion of already being proficient readers based on accuracy and speed (Applegate, Applegate & Modla, 2009).

The first section of chapter two concentrates on the relationship between fluency and comprehension associated with word callers. The second segment focuses on whether or not verbal or visual strategies enhance reading comprehension. The third component addresses strategy instruction and the specific strategies that are used to enhance comprehension in students with learning disabilities. The final section focuses on problem behaviors in the classroom and how they affect academic achievement.

Relationship between Fluency and Comprehension

There have been many studies that have suggested that fluent readers are expected to exhibit growth in comprehension (Applegate, Applegate, & Modla, 2009). It has also been
suggested that fluency must be developed before comprehension can occur and as students become more fluent word decoders more effort can be directed to comprehension (Hamilton, 2003). The research that will be presented in this section will lay the foundation that comprehension should not be an assumed outcome based on a student’s ability to read with accuracy and speed. Care should be taken when identifying students as adequate decoders but poor comprehenders, without the use of accurate measures to support that perception.

Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) attempted to determine if the development of fluency would correspond with a high degree of reading comprehension when assessed as higher-level response to text. The authors proposed two questions. “Will a high degree of fluency be accompanied by a high degree of reading comprehension when that comprehension is assessed as thoughtful response to text? And “Is there support in our findings for the idea that the development of a high level of fluency will be accompanied by a high degree of reading comprehension”(Applegate, Applegate, & Modla, 2009, p. 514)? The independent variable the researchers selected consisted of two narrative passages from the Critical Reading Inventory-2 (CRI-2; Applegate, Quinn, & Applegate, 2008) used to assess reading comprehension through text-based literal, inferential and critical response questions and fluency. The dependent variable was the teacher’s perceived judgment of a student’s reading proficiency compared to the student’s results on the CRI-2.

The sample was drawn from three states. Both public and parochial schools were represented, with a total of 171 children in grades 2-10. Out of the 171 children studied, 111 were females and 60 were males with 81% being white while and only 14% being from minority groups.
All students were considered to be strong readers by either a parent or a teacher, scored a 16 or higher on the CRI-2, and were placed by teachers into high reading groups. All students were tested by trained graduate or undergraduate examiners who audio taped all oral passages and the retellings. The retelling scores were calculated by a computer program and checked again by qualified CRI-2 examiners. The comprehension questions were also double checked by a qualified CRI-2 examiner.

All students were tested with a total of two narrative passages- one read orally and one read silently. The students were then required to complete a retell of each passage and answer ten comprehension questions. The text-based comprehension questions were given then the inferential and higher level comprehension questions were combined for a total of 12 questions.

The results to the question “Is there support in our findings for the idea that the development of a high level of fluency will be accompanied by a high degree of reading comprehension?” were surprising to Applegate, Applegate and Modla who differentiated the scores between advanced (total comprehension score of 85% or higher), proficient (total comprehension score between 63% and 80%) and struggling (total comprehension 58% or lower). The authors expected to find that some strong readers scored in the advanced category (30%). They found that those who scored at the proficient category (36%) needed additional instruction in reading comprehension. However, it astonished the authors to find that a 33 % of the students scored in the struggling category. It was only after digging deeper into the data that authors found that the problem lies with the higher-level thinking problems and not the retelling and literal questioning. The authors found that there are students who are considered strong
readers due solely on fluency- speed, accuracy, and prosody- with little regard to their comprehension ability.

In conclusion, the answer to the other question that the authors proposed in this study’ “Will a high degree of fluency be accompanied by a high degree of reading comprehension when that comprehension is assessed as thoughtful response to text?” was proven to be no! Both struggling readers (49%) and proficient readers (36%) have difficulty with higher order comprehension and the problem is more widespread than previously thought. Teachers must use both fluency and comprehension assessments concurrently when determining reading proficiency. It is important to assess whether both fluency and comprehension combined with the other skills are functioning together.

The authors concluded that students need additional classroom instruction in the higher level thinking involved in comprehension and not just those tasks that involve the student in a simple retelling. Teachers should develop additional instructional strategies to aid students to more fully comprehend text.

The previous study by Applegate, Applegate and Modia (2009) suggested that it would be a disservice to our students to assess reading fluency without assessing higher level comprehension at the same time. This next study by Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) suggested that adequate decoders/poor comprehenders are labeled “word callers” and these word callers read so fluently that they don’t pay attention to the text thus hampering comprehension. This study focused on why the word callers hamper comprehension instead of how word callers demonstrate the lack of comprehension.
Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) attempted to clarify the association between reading skill fluency and comprehension. The researchers endeavored to answer the following questions: “(1) How strongly does comprehension depend on reading skill fluency? (2) How is the fluency-comprehension relationship influenced by development and motivation? (3) How is the relationship influenced by restriction?” (Walczyk, 2005, p. 563). The independent variable was whether comprehension was improved using the compensatory-encoding theory compared to fluent word reading. The focus of this study was on the compensatory-encoding theory or the C-ET. C-ET explains how comprehension is enhanced for weak word readers by adjusting their reading. Weak readers adjusted their reading by slowing their reading rate, instituting a pause, using a look back, reading aloud, sounding out words, using a jump over or skip, or rereading the text. C-ET states that weak readers with poor listening comprehension can increase their text comprehension as long as there are no time constraints and they are motivated to do so. The C-ET, also states that being a nonfluent reader does not necessarily lower reading comprehension. The dependent variable was computer- based reading fluency measures and passages, constructed comprehension texts and reading tasks to assess fluency, comprehension, and motivation.

The sample for this study consisted of 71 third graders (38 males, 33 females), 68 fifth graders (35 males, 33 females) and 72 seventh graders (39 males, 33 females). Roughly one-third of the students were African- Americans with the rest being Caucasian. Half of the sample came from the suburbs of Southern Louisiana and the other half came from a rural school in Northern Louisiana. No one in this sample had a reading disability.
The procedure used by the researchers consisted of several different tests. The students were tested on word reading, word meanings, sentence comprehension, working memory, comprehension tests, motivation and four separate reading tasks. The word reading was measured via a computer. The students were tested to determine how fast and accurately they could read words as those words flashed on the screen. Word meaning was measured by assessing how fast the students could determine whether or not two nouns were in the same category. Sentence comprehension was measured by timing how fast students could choose which of two words made the best sense in a sentence. Working memory was measured by listening comprehension and retelling. Comprehension tests were measured by passage reading followed by eight to eleven literal and inferential questions. Motivation was measured by self-reports made by the students after each task. Finally, reading tasks were broken down into four individualized tests. The first task consisted of unrestricted reading where it was recorded by students and it was coded later for compensations. The students were able to use whatever strategies they needed to comprehend the text. The second task was a time pressure/no time pressure task. The students were randomly placed into the time pressure or no time pressure groups and asked to read aloud. The third task was reading at a constant rate or variable rate. The students were required to either read at a constant rate with no slowing down or looking back or allowed to read at their own rate and use their strategies when needed. All students were required to read aloud. The final reading task was to read either silently or aloud. Students were randomly placed into the “read silently” the whole time or to “read aloud” group the whole time.

The authors of the study found that in terms of reading fluency, all students with weaker fluency skills, regardless of their grade level, compensated more frequently. This means they looked back into the text, paused, slowed their reading rate, and reread the text when needed. By
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comparison, and not surprisingly, students who were more fluent compensated less. However, an unexpected discovery was made within grade levels. Students in the third grade spent too much time trying to decode words and had to be told to continue to read. The fifth and seventh grade students were more apt to just skip over insignificant words with which they were not familiar. The seventh grade students were more willing to use their compensation skills and to comprehend better when they found the text engaging.

The authors found that when time was restricted, only fluent readers comprehended better. Students with weak skills compensated much less when time was restricted. The only exception to this was in the case of the seventh graders where the time restrictions enabled them to focus better and to increase their comprehension.

The findings from the study revealed that in terms of the constant and variable rate of reading, the students basically incorporated their own rate and still chose to compensate when they felt they could. However, when students read at the constant rate and they were not able to compensate, the level of comprehension was significantly reduced.

In terms of reading in silence or reading aloud, third graders comprehended at a significantly higher level than fifth or seventh graders when reading aloud. The practice of reading aloud was a useful compensation tool for less skilled students at all levels.

By using the C-ET model Walczyk and Griffith-Ross exhibited that nonfluent readers with weaker skills do not necessarily equate to lower comprehension due to their ability to use compensation strategies. The researchers also indicated that the label “word calling” described a student’s reading fluency yet lacking comprehension. These students were found to challenge
teachers to find relevant and engaging literature as well as classroom activities that demand higher level thinking and comprehension skills.

The results led to many instructional implications that can be immediately implemented into the general education classroom. This study showed that students comprehend better when they are motivated by their text selection, can read in an unrestricted environment with no time constraints, have the option of reading aloud, and are allowed to use their other compensation strategies at will. An important implication is that the compensation strategies of how and why to pause, slow down their speed, look back into the text, and reread the text must be explicitly modeled by their general education instructors.

The previous study examined why word callers display a lack of reading comprehension and its relationship to reading fluency. The next study by Hamilton and Shinn (2003) tested the accuracy in which teachers identify word callers and whether or not the teachers overestimated the word reading skills if those students.

Hamilton and Shinn (2003) investigated the effect of teachers’ perceptions of the identification of word callers. The researchers examined teacher-identified word callers in comprehension and oral reading in order to determine if the teacher’s perceptions were correct. The questions posed by this study were:”(1) Are students identified by their teachers as word callers reading fluently but not comprehending? (2) Given that word callers are predicated on teacher’s judgments of individual students’ oral reading and comprehension skills, are teachers accurate in their judgments of these skills” (Hamilton and Shinn, 2003, p. 230)? The independent variable was the teacher’s perceptions of the identification of word callers who lack comprehension skills versus similarly fluent peers with effective comprehension skills. The
dependent variable was the Reading Curriculum-Based Measurement (R-CBM; Shinn, 1989), Curriculum-Based Measurement-Maze Assessment (CBM-Maze Assessment; Shinn, 1989), and the Passage Comprehension subtest of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT-PC; Woodcock, 1987) to assess oral reading and comprehension skills.

For the purposes of this study, 66 third grade students and a number of teachers from 25 elementary schools participated. Word callers (n=33) were identified by their teachers using an explicit verbal prompt:

“… [I]f you teach a third grade student who can read fluently, but has difficulty comprehending text” (Hamilton & Shinn, 2003, p. 230-231).

Similarly fluent peers (SFP) were also identified by the teachers using another explicit verbal prompt:

“… [I]f you teach a third grade student who can read as fluently as the word caller but who has no difficulty with comprehension” (Hamilton & Shinn, 2003, p. 230-231).

The sample finished with 33 word callers and 33 SFP where each word caller was paired with a SFP from the same classroom. In the word callers group there were 27 males and 6 females of whom 10 students were in special education. In the SFP group, there were 18 males and 15 females of whom 3 students were in special education.

Those who administered the measurements were extensively trained in administering and scoring the measurements. Each participant in the study completed all four reading measures within one 20- minute session. The WC and the SFP were given the four reading measures on
the same day. The teachers were also interviewed in a 15-minute session during which the formats for the test and the directions were explained.

The results, using the WRMT-PC, showed that the SFP did not have comprehension issues with a score of 99.6 (48th percentile) which mimics the average score of the national norm sample. The WC did have some comprehension issues with a score of 92.4 (30th percentile) which ranked below the national norm. The CBM-Maze also showed that the SFP participants outperformed the WC for oral comprehension (13.6 versus 9.1).

To answer the initial question as to whether teachers’ perceptions are accurate in judging student’s reading skills, it was found by using the Tukey procedure that teachers overestimated both the WC and the SFP students’ ability to the same degree using the R-CBM. Using the ANOVA with the reading comprehension tests, teacher-predicted scores were significantly higher than student scores again for both groups. However, the teachers significantly overestimated the SFP group using the CBM-Maze test for reading comprehension. The students who the teachers identified as word callers did not comprehend as well as their SFP peers and performed in the low average range of the Woodcock. But the teachers were only half right as they overestimated the fluency of the WC group.

The finding from this study suggest that there are differences in both the reading fluency and the reading comprehension for the students identified by teachers as word callers and the students identified as those having comprehension skills. This also suggests that teachers overestimated the reading fluency of both groups, thus the need for teachers to keep objective curriculum-based measures. The question becomes whether or not the teacher is basing a
student’s fluency on firsthand observation along with incorporating his or her own definition of fluency.

In conclusion, these studies showed that the relationship between fluency and comprehension is a complex dynamic that needs to be taught individually but assessed concurrently. The studies also showed the bridge between reading and fluency contains many “diverse pathways” and fluent readers can benefit from engaging in other metacognitive tasks (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007, p. 567). These studies also show the label “word caller” refers to those students who are considered adequate decoders but poor comprehenders (Hamilton & Shinn, 2003). Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) and Hamilton and Shinn (2003) both urged caution when identifying word callers, stressing that teacher perceptions may be judged on fluency observations and not scientific assessment data.

**Verbal versus Visual Strategy Instruction**

Researchers have long pondered the practice of teaching reading comprehension instruction and what strategies would be best employed. The goal of reading comprehension is the ability to gain meaning from independent reading. The following researchers focused their research on whether visual or verbal strategy instruction is best for students with learning disabilities and word callers.

Sencibaugh strived to determine whether auditory or visual strategy interventions are effective methods to improve reading comprehension for students with learning disabilities. This study was a metanalysis of 15 previous studies conducted between the years of 1985 and 2005.
The purpose of this study was “to conduct a meta-analysis on metacognitive instructional strategies used to improve the reading comprehension levels of students with learning disabilities” (Sencibaugh, 2005, p.3). The independent variable was reading comprehension comparing either visual or auditory strategy instruction to conventional reading instruction. The dependent variable that was used to measure reading comprehension was the students’ “responding to questions in order to reveal an understanding of the passage” (Sencibaugh, 2005, p. 6). The assessment tools include the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Gates-MacGinitie, 1989), the Nelson Reading Test (Nelson, 1983), and the Gray Reading Test for comprehension (Bryant, 2002).

There were a total of 538 students in the 15 studies that were analyzed. A majority of the subjects were identified as students with learning disabilities as identified by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test to be poor readers and below-average readers, and there were four students who the researchers referred to as “mentally retarded” (Gates-MacGinitie, 1989).

Ten of the fifteen studies were completed at the elementary level, four at the middle school level, and one at the high school level.

The procedure of this study was to search for journal articles on EBSCO and ERIC databases that contain the following criteria: 1) The participants must be from grades k-12, 2) The studies must be experimental with a treatment versus control design, 3) It must be about reading comprehension, 4) The participants must be learning disabled or have a reading disability, and 5) There must be enough data to allow for a Delta index for effective size (Sencibaugh, 2005).
There were various visual and verbal strategies used in these studies. The visual strategies included graphic organizers, pictures, and illustrations. The verbal strategies incorporated summarizing, self-monitoring, retelling, inferring, pre- and post-reading predictions, reciprocal reading training, and questioning.

Some of the results were unanticipated. For the visual interventions the use of the graphic organizers (Delta 1.52) made the most significant impact on reading interventions for students with reading and/or learning disabilities, followed by visual attention therapy (Delta .80). The researchers were surprised to learn of the impact of illustrations during visual interventions. Illustrations with a Delta of .50 made only a slight impact on reading comprehension. The author’s reasoning suggested that illustrations may have been a distraction for students with learning and/or reading disabilities.

In terms of the verbal strategies, paragraph restatement (Delta 3.65) and text structure (Delta of 2.39) created the most significant impact on reading comprehension. Other verbal strategies such as summarization (Delta 2.71), reciprocal teaching (Delta 1.07) and self-instruction or questioning (Delta 1.72) also generated a significant impact on reading comprehension. Verbal strategies like retelling (Delta .60) and summarizing (Delta .68) had a minimal effect on reading comprehension. The only verbal strategy to produce the lowest impact on students with learning and/or reading disabilities was inferencing, with a Delta of only .31.

As a result of this meta-analysis the author concluded that visual strategies with a Delta of .94 with a 90% confidence interval, and verbal strategies with a Delta of 1.18 also with a 90% confidence interval are both considered as having a significant impact on the reading
comprehension of students with learning and/or reading disabilities, with verbal strategies generating the greatest impact. The implications also suggest that the verbal strategies of questioning and summarization, along with text based structure strategies, will produce the greatest effect; however, students must be explicitly trained to implement these megacognitive strategies. Combined use of these verbal strategies along with the use of the graphic organizer, which is a visual strategy, would be a powerful combination to utilize. Students with learning and/or reading disabilities would benefit from being taught either visual strategy, verbal strategy or a combination of both visual and verbal strategies in contrast to standard reading comprehension instruction.

The findings in the previous study by Sencibaugh (2005) suggested that a combined use of visual and verbal strategies would best benefit students with learning disabilities. Students with good decoding skills but poor reading comprehension (word callers) often have difficulty paying attention to text. The next study by Glenberg (2000) focuses on the use verbal and visual based intervention aimed at increasing the reading comprehension of poor comprehenders.

Glenberg (2000) investigated whether teaching reading strategies to poor comprehenders in a small group setting would improve their reading comprehension and whether this improvement in comprehension would be greater if the intervention program would be verbally based or visually based. Glenberg posed two questions:” (1) Does small group strategy training enhance reading comprehension for adequate decoders who are poor comprehenders? and (2) Does it matter whether the trained strategy is more verbal or more visual?” (Glenberg, 2000, p. 772). The independent variable was reading comprehension ability comparing a verbal reciprocal teaching program (RT) and a visualizing/verbalizing (VV) program. There was also a
control group. The dependent variable was comprised of three tests. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R; Wechsler, 1974) was a pretest which assessed vocabulary with open-ended questions. The Word Recognition subtest (WRAT; Jastak & Jastak, 1978) evaluated word reading ability for both pre and post testing. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test: Comprehension subtest (MacGinitie & MacGinitie, 1989) assessed reading comprehension using narrative texts to measure predictions, recall, listening recall, working memory, and question generation used for both pre- and post-testing.

The participants were teacher-identified third through fifth graders (T=59) who were placed, based on pretest screening measures, into either the RT group (n=22), the VV group (n=22), or the conventional reading instruction group (n=14). There were 12 small groups, each having two to five participants. The participants were from three schools with two trainers teaching each of the intervention programs. The intervention duration was ten weeks with each intervention program meeting four times a week for a total of 28 sessions. Glenberg (2000) asked that no students recommended for the research have emotional-behavioral problems, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder and/or assistance needed on a daily basis (Glenberg, 2000). The participants were 95% Caucasian due to the population of the region where the study was done.

The RT intervention program concentrated on four reading strategies that were introduced to the participants in the following order: summarization, clarification, prediction, and question generation. These strategies were introduced at a rate of one per week. An important concept in the RT program was that the participants learned the role of “team leader”. At the
beginning of each session one child was chosen to be the leader (i.e., to lead discussions) and one child was chosen as a clarifier (i.e., to look up unknown or difficult words).

The VV intervention program instructed the students to “create a mental image” and to discuss their images with the group. To aid the students in creating these mental images, the trainers taught the students twelve “structure” words. To express the concept of “what”, students used words describing: number, size, shape, and color. To create the image for the “where” questions, the students words described: background and perspective. Time was indicated for the word “when”. Finally, the “how” structure words were to reflect movement, mood, sound, smell, and touch. These words were first modeled then used during independent practice. The progression was first to use with a single word, followed by a sentence, and finally in the form of a paragraph. At the paragraph level the first sentence was analyzed using all twelve structure words and it served as an anchor sentence for the rest of the paragraph with the image placed on a colored square. Each sentence in the paragraph was then analyzed and that image was also placed on a colored square. The students subsequently used the colored squares to complete a recall of the paragraph using as much detail as they could remember. This practice proved to be very time consuming. It was important that with this picture summary, the participants proved that they were imaging the main idea and not just using other adjectives to describe the text.

It was found that small group strategy training did indeed enhance reading comprehension for adequate decoders who were poor comprehenders. Both the RT and the VV groups did significantly better than the control group in four areas. The RT group posttest gains were significantly higher in the areas of word recognition, question generation, answering explicit and implicit questions. The VV group surpassed the control group only in the area of
implicit questions with a marginal gain in word recognition. These gains showed that teaching reading comprehension strategies improved student performance with decoding and reading comprehension. The only section in which the control group made significant gains over the experimental groups was in DTLA-following directions measure.

The second question of whether it matters if the trained strategy is more verbal or more visual was found to be inconclusive. The RT group significantly outperformed the VV group on one measure—answering explicit questions. This surprised the researchers who predicted that the VV group would post the greater gains on the reading comprehension measures. Researchers concluded that on the two measures most utilized for reading comprehension, recalling main ideas and implicit questions, there was no significant difference between the two experimental groups.

The instructional implications formed from this research suggest that small group instruction in metacognitive reading strategies increases adequate decoders/poor comprehenders’ skills. Moreover, a combination of both the RT and the VV reading strategies would have the greatest impact on success.

The previous study focused on which reading strategy instruction, verbal or visual, would benefit word callers the most. Comprehension strategies consist of procedures that enable students to understand text. Struggling students may need a more direct comprehension strategy such as explicit verbal instruction in order to comprehend text. In the next study, Duffy, Roehler and Meloth (1986) took into account the teacher effects of explicit verbal instruction on reading comprehension.
Duffy, Roehler, and Meloth (1986) investigated whether classroom teachers who provide more explicit instruction of strategic reading skills had more effect than those who were less explicit in explaining skills. The author posed three questions: “1) Are teachers trained to be more explicit during low-group reading skill instruction more effective than teachers who receive no training? 2) Are low-group students of teachers who receive training in how to provide explicit explanation more aware of what skill was taught and of how to use it strategically than low-group students of teachers who receive no training? And 3) do the low-group students of trained teachers score significantly higher on the comprehension subtest of a standardized reading achievement test than low-group students of untrained teachers?” (Duffy, Roehler & Meloth, 1986, p.240). The independent variable was reading comprehension achievement comparing teacher-led explicit teaching of reading skills and less explicit teaching of reading skills. The dependent variable consisted of a “developed rating instrument” to measure the explicitness of teacher’s explanations of reading skills (Duffy, Roehler & Meloth, 1986, p. 241). The measure used to evaluate reading comprehension was the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (2nd ed., MacGinitie, 1978).

The subjects in this study consisted of 22 fifth-grade teachers and their students who were placed in the low group from an urban school in the Midwest. The teachers were randomly assigned to either the control group (less explicit teaching of reading strategies) or the treatment group (more explicit teaching of reading strategies) based on the results from an observation tool devised by Putman and Meloth (1984). This observational tool measured how many students were on task, the number of interruptions a teacher experienced while instructing, and the teacher’s classroom management style. This observational tool was used five times throughout the yearlong study.
The students who were placed in the low-group were considered one year behind in reading comprehension based on their achievement scores and teacher recommendations from the previous year. All the students were from the same demographic area and the average low-group size was 11.6 students.

The measurement used for this study was a “developed rating instrument” that used trained graduate students as raters. This “instrument” measured two areas: 1) The content of what the teacher said to students, and 2) How that content was conveyed to the students (Duffy, Roehler & Meloth, 1986, p. 242). The teachers used lesson transcripts. The ratings in each category were rated as either a 0 indicating an absence of the criteria or a 2 indicating exemplary use of the criteria used in these transcripted lessons.

The procedure consisted of each student being given the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for the initial data collection measurement in October (2nd ed., MacGinitie, 1978). That same month the teachers were observed while instructing the low-group during instruction to establish a baseline measurement using the developed rating instrument (Duffy, Roehler & Meloth, 1986). Teachers were then randomly placed into either the control or the treatment group. Then initial meetings were held where the treatment teachers began their training on how to give explicit reading instruction and the control group teachers were given a brief seminar on classroom management. The treatment teachers received an additional ten hours of training while the control group received no supplemental training during the school year.

The additional instruction given to the treatment teachers was in the following areas (1) how and when the explicit instruction would be delivered and used, and (2) how to present these lessons to the students. In general, the teachers were taught to verbalize the thought
processes when using a specific strategy. They were instructed to follow the following format for the lessons: introduction, modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and finally application of the strategy in everyday reading. Furthermore, both the treatment and the control group teachers were observed four additional times throughout the year during the scheduled reading instruction time. The observations were taped and field notes were taken for later data analysis. The observers also chose five randomly picked students for an interview about that day’s lesson. Finally, the Gates-MacGinitie was given to all the participants in both the control and treatment groups in April to measure student growth in reading comprehension.

The results to the first question of whether treatment teachers received significantly higher ratings for explicitness during reading instruction showed that they did have higher ratings than the control group based on an ANOVA analysis of the five observation times. However, it is important to note that during the teacher interviews conducted after the study it came to light that several of the treatment teachers found it difficult to maintain the explicit instruction; therefore, it was not consistently used.

The outcome to the second question was in regard to whether the treatment teachers received led to higher awareness of what reading skill was taught and how it is used. It was determined that the treatment group had significantly higher student awareness in contrast to the control group based on repeated ANOVA of the observations.

The third question this study addressed was whether the treatment group assessed at a higher level of reading comprehension than the control group on the April Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (2nd ed., MacGinitie, 1978). The results were surprising. Although the
treatment group spent a greater amount of time completing the test, there was no significant difference in reading comprehension.

The instructional application suggests that even though the outcome of explicit instruction did not translate to an increase in reading comprehension, the explicit verbal instruction did increase student awareness of the lesson and may translate in the future into an increased use of these skills while reading.

If studies such as this suggest that explicit verbal instruction may lead to an increase in reading comprehension then it stands to reason that other direct instruction strategies would also be useful. The following year-long study by Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, and Schuder (1995) combined several strategies such as visual aids, questioning, and explicit modeling of think-alouds to improve the reading comprehension of low-achieving comprehenders.

Brown (1995) investigated the effectiveness of the Student, Achieving, and Independent Learning (SAIL) using Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) on reading comprehension. Three hypotheses were studied:” (1) that instruction in SAIL would enhance reading comprehension as measured by standardized tests; (2) that there would be clear indications of this improvement after a year of SAIL instruction; (3) that students would develop deeper understandings of text after a year of SAIL instruction” (Brown, 1995, p. 6). The independent variable was the impact of reading instruction using SAIL strategies compared to reading instruction using conventional strategies. The dependent variable was the Stanford Achievement Test (Pate, 2008), an interview, story lesson along with retelling questions, and a think aloud story with questions at stopping points to assess reading comprehension.
The procedure for this year-long study first involved assigning teachers to the SAIL group and the comparison group. The teachers included in the study for both the SAIL group and the comparison group all came from the same school district. The five teachers chosen for the SAIL group all had previous experience teaching the SAIL program. The five teachers chosen to represent the comparison group had very diverse instructional styles. These teachers were all given the same questionnaire inquiring about their philosophies on teaching. This questionnaire was given in order to identify any patterns of teaching beliefs among the two groups of teachers. The next step consisted of identifying the student participants.

For this study there were a total of ten reading groups of which five used the SAIL strategies and five used the conventional reading strategies. The ten reading groups consisted of six students each. The students who participated in the study were all second-grade students who were reading below level at the beginning of the year. “Classes were demographically based on student mobility patterns, ethnic and minority composition, size and location of schools, as well as standardized test scores (Brown, 1995, p.9). Since information about students’ performance from previous years was unavailable, a standardized achievement test was administrated to each of the students. Students were matched on the basis of their standardized comprehension pretest scores.

All students were administered a strategies interview in October and November as well as in March and April. Students were asked the same questions but the questions were given in different order each time to assess the students’ awareness of the comprehension strategies. The research did not provide much information about the interviewers.
In March/April all groups read the same two stories and these interactions were recorded. These lessons were taught in the morning and did not last more than 55 minutes. Two hours later each of the students was interviewed individually. All students were asked to retell the story to a researcher and were also asked to sequence pictures that correlated to events in the story. In May or June students read another more challenging story (level 3.9). Students were stopped at the same four points in the story to conduct a think-aloud. The first question was primarily focused on content in an open-ended format. This was to test the student’s ability to recall what was read. Researchers also observed whether students actually used comprehension strategies when reading, or merely memorized information from their teacher. In May or June, students took the same Stanford Achievement Test (Pate, 2008). This was to test reading comprehension and word study skills. The results were used as a pre- and post-test to determine if there was growth in understanding. The spring think-aloud analysis section had two scorers who read through all of the protocols independently and identified potential categories to record responses. They combined these categories to create a way of scoring the students’ responses. Toward the end of the school year (May-June) the SAIL participants outperformed the comparison-group on a 40 question comprehension subtest. In addition, SAIL students outperformed the comparison group on a word subtest. By spring, SAIL students relayed more comprehension and word strategies during the interview than did comparison-group students. Students in SAIL already began with more knowledge of word-level strategies due to initial instruction but by the end of the study, the SAIL students demonstrated a deeper understanding of these strategies. Every strategy but two (sounding out and asking for help) was mentioned more frequently by SAIL students in the interview than by the comparison-group students.
One issue measured was whether SAIL students scored more interpretive idea units than comparison-group students. Interpretive idea units measure the students’ responses that relate background knowledge to the given text. For the Mushroom Story, SAIL students averaged 6.12 interpretive idea units per student as compared to 4.48 interpretive idea units for the comparison-group. For Fox Trot, SAIL students averaged 5.58 interpretive idea units per student, as compared to 3.84 in the comparison-group.

Another issue measured was the student’s interpretive recall, or literal ideas remembered from the story. Basically, this meant that if a student recalled a particular event from the reading, that student was scored as recalling the whole unit. For the Mushroom Story, SAIL students averaged a recall of 17.64 literal idea units per student, which did not significantly exceed the comparison-group that averaged 15.82 units. In the Fox Trot Story, SAIL student’s recall was 12.26, which exceeded the comparison group which had an average recall of 8.38. SAIL students had far more interpretive responses in their recall than comparison-group students. These results suggest that SAIL students internalize the strategies and offer more interpretations to stories than those in the comparison-group.

The responses to the fable reading in the spring were recorded and analyzed for the use of comprehension strategies. The results indicated that SAIL students used a significantly higher number of strategies during the spring reading than did their comparison-group peers. All of the strategies that were measured, except for monitoring, were seen more frequently in SAIL students, than in the students of the comparison-group.

Another strategy measured was whether SAIL- or comparison- group students focused more on text or reader- based information, when they responded without the use of any particular
strategy. By a large margin, the SAIL group participants recorded more reader based responses than the comparison-group. It’s obvious that the SAIL students had begun to apply strategy use independently.

Finally, students in SAIL benefitted both in the short-term and the long term over their performance-group peers. The SAIL group students gained more meaning from stories read in small groups, and obtained more explicit information by doing so. Both in terms of retrieving explicit information from the text and making connections through use of strategies, the SAIL group made significant gains when compared to the comparison-group students. SAIL students outperformed their peers on standardized tests, and used strategies more often to understand text. This study strongly indicates that transactional strategies instruction does indeed improve the reading achievement of elementary-level students.

In conclusion, the implications of these studies suggest an increase in reading comprehension for struggling readers when both visual and verbal strategies are implemented during instruction as per the study by Sencibaugh (2005). An important part of the process of growing up is the ability to read and understand what one reads. People who have difficulty processing what they read required explicit modeling of comprehension strategy and this is especially true for word callers. According to Glenburg (2000), one of the best practices would be to employ both visual and verbal strategies when instructing word callers. Teachers need to expand their knowledge on incorporating both verbal and visual instruction for poor comprehenders. Duffy, Roehler and Meloth (1986) indicated teachers must not only be trained in explicit teaching of reading strategies but must also be consistent the classroom with the use of those strategies. Teachers must create a connection between the words read and experiences.
The use of visual aids and graphic organizers can enhance a student’s ability to organize their thoughts in a meaningful way. Brown (1995) suggested a combination of graphic organizers and explicit modeling would aid in the probability of success for those students who are adequate decoders but poor comprehenders and those students with learning disabilities.

**Strategy Instruction**

“Readers are not passive recipients of information from text; readers are active participants in the meaning-making process” (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 2001, p. 65). Research suggested that students can be taught specific reading strategies and the use of those strategies will advance reading comprehension. Research also indicated that reading comprehension skills are compromised of a separate set of subskills than those of reading fluency. “Although word reading and comprehension skill are correlated, distinctly different abilities account for variances in reading subskills” (Oakhill, Cain & Bryant, 2003, p. 463). The subskills that increase reading comprehension include retelling, questioning, inferencing, and synthesizing.

Dole, Brown and Trathen (2001) investigated if a teacher-directed or student-based comprehension instruction was more beneficial for at-risk students. The authors hypothesized whether “a student-centered strategy may be more likely to help students with texts they read on their own” (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 2001, p.62). The independent variable was the comparison of reading comprehension ability between strategy instruction (activating prior knowledge) with both story content instruction (scaffolding the content and the students’ prior knowledge) and traditional instruction (basal readers). The dependent variable used to assess reading comprehension was comprised of six tests that were designed by the authors “covering the material from each of six basal reading selections” (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 2001, p.68).
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

The 67 fifth- and six- graders who participated in the five week study met the federal criteria for at-risk students of a minority population, free or reduced lunch and scored below 25% on Stanford Achievement Test (Pate, 2008) for reading. The students were grouped for reading instruction based on the Stanford Achievement Test (Pate) from the previous year.

All the materials came from the basal reading program that was already used in the district. The authors selected 24 narratives from the fourth-, fifth-, and six- grade level readers from the basal reading program. The fourth grade level was included due to the high percentage of the population that scored below the 25% on the Stanford Achievement Test (Pate, 2008).

Based on the teacher recommended grouping of high-average, average, and low-average groups, the students were randomly placed within either the strategy instruction, story content instruction, or traditional/basal instruction group. The teachers were all upper elementary teachers and they followed two guidelines: 1) the teachers were rotated through each of the instructional groups, and 2) they followed an author developed script.

Baseline data were collected on all three groups using two of the six author- developed tests followed by ten comprehension questions. The first test was given on day one and provided information that would be used to base independent reading comprehension performance with no instruction. The second test was given on day two after the initial instruction began, and provided a baseline for independent reading comprehension with instruction. Instruction was given daily for five weeks for fifty minutes a day and all students, regardless of their instructional group, read the same narrative and completed the same six comprehension questions. The students were allowed decoding aid from the teacher and were not assessed on penmanship or spelling.
The general procedure of the story content instruction was the use of story maps and scripted instruction on vocabulary and key ideas. The teacher introduced the topic, asking the students to quietly think about what they already knew about the topic to activate prior knowledge, and then introduced the important concepts of the narrative using a retelling format. The students read the narrative silently and completed the six comprehension questions.

The strategy instruction group was taught to make predictions, as well as to identify main characters, the problem and the solution to the narrative. The students were instructed to use who, what and why questions that “reminded” the students of the passage (Dole, et al., 2001, p.70). The instruction incorporated scaffolding which used the procedure of teacher-model use, peer-led model use, to small collaborative group, to pair groups, and finally in the fifth week, independent use of the story map and strategy instruction. Unlike the other two strategy groups whose lessons changed daily depending on the narrative, this group was taught the same strategy but scaffolded to independent use.

The traditional, or basal, instruction group followed the procedure outlined in the teachers’ basal manual for instruction. The teacher began with identifying unknown vocabulary, then provided an introduction of any new concepts, and then finally, a group discussion followed the silent reading of the narrative. Lastly, the students were asked to complete the six comprehension questions.

The results using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) showed a significant difference between the instructional strategies. The strategy instructional group scored significantly higher than either the story content or the basal instruction groups. An unexpected finding was that
there was no difference in the reading comprehension between the story content and the basal instruction groups.

It was found that the hypothesis that a student-centered strategy would aid the students in reading texts on their own did indeed significantly enhance reading comprehension for at-risk students.

Strategy instruction would be the recommended reading comprehension instruction for at-risk students. The strategy instruction stressed: 1) the importance of not only schema but also the process of comprehending text, and 2) the teachers role in scaffolding the instruction from modeling to coaching to finally stepping back and allowing the students to work independently in order to become more active learners.

The previous study by Dole, Brown and Trathen (2001) reflected on the effects of strategy instruction for at-risk students and the role it plays in reading comprehension. Metacognitive skills such as questioning enable the student to reflect upon the text, make changes in their thinking, and allow for independent practice to monitor their progress. The finding from the next study by Dole, Brown and Trathen (2001) suggested that a specific set of subskills were needed for comprehension. Metacognitive monitoring, defined as thinking of one’s own thinking, practiced through questioning, was one of the skills needed for comprehension.

Oakhill, Cain, and Bryant (2003) attempted to determine if decoding and comprehension metacognitive processes are independent of each other and whether or not these processes are based upon different underlying skills. The authors addressed the following questions: “Given that the understanding of a text depends on building a mental model of the situation represented
in that text, is this ability normally inextricable interrelated with lower-level reading processes in
customers?” or “Are there skills that contribute to the construction of the text representation, that
are not predictors of reading ability more generally” (Oakhill, et al, 2003, p. 447)? The
independent variable was the contribution of distinct skills related to comprehension in adequate
decoders/less-skilled comprehenders versus skilled decoders/skilled comprehenders. The
dependent variable were the following assessments: the Gates-MacGinitie Vocabulary Subtest
(Gates & MacGinitie,1989) which measured silent word recognition out of context, the Neale
Analysis of Reading Ability: Revised (Neale,1989) which assessed reading accuracy and rate,
the British Picture Vocabulary (Dunn, Dunn, Whetton, & Pintillie,1982) which measured the
children’s receptive vocabulary. To assess phonological awareness the authors used tests they
have developed called the Phoneme Deletion Task and the Odd-One-Out Task (Cain, Oakhill, &
Bryant, 2000). The Test for Reception of Grammar was used to measure comprehension (TROG:
Bishop, 1982) along with Inference and Integrations Skills Test (Oakland, 1982) which assessed
specific comprehension sub skills (inferential processing, understanding of the story structure,
and comprehension monitoring). Lastly, the WISC-R (Wechsler, 1974) was used to measure
both verbal and nonverbal intelligence.

There were 102, seven- and eight- year olds who participated in this longitudinal
study that occurred on two separate occasions. The first time period was when the participants
were seven and eight years old and the second time period was when the participants were eight
and nine years old. Omitted from this study were students who were deemed extremely good
readers and students who were deemed extremely poor readers. Also excluded from this study
were students who didn’t speak English and those who had “behavioral, emotional, or learning
disabilities” (Oakhill, et al, 2003, p.449). A follow-up study was planned for when this population of students reached the ages of ten and eleven years old.

The procedure for this study was as follows: the participants were given the various assessments at each time point (Time 1 and Time 2) and the results were assessed by Chronbach’s Alpha to measure reliability. The reliability coefficient for this study was .60-.80. The authors first looked for correlations between each of the measures then proceeded to conduct multiple regression analyses to find which of the measures accounted for the differences in both comprehension skill and single-word reading ability.

Generally, the results indicated the correlations remained similar, across the board, for each time period. In relationship to the TROG, the authors found a correlation between the Neale Accuracy and the Neale Comprehension after Test 2 but not Test 1. Oakhill, Cain, and Bryant (2003) discussed the possibility of the older students performing better due to working memory maturity that the authors knew was already correlated to reading comprehension. A lack of correlation was found between the assessment of integration and inference skills, both of which are connected to comprehension but are not found to be significantly intercorrelated. The authors surmised this was possibly due to the fact that the assessments “tap” into different sub skills of comprehension (Oakhill, et al., 2003, p. 462). However, the authors discovered that the correlations between Period 1 and Period 2 in regard to the Neale analysis, which assessed for accuracy and comprehension, were noticeably different. Period 1 did not show significant correlation between the subtests measures of comprehension, whereas Period 2 did show a significant correlation. Surprisingly, after a multiple regression analysis was performed where both verbal IQ and vocabulary were included, several subtest measures indicated a significant
The subtest measures included comprehension monitoring, text structure, inferencing, and phonological awareness. To answer the initial question, “Are there skills that contribute to the construction of the text representation that are not predictors of reading ability more generally?” (Oakhill, et al, 2003, p.447), the authors concluded that indeed, different sub skills, such as comprehension monitoring, text structure, and working memory, account for the difference between word reading and comprehension, even though there is a proven strong correlation between these two skills. This variance is apparent even after including verbal IQ and vocabulary in the multiple regression analysis. Although verbal IQ is correlated with comprehension, one would believe that less-verbal students could simply be instructed in vocabulary. However, one must consider that the issue may not be just “vocabulary” but the way the students represent the vocabulary in their semantic memory, making the word relationship less accessible.

The classroom implication regarding the general correlation between reading comprehension and word reading would suggest that these two skills be taught not only independently, but also by skill set. Students with reading problems need to be assessed on each skill set in order to determine the specific intervention instruction needed for that student.

The results of the previous studies indicated that both word callers and students with learning disabilities would benefit from megacognitive strategy instruction for reading comprehension. Good readers have a purpose for reading. According to Dole, Brown and Trathen (2001) a student led strategy that emphasizes the use of who, what and why questions, which “reminded” the students of the passage and predictions, increased reading comprehension. Oakhill, Cain and Bryant (2003) suggested the following three subskills that determined the
relationship between word reading and comprehension: comprehension monitoring, text structure, and working memory. The researchers also suggested that it may be beneficial to focus on not only verbal strategy instruction but to combine that with a megacognitive strategy such as the self-monitoring skill of questioning (Oakhill, et al, 2003). Questioning was a purpose for reading and was used before, during, and after reading. The outcome of student generated questioning, which included both literal and inferential questioning, would improve reading comprehension.

**Problem Behaviors and Academic Achievement**

There has been substantial research done in regards to the relationship between problem behaviors and academic achievement. This topic was relevant to general education in many ways. This relationship was cyclical in nature. Problem behavior impedes a student’s education which in turns creates low self-esteem leading to additional problem behaviors, which eventually produces long lasting negative effects for that individual over time. The following researchers focused their research on whether social competence was a predictor to academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002).

Malecki and Elliot (2002) investigated the relationship between social behavior and academic achievement. The researchers examined whether social competence in elementary school would be a predictor of academic achievement. The authors posed two questions: “1) Are there strong, meaningful relationships among a student’s social skills, problem behavior, academic competence and academic achievement? and 2) Is there beginning evidence for a
predictive path leading from social skills, problem behavior, and academic competence to academic achievement?” (Malecki & Elliot, 2002, p. 5). The dependent variables selected by the researchers were the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliot, 1990) used to measure a teacher’s perception of student behaviors (social behaviors and problem behaviors) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills-Survey Battery (ITBS; Hoover, Hieronymus, Frisbie, & Dunbar, 1993) which measures the students’ performance in reading, math, and language. The independent variable was the relationship between social behaviors and academic achievement compared to the students’ results on the SSRS and the ITBS.

Both the students (139 third and fourth graders) and their teachers who participated in this study were from two urban schools in Massachusetts. The students were from low income families and 95% of the students from these schools participated in a free and reduced lunch program. In addition, 70% of the students were also from single parent homes. The student participants were 54% female and 46% male with 69% being minority students (Hispanic and African-American) and 31% being Caucasian. Sixty-two percent of the teachers were regular education teachers and 38% were special education teachers.

The procedure was very simplistic in nature. Data were collected just two times, once in November and once in May. In November, after parental consent was given for the study, the Social Skills Rating System-Teachers (SSRS-T) was completed via the teacher. The Social Skills Rating System-Student (SSRS-S) was completed via the participating students. Teachers were allowed to aid the students with vocabulary as needed. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills was given per the district’s requirements. In May, the same procedure as in November was used to collect data.
The researchers developed several predictions. They were as follows:

Prediction 1: Social skills as rated by teachers and students will be related significantly to academic competence and academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Using the SSRS subscales and the ITBS subscale, moderate to high positive correlation is predicted. This study provided evidence, using correlational analysis that supported a significant relationship between teacher rating of social skills and all three subsets of the ITBS.

Prediction 2: Problem behavior as rated by teachers will be related significantly to academic competence and academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Using the SSRS subscales and the ITBS subscales, a moderate to high negative correlation is predicted. A moderate relationship exists as supported by the data. The results, using correlational analysis, showed that there was a significant relationship between the teacher’s rating of behavioral problems and the ITBS scores in Reading and Math, but not Language. The researchers hypothesized that this may have been due to much more structured instruction in Reading and Math than in Language. Less structure in an academic area would be more directly affected by student behavior.

Prediction 3: Academic competence as rated by teachers will be related significantly to academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Using the SSRS-T subscale and the ITBS subscales a moderate to high positive correlation is predicted. The teachers rated the students’ academic behavior without knowing the students’ ITBS scores. This study concluded, using correlational analysis, that there is a significant correlation between academic competence and all three ITBS subtests.
Prediction 4: Social skills as rated by teachers and students and problem behavior as rated by teachers will predict academic competence, and academic competence will predict academic achievement (Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Using the SSRS from both the teachers and the students for time 1 (November) and time 2 (May) a regression analysis was used. It was predicted that at least a 50% variance in the ITBS score would exist. This study concluded that there was no evidence to support that problem behaviors would be a predictor to academic competence. Interestingly, when studying the relationship between problem behavior and academic achievement, this relationship was significant for the Caucasian sample but not the minority sample. The authors also found that there were no significant differences between Caucasian and minority students’ scores for social skills, problem behavior and teacher-rated academic competence. However, surprisingly, a significant difference was found with concerns for the ITBS scores; the Caucasian students scored significantly higher.

The result to the question “Are there strong, meaningful relationships among students’ social skills, problem behavior, academic competence and academic achievement?” was supported as predicted by Malecki and Elliot (2002). This is only made more challenging when considering students with learning disabilities and students who are considered word callers.

However, given the variance between Caucasians and minorities, a more detailed study is needed for students of diverse populations. If a regression analysis had been carried out with a sample of Caucasian students only, results concerning problem behaviors may have been found.

The other question posed by the authors was “Is there beginning evidence for a predictive path leading from social skills, problem behavior, and academic competence to academic
achievement?” The answer is that social skills appeared as the only significant predictor of academic achievement. It was reported by the researchers that “There is now further evidence to hypothesize that classroom social skills may act as academic enablers” (Malecki & Elliot, 2002 P. 11). In conclusion, teachers should recognize the importance of students’ social skills and its relationship to academic achievement.

The previous study established that social skills significantly predict academic achievement. “It is as important to identify a child with poor social skills as it is a child with poor academic skills” (Malecki & Elliot, 2002 p.7). The next article by Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips and Welsh (2007) takes the relationship one step further by exploring a reading intervention in the general education classroom which impacts problem behaviors.

Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips and Welsh (2007) attempted to determine the effectiveness of the Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) on the literacy skills of first-grade students who are at risk for emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD) and have reading deficits. The authors proposed the following questions: “1) Is it possible to provide supplemental reading instruction for students at risk for E/BD in the general education setting in the absence of sustained support from either university personnel or school site support staff? 2) Are the improved reading skills associated with classroom behavior?” (Lane, et al., 2007, p. 51). The dependent variable included the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Wechsler, 1991) which was used to estimate the students’ “intellectual functioning” (Wechsler, 1991), Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement (Woodcock, et al., 2001) which was used to assess oral language, oral expression, and listening comprehension, Social Skills Rating System-Teacher Version (SSRS-T; Gresham & Elliot, 1990) which was used to assess social skills and behaviors from the teacher’s perspective, and Social Skills Rating System-Parent Version
(SSRS-P; Gresham & Elliot, 1990) which was used to assess social skills and behaviors from the parents’ perspective. The independent variable was the comparison of decoding, reading fluency and academic engagement of first-graders compared to the results of Wechsler Intelligence Scale, the Woodcock-Johnson III, and the SSRS.

For the purposes of this study, 7 first-grade students (4 boys and 3 girls) from two full inclusion schools were chosen to participate. These students had a mean age of 6.96 years and scored in the average or slightly below average on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Addition (WISC-III; Wechsler, 1991). None of the participants were currently receiving special education services and had any diagnosed disorders after completing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). All seven participants scored above the normal criteria on Stage 2 of the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1992) or scored as moderate or high risk for antisocial behavior on the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS; Drummond, 1994). However, six of the seven participants did receive additional reading support either in a small group setting or in a one--to--one setting all for a total of 30 minutes per day, three to five times a week. The participants were all Caucasian and identified to be at-risk for both behavioral and reading deficits. The teachers involved were both general education teachers, female and Caucasian. The teachers were required to complete a full day of training on the first-grade PALS curriculum. The research assistants, who were all special education graduate students, trained the teachers in the program and introduced the program with the teachers in their general education classroom. It is important to note that the teachers were the focal point in administering this intervention. The researchers sought to find an intervention program that could be implemented in the general education classroom with little or no additional support.
The seven week long intervention entailed using Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), which is a supplemental reading program that focused on decoding and reading fluency. The intervention consisted of 30 minute lessons, 4 days a week. This equaled 14 extra hours of supplemental reading intervention instruction the students received over the duration of the seven week long intervention period. The study participants were paired with a teacher-selected student whose reading skills were in the top 50% of the class. These pairs remained together for the entire intervention. Each student took a turn as the tutor and the tutee and each lesson contained three parts: teacher modeled sounds/words, a speed game, and partner reading (Lane, et al., 2007, p. 54). The sound game, involved reading a passage or sight words during a fixed time limit and it encouraged competition not between partners but for the student themselves. Partner reading didn’t begin until week 5 of the intervention and consisted of a 10 minute read aloud from a leveled reader. The intervention had a reward system in place that consisted of verbal praise and points earned. In order to earn a point the students must have put forth their best effort in following the set rules, increasing speed game scores and completing a set activity. The reward for filling the reward sheet with points was a pre-set incentive.

The researchers monitored academic performance, basically decoding and reading fluency, once per week after intervention using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literary Skills (DIBELS; Kaminski & Good, 1996). They also measured behavioral performance once a week after intervention using academic engaged time (AET) that monitored how much time a student spent engaged in the activity during a 10 minute observation. Engaged behavior included making efforts to complete the assigned task, looking at the teacher or student speaking, following the rules of the game, asking for help appropriately, and waiting for help in the appropriate manner. Non-engaged behaviors included, but were not limited to, looking around
the room, disrupting others, not being at one’s assigned spot, and sleeping. This observation was completed using Multiple Option Observation System for Experimental Studies (MOOSES; Tapp, Wehby, & Willis, 1995). This software collected the frequency and duration of the behaviors observed.

The results of the intervention indicated that all seven students showed an increase in mean scores in Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency from the baseline phase through the intervention phase. Oral Reading Fluency showed the most significant improvements. The students also maintained those gains after the intervention. Overall, in terms of both decoding and reading fluency skills, all seven of the students showed improvement. In terms of academic engagement, only five out of the seven participants showed an increase in academic engagement time. The other two students actually showed a decrease in mean level as compared to the baseline. It is important to note that this study limited its focus on academic engagement without thought to disruptions.

In conclusion, the answer to the question: “Is it possible to provide supplemental reading instruction for students at risk for E/BD in the general education setting in the absence of sustained support from either university personnel or school site support staff?” was yes! This study does support the effectiveness of teacher--led PALS intervention on students with E/BD in a general education classroom. The results of the second question which stated: “Are the improved reading skills associated with classroom behavior?” turned out to be inconclusive. There was evidence to indicate there may be some positive effects on behavior due to academic engagement but at the time of this study they were not significant.
It has been noted students with E/BD commonly have below-average academic performance and are noted for their social and behavioral problems (Lane, et al., 2007, p. 64). The struggle of teachers, especially with the movement to instruct in all inclusive classrooms, will be in trying to meet the academic as well as social needs of these students.

Although the findings in the study by Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips and Welsh (2007) proved inclusive in regards to classroom behavior an increased reading skills; this study did provide the framework for intervention in the general education classroom for E/BD students. Intervention provided in the general education classroom allowed for targeted students to receive services with emphasis on both social and academic skills. In the following study by Barton-Arwood, Wehby and Falk (2005), the researchers tried to determine if using a reading program concurrently with a supplemental intervention would impact student social behaviors and reading achievement.

Barton-Arwood, Wehby and Falk (2005) examined the effects of a comprehensive reading program on both the academic achievement and social behaviors on students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD). The researchers believed that it is important to decrease problem behavior of students with E/BD while concurrently focusing on academic achievement. The Authors posed the question: “What are the effects of a comprehensive reading intervention on the reading achievement of elementary-age students with E/BD as well as collateral effects on student social behaviors?” (Barton-Arwood, Wehby & Falk, 2005, p.). The dependent variables were the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised (WRMT-R; Woodcock, 1998) and the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP; Wagner, Torgesen, & Tashotte, 1999) which were used to confirm reading deficits in the participating students, five reading probes that included Phoneme Blending and Phoneme Segmentation (Fuchs et al., 2001), Dynamic
Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills subset (DIBELS; Kaminski & Goods, 1996), Horizon Word Reading (Engelmann et al., 1997) and Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM; Fuchs et al., 2001) were used to assess growth in the areas of phonological awareness, word-level reading and oral reading skills, and the Multiple Option Observation System for Experimental Studies (MOOSES; Tapp, Wehby, & Ellis, 1995) that were used to measure behaviors of engagement, nonengagement, negative talk, and aggression. The independent variable was the students’ reading achievement and social behaviors as they compared to the results of the WRMT-R, DIBELS, CBM, MOOSES, and the CTOPP.

The participants of this 27 week study were six eight-year old students (4 males and 2 females) from one self-contained public school. Students were selected based on the following criteria: 1) teacher-reported academic deficiencies, 2) placed in the school due to behavioral issues, 3) attendance, and 4) below the 20th percentile in phonological awareness and word attack scores on standardized tests. All the participants had been referred to the E/BD program for at least noncompliance and aggression and some of the participants had additional issues. The boys formed two pairs and the girl formed the third pair for the study.

Baseline data were collected while the students were involved in their current or pre-intervention instruction. This consisted of either teacher-selected worksheets not associated with a basal series or the Wilson Reading System (Wilson, 1996).

The reading intervention itself consisted of two elements which replaced their prior instruction. The first element was the Horizons Fast Track A-B reading program (Engelmann, Engelmann, & Davis, 1997) and Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS; Fuchs et al., 2001). Horizons Fast Track A-B reading program (Engelmann, Engelmann, & Davis, 1997) was
considered the primary curriculum and met for thirty minutes four days a week. It was selected based on its past effectiveness for students with disabilities. A research assistant attended an eight hour training session in order to implement the Horizons program. PALS was used as the supplemental curriculum and met for thirty minutes three days a week. PALS was selected based on the program’s effectiveness with students with learning disabilities (LD). PALS was implemented using the two paraprofessionals already established in the classroom. The paraprofessionals attended four hours of PALS training.

The results for the phoneme blending probe showed that all six students showed an increase in mean scores after the combined Horizons and PALS intervention. The phoneme segmentation probe results indicated that even though all six students exhibited an increase in scores, two of the four students plateaued during the intervention. In terms of the Horizon intervention, all six students made progress in word reading. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test presented an increase after intervention in the areas of letter identification, word identification and word attack for five of the six students. Results on the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing revealed minimal gains for all students to the surprise of the researchers. Horizon’s program relies heavily on phonological awareness and as such the researchers anticipated greater gains in this area. In terms of student behaviors the results were inconclusive. The times of total inappropriate behavior decreased for two students while the total inappropriate behavior for the other four students remained at the same level as the baseline. Engagement did increase for all six students during intervention. Reading skills overall resulted in a moderate increase using the Horizons and PALS interventions concurrently.

In conclusion, due to the lack of reading interventions with students with E/BD, the researchers caution readers about the gains in overall reading skills. This study does show some
evidence indicating that the Horizons and PALS intervention delivered concurrently may improve the reading abilities in students with E/BD; it does not provide evidence of a relationship between social behaviors and this aforementioned intervention. Instructional implications offer hope that with intensive intervention students with E/BD can successfully improve reading achievement. It would behoove teachers in an inclusive, general education classroom to discover ways to promote student engagement and student motivation during instruction.

In review, the study by Malecki and Elliot (2002) showed that there was a significant relationship between social competence and academic achievement specifically in the area of social skills. Interestingly, the findings of the studies by Barton-Arwood, Wehby and Falk (2005) and Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips and Welsh (2007) both suggested that interventions completed in the general education classroom will increase reading abilities in E/BD students; however, the results are inconclusive in regards to gains in student social behaviors. This suggested that it would behoove teachers to promote greater attention to the development of social skills within the curriculum thus improving academic achievement. Once these skills were interwoven into the classroom atmosphere, E/BD students may be influenced to accept intervention in this area.

Conclusion:

Reading comprehension and fluency were the two components typically needed to gain understanding from text. A problem occurred when highly fluent readers failed to comprehend text that was presented at their reading level. Applegate, Applegate, and Modla (2009) discovered that many students who had been considered strong readers were judged based on
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

accuracy and fluency alone and often need additional classroom instruction in higher level thinking. Therefore, the relationship between reading fluency and comprehension needed to be clarified. In the study by Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) it was concluded that poor fluency can be compensated with the use of several strategies like look backs, rereading the text and slowing down. In terms of word callers, whom Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) identified as students who read fluently but lack comprehension, the strategies that center on metacognitive training were the most effective. The ability to accurately identify a word caller was called into question by a study completed by Hamilton and Shinn (2003), which suggested that teachers overestimated the reading fluency in students. Therefore, a curriculum needed to be designed to facilitate learning for a unique group of students termed word callers.

“The bridge between reading and fluency contains many “diverse pathways” and fluent readers can benefit from engaging in other metacognitive tasks” (Walczyk & Griffith-Ross, 2007, p. 567). These studies showed that even though verbal strategy instruction had a slightly better performance record, one of the best practices would be to employ both visual and verbal strategies when instructing word callers (Glenburg, 2000). “If the ultimate goal was text comprehension, then increasing either the visual or the verbal route may be sufficient (Glenburg, 2000, p. 780). Both Sencibaugh (2005) and Oakhill, Cain and Bryant (2003) suggested that it may be beneficial to focus on not only verbal strategy instruction but a combination of metacognitive strategies such as the self-monitoring skill of questioning as well. One point was for certain, teachers needed to find a way to instruct all students in a manner that is conducive to the individual student. The ultimate goal was for all students to be actively engaged in independent reading and for all students to be aware of the strategies used to understand what they read, regardless of whether those strategies were visual or verbal. This was only made more
challenging when considering students with learning disabilities and students who are considered word callers.

The findings produced in the studies, which used metacognitive strategies, had implications for students and teachers in the field of general education. For example, according to Oakhill, Cain, and Bryant (2003) when certain skills such as comprehension monitoring, text structure, and working memory were modeled reading comprehension improved. When teachers help learners use the metacognitive strategy of questioning to facilitate reading comprehension and explicitly model the strategy in order for the students to comprehend and apply the strategy to their independent reading; students now had a tool to help them understand what they read. These studies showed the complexity of reading comprehension, the wide range of comprehension strategies and the best practices which were used for instruction. Also, instruction using the student-centered strategy would aid the students in reading texts on their own thus enhancing reading comprehension for at-risk students (Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 2001). Any gains in reading ability may be threatened by problem behaviors and lack of social skills.

Problem behaviors and lack of social skills may harm a student’s academic achievement and self-esteem. The question, “Does being good make the grade?” was answered in a study by Malecki and Elliot (2002) which provided evidence that positive social skills are linked to increased academic achievement. “Educators have long recognized that students with E/BD and those who are at risk for such problems have social and behavioral problems that impede instruction” (Lane, et al., 2007, p.65). Student engagement was critical for E/BD students in the general education classroom. A successful learning environment offered the opportunity for all students to be engaged in activities and demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior. Peer
Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), a supplemental reading intervention program, allowed for active engagement in the classroom by means of student pairing. “As the need to serve students with special needs in an inclusive setting, while still needing to meet the academic needs of all students, general education teachers must be ready to assume a role in intervention” (Lane, et al., 2007, p. 67). Lane, Little, Redding-Rhodes, Phillips and Welsh (2007) established teachers can engage in intervention in the general education classroom with little outside support, however the PALS intervention for student engagement proved inconclusive in regards to student behavior. Barton-Arwood, Wehby and Falk (2005) took the last study one step further by including the Horizons reading program (Engelmann et al., 1997) with PALS. This study did show some evidence indicating that the two intervention programs improved the reading abilities in E/BD students, but proved inconclusive in terms of social behaviors. Barton-Arwood, Wehby and Falk (2005) said it best, “Effective instruction has been and continues to be an unsolved challenge for students with E/BD” (p.25).
Chapter 3

Procedures for the Study

The project objectives were to improve both the literal and inferential reading comprehension of one student in a general education third grade classroom as a result of teacher modeling and the teacher think-aloud process of the comprehension strategy of questioning. The use of graphic organizers was utilized to facilitate this process. This chapter documents the school’s demographics, my classroom’s demographics, and the targeted student’s demographics. The student’s strengths and weaknesses in the area of reading comprehension are addressed as well as a description of the procedures used and the method of data collection.

Participant

This research project was conducted at one elementary school with a population of 425 students in grades kindergarten through 5th grade. The school consisted of 62% Caucasian, 22% Latino, 14% African American, .5% American Indian, and .5% Asian as reported at the 2010-2011 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WINSS, 2011). Eighty-four percent of the students qualified for free or reduced breakfast and lunch. Twelve percent of the population received special education services including speech and language. A total of 3% of the population was considered having limited English proficiency. There are 46.1% female and 53.9% male in the student population (WINSS, 2011). See Figure 1 below.
The school district recognized the need to create a system-wide discipline system and selected the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) as a universal intervention program. PBIS was a three-tiered approach to student discipline which was both positive and consistent. This program also targeted those students who were at risk and those students who had chronic behavioral issues. At the time of this study, this school was participating in PBIS at the universal or tier 1 level. The goal for PBIS at tier 1 was a universal or school-wide intervention whereas all faculty approached behaviors in a “game plan” manner. Students were explicitly instructed by demonstration and practiced the behavior protocols (See Figure 2).

This study was exclusively conducted in one third grade classroom consisting of 13 males and 7 females for a total of 20 students. The classroom contained a population that was 50% Caucasian, 25% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 5% American Indian. Four students received special education services, two more students participated in Title 1 reading intervention, four others participated in math intervention, and one student participated in both Title 1 reading intervention and math intervention (Figure 3). This third grade classroom also had five students who were attending specialized small group lessons for socialization skills with
a licensed social worker. Another 45% of the class attended outside therapy sessions for a variety of reasons. This class began the school year at tier 1 of PBIS. In November, due to the specific challenges with this class, their PBIS status was elevated to tier 2 (See Figure 2). Tier 2 of PBIS required a specific plan of action. The students were able to earn up to six checks daily dependent on following the classroom PBIS behaviors: being safe, being respectful, being responsible and being a learner. At the end of the day the students received a sticker in their assignment notebooks which detailed how many checks they received that day.

**Figure 2:**
Three-Tiered PBIS Model

![Three-Tiered PBIS Model](http://www.pbis.org/training/default.aspx)


**Figure 3:**
Class Room Demographics
While the class faced many challenges, there were many positive qualities to this third grade class. These students were remarkably supportive of each other. They were well aware of the fact that all students learn at different rates. The students provided assistance to those peers who required support. This class was also very supportive of any students with special needs and would go out of their way to include them in any activity they were engaged in and would “back them up” if they were harassed by students from another class. These students practiced inclusion in an almost seamless manner without much prompting from staff. Surprisingly, these third graders willingly took it upon themselves to maintain the housekeeping, organization, and cleanliness of the classroom. It was almost as if this was a therapeutic activity for them as well as taking pride in their “working home”. It was also noted that the interaction between the students transformed from a peer relationship to an almost sibling-like relationship. In fact, at the end of third grade, many requested to keep the “family” together in fourth grade and asked if I could take care of this for them. This was unique in my 8 years in the education field.

The student targeted for this study was an eight year old, Hispanic, female who was referred to as Sam. Sam participated in the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program as well as the Friday snack pack program. She lived in a single parent home with her biological mother as well as one half-brother. At the time of this study there was no ongoing relationship with the father.

Sam was an eager learner though she struggled in reading and math. As her third grade teacher, I noticed that Sam was making progress in reading comprehension but it was slow. She continued to struggle in understanding both literal and inferential comprehension. Although she
was able to read fluently she was able to achieve only basic literal comprehension. Sam’s strengths in reading included fluency and accuracy. One of her particular reading strengths was in decoding words. She had great success in teaching this skill to other students and she really enjoyed the role. Sam wanted to read well and read for pleasure, often choosing fiction as her genre of choice. Sam often had difficulty finding a “just right” book. This was due to being able to pass the five-finger test but still not being able to comprehend what she just read. Sam has participated in Title I Reading intervention for the last two years. Sam received 120 minutes weekly of Title 1 reading intervention in addition to the 90 minutes of reading workshop. The focus during Title 1 was reading comprehension skills such as making connections, visualizing, and determining importance. This intervention was completed in a small group setting.

Math was also a struggle for Sam. She was very inconsistent when participating in instruction for measurement, time, and money skills. Sam could identify coins but had difficulty counting coins and making change. When telling time, Sam would often confuse the hour and minute hand. Interestingly, Sam excelled in the geometry unit while other students struggled. She enjoyed working with geometric nets and other manipulatives used in this unit. She often supported other students who were struggling in this area.

Sam did very well in writing, specifically narrative writing. She put great effort into using figurative language and often obtained a dictionary and thesaurus in order to find “juicy” words. She had the ability to write in a way that gave the reader a vivid mental picture of what she was describing. She also put a lot of voice into her writing that added humor. She was often offered the opportunity to journal when she was upset and always chose to do so.
If an activity proved to be even the slightest bit challenging, Sam chose not to engage in the activity. Any frustration with academic activities seemed to start and end in the classroom but could lead to complete shutdown during class and often created a situation where Sam would lose recess time to make up classroom work. When properly motivated (i.e.: being read to or a chance to eat lunch with the teacher), Sam could often remain calm and rejoin instruction. Sam often became frustrated when she was not successful right away at a concept and gave up. During these times, she often rejected both peer and teacher support. This was usually when we would start to have behavioral issues in the classroom.

What made Sam the perfect candidate for participation in this study was her unique ability to decode words thereby speaking the words with almost perfect accuracy and fluency yet without comprehending what she had just said. Walczyk and Griffith-Ross (2007) described these types of students best,” adequate decoders/poor comprehenders are labeled “word callers” and these word callers read so fluently that they don’t pay attention to the text thus hampering comprehension” (p.566). Sam fit the description suggested by the authors for word callers.

Social Skills

Sam was a quiet, eight year old girl who wanted to do well in school. She had many peers who were willing to support her academically but she was not very receptive to them. Often times when help was offered, Sam would misunderstand the offer and believe they were “just trying to make her feel stupid”. This often carried into other classes and would then impact other aspects of her day (other recesses, specials, and during lunch). Mom reported that she was having difficulties at home and saw increasingly defiant behavior. She was currently
looking for some outside therapy for Sam. Despite Sam’s participation in several small group socialization groups, she continued to have difficulty making and maintaining friendships. Surprisingly, when social skills were taught in the general education classroom, Sam listened intently and could verbalize what appropriate actions should be taken. These lessons included role playing in which she really enjoyed participating.

Sam also participated in two social skills groups. The first was a group of all girls, mostly in second and third grade, facilitated by the school psychologist that focused on making and retaining friends. This group met once weekly from early October until the end of November. The second group was just third grade students facilitated by a volunteer social worker. The group focused on anger management skills. This group met once weekly from January until the middle of March. Due to the lack of progress made in these two groups, Sam was selected by the school’s principal to join an intensive group session facilitated by the Big Yellow House in Waukesha. This group session met for 90 minutes week for 6 weeks. Unfortunately, during the course of this reading intervention a need to commune a problem solving team (PST) for adverse behavior involving this student was necessary resulting in a behavior plan being put into place.

Procedures

The action plan for this research project centered on the comprehension strategy of questioning for my entire third grade classroom and specifically targeted one student. The following information details the timeline for each week of research.

For the time period of November 21, 2011-January 6, 2012, I submitted and received approval from Cardinal Stritch University for this case study research project, requested and
received approval from my school district, received consent from targeted student’s parent, and
gathered all needed supplies for this project. It was also necessary to obtain prior documentation
such as the student’s Measure of Academic Achievement (MAPs; Northwest Evaluation
Association, 2012) data and beginning of the year running record. I also obtained all the mentor
texts needed for the duration of the intervention. They were as follows:

*Grandfather Twilight* (Berger, 1984)

*The Sweetest Fig* (Van Allsburg, 1993)

*The Lotus Seed* (Garland, 1993)

*An Angel for Solomon Singer* (Rylant, 1992)

*Charlie Anderson* (Abercrombie, 1990)

*The Stranger* (Van Allsburg, 1986)

**Week 1.** During the first week (January 9-13, 2012), or the pre-documentation phase, a
baseline running record was conducted (Appendix A), the initial Qualitative Reading Inventory
(QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) was performed (Appendix B) and the student essay was
completed (Appendix C). I administered the student essay on January 9, 2012. All pre-
documentation was kept in a locked file cabinet in the classroom.

**Week 2.** Week two of this project was the start of the intervention which dates from
January 16- January 20, 2012. During each week of the intervention different teaching points of
the questioning strategy were introduced using explicit modeling, think alouds and graphic
organizers. I utilized the approach of “I do, we do, you do” to scaffold the students on use of the
questioning strategy. The following table outlined each week’s focus for the intervention:
Weekly Intervention Teaching Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Teaching Point</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None- Pre-documentation</td>
<td>January 9-13, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spontaneous Questioning</td>
<td>January 16-20, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Before, During, After Questioning/coding</td>
<td>January 23-27, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answering Before, During, After Questions/coding</td>
<td>January 30- February 3, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>On-the-surface, Under-the surface-Questioning</td>
<td>February 6-10, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>None- Post-documentation</td>
<td>February 13-17, 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second week of the intervention (January 16-20, 2012) focused on spontaneous questioning. I explicitly modeled spontaneous questioning while reading the mentor text *Grandfather Twilight* (Berger, 1984) and recording my questions on an anchor chart. I also completed another anchor chart titled “Thinking about Questioning”, the purpose was to ask the students what they knew about asking questions, how did asking questions help the reader, and how did readers figure out the answers to their questions. The students worked with me using the mentor text *The Sweetest Fig* (Van Allsburg, 1993) to record spontaneous questions on their own graphic organizer (Appendix D). The graphic organizers were collected and kept in a locked file cabinet in the classroom. I planned to confer (Appendix E) with the targeted student twice this week in order to monitor her progress and to reteach before, during, and after questioning as necessary.

**Week 3.** During the third week of intervention (January 23-27, 2012), the teaching point was asking questions before (b), during (d), and after (a) reading and coding the questions as such. The mentor text used was *The Lotus Seed* (Garland, 1993) and an anchor chart was started. I started with recording my “before” questions on the anchor chart. Students were asked “Who has a question before we start reading the book?” and those were recorded on the anchor chart.
under the heading: Before Reading. We stopped half way through the book and I recorded my questions on the anchor chart under the heading: During Reading. The students were able to include theirs on the anchor chart. Then at the conclusion of the book, I recorded a question I still had under the heading: After Reading; and I asked the students to do the same. The students continued before, during, after questioning on their own graphic organizer (Appendix F) which was collected and kept in a locked file cabinet in the classroom. The students were encouraged to use post-its to record before, during, and after questions as they read their own independent reading books. I planned to confer with the targeted student twice to monitor the use of post-it notes during independent reading.

**Week 4.** The fourth week of intervention (January 30-February 3, 2012) focused mainly on finding answers to the before, during, and after questions. The previous week anchor chart “The Lotus Seed” was used for the explicit modeling. I worked through the questions and thought aloud about where and how the answers are found. I explained that questions, which could be answered right from the text, should be coded with a T. Any questions that had to be inferred, should be coded with an I; and some questions may need an outside source to find the answer and those should be coded OS. The mentor text used for guided practice was *An Angel for Solomon Singer* (Rylant, 1992) and the students quickly worked through creating before, during, and after questions. The students worked together to answer one before, during, and after question with a partner. They continued work with their graphic organizer (Appendix G) on their own. The graphic organizers were collected when completed and locked in a file cabinet in the classroom. It was at this time that it was necessary to initiate a Problem Solving Team (PST) on the targeted student for behavior. I continued to confer with the student when behavior
allowed and proceeded to reteach the strategy as needed. I planned to meet with targeted student twice to monitor question coding during independent reading.

**Week 5.** Week five (February 6-10, 2012) concentrated on On-the-surface questioning which refers to questions that are literal and could be answered using the text, Under-the-surface questioning which were usually inference questions that need your schema and clues from the text to answer, and the Deep Under-the-surface which were questions that required you to synthesize new information and connect it to your life. Deep Under-the-surface questions often ended up being opinions. An Anchor chart titled “Questioning Sea” was developed to explain these questions (Appendix H). The mentor text used for this particular teaching point was *Charlie Anderson* (Abercrombie, 1995). Two days were spent on developing questions while reading to the students, using think alouds and the “Questioning Sea” anchor chart. Guided practice was conducted using the text *The Stranger* (Van Allsburg, 1986) along with a graphic organizer (Appendix I). All graphic organizers were collected and locked in a file cabinet in the classroom. I planned on meeting with the targeted student twice in order to monitor the independent practice of Under-the-surface questioning.

**Week 6.** The last week of the project (February 13-17, 2012) comprised of post-documentation work. I re-administered both the student essay (Appendix C), the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) (Appendix J) and conducted the final running record (Appendix K). All data collected was locked in a file cabinet in the classroom.

**Project Action Plan Data Collection-Method of Assessment**

Many different tools were used to assess the changes in the student’s reading comprehension. The first tool used was the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006), otherwise known as running records, which provided the materials
needed to establish both instructional and independent reading levels for students. This one-on-one assessment measured fluency, accuracy and comprehension. It enabled teachers to focus on those areas where extra instruction is needed. This assessment was given to the student as a pre-test and a post-test to the intervention. See Appendix A for a copy of the assessment used.

The second tool used was the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011); otherwise known as the QRI-5, an informal assessment used to measure a student’s reading ability. The QRI-5 used both fiction and non-fiction passages that enabled a teacher to assess student’s prior knowledge as well as accuracy, fluency, and both literal and inferential comprehension. This assessment allowed teachers to focus instruction on areas of need, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and establish reading levels. This assessment was performed as a pre-test and a post-test to the intervention. See Appendix B and Appendix N for a copy of the assessment used.

The third tool, *The Star Llama* (Mike, 2001), was an essay used to determine prior knowledge about questioning. The students were given a copy at the beginning and told to read the article. I did not give any further instructions. The students were given this article again at the end of the unit. I again refrained from giving any additional instructions. The intent of this exercise was to see if the student would use the questioning strategy without prompting. A copy of the pre-test and post-test short essay is located in Appendix C.

All the graphic organizers used, were collected and analyzed for follow through on the given lesson and were the fourth tool used. These lessons were scaffolded throughout the four weeks of intervention. The first graphic organizer titled “*The Sweetest Fig*” (Appendix D) was used to allow the students to become accustomed to the initial, very basic requirement of asking questions before, during and after reading. The students were only required to ask one question
for each section. The next graphic organizer titled “The Lotus Seed” (Appendix F) required the students to ask as many questions as they could before, during, and after reading. The focus of this organizer was that readers ask questions for a variety of reasons. The next graphic organizer titled “An Angel for Solomon” (Appendix H) required students to not only ask before, during, and after questions, but to also determine whether the answers could be found in the text (T), by inferring (I), or by having to locate it using an outside source (OS). The final graphic organizer used was called the “Question Sea” (appendix J), used with the book The Stranger (Van Allsburg, 1986), that required the students to first ask and answer On-the-surface questions that addressed the who, what, when and where questions. The students then asked the Under-the-surface questions that tackled the why, would, how and what if questions. The final portion of this organizer focused on the Deep Under-the-surface questions of “If I were…, and How…?”

The final tool used for measuring student progress was my own conferring notes. This allowed for a glimpse of how well the intervention was being used by the student in an independent setting. A copy of the conferring sheets used can be found in Appendix E, G, I and J.

Conclusion

This study focused on improving both literal and inferential comprehension skills of wordcallers. The intervention combined the questioning strategy with graphic organizers and explicit teacher modeling as the focus for instruction in the general education classroom. I collected several pieces of data that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.
The objective of this case study research project was to increase both literal and inferential reading comprehension, for a student who tends to be a word caller, using the comprehension strategy of questioning. I implemented a four-week intervention which entailed specific modeling of the questioning process. This intervention was conducted during regular reading workshop blocks, with one third grade class, targeting one particular student (Sam) from January 9-February 17, 2012. Included in this chapter is a detailed description on each of the six weeks of the project as well as all the anchor charts used during instruction. The first week centered on administering the pre-documentation assessments on the targeted student. Week two was the official start of the intervention and focused on spontaneous questioning. The third week focused on the before, during, and after reading questioning and coding the questions as such. Week four concentrated on answering questions and properly coding those answers. The fifth week emphasized On-the-surface (literal) questioning and Under-the-surface (inferential) questioning. The sixth week of intervention centered on administering the post-documentation assessments on the targeted student. The final portion of this chapter features the results of the intervention. The running record and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5, Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) pre-tests and post-tests will be analyzed to measure growth in reading comprehension. A comparison between the beginning of the year and end of the year of the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAPs; NWEA, 1997) will provide an overall measurement of growth in reading. A short essay, which was given as a pre-test and post-test, will be analyzed to exam
growth in active reading. The last measurements analyzed, to assess independence on the
weekly teaching points, were the graphic organizers.

Description of the Intervention

Week one. During the first week, or the pre-documentation phase, a baseline running
record was conducted (Appendix A), the initial Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie and
Caldwell, 2011) was performed (Appendix B) and the student essay was completed (Appendix
C). The results of these assessments will be discussed concurrently with the post-tests.

Week two. Intervention started at the beginning of this week. The teaching point for
week two was spontaneous questioning. A student’s spontaneous questioning reveals how
focused she is when reading and allows for glimpses into the student’s thinking. I explicitly
modeled and completed the anchor chart titled “Grandfather Twilight” (See Figure 4). The
purpose of this anchor chart was to allow the students to become accustomed to asking questions
while they read. The second anchor chart completed was titled “Thinking about Questioning”
(See Figure 5). The purpose was to ask the students what they knew about asking questions, how
asking questions help the reader, and how readers figure out the answers to their questions. The
students were asked to complete their own graphic organizer titled “The Sweetest Fig”. I wanted
to know if the targeted student was engaging with the text. Was she an active reader?
Week three. During the third week of intervention, the teaching point consisted of asking questions before (B), during (D), and after (A) reading and coding the questions as such. By asking questions before reading, schema was activated and connections (text-to-self) were made. By asking questions during reading, connections continued to be made, other questions were being answered and comprehension was monitored. By asking questions after reading, the
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author’s purpose was questioned and decisions on whether or not more information was needed were made. The mentor text used was *The Lotus Seed* (Garland, 1993) and an anchor chart was completed (See Figure 6). The students continued before, during, after questioning on their own, using *The Lotus Seed* graphic organizer which I collected. I wanted to know if the targeted student was trying to fill a gap in her schema. The students were encouraged to use post-its to record before, during, and after questions as they read their own independent reading books.

**Figure 6**
The Lotus Seed Anchor Chart

![Image of the Lotus Seed Anchor Chart]

**Week four.** The fourth week of intervention focused on finding the answers to the before, during, and after questions. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) stated that when teacher’s” students ask questions and search for answers, teachers know students are monitoring comprehension and interacting with the text to construct meaning, which is exactly what we hope for in developing readers” (p.82). The previous week’s anchor chart “*The Lotus Seed*” (See Figure 7) was utilized for modeling this strategy. I began working through the questions and thinking aloud about
where and how answers are found. Questions that can be answered right in the text were coded with a T, questions that have to be inferred should be coded with an I, and questions that needed to be answered using an outside source should be coded with an OS. The mentor text used for guided practice was *An Angel for Solomon* (Rylant, 1992). The students quickly worked through creating before, during, and after questions and coding answers on this graphic organizer. I wondered if the questions asked and the answers found clarify meaning, promote comprehension, or extend schema for the targeted student. Were the answers coded correctly?

**Figure 7**
The Lotus Seed Anchor Chart

Week five. Week five concentrated on On-the-surface, Under-the-surface and Deep Under-the-surface questioning. On-the-surface questioning usually has one correct answer that could be found in the text. Under-the-surface questioning could have more than one correct answer and often had to be inferred. Deep Under-the-surface questions consisted of making
“real life” applications and often contained opinions. An Anchor chart titled “Questioning Sea” was developed to explain how these questions are categorized (See Figure 8 and Appendix J). The mentor text used for this particular teaching point was *Charlie Anderson* (Abercrombie, 1990). Guided practice was conducted for inferential questioning using the text *The Stranger* (Van Allsburg, 1986) along with a graphic organizer titled “Questioning Sea”. Questions that had life applications and were answered using opinions, were practiced using the graphic organizer titled “Deep Under-the-surface”. The questions I most wanted answered was “Did they understand the text enough to participate during a classroom discussion?” And “Could they synthesize the new information and relate it to their lives?”

**Figure 8**
*Questioning Sea Anchor Chart*

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**Week six.** Week six contained the post-documentation work. I re-administered both the student essay and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) and conducted the final running record.
This intervention included conferring with Sam two times per week. When conferring, I focused on reteaching and reinforcing that week’s teaching point using Sam’s independent reader.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Throughout this action research project, I collected data to assess the effectiveness of the explicit modeling of the comprehension strategy: questioning. Specifically targeted was one student, Sam, who although reads fluently and accurately has difficulty with both literal and inferential comprehension. I compared both pre-test and post-test data from Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment system (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006) (Appendix A) and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-5; Leslie and Caldwell, 2011) (Appendix B). I also compared Sam’s comprehension of an essay titled “The Star Llama” by Jan Mike, given before the intervention began and again when the intervention was completed (Appendix C and M). The fourth measurement was comparing the Measurement of Academic Progress assessment (MAPs; Northwest Evaluation Association, 1997) from September, 2011 to May, 2012. The final measurement was the graphic organizers themselves to assess how well the student incorporated the teaching points independently.

The target student was given the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). The Benchmark Assessment system was a one-to-one assessment that matches a student’s independent and instructional reading ability to a reading level. The assessment was used to measure accuracy, fluency, and literal and inferential questions along with key understandings of the text. The data below include the results of the benchmark completed on
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION


Figure 9
Running Record Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Literal Comprehension</th>
<th>Inferential Comprehension</th>
<th>Key Understandings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/16/2011</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test 1-9-12</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test 2-17-12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly the results for the accuracy category remained high and there was a percentage increase in comprehension indicated for literal comprehension. Although both the inferential and the key understanding components indicated increased comprehension, my hope was to see greater gains in these two areas. Key understanding of the text included all the main ideas and asked the student why the author presented those ideas in a certain way. These questions are meant to deepen the student’s understanding of the author’s purpose. During the post-test, it was noted through observation, Sam was agitated because she was not allowed to have the book back so she could complete “look-backs”. This surprised me because of comments made previously during the pre-test and post-test of the QRI-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) in which she was unwilling to complete look-backs at that time.

The next area of measurement was a pre-test and a post-test using the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). The QRI-5 is an informal reading
inventory that assesses a specified student’s reading level. This is a diagnostic inventory which includes:

- Word lists: Used to measure word accuracy
- Both narrative and expository Texts: Used to measure reading ability and comprehension for both types of texts. Both types of texts are included and tested for because research has suggested that students may have a difficult time transitioning from children’s picture book narratives to the more content based expository types of text (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011).

Word list results are as follows:

For this particular student, who was in 3rd grade, I began the word lists at the 1st grade level.

Here is the summary of findings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 (grade level)</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number Correct:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage correct:</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level:</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Instructional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sam showed word accuracy at an independent level through grade level. The 4th grade word list was given and Sam achieved an instructional level. I began passage reading at the 4th grade level even though this was considered an instructional level because the two out of the four miscues were corrected by Sam after the fact. This would have placed Sam at her highest independent level.

**Passages:**

The purposes of the passage readings is used to determine the student’s instructional level for not only comprehension but word accuracy, too. I chose the narrative passages in order to compare the student’s work using the same format of text. Both narratives included the opportunity for look backs. Through the use of look backs, a teacher can determine whether or not the student was able to locate information or correct misconceptions. These narrative passages were both read orally.
The following are the results from the narrative passages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Concept questions:</th>
<th>Total Miscues/ PR level</th>
<th>Retelling/percentage:</th>
<th>Comprehension:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>5/12-unfamiliar</td>
<td>5 / Independent</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>9/12-familiar</td>
<td>4 / Independent</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia Earhart</td>
<td>(Pre-test)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Appleseed</td>
<td>(Post-test)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without look-backs:</td>
<td>Explicit:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 / Frustrational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implicit:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 / Instructional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total/level:</td>
<td>4 / Frustrational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Look-backs:</td>
<td>Explicit:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 / Frustrational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implicit:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 / Instructional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total/level with look-backs:</td>
<td>5 / Frustrational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sam began by orally reading the 4th grade narrative passage “Amelia Earhart”. Sam’s prior knowledge score of 41% showed that she was not very familiar with this topic. Sam wondered why a woman back then would want to fly a plane. Sam had a total of five miscues while reading this passage which placed her at a passage reading level of independent. During the retelling, Sam stated 34 ideas in a sequential order. Sam recalled many of the events and the resolution of Amelia’s life but not any details surrounding her goals and her background.

Sam scored a 50% comprehension rate without look-backs. She scored evenly at two out of four correct on both explicit and implicit questions. Her comprehension level without look-backs rates frustrational. Sam scored a 63% comprehension rate after look-backs. She increased her number correct for explicit responses going directly back to the correct section and rereading the text. However, Sam did not score any additional correct responses for implicit comprehension questions. This is understandable when during the prediction section of the assessment, Sam said, “OH, I hate this
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part.” It makes sense that she finds the implicit questions more difficult. She ended her narrative comprehension level at frustrational.

Johnny Appleseed (Post-test):

Sam’s Post-intervention test was Johnny Appleseed which is a 4th grade narrative passage. Sam’s prior knowledge score of 75% shows that she was familiar with the concepts introduced in the passage. It is noted that Sam remembered part of the story from Kindergarten. Sam had a total of four miscues while reading this passage which placed her at a passage reading level of independent. During the retelling, Sam scored 27 out of 47 ideas (57%). Sam had a difficult time depicting Johnny’s background and goals.

Sam scored a 63% comprehension rate without look-backs which is at the independent level. She scored three correct on the explicit questions and two correct on the implicit questions. Sam did raise her comprehension rate to 88% with look-backs. This was a particularly useful strategy for Sam as she correctly answered all four of the explicit questions; however, her implicit questioning remained the same with only scoring two correct. This brought Sam’s comprehension level to instructional for this narrative text.

Sam, who was a third grader, placed in the fourth grade instructional level on the word lists. Sam showed this strength through her decoding skills and automatic word identification. Her comprehension scores on her Pre-test indicated that instructional work needed to be complete in order for her to comprehend both explicit and implicit comprehension questions. After the intervention was completed, Sam scored at the independent level for comprehension. When the text was placed in front of her for look backs, Sam did not welcome the opportunity to clarify her answers. She verbalized the
thought “Why can’t I just read?” And “Do I have to?” Sam did eventually take the opportunity to complete look backs and as a result increased her scores for reading comprehension.

The next unit of measurement was in the form of a short essay called “The Star Llama” (Mike, 2003). The purpose of this tool was strictly observational. Questioning should facilitate a personal connection to the story which leads to deeper understanding. The big questions were: Would the Sam record her thoughts while reading if not prompted? Did she engage with the text? Was there an effort to make connections to the story? Did Sam ask any questions? Were the questions literal, inferential, or both? Figure 10 below shows a graphic representation of The Star Llama assessment results.

**Figure 10**
The Star Llama Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did the Student…</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>record her thinking?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage with the text?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make connections?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask literal questions?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask inferential questions?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students were simply given this short essay to read and that is it. No other directions were given. Sam, as you can see in Figure 11 did not record any thoughts at all.
Surprisingly, not even Text-to-Self (T-S), Text-to-Text (T-T), or Text-to-World (T-W) recordings were evident. It appeared that the student was not actively engaged in the text since no comments were observed and no questions were asked.

During the post-intervention assessments, the same short essay was provided to the students to complete an identical assignment (See Figure 12). Sam asked if she could write on her paper and did record her thoughts. Also noted was the inclusion of connections (T-S) and questions. Interestingly, the questioning was not a skillful representation of asking before, during, and after questions along with
coding the questions per teacher-modeled instruction. The questions asked by Sam were all literal questions and the answers were excluded from her recording.

The results of this task indicate that gains in comprehension strategies have been made. However, additional work in questioning and coding is needed.

Figure 12
The Star Lama

Observation: Literal questioning, no coding, no answers.

Observation: Text-to-self connection.

The Measurement of Academic Progress (MAPs; NWEA, 1997) was a computerized math and reading assessment given to all students three times a year. This assessment allowed me to measure the growth of the target student’s basic skills, areas of strength, and areas that needed additional instruction. The Reach Unit (RIT) was the scale used to measure the academic achievement and
growth. The RIT scale was directly related to the third grade curriculum. The percentile rank indicates that a student scored as well as, or better than the percent of students in the norm group (NWEA, 1997).

The results from Sam’s MAPs data were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Term</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Winter 2012</th>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%ile</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following data breaks down Sam’s reading RIT score by content areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Strand</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Winter 2012</th>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Meaning/Context</td>
<td>187-200</td>
<td>174-190</td>
<td>206-219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Text</td>
<td>175-189</td>
<td>194-208</td>
<td>205-218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze Text</td>
<td>185-198</td>
<td>199-213</td>
<td>202-215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate and Extend Text</td>
<td>190-204</td>
<td>204-220</td>
<td>202-216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sam began the year in the 53rd percentile in reading and ended the year in the 77th percentile. This meant that she started the year off doing as well in reading or better than 53 percent of the norm group. She ended the year doing as well in reading or better than 77 percent of the norm group. I noted that Sam’s strengths in reading, based on the RIT score, were in word meaning/context, and understanding text. Sam began the year in the average range in these areas and ended the year in the high range. Areas that needed improvement were in analyzing text and evaluating and extending text. Even though there was little improvement in these areas, Sam still was considered in the average range.

The final unit of measurement consisted of the graphic organizers themselves. This was mainly an observational tool that was used to ascertain if Sam was independently completing the teaching.
points for each week. Figure 13 below shows a glimpse of each week of intervention’s teaching points and the questions I sought answers for.

**Figure 13**  
Graphic Organizer Data Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of Intervention</th>
<th>Graphic Organizer title</th>
<th>Teaching point</th>
<th>Assessment question</th>
<th>Did the student successfully answer the assessment question?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Sweetest Fig</td>
<td>Spontaneous Questioning</td>
<td>Was the student engaged in the text?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Lotus Seed</td>
<td>Before, During, and After Questioning</td>
<td>Was the student trying to fill in a gap in schema?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An Angel for Solomon</td>
<td>Before, During, and After Questioning with Coding Answers</td>
<td>Is the student trying to clarify meaning, promote comprehension or extend schema?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Stranger</td>
<td>Inferencing is schema plus text clues and life applications means to synthesize information and connect to life</td>
<td>Did she understand the text enough to participate in a discussion? And Could she synthesize the new information and apply it to her life?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Sweetest Fig” graphic organizer initiated the intervention. The teaching point for this week was spontaneous questioning. The question that I wanted to evaluate was “Is the student engaged in the text (See Figure 14)? I noted Sam was engaged in the text since she was able to formulate some thoughts. Notice Sam not only recorded her thoughts but also participated in asking
very basic questions. I found that many of the questions were based on the illustrations used in the book.

Figure 14  
The Sweetest Fig Graphic Organizer

The second week of intervention utilized “The Lotus Seed” Graphic organizer. The teaching point for this week focused on asking questions before, during, and after reading. I characterized this strategy for the students by saying “You don’t know until you ask! One reason we ask questions is to increase our schema.” So, did Sam ask questions in order to fill in a gap in schema (See Figure 15)? I noticed Sam did indeed use before, during, and after questions to increase her schema. An example was in Sam’s questioning of “what a lotus seed is and is it a seed that we eat?” She wondered if it was “like a pumpkin seed.” Sam was able to take her current understanding of seeds and incorporate the answers to her questions into additional background knowledge. Adding to and activating background knowledge provides the necessary foundation for synthesizing information. She found out that a lotus
is a type of flower and the seeds would not be something you would want to eat. It was observed that
Sam did not properly code her answers and very few answers were present.

**Figure 15**
The Lotus Seed Graphic Organizer

The third week of intervention continued with asking questions before, during, and after reading. Also
included within this week of intervention was answering those questions by coding them with a “T” for answers found in the text, an “I” for questions that you need to infer, and an “OS” for questions that require and outside source to answer. The graphic organizer titled “An Angel for Solomon” was utilized for this week’s lessons (See Figure 16). I wanted to assess the types of questions Sam was asking. Was she asking questions to clarify meaning, promote comprehension, or to extend understanding? I found Sam was seeking to clarify her understanding and promote comprehension as noted questions such as “Was he different from the others?” and “Was he an Angel?” Sam was trying to clarify Solomon’s role
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in the story as well as understand where this story was leading. It was also noted that Sam did properly code he work but didn’t always compete answering the questions.

Figure 16
An Angel for Solomon Graphic Organizer

The last week of intervention concentrated on asking questions that promote inference and synthesizing that information into a life application—a connection to your own life. Inferencing is an important skill used in reading comprehension. The lesson focused on the ability to take prior knowledge (schema) plus context clues to make predictions about what happens next in a story, what the author’s purpose was in writing the story, and main idea of the story. Synthesizing is the process of combining new information with your own background knowledge to create new meanings and opinions. It is another important skill used for reading comprehension. This is why a reader reads. It is the road to new
knowledge, the creation of new ideas, the “AHA” moment, and the next new adventure. I used the mentor text *The Stranger* (Van Allsburg, 1986) combined with the graphic organizers titled “Questioning Sea: Under-the-Surface, and Questioning Sea: Deep Under-the-surface” See Figure 17 and Figure 18) to assess whether Sam was able to make inference and then synthesize the information to create her own opinion or make a connection to her life. Sam was able to produce Under-the-surface (inferential) questions such as “What if he dies? And “Does he do that because he has a gift?” However, she had difficulty using her schema and text clues to infer an answer. Sam did properly code her work with an “I” for inference. For Deep Under-the-surface (life applications), Sam was unable to produce a question but did issue the following statement: “If I were there I would be scared.” This did offer an opinion on the book but suggests very little insight about “why” she would feel that way. I was curious about what was the new information from the story and what was the background knowledge used to create this statement. When asked about it, she offered no insight into her thoughts; it was just something she felt.

**Figure 17**
**Under-The-Surface Graphic Organizer**

![Under-The-Surface Graphic Organizer](image)
In conclusion, this chapter detailed the project’s intervention from January 9- February 12, 2012. An account of each of the pre-test and post-test measurements was stated as well as the results of each. The following chapter features the results of the measurements used in this intervention, specifies recommendations for further instruction, and expresses the strengths and limitations of this case study research project.
Chapter 5

Conclusions

Reading comprehension has been an area of concern for many years and improving reading skills has been a top priority to educators. This is reflected at the national level in the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), “which purpose is to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice so no child is left behind” (p.3). This study focused on increasing reading comprehension for a student who was adequate decoders but poor comprehender (word caller) using the reading comprehension strategy: questioning. This was supported by the Common Core Standard RL.3.1 which stated that students be able to “ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.” (WDPI, 2010, p.12) As stated by Sencibaugh (2005) “questioning strategies involving self-instruction and paragraph restatements along with text-structure-based strategies yield the most significant outcomes” (p. 8). This study utilized the questioning strategy to assist one word caller in increasing her reading comprehension. I believed that without a solid foundation of reading skills, students would struggle in every aspect of their adult lives. I hoped to help build this foundation by providing Sam with this reading strategy tool.

Results

The use of explicit teaching modeling, think alouds and student practice of the reading comprehension strategy of questioning led to a positive impact on student comprehension. The
data support the hypothesis that the student’s implicit and explicit reading comprehension would increase with the use of the reading comprehension strategy of questioning.

First, the results of the QRI-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) showed an increase in both implicit and explicit questioning comprehension. The QRI-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011), results indicated a 23% increase in retelling comprehension, a 25% increase in both implicit and explicit correct responses without look backs, and a 25% increase in explicit correct responses only after look backs. Dole, Brown and Trathen (1996) suggested that “when teachers shift responsibility for strategy use to students and show students explicitly how strategy use affects their academic performance, students may come to see themselves as more capable and less reliant on their teacher” (p.75). Becoming a good reader doesn’t happen without active participation. When students read a text it is usually for a reason. When they avoid reading a text it is for a reason. When Sam reads for pleasure she is intrinsically motivated which means she is reading for her own sake. What can I do when she avoids reading a text? Simply reading a text is not sufficient. Reading because the teacher says so is considered external motivation. However, when Sam sees that a certain comprehension strategy is working for her, through scaffolding and maximizes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) (Coffey, 2009), she will now be “reading for pleasure”, therefore changing her motivation from external to internal.

Secondly, the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006) which measures reading accuracy and comprehension, further supports the hypothesis that the use of the questioning strategy would increase reading comprehension. The student’s accuracy remained high, scoring 100% (a 1% increase), literal comprehension increased 75% and inferential comprehension increased by 50%.
The student’s increased ability to apply the comprehension strategy of questioning, may have contributed to the target student raising her MAPs reading scores 24%, from 191 (53 percentile) in fall to 210 (77 percentile) in spring. Word meaning/content and understanding text categories increased from average (41-60 percentile) to high (greater than 80 percentile). Analyze text and evaluate/extend text remained average (41-60 percentile).

The learning trend indicates that she benefited from being taught to use the questioning reading strategy. Evidence from the post-test short essay, the Star Llama (Mike, 2003) showed that the student increased use of reading comprehension strategies when compared to the pre-test. The targeted student not only recorded her thoughts on her post-test essay but also used two reading strategies: questioning and making connections. The additions to the post-intervention essay indicated the target student was able to make her thinking visible about what she read as opposed to reading the essay without comment as she did on the pre-test.

Researchers such as Dole, Brown and Trathen (1996) suggested that results such as these may be attributed to strategy instruction which promotes a sense of control over learning therefore increasing a student’s motivation. Sencibaugh (2005) alluded that “when students with learning disabilities are taught how to utilize metacognitive strategies, (visual strategies utilizing graphic organizer and verbal strategies utilizing think alouds), and teachers facilitate the process, comprehension is increased” (p.4). So, this suggests that strategy instruction and student motivation may share a reciprocal relationship that when combined with explicit teaching instruction account for gains in reading performance. The use of scaffolding instruction enabled this student to master “questioning” in baby steps. The scaffolding instruction is based off the concept by Lev Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) which states “The zone of proximal development is the gap between what a learner has already mastered (the actual level of
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

development) and what he or she can achieve when provided with educational support (potential development)” (Coffey, 2009, p.79). It was important to develop my instruction in small, attainable steps combined with teacher support which would enable Sam to complete assignments independently. Scaffolding, as part of the ZPD, is an incredibly important strategy for students with learning disabilities as it allows for the teacher to provide adaptations to instruction that meets the student’s present abilities; it also allows the student to activate and build on her prior knowledge and synthesize the new information at a “safe” level for the student.

Behavior problems in the classroom create an environment where learning is disrupted and other students may be hurt. When a student misbehaves, the most common reaction is to focus on “discipline”; of wanting the student to take ownership of the act and institute a consequence for the rest of the classroom to take note of, hopefully preventing other outbursts. For a student who is already at-risk for EB/D and has low self-esteem this seems counterproductive. I found that I needed to take a step back from the “discipline” approach and ask myself what happened to cause this behavior. I needed to remember not to take the behavior personally. A report from the Massachusetts Advocates for Children titled Helping Traumatized Children Learn (Cole, 2005) states that misbehavior” is not “to get the teacher”; it is a response to a feeling of insecurity, to a real sense of emotional or physical danger” (p.15). I knew that physical safety during these disruptions was not the issue. That left emotional safety. Using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1948), I realized that after all the Physiological needs such as food, water, and sleep are ruled out, then I could move on to the next level of the pyramid which is safety. It is a common practice in our school to make sure the first level of needs are met including but not limited to providing breakfast, lunch and snacks and a place to
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

sleep when needed. If the need for safety is unfulfilled, it may manifest itself into problem behavior that could inhibit learning. A person can’t move to the next level until the needs to the preceding level have been filled. How could I provide emotional safety for a child who was already suffering from lack of self-confidence and self-esteem? Reflecting back to the disruptions, I realized that a pattern was established. I realized that each time Sam shut down and became non-compliant was when I began a new week’s teaching point. How was I going to overcome this? I began by taking a hard look at the relationship that I had with Sam. How could I create a stronger bond, one where she could feel safe trying out a new strategy without worrying about how others would view her? I needed to get to know this student better. I asked her to pick a student to join her in a book club, a book of her choice that would meet weekly with me during lunch. We had lunch, talked about the book, aided her in creating a positive peer relationship, and I got an inside look into her home life. I found out that she had a really good sense of humor and really yearned for a close friend at school, she believed that she didn’t have friends because she was fat, and in an AHA moment, casually mentioned that she wished she could work with me out in the hall so no one would hear her. So, now I knew “why” the disruptions were occurring. What could I do about it? A few simple changes such as holding conferring sessions in the hall and encouraging the book club to meet during individual reading time, hopefully, allowing a friendship to develop were initiated right away. A study by McInerney, Dowson, Yeung, and Nelson (n.d.) found that “teachers are probably the most influential agent in promoting academic self-esteem and interest, and in enhancing academic performance in the school context. It is also essential that their support be explicitly known to the students” (p.17). By using the book club and lunch meetings I had established a more positive, nurturing relationship with Sam. I decided to keep my expectations high, practice lots
of patience, be fair and consistent, and most importantly, not get into a power-struggle. Conferencing seemed to cause Sam discomfort and so I decided that if she didn’t want to confer, I would not push the issue. I allowed her to soak in what was taught in the mini-lesson and initiated “wait time” until she could verbalize her comments and questions. I aimed to reduce pressure by letting her know that I was available if she needed help and foreshadowing when the next scheduled conferring time was going to be held. This didn’t stop the problem behaviors from occurring but it did limit the duration and escalation of the disturbances. Once this need for emotional safety was met and a relationship with me established, Sam was able to internalize the instruction enabling a successful intervention.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to implement the reading comprehension strategy of questioning in an attempt to improve the reading comprehension abilities of one third grade student. By utilizing graphic organizers, teacher think alouds, and conferring to gauge understanding along with reteaching as necessary, I was able to give this student a tool to aid in reading comprehension. I recommend the continuation of explicit teacher modeling; the use of teacher-led think alouds, and guided practice of the reading comprehension strategy of questioning in the general education classroom. Implications for further teaching practice with this student include maintaining the skills that she has acquired, including the use of graphic organizers, and focusing future instruction on the development of other reading strategies such as prediction and visualization. The use of peer assisted learning strategies (PALS) shows promise and is supported with research (Malecki & Elliot, 2002). This will allow Sam to verbally process
the story, discuss the story and ask each other questions about it. I also suggest that Sam continue reading for pleasure at home using teacher-approved books from school. I use caution at the thought of utilizing a graphic organizer or post-its to track her thoughts and questions, unless used for a specific school assignment, nothing should hinder Sam’s enthusiasm in reading for pleasure. I would also encourage the use of foreshadowing conferring times; continue to hold the meetings outside the hearing of other students and allow a waiting period between the time the new information was given and requiring a response, allowing time for Sam to contemplate the new skill.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA), focused legislation that required schools to provide free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (WDPI, 2005). IDEA introduced Response to Intervention (RTI; WDPI, 2005) “as a method for ensuring that high quality instruction is used in the process of identifying learning disabilities” (p. 13). Title I is a federal program that provides funds to schools with high percentages of students who are disadvantaged, for a variety of services (WDPI, 2012). RTI is supported through Title I. Although the results indicate the targeted student is above the 50th percentile in MAPs, which is one of the measurements used by the school district to place students in intervention, it is recommended that the student remain in Title I intervention focusing on reading comprehension for at least another year to solidify gains. It is my intention to share all the research and results of the reading comprehension strategy, questioning, with the school’s intervention staff. Title I is a federal program that provides funds to schools with high percentages of students who are disadvantaged, for a variety of services (WDPI, 2012). It is also recommended that the behavior plan initiated during the PST and following RTI guidelines remain in the place for the next school year and continued participation
in school-led socialization groups be required. Indications have been noted regarding the improvement in behaviors, albeit slight improvements, after the plan was implemented. I plan on submitting these findings to her general education teacher next year in hopes that continued support is offered to Sam and imparting the necessity to continue to make sure Sam’s needs with reference to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1948) are met as well as can be expected in a school setting.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The major strength in this study lied in the ability to successfully identify areas that needed improvement, revise my lesson plans to reflect this need, explicitly model the questioning strategy while conferring with Sam individually, which resulted in a significant improvement in reading comprehension. Of course, this approach is only one way to increase reading comprehension as there are no simple answers to furthering reading comprehension. Increasing reading comprehension in a child is as individual as the child herself. This case study research project has helped me to better understand the difficulties faced in comprehending text for struggling readers. The explicit modeling and the think aloud process were valuable tools used to implement the questioning comprehension strategy I needed them to use. I have used both these tools in the past, but found I was inconsistent in their use. This case study forced me to meticulously plan each and every lesson in order for the students to be successful in applying the strategy during independent reading. At the same time, it gave me better insight into the struggles and frustrations of students with learning disabilities or E/BD. I recognize the need to
practice a great deal of patience while implementing interventions in my general education classroom.

If I were to continue this study, additional time would be slated for the analyzing text and the evaluate/extend text categories. I believed, due to the limited duration of the intervention, my expectation for the independent use of the questioning strategy may have been too high for their cognitive development at this time, without reminders. At this stage, guided practice of this strategy would be appropriate. However, it was apparent to me that third grade students did have the ability to independently complete this strategy by the end of third grade. “The success of improving reading achievement levels for students with learning disabilities is contingent upon the implementation of strategy instruction” (Sencibaugh, 2005, p. 12). I felt time was the greatest barrier to allowing for the implementation of additional metacognitive strategies such as visualization or prediction. I would also pursue whether problem behavior could be reversed using a combination of scaffolding, PALS, and using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1948) to identify areas of deficiencies in relationship to reading instruction. Another limitation involved the generalizability of this case study research project. One can’t generalize an individual case study which by its very nature is very “individualized” therefore it doesn’t add to the development of a single scientific methodology which can be generalized in the general education classroom however, a general education teacher would be able to understand that if our needs are not met, whether they are physical, social, or emotional, then learning is disrupted. Also, the use of scaffolding and explicit teacher modeling is common instruction strategies and can be incorporated in all general education classrooms and can be generalized. A further limitation involved not taking into account behavioral issues that climaxed during the intervention and the demands of implementing and adjusting a behavioral plan thereby
eliminating several individual conferring sessions. This made it difficult to assess and reteach the strategy with any kind of consistency.

Since reading comprehension is essential to school success, it is essential to implement strategy instruction that focuses on learning and utilizing the tools good readers need to read text. This is especially important when teaching students with learning disabilities who have a history of academic difficulties and behavior problems. The results above suggest that a combination of explicit teacher modeling and metacognitive strategy instruction is one of many effective interventions. The results also suggest that behavioral problems may stem from a need not being met and can impair one’s ability to learn. Once that need is identified, and this may take some time, then plans can be put in place to address that need. It is also important to identify where the student lies in the Zone of Proximal Development (Coffey, 2009) in order for the student not to experience additional frustration and anxiety over new instruction and how that student would be best supported. One goal of reading instruction is for a student to learn certain strategies then generalize those strategies to other reading assignments. However, it is imperative to remember that students are complex individuals who bring to the classroom internal and external pressures and needs which need to be addressed. Only then will they be in a place to accept any kind of instruction. Our job is to teach the “whole” child. Reading instruction, as important as it is, is only one piece.
References


http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/5075


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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, (2005). *Title I and RtI.*
http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/titleone/faq.html#respo

http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/idea.html

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, (2005). *Common core standards.*
http://dpi.wi.gov/ell/common-core.html

Appendices
### Appendix A

**Earnie Learns Level L**

#### Recording Form

**Part One: Oral Reading**

Place the book in front of the student. Read the title and introduction.

**Introduction:** Brett was trying to train his puppy Ernie to obey him. Read to find out about the problems Brett had trying to teach Ernie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:01:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brett patted his puppy on the head, saying, “Today’s the big day, Ernie.

Today you’re going to learn how to be a good dog.”

Ernie gave a happy bark.

“Okay, let’s get started,” Brett said. He searched his memory for the instructions he had been reading in a book about dog training. He recalled two important things. One—you have to tell your dog what to do.
Two—you also have to show your

dog what to do. He tried to
remember more and then
decided to start. Maybe that
was all.

"Sit, Ernie!" Brett said.
He nudged the puppy, and the
little dog sat.
Then Brett made another
attempt. But Ernie just looked
at him. Then Brett showed the
puppy over and over how to sit.
Again, Ernie forgot what to do.
"Maybe you don't like sitting."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brett said, “Let’s try something new.” He backed away from his dog. “Stay!” he said. Ernie didn’t stay. He didn’t lie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>down. And he didn’t come when he was called. Brett’s mom was watching from the porch. Brett yelled, “Mom, why can’t I teach Ernie anything?” “I think you forgot an important step,” Mom said. She held out some puppy treats. “You</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal
Part One: Oral Reading continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>have to make him want to be good! Watch for him to do something right. Then praise him and reward him. That's how Dad and I get you to be good!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End Time ____ min. ____ sec.

Have the student finish reading the book silently.
### Accuracy Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Below 95%</th>
<th>95%</th>
<th>96%</th>
<th>97%</th>
<th>98%</th>
<th>99%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Self-Corrections

---

### Fluency Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Fluency Scoring Key**

0. Reads primarily word-by-word with occasional but infrequent or inappropriate phrasing; no smooth or expressive interpretation, irregular pausing, and no attention to author's meaning or punctuation; no stress or inappropriate stress, and slow rate.

1. Reads primarily in two-word phrases within three- and four-word groups and some word-by-word reading; almost no smooth, expressive interpretation or pausing; guided by author's meaning and punctuation; almost no stress or inappropriate stress, with slow rate most of the time.

2. Reads primarily in three- or four-word phrase groups; some smooth, expressive interpretation and pausing guided by author's meaning and punctuation; mostly appropriate stress and rate with some slowdowns.

3. Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrases or word groups; usually smooth, expressive interpretation and pausing guided by author's meaning and punctuation; appropriate stress and rate with only a few slowdowns.

### Reading Rate (Optional)

- **End Time:** min. sec.
- **Start Time:** min. sec.
- **Total Time:** min. sec.
- **Total Seconds:**

\[
(RW \times 60) \div \text{Total Seconds} = \text{Words Per Minute (WPM)}
\]

13,860 ÷ _____ = _____ WPM
**Part Two: Comprehension Conversation**

Have a conversation with the student, noting the key understandings the student expresses. Use prompts as needed to stimulate discussion of understandings the student does not express. Score for evidence of all understandings expressed—with or without a prompt. Circle the number in the score column that reflects the level of understanding demonstrated.

**Teacher:** Talk about what happened in this story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Understandings</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within the Text</strong></td>
<td>What was the problem in this story?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells significant events of the story in sequence, such as: Brett was having trouble training Ernie; Mom told him to give Ernie treats for doing the trick; Brett trained Ernie to sit and stay.</td>
<td>What did Brett do to solve his problem?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note any additional understandings:</td>
<td>What else happened?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beyond the Text</strong></td>
<td>Tell some of the ways people and dogs are alike.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both people and dogs have to want to be good.</td>
<td>What was the secret to teaching Ernie?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a person or a dog a reward (treat) helps them want to be good.</td>
<td>Tell how Brett felt at the end of the story. Why did he feel that way?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett was happy at the end of the story because he learned how to teach Ernie.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note any additional understandings:</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued on next page.*
QUESTIONING STRATEGY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

**Part Two: Comprehension Conversation continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Understandings</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **About the Text**  | Is this a good title for this story? Why (not)?
Brett learned that both people and animals need rewards.
There was a joke at the end of the story when Brett barked a happy bark like Ernie did at the beginning.  |
| Note any additional understandings: |

**Guide to Total Score**
- 9–10 Excellent Comprehension
- 7–8 Satisfactory Comprehension
- 5–6 Limited Comprehension
- 0–4 Unsatisfactory Comprehension

**Subtotal Score:** 9

**Total Score:** 10

**Part Three: Writing About Reading (optional)**
Read the writing/drawing prompt on the next page to the student. Specify the amount of time for the student to complete the task. (See Assessment Guide for more information.)

**Writing About Reading**
- 0 Reflects no understanding of the text.
- 1 Reflects very limited understanding of the text.
- 2 Reflects partial understanding of the text.
- 3 Reflects excellent understanding of the text.
During World War I, Earhart worked as a nurse. She cared for pilots who had been hurt in the war. Earhart listened to what they said about flying. She watched planes take off and land. She knew that she, too, must fly.

In 1928, Earhart was the first woman to cross the Atlantic in a plane. But someone else flew the plane. Earhart wanted to be more than just a passenger. She wanted to fly a plane across the ocean herself. For four years, Earhart trained to be a pilot. Then, in 1932, she flew alone across the Atlantic to Ireland. The trip took over fourteen hours.

Flying may seem easy today. However, Earhart faced many dangers. Airplanes had just been invented. They were much smaller than our planes today. Mechanical problems happened quite often. There were also no computers to help her. Flying across the ocean was as frightening as sailing across it had been years before. Earhart knew the dangers she faced. However, she said, “I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be a challenge to others.”

Earhart planned to fly around the world. She flew more than twenty thousand miles. Then, her plane disappeared somewhere over the huge Pacific Ocean. People searched for a long time. Finally they
Level: Four

gave up. Earhart and her plane were never found.

(263 words)

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Number of Total Misses
(Total Accuracy): _____________

Number of Meaning-Change Misses
(Total Acceptability): _____________

Total Accuracy

Accuracy

0–6 misses __ Independent _ 0–6 misses
7–27 misses __ Instructional __ 7–14 misses
28+ misses __ Frustration ___ 15+ misses
Rate: 203 × 60 = 12,180 __ seconds = ___ WPM
Correct WPM: 203 – ___ errors × 60 = ___/ __ seconds = ___ CWPM

Retelling Scoring Sheet for “Amelia Earhart”

Setting/Background
___ Amelia Earhart was an adventurer.
___ During World War I
___ she was a nurse.
___ She cared for pilots
___ who had been hurt.
___ Earhart watched planes
___ take off
___ and land.

Goal
___ She knew
___ that she must fly.
___ Earhart was the first woman
___ to cross
___ the Atlantic.

___ in a plane.
___ Someone else flew the plane.
___ Earhart wanted to be more
___ than a passenger.
___ She wanted
___ to fly a plane
___ across the ocean.

Events
___ Earhart trained
___ to be a pilot.
___ In 1932
___ she flew
___ alone
___ across the Atlantic
___ to Ireland.
___ Earhart faced dangers.
___ Airplanes were smaller.
___ Problems happened often.
___ There were no computers.
___ Earhart said
___ women must try
___ to do things
___ as men have tried.
___ Earhart planned
___ to fly
___ around the world.

Resolution
___ Her plane disappeared
___ over the ocean.
___ the Pacific Ocean.
___ People searched
___ for a long time.
___ They gave up.
___ Earhart
___ and her plane were
___ never found.

47 Ideas
Number of ideas recalled ________

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:
Level: Four

Questions for “Amelia Earhart”

1. What was Amelia Earhart’s main goal?
   Implicit: to fly; or to do things that were challenging

2. What was Amelia Earhart doing in a plane when she first crossed the Atlantic?
   Explicit: she was a passenger

3. How long did it take Amelia Earhart when she flew alone across the Atlantic?
   Explicit: over fourteen hours

4. Why would flying alone across the Atlantic be an especially dangerous thing to do?
   Implicit: it was a long trip; there was no one to help with problems; or there was no one to help her stay awake or give her a break

5. What was one of the dangers of flying in those early days?
   Explicit: small planes; mechanical problems; or no computers

6. How do we know Amelia Earhart believed in equal rights for women?
   Implicit: she said women should try to do things just as men have tried

7. What was Amelia Earhart trying to do when her plane disappeared?
   Explicit: fly around the world

8. Why do you think her plane was never found?
   Implicit: probably sank in the ocean; ocean was so big; or plane was very small
Once there was a young Inca boy. He had no family except for an old llama. Each day the boy and his llama walked many miles, looking for a home. Each night they curled up together and slept. But one starry evening, the old llama died. The boy buried his friend next to an icy stream. Then he sat under a tree and cried. What would he do? He had no family and no home.

The boy cried for a very long time. But there was no one to comfort him. There were only the stars in the sky.

Suddenly, the sky filled with the bright light. The boy held his breath. He was afraid to move. One bright star fell to the ground. Slowly, the star took the shape of the old llama. She bent her head and drank from the stream. She looked at the boy and smiled. As she jumped back into the sky, bits of llama wool fell.

As the Sun began to rise, the boy picked up the soft, warm wool. It glowed in his hands like starlight. He carried the wool to the city and sold it. With the money, he bought a house. He bought two young llamas. He never forgot the star llama. And he was never lonely again.
Appendix D

Questioning Before, During and After The Sweetest Fig Worksheet

Name:

Questioning
Before, During and After
The sweetest Fig

Before:

During:

After:
### Reading Behaviors and Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy:</td>
<td>Reading Behaviors and Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self Corrects Misreads using a variety of strategies</td>
<td>Book Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Misreads make sense</td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Misreads fit the syntax/structure of sentence</td>
<td>Stop and Check for Understanding: Y N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Misreads look similar to words in text</td>
<td>I noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations:</td>
<td>Good readers use many strategies when they read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fluency**

- Read not choppy or word by word
- Readaloud! Uses punctuation
- Expressive Changes voice to mark shifts in tone or mood, to reflect meaning and understanding
- Observations:

**Comprehension:**

- Monitors for Understanding while reading
- Uses Back Up and Reread
- Retells sequence of events when asked
- Summarizes big ideas and events when asked
- Observations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Expanding Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check for Understanding</td>
<td>Cross Checking... Do the pictures and/or words look right? Does it sound right? Does it make sense?</td>
<td>Veracious Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Up and Reread</td>
<td>Use the picture... Do the words and pictures match?</td>
<td>Read appropriate level text that are a &quot;Good Fit&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and Fix Up</td>
<td>Use beginning sounds and ending sounds</td>
<td>Reread text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell the Story</td>
<td>Blend sounds, stretch and read</td>
<td>Practice common sight words and high frequency words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use prior knowledge to connect with text</td>
<td>Flip the sound</td>
<td>Adjust and apply different reading rates to match text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a picture or mental image</td>
<td>Chunk letters and sounds together</td>
<td>Use punctuation to enhance phrasing and prosody (and marks, commas etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions throughout the reading process</td>
<td>Skip the word then come back</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict what will happen, use text to confirm</td>
<td>Trade a word/guess a word that makes sense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infer and support with confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use text features (titles, headings, captions, graphic features)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize text, include sequence of main events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use main idea and supporting details to determine importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and contrast within and between text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:**

- C A F E

**Strategy:**

- Good readers use many strategies when they read.
- What would you like to work on to become a better reader?

**Veracious Reading**

- Tune in to interesting words and use new vocabulary in my speaking and writing
- Use pictures, illustrations and diagrams
- Use word parts to determine meaning of words (prefixes, suffixes, origins, abbreviations)
- Use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning
- Ask someone to define the word for you
- Use dictionaries, thesauruses and glossaries as tools
Appendix F

Lotus Seed Worksheet

Name:

Lotus Seed

Before Questions:

During Questions:

After Questions:
Appendix G

An Angel For Solomon Worksheet

Name:

An Angel for Solomon

T-Text, I-Infer, OS-Other Source

Before:

During:

After:
Appendix H

Questioning Sea Worksheets

Building Reading Comprehension in Grades 6-12: A Toolkit of Classroom Activities by Jeifer Zeman. Copyright © 2004 by the International Reading Association. May be copied for classroom use. (See related activity on page 106.) 174
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF QUESTIONS

On-the-Surface Questions
- Usually have one correct answer found in the text (you can point to it)
- Involve summarizing, paraphrasing, and literal retelling
- Inquire about facts, details, and events
- Often begin with Who, What, Where, or When
  (some on-the-surface questions may begin with Why, How, Should, Could, or Would)

Under-the-Surface Questions
- Can have more than one correct answer
- Are not explicitly stated in the text
- Often begin with the words Why, How, Should, Could, or Would (some under-the-surface questions may begin with Who, What, Where, or When—often followed by “do you think...” and then often followed by another Why? question)
- Usually require one or more of the following:
  - Filling in gaps, making inferences, “reading between the lines”
  - Predicting, speculating, asking what the text means
  - Hypothesizing and evaluating
  - Challenging the text
  - Experimenting, solving problems, thinking divergently
  - Reflecting, expressing major understanding

Life Application Questions
- Connect the text to self or knowledge of the world
- Ask about author’s purpose, message, moral, or symbolism
- Explore cultural or psychological ideas
- Extend beyond the text into the reader’s own experience
- Include opinions
- May include “How does this part relate to my past, present, or future?”
  “What is my opinion about what the text says?”
  or “How does this text help me learn what I need to learn?”
Appendix I

Questioning Sea Worksheet

Name:

**Questioning Sea**

**The Stranger**


- **Who?:**

- **What?:**

- **When?:**

- **Where?:**

*Deep Under-the-Surface Questions:*

If I were..., how...?

If I were...

How...?
Level: Four

Narrative

Concept Questions:
Who was Johnny Appleseed?

Why do people plant fruit trees in certain places?

Why do people plant apple trees?

What does “making apple cider” mean to you?

Score: ______/12 = ____%  
PAM: __________, UNFAM: __________

Prediction:

“Johnny Appleseed”

John Chapman was born in 1774 and grew up in Massachusetts. He became a farmer and learned how to grow different kinds of crops and trees. John especially liked to grow and eat apples. Many people were moving west at that time. They were heading for Ohio and Pennsylvania. John knew that apples were a good food for settlers to have. Apple trees were strong and easy to grow. Apples could be eaten raw and they could be cooked in many ways. They could also be dried for later use. So in 1797, John decided to go west. He wanted to plant apple trees for people who would build their new homes there.

John first gathered bags of apple seeds. He got many of his seeds from farmers who squeezed apples to make a drink called cider. Then, in the spring, he left for the western frontier. He planted seeds as he went along. Also, he gave them to people who knew how valuable apple trees were.

John walked many miles in all kinds of weather. He had to cross dangerous rivers and find his way through strange forests. Often he was hungry, cold, and wet. Sometimes he had to hide from unfriendly Indians. His clothes became ragged and torn. He used a sack for a shirt, and he cut out holes for the arms. He wore no shoes. But he never gave up. He guarded his precious seeds and carefully planted them where they had the best chance of growing into strong trees.

John’s fame spread. He was nicknamed Johnny Appleseed. New settlers welcomed him and gratefully accepted a gift of apple seeds. Many legends grew up about Johnny Appleseed that were not al-
Level: Four

ways true. However, one thing is true. Thanks to Johnny Appleseed, apple trees now grow in parts of America where they once never did. (308 words)


Number of Total Miscues (Total Accuracy):

Number of Meaning-Change Miscues (Total Acceptability):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Accuracy</th>
<th>Total Acceptability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-7 miscues</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-32 miscues</td>
<td>Instructional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33+ miscues</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate: $308 \times 60 = 18,480$ seconds = ____ WPM
Correct WPM: $308 - \frac{\text{errors}}{\text{words}} \times 60 = \frac{\text{words}}{\text{seconds}} = \text{CWPM}$

Retelling Scoring Sheet for “Johnny Appleseed”

Setting/Background

1. John Chapman was born
2. in 1774.
3. He became a farmer
4. and grew crops.
5. John liked
6. to grow
7. and eat apples.
8. People were moving west.
9. Apples were a good food
10. for settlers to have.

Goal

11. John decided
12. to go west.

Events

13. He wanted
14. to plant apple trees.

John got many seeds
from farmers
who squeezed apples
to make a drink
called cider.
He left
for the frontier.
He planted seeds
as he went along.
He gave them away.
John walked miles.
He crossed rivers
and went through forests.
He was hungry
and wet.
He had to hide
from Indians
unfriendly Indians.
His clothes were torn.
He used a sack
for a shirt
and he cut out holes
for the arms.
He wore no shoes.

Resolution

15. John’s fame spread.
16. He was nicknamed
17. Johnny Appleseed.
18. Settlers accepted seeds
gratefully.
19. Thanks to Johnny Appleseed,
apple trees grow
in many parts
of America.

47 Ideas

Number of ideas recalled _______.
Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

128
Level: Four

Questions for "Johnny Appleseed"

1. What was John Chapman's main goal? Implicit: to plant apple trees across the country

2. Why did John choose apples to plant instead of some other fruit? Implicit: the trees were easy to grow; the fruit could be used in a lot of ways; or he especially liked apples

3. Where did John get most of his seeds? Explicit: from farmers or from people who made cider

4. Why would John be able to get so many seeds from cider makers? Implicit: cider is a drink and you don't drink seeds; or apples have a lot of seeds and you don't use seeds in cider

5. How do we know that John cared about planting apple trees? Implicit: he suffered hardships; or he guarded the apple seeds carefully

6. How did John get to the many places he visited? Explicit: he walked

7. Name one hardship John suffered. Explicit: being hungry, cold, wet, lost, in danger from unfriendly Indians

8. Why should we thank Johnny Appleseed? Explicit: apple trees now grow in parts of America where they once never did

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: ___

Number Correct Implicit: ___

Total: ___

Independent: 8 correct

Instructional: 6–7 correct

Frustration: 0–5 correct

With Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: ___

Number Correct Implicit: ___

Total: ___

Independent: 8 correct

Instructional: 6–7 correct

Frustration: 0–5 correct
Appendix K

Saving Up Level M

Student

Teacher

Recording Form

Part One: Oral Reading

Place the book in front of the student. Read the title and introduction.

Introduction: Danny really wanted a dog, but his mom told him he had to do some things first. Read to find out if Danny got a dog.

Page Start Time min. sec.

1. I really really wanted to get a dog.

But Mom said I wasn’t responsible enough to take care of a pet.

“T’m very responsible!” I said.

“Hmm. Okay, Mr. Responsible. I hate to disagree with you, Danny.

But how many times did I tell you to clean your room this week?” asked Mom.

“Well, cleaning my room is totally boring! Taking care of a dog would be totally fun!”

Subtotal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mom said, “Dogs are a lot of work!” She said I’d have to prove I was capable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>was responsible enough to get a dog. “Great! How can I prove I’m responsible? I’ll do anything!” “First, you should call the animal shelter and ask them how much it costs to get a dog. Then you’ll have to save the money.” “I can certainly do that!” I said. I called the shelter. I found out it costs one hundred and forty dollars to get a puppy and seventy dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part One: Oral Reading continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>to get a dog. I decided to get a grown dog!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How long would it take me to save seventy dollars? I started to do the math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My allowance was seven dollars a week, if I did all my chores. I never used to save any of it. Now I'd have to save a whole lot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have the student finish reading the book silently.
### Part Two: Comprehension Conversation

Have a conversation with the student, noting the key understandings the student expresses. Use prompts as needed to stimulate discussion of understandings the student does not express. Score for evidence of all understandings expressed—with or without a prompt. Circle the number in the score column that reflects the level of understanding demonstrated.

**Teacher:** Talk about what happened in this story.

#### Comprehension Scoring Key
- 0: Reflects no understanding of the text. Either does not respond or talks off the topic.
- 1: Reflects very limited understanding of the text. Mentions a few facts or ideas but does not express the important information or ideas.
- 2: Reflects partial understanding of the text. Includes important information and ideas but neglects other key understandings.
- 3: Reflects excellent understanding of the text. Includes almost all important information and main ideas.

#### Key Understandings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within the Text</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tells 5–4 important events from the story, such as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny wanted a dog; his mom said he had to prove he was responsible; he found out what a dog cost; he did his chores and extra jobs to earn the money; he got a dog.</td>
<td>What was Danny’s problem in this story and what did he do to solve it?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny wasn’t very responsible because he didn’t clean his room. He changed by doing all his chores because he wanted a dog so much.</td>
<td>Tell how Danny changed in the story. Why did he change?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He kept doing all that work because he was working to save enough money for a dog.</td>
<td>Why do you think he was able to keep on doing all that work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His mom was impressed and proud of him because (any reason consistent with the text).</td>
<td>How do you think Danny's mom felt about him at the end? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note any additional understandings.*

*Continued on next page.*
### Part Two: Comprehension Conversation

#### Key Understandings

**About the Text**

The writer showed how much Danny wanted a dog by telling you things he did or said.

There is a joke at the end when Danny names the dog Buck and Mom says he is funny. The name Buck is funny because Danny had to earn a “buck” (money) to get a dog.

*Note any additional understandings:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did the writer help you know how Danny felt about getting a dog? Show the place in the story that helped you know that.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom said Danny is responsible and funny. Why did she say he is funny?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guide to Total Score**

- 9–10: Excellent Comprehension
- 7–8: Satisfactory Comprehension
- 5–6: Limited Comprehension
- 0–4: Unsatisfactory Comprehension

**Subtotal Score:**

**Add 1 for any additional understandings:**

**Total Score:**

---

### Part Three: Writing About Reading (optional)

Read the writing/drawing prompt on the next page to the student. Specify the amount of time for the student to complete the task. (See Assessment Guide for more information.)

**Writing About Reading**

- 0 Reflects no understanding of the text.
- 1 Reflects very limited understanding of the text.
- 2 Reflects partial understanding of the text.
- 3 Reflects excellent understanding of the text.