

The Effects of Instruction Through Text Feature Walks on Comprehension of Expository Text

in a Fifth-Grade Classroom

Cecely Franco

University of Arkansas

T.G. Smith Elementary

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom. Twenty-six fifth-graders participated in intentional dialogue structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material 45 minutes a day, 4 days a week. The *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* measured comprehension before and after the intervention. The results significantly improved comprehension of expository text of the participants after the text feature walk instruction. Results suggest that text feature walk instruction maybe effective for males and females, students who do receive special services and students who do not receive special services, and English language proficient and non-English language proficient students.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Tables.....	7
List of Figures.....	8
Chapter I: Introduction.....	9
Background of the Problem.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
Purpose and Significance of the Study.....	12
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	13
Significance of Reading Comprehension.....	13
Issues Related to Comprehension of Expository Text.....	14
Issues Related to Expository Text Comprehension.....	15
Comprehension Strategies.....	16
Text Feature Walks Instruction.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter III: Methodology.....	19
District Setting.....	19
School Setting.....	20
Participants.....	21
Confidentiality.....	22
Data Collection.....	23
Evaluation Instrument.....	23

Baseline Data.....	24
Other Data Collection Methods.....	25
Post Data Analysis.....	25
Intervention Strategies.....	26
Week 1.....	27
Week 2.....	27
Week 3.....	27
Week 4.....	28
Week 5.....	28
Week 6.....	29
Week 7.....	29
Week 8.....	30
Summary.....	31
Chapter IV: Results.....	32
Baseline Data.....	32
During Intervention.....	34
Post Intervention.....	35
Data Analysis.....	37
Subpopulations.....	38
Male and Female.....	38
English Language Proficiency.....	39
Special Services.....	40
Anecdotal Records.....	41

Summary.....	42
Chapter V: Discussion.....	44
Conclusions.....	45
Limitations.....	46
Implications.....	47
Recommendations.....	48
Future Research.....	48
Future Use for Instruction.....	49
Summary.....	49
References.....	50
Appendices.....	54
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Form.....	54
Appendix B: Principal Approval Letter.....	55
Appendix C: Parent Letter.....	56
Appendix D: Informed Consent.....	58
Appendix E: <i>Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory</i> Pre- and Post- Test Items.....	60
Appendix F: <i>Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory</i> Interest/Attitude Interview	66
Appendix G: <i>Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory</i> Initial Placement Sentences.....	69
Appendix H: Daily Intervention Score and Sequence.....	71
Appendix I: Daily Intervention 5- Point Rubric.....	74
Appendix J: Lesson Plans and Examples.....	78
Appendix K: Weekly Text Feature Scope and Sequence.....	86
Appendix L: Individual Student Pre- and Post- Intervention Scores.....	87

Appendix M: Individual Student Daily Averages.....	89
Appendix N: Complete <i>t</i> -test Results	97
Appendix O: Male and Female Pre- and Post- Intervention Scores and <i>t</i> -test Results.....	98
Appendix P: English Language Proficient and Non-English Language Proficient Pre- and Post Intervention Scores and <i>t</i> -test Results.....	100
Appendix Q: Special Services and Non-Special Services Pre- and Post- Intervention Scores and <i>t</i> -test Results.....	102
Appendix R: Anecdotal Records.....	104

List of Tables

Table 1: Results Obtained from *t*-test for Reading Comprehension of Expository Text Scores...37

List of Figures

Figure 1: Racial Demographics for the School District in Northwest Arkansas.....	20
Figure 2: Racial Demographics for the Elementary School in Northwest Arkansas.....	21
Figure 3: Racial Demographics for the Elementary Classroom in Northwest Arkansas.....	22
Figure 4: Percentage of Students in each Achievement Category.....	34
Figure 5: The Weekly Means of Daily Scores for Comprehension.....	34
Figure 6: Individual Student Comprehension Scores and Grade-Level.....	36
Figure 7: Percentage of Students' Achievement Categories in Comprehension.....	37
Figure 8: Pre- and Post- Intervention Scores by Gender.....	38
Figure 9: Pre- and Post Intervention Scores by English Language Proficiency.....	39
Figure 10: Pre- and Post- Intervention Scores by Special Services.....	40

Chapter I

Introduction

Daniels (2002) asserts that 70-80% of standardized reading test content is expository text. Miller and Veatch (2010) note that students lack the necessary literacy to comprehend nonfiction text. Literature (Brimmer, 2004; Cote', Goldman, & Saul, 1998; Ness, 2007) states that students lack the strategies they need to comprehend grade level textbooks. Additionally, literature (Miller & Veatch, 2010; Ramsay, 2010) indicates that reading comprehension of expository text is an unfamiliar idea, but is vital to making sense of the text. Recent research (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010) concluded that text feature walks improve students' ability to comprehend expository text. In order to meet the Common Core State Standards [CCSS] (2010), it is imperative that students comprehend and know how to use expository text. More importantly, it is crucial that all citizens are able to understand informational text in order to comprehend everyday reading materials: the newspaper, sports magazines, business magazines, and college textbooks. Text feature walks aimed at enhancing reading instruction may be an effective tool enabling students to comprehend expository text.

Background of the Problem

Sources (Bluestein, 2010; CCSS, 2010) state that students have difficulty deciphering between which pieces of information in expository text are most important and what parts are unnecessary. Durkin (1978-1979) and Akhondi, Malayeri, and Samad (2011) all agree that comprehension is often assessed, but not taught in an elementary classroom. Brimmer (2004) and Ramsay (2010) explain that many students struggle, because they do not usually receive guidance from instructors on how to navigate expository text; instead they are expected to read independently and understand the content. Ness (2007) and Ramsay (2010) opine that although

students may be exposed to expository text in their reading and language arts classes, as well as in content classes, they still struggle to comprehend text intended to inform because they lack appropriate reading strategies.

Definition of Terms

To facilitate the understanding of this study, the following terms are defined:

1. Comprehension is the mind's ability to make meaning of text and gain information about the world (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp, 2011; Hammadou, 2000; Dorn, 2006). For this study this term was operationalized to mean the ability to make meaning of informational text as measured by *the Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory*.
2. Connections is defined as reactions or relationships connected to the text (Kelley & Clausen- Grace, 2010).
3. Expository text is nonfiction reading materials, such as textbooks, biographies, educational journals, etc. (Miller & Veatch, 2010)
4. Initial placement sentences are defined as a set of sentences read by a student at the beginning of the selected form of the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* to determine the initial passage selection to be read by the student (Flynt and Cooter, 2004).
5. Main body is defined as all the parts of the text that are not the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010).
6. Predicting is described as making an educated guess as to what the text might be about based on the clues given by the text features (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008).

7. Questioning involved the students reading the text features to pose a question that can be answered through reading of the main body of the text (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010).
8. Special services are defined as educational services for physically or mentally handicapped children whose needs cannot be completely met in an ordinary classroom (Princeton, 2012). For this study this term was operationalized to mean small group or individual services provided to students who are diagnosed with autism, speech or language impairment, and who are in the Response to Intervention (RTI) process.
9. Text features are all the components of a story or article that are not the main body of the text. These included the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010).
10. Text feature walk is a structure that addresses all parts of an expository text minus the main body using predicting, questioning and connections (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010). For this study this term was operationalized to mean a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of the text. The intentional dialogue between the students is structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study investigated the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom. The intent was to determine if a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of text improved the ability to make meaning of informational text. The intentional dialogue among the students was structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material. Because text feature walks may enable students to better understand expository text, teachers may utilize this strategy in order to help students who struggle in comprehension of expository text be more successful. This study looked at the effects of text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom, and the research question addressed was, “Does instruction through text feature walks improve comprehension of expository text in one group of fifth-grade students?”

This research report is organized into five chapters. Chapter I has offered a statement of introduction for this study, which is to determine the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom. Chapter II provides a review of literature concerning comprehension of expository text and instruction through text feature walks. Chapter III serves to explain the methodology for the study. The setting, participants, data collection, procedures, instruments, and analysis are shared. Chapter IV reports the results of the study. Chapter V draws conclusions and implications, then makes recommendations based on the results of the study.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This chapter provides a comprehensive, yet not exhaustive, review of literature on reading comprehension of expository text and text feature walks. The intent to synthesize relevant research and other literature that supports the argument that a technique used to make meaning from informational text involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of non-fiction text improves the understanding of nonfiction text. Literature (Brimmer, 2004; Cote' et al. 1998; Ness, 2007) states that students lack the strategies they need to comprehend grade level textbooks. Additionally, experts (Miller & Veatch, 2010; Ramsay, 2010) indicate that comprehension of expository text is an unfamiliar idea, but is vital to making sense of the text. Research (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010) concludes that text feature walks improve students' ability to comprehend expository text.

This chapter is organized so that literature and research on the significance of reading comprehension is reviewed first, then issues related to comprehension of expository text and issues related to expository text comprehension is synthesized. General recommendations for comprehension of expository text and text feature walk instruction are analyzed.

Significance of Reading Comprehension

Research (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp, 2011; Hammadou, 2000) and literature (Dorn, 2006) describes reading comprehension as the mind's ability to make meaning of text. According to Dorn (2006) and Ruddell (1994) comprehending is the mind's ability to make meaning of life. Bohn-Gettler and Rapp (2011) explain reading as the common way that individuals gain information about the world.

Sources (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp, 2011; Dorn, 2006 Hammadou, 2000; National Institute of Child Health & Human Development [NICHD], 2000) state that reading comprehension is the primary reason for success. The report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) made clear the importance of children's ability to comprehend text in order to obtain an education. Bohn-Gettler and Rapp (2011) note that reading comprehension is a critical component of success in educational settings.

Issues Related to Comprehension of Expository Text

According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] in grades 4 and 8 (2011), Arkansas has not made improvement gains in reading since 1993. The NCES (2011) asserts that more students are falling behind and not scoring above proficient on the NCES (2011) reading test, due to the large percentage of expository text on the test, which provides evidence of students not performing well in school and not being able to comprehend expository text. Brimmer (2004), Miller and Veatch (2010), Ramsay (2010) explain that many students struggle, because they do not usually receive guidance from instructors on how to navigate expository text; instead they are expected to read independently and understand the content. Ness (2007) and Ramsay (2010) opine that although students may be exposed to expository text in their reading and language arts classes, as well as in content classes, they still struggle to comprehend text intended to inform because they lack appropriate reading strategies. According to Adams (2009), as found in Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects if students cannot read complex expository text to gain information, they will begin to turn to text-free or text-light sources, such as videos, podcasts, and tweets.

Brimmer (2004) and Cote'et al. (1998) affirm that comprehension of expository text can be problematic when there is a lack of relevant knowledge, which is commonly found when teachers teach reading comprehension using expository text. Several sources (Cote' et al. 1998; Ness, 2007; Ramsay, 2010) claim learning from text must be meaningful and activate relevant prior knowledge as well as integrate the new information. Durkin (1978-1979) provided evidence in her landmark study that students more often complete workbook pages or take tests rather than practice comprehension skills. Akhondi et al. (2011), Durkin (1978-1979) and Ramsay (2010) add that comprehension is often assessed, but not taught in an elementary classroom and that students do not usually receive guidance from instructors on how to navigate the assigned text, but instead are expected to read independently and understand the content.

Dymock's study in 1993 evaluated the effectiveness of teaching 32 New Zealand 12 year olds to decode words, read fluently, and to comprehend text. The testing material used was 4 expository passages with a reading level range of 12 to 15. The interventions were spaced 6 weeks apart. While the results show that all children read with accuracy and fluency, the overall student averages were at different levels. The good readers' reading and listening comprehension scores were equally high and the poor readers' reading and listening skills were equally low. Dymock concluded that there was no dramatic improvement in reading and listening skills for the poor readers due to the infrequent and inconsistent interventions.

Issues Related to Expository Text Comprehension

Akhondi et al. (2011) state that students must become familiar with expository text structure and be able to determine significant information in order to comprehend the text. These authors also suggest that teachers' model and instruct students on how to use text features to comprehend the text.

Akhondi et al. (2011) go on to say that teaching students how expository text is organized could improve reading achievement. They recommend that text structures be introduced, identified, and analyzed, so that readers can comprehend the text more easily and retain the information. The new Common Core State Standards Initiative (2011) requires the use of expository text to prepare students for college and work expectations.

Comprehension Strategies

Kelly, Moore, and Tuck (1994) and literature by Stahl (2004) and Stricklin (2011) emphasize the importance of comprehension strategies and the knowledge that can be gained through classroom instruction. Stricklin (2011) notes that reciprocal teaching is an appropriate way to teach reading comprehension for any grade level with both fiction and nonfiction text. Stahl (2004) advises that reciprocal teaching should be taught by having the teacher use questioning to boost reading comprehension. Additionally, Stricklin (2011) implies that hands-on-reciprocal teaching encourages teachers to use a research-based technique that encourages student participation.

Hedin and Conderman (2010) recommend the strategy of rereading as a way to help students comprehend informational text. According to Hedin and Conderman (2010) when the instruction of rereading is aligned with the text's features, instruction is found most effective. Miller and Veatch (2010) suggest that by rereading the text, students begin to understand the content and embark on becoming proficient readers.

Brimmer (2004) suggests that think-alouds be used to teach students to monitor their comprehension during reading. The author also states that think-alouds are an effective way to improve comprehension because students read in order, which makes them think about the information in the text as they read.

Stahl (2004) asserts that teachers should be using instruction with explicit teaching and guided practice, and then over time release the students to practice independently. Williams (2005) states that instruction should be introduced in small simple increments in the beginning and then gradually moved to more complex instruction. Also, Williams (2005) discusses how the teacher should model and guide instruction every step, and scaffold in order for students to become independent workers.

Text Feature Walks Instruction

Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008; 2010) found that explicit instruction of text features and text feature walks enable students to make quality predictions, anticipate their learning, and comprehend non-fiction text more fully. Similarly, Akhondi et al. (2011) claim that students who struggle with comprehension of expository text are likely to improve their comprehension if they learn text features. Like Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2011), Hedin and Conderman (2010) assert that informational text is an exceptional way to teach comprehension due to the text features and large selection of unique words that require students to use context clues to determine the meaning of words. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008; 2010) state that if teachers recognize and focus on three factors: text feature, text organization, and text content, then comprehension will be enhanced.

Kelley and Clausen-Grace's (2007) pilot study evaluated the effectiveness of teaching Clausen-Grace's students to use text feature walks. The class was divided into three groups. Group 1 was the control group; this group made predictions, read the text silently and then answered the review questions. Groups two and three were the treatment groups. Group two had a discussion before opening the textbook, then predicted, read, and answered the review questions. Group three conducted a text feature walk of the selected section prior to writing

predictions, reading the text, and answering the review questions. The control group had fewer relevant predictions than the treatment groups, but scored higher than group two. While this study had a limitation of a small sample size, the text feature walk group had the highest average correct. Kelley and Clausen-Grace concluded that when students do a text feature walk, they are able to make better predictions and learn more from reading the text.

Akhondi et al. (2011) and Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2011) claim that text features help readers locate and organize information in the text and then are able to hold it in their short term memory or make a personal connection so that it can be stored in their long-term memory. Hedin and Conderman (2010) also suggest that the teacher orally identify the organization of the passage in order to connect supporting details. Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2011) found that when students have knowledge and understand the patterns of text features, comprehension of the nonfiction text will occur.

Summary

Based on literature (Miller & Veatch, 2010; Ramsay, 2010) that points to the notion that comprehension of expository text is an unfamiliar idea, but is vital to making sense of the text; and research by Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008; 2010) who propose that text feature walks improve the students' ability to comprehend expository text, it appears that a study to determine the effects of text feature walks on comprehension of expository text was appropriate. Chapter III explains the methodology of the study. In the next chapter the setting, participants, data collection, procedures, instruments, and analysis are shared.

Chapter III

Methodology

This study investigated the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a fifth-grade classroom. The intent was to determine if a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of the text improved the ability to make meaning of informational text. The intentional dialogue between students was structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material. The chapter describes the setting, the participants, and the confidentiality procedures that were attained during this study. How data were collected and the evaluation instruments are also described. The intervention strategy is explained and the methods for analyzing the data are detailed.

District Setting

The study took place at an elementary school in Northwest Arkansas. Demographic information for the school district provided in this section is based on the published information from the 2011-2012 school year (Arkansas Department of Education Data Center [ADE], 2012). The school district serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The district in which the school is located has a total number of 19,376 students in 25 schools (ADE). There are 10,024 elementary students, 3,725 high-school students, 2,907 middle-school students, and 2,720 junior-high students (ADE). The ethnic breakdown for the school district is as follows: 8,137 White; 7,996 Hispanic; 1,701 Pacific Islander; 654 students who are two or more races; 438 Black; 356 Asian; and 94 Native American or Native Alaskan (ADE) (see Figure 1). The school

district has a gifted and talented program, special education program, migrant education program, a pre-school, and an Alternative-Learning-Education program. The district has 11,055 students who receive free lunches and 1,713 who receive reduced lunches (ADE).

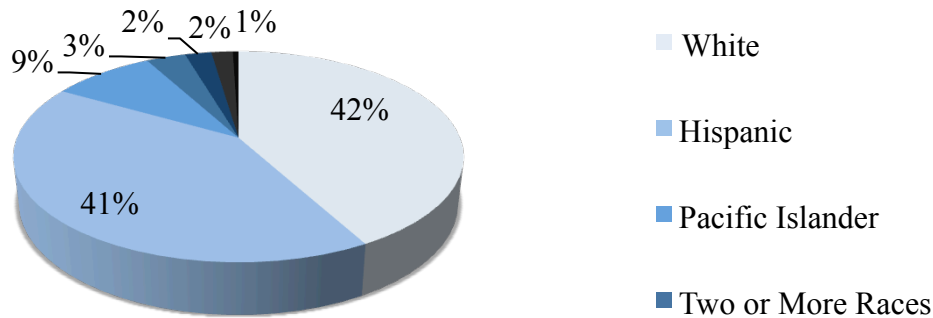


Figure 1. Racial demographics for the school district in Northwest Arkansas.

School Setting

The elementary school in this study has a total population of 608 students (ADE, 2012). The student population consists of 264 White students, 227 Hispanic students, 55 Pacific Islander students, 27 students who are two or more races students, 14 Black students, 11 Native American or Native Alaskan, and 10 Asian students (see Figure 2). This elementary school has 440 students on free/reduced lunch, which is 72% of the student population (ADE, 2012). This school has a hearing-impaired classroom, a gifted and talented program, a special education program, and Limited-English-Proficient students. Also, this elementary school is one of the few in the district to implement the Springdale Family Literacy Program, which is an English language and literacy skills program for Hispanic and other immigrant families that address their growing educational needs. This program provides Hispanic and other immigrant parents who are interested to attend a class held four mornings per week with lessons and instruction intended to increase the parents' literacy and English skills while also learning how to help their children improve while at home. Through this program PACT Time is offered, which is Parents and

Children Together. During PACT, each parent has the chance to go into the classroom with his or her child and learn beside him or her. There are Literacy and ESL specialists employed by this elementary school that work with the students in this school and alongside this program.

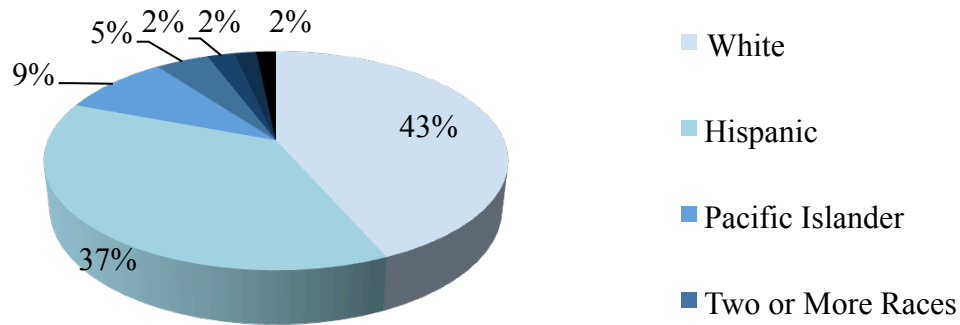


Figure 2. Racial demographics for the elementary school in Northwest Arkansas.

Participants

This study took place in a fifth-grade general education classroom consisting of 28 students with one teacher. Twenty-six students participated in the study. There are 13 males and 13 females in the classroom. The racial demographics for the students in this classroom are as follows: 13 White students, 9 Hispanic students, 3 Pacific Islander students, and 1 black student (see Figure 3). This classroom has 15 students who receive free lunches and 4 who receive reduced lunches (P. Berlin, personal communication, October 27, 2011). There are 10 English Language Learner students in the classroom at varying levels: 2 students at level 2, 4 students at level 3, and 4 students at level 4. Additionally, there are 5 students who receive a variety of special education services. One student is indirectly served, one student goes to the special education room for an hour and fifteen minutes each day for math and writing, another student is in the RTI process and receives one-on-one help two hours each day for math, reading and writing. Also, two students receive speech services two hours a week. One student is diagnosed with emotional behavior disorder.

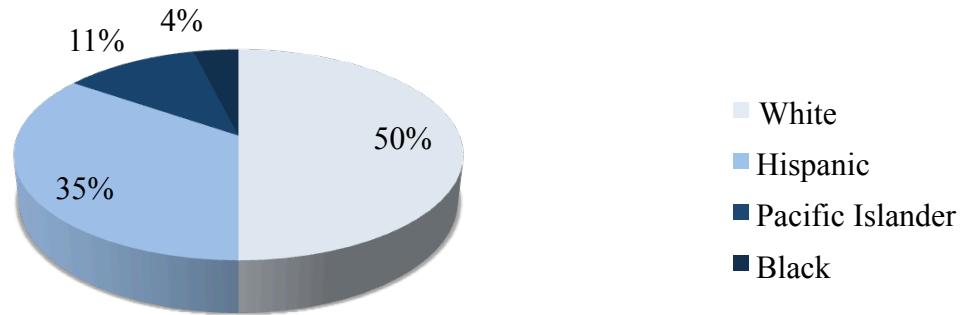


Figure 3. Racial demographics for the elementary classroom in Northwest Arkansas.

Confidentiality

Permission to conduct this study was granted by the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), as well as the administration of the elementary school where the study was conducted (see Appendix B). Permission to participate in this study was obtained prior to the commencement of the project. A letter (see Appendices C1 & C2), along with an Informed Consent (see Appendices D1 & D2), was sent home with each student in the appropriate language, and a signature from the parent or guardian was required before data for that child was reported. The Informed Consent explained the purpose and procedures of the study. It also explained that participation was completely voluntary and that there was no reward or penalty for participating. It explained that the child might withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Ninety-three percent of the students returned their Informed Consents. Confidentiality was maintained and assured by the researcher through the establishment of a code. Each student participant was assigned a number at random to establish the code. All data were recorded anonymously using the code. Only the researcher had access to the code, and all data were kept in a locked file cabinet in the project classroom. Once the study is defended the code will be destroyed.

Data Collection

This study was designed to examine the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in one group of fifth-grade students. Data were collected to determine if a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of the text improved the ability to make meaning of informational text. The intentional dialogue between the students was structured around predictions, questions, and connections related to informational text features such as table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures and captions, and labeled diagrams, intended to help students understand non-fiction reading material. Comprehension of expository text was measured before and after text feature walk reading instruction. During the 8-week intervention period, ability to understand expository text was determined through scores and anecdotal records that were recorded daily.

Evaluation instrument. Students were given the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* (see Appendices E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, & E6) to determine comprehension of expository text. *The Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* measured silent reading comprehension. The researcher began by giving each student an interest/attitude interview (see Appendices F1, F2, & F3) that assisted the examiner in learning more about each student's background knowledge, interests, and motivations. Next, the students read a set of initial placement sentences (see Appendices G1 & G2) from appropriate forms of the test. The student read two grade levels below their actual grade level and kept reading until they missed two or more words. The highest level read with zero errors was the level of the first passage read by the student. Next, the student read the passage silently. After completing the passage, the student retold the passage to the researcher, and then the researcher asked any questions that were unanswered. After the silent reading

comprehension test, the researcher determined the student's silent reading comprehension score. If the student scored in the "easy level" the test was re-administered using a higher-level test. If the student scored in the "too hard" or "frustration level," the test was re-administered on a lower level. This continued until the student reached the "adequate level" on the silent reading comprehension test. Once this occurred the researcher recorded this level as the student's independent reading level. The researcher then determined the percentage correct of comprehension questions answered at each student's reading level. Comprehension scores were categorized into achievement based on the level of comprehension the student placed. A level 5 was considered grade level or average, anything above was above grade level or above average, and anything below level 5 was below grade level or below average.

This test was administered by the researcher individually to each student as a pretest before instruction through text feature walks was used as a teaching strategy in the classroom, and it was administered again as a posttest at the conclusion of the 8-weeks to assess growth. The test lasted approximately 20 minutes. The scores were calculated according to the examiner manual, and were recorded on an individual basis in the researcher record book.

Baseline data. In order to establish a baseline for students' comprehension of expository text, the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* was administered before and after text feature walk reading instruction. The students' scores from this test served to evaluate the students' achievement in comprehension of expository text prior to the implementation of instruction through text feature walks in the classroom. As a pretest, the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* was administered between December 15 and December 20, 2011, and January 18 and 21, 2012.

Other data collection methods. Data were collected during the intervention period to monitor and record students' progress related to comprehension of expository text. Data for week 1 (see Appendix H1) represented the knowledge of text features and not comprehension of expository text. Beginning week 2, daily scores were collected based on the understanding of expository text through implementation of the focused comprehension strategy (Appendices H1, H2, & H3). Daily scores were taken based upon understanding of text. To assess students' reading comprehension an exit slip was turned each day, scored and recorded. A 5-point rubric (see Appendices I1, I2, I3, & I4) was used each day to measure the students' understanding of the text. Students' comprehension was measured at the end of each week using activities that required them to develop the text feature learned that week (see Appendices H1, H2, & H3). Students learned different strategies associated with text feature walks to use while they read to comprehend expository text. Scores were taken from comprehension activities assigned each Thursday. Strategy use was observed and noted by recording anecdotes that revealed understanding of text features. Data were recorded daily and were then organized and analyzed to determine results through out this study.

Post data analysis. In order to determine the effectiveness of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* was re-administered to each student following the same method as utilized before. The post-assessment results were examined and compared to the baseline data. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists between the pretest and posttest comprehension scores. Anecdotal records were coded and analyzed to determine patterns and themes which appeared. Daily comprehension scores, along with the pretest and posttest assessments, and anecdotal records were carefully examined and analyzed to determine changes

and trends, and then conclusions were drawn. Daily scores were recorded and averaged based on the understanding through implementation of the focused text feature strategy.

Intervention Strategies

During the course of this study, daily instruction followed the same pattern each week. Students received instruction using text features and three strategies that good readers use when reading: predicting, questioning, and connections related to text features (see Appendices J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6, J7, & J8) for example lesson plans demonstrating each of the three strategies). This instruction was the only reading instruction delivered. Daily intervention lasted 45 minutes, 4 days per week, for 8 weeks. Students were introduced to expository text and taught all of the text features the first week, and a text feature was emphasized each week for weeks 2 through 9 of the study, beginning with table of contents, and ending with sidebars (see Appendix K1 for a scope and sequence of instruction).

The text features and strategies were introduced during a whole-group setting. The researcher then introduced each text feature. It was then modeled using each text feature to predict, question, and make connections for the students using expository text. After explicit instruction, the students had opportunities to practice the strategies with support from the teacher in a supportive environment where the teacher was able to scaffold the students and their learning. The students were provided time to work independently to use the text features to comprehend the expository text they are reading. After students completed their individual work, cooperative learning took place to practice using the text features and the strategies with their peers so that they learned from these social interactions and peer support. The scope and sequence of comprehension and strategies involved in the study are text features, predicting, questioning, and connections strategies.

Week 1. The teacher introduced expository text organization and all the text features. The teacher used a dictionary, social studies textbook and a science textbook to introduce students to: table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, pictures, captions, labeled diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, and sidebars. This week's intervention looked different than other weeks. On Monday, the teacher introduced and defined organization of expository text. Students' were assessed by defining expository text and by comparing and contrasting narrative text to expository text. On Tuesday, the teacher taught all of the text features: table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, pictures, captions, labeled diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, and sidebars. To assess the students, they were asked to identify the text features when shown a picture. On Wednesday, the teacher instructed on how each text feature fit into the students' social studies and science textbooks. To assess the students, they were asked to give 3 to 4 reasons how text features fit into expository text.

Week 2. The teacher introduced the table of contents text feature. On Monday, the students and the teacher used social studies and science textbooks' table of contents to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used the social studies and science textbooks' table of contents for questioning. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used the social studies and science textbooks' table of contents and the main body to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *Frozen in Time* and were asked to make a table of contents for the text.

Week 3. The teacher introduced the index text feature. On Monday, the students and the teacher used the text: *Matter and It's Properties* or *Properties of Matter* index depending upon

the students reading level to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Matter and It's Properties* or *Properties of Matter* index to question. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Matter and It's Properties* or *Properties of Matter* index and the main body of the text to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *I Was 11 on September 11, 2001* and asked to make an index for the text.

Week 4. The teacher introduced the glossary text feature. On Monday, the students and the teacher used the text: *Changes In Matter* or *Changing Matter* glossary depending upon the students reading level to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Changes In Matter* or *Changing Matter* glossary to question. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Changes In Matter* or *Changing Matter* glossary and main body of text to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *Why Are These Kids So Excited?*, a dictionary, and were asked to make a glossary.

Week 5. The teacher introduced headings, subtitles, and types of print text features. On Monday, various biographies' headings, subtitles, and types of print were used to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used various biographies' headings, subtitles, and types of print to question the main idea of the text depending upon the students reading level and interest.

The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used various biographies' headings, subtitles, types of print and the main body of the text to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given an article without a title from the scholastic newsletter, *Hope on Wheels* and were asked to make a heading, subtitle, and highlight a word that should be written in a different type of print. Each student was given an article from this scholastic newsletter based on his or her reading level. The on-grade level students received the article *Hope on Wheels* and the low level students received *Robot Racer*.

Week six. The teacher introduced pictures and captions text features. On Monday, the teacher and the students used various daily *Northwest Arkansas Times* newspapers' pictures and captions to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used various daily *Northwest Arkansas Times* newspapers' pictures and captions to question. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used various daily *Northwest Arkansas Times* newspapers' pictures and captions to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *Tales of Bullying* and asked to make a picture and caption for the text. Each student was given an article from this scholastic newsletter based on his or her reading level. The on-grade level students received the article *Tales of Bullying* and the low level students received *Mind Games*.

Week 7. The teacher introduced labeled diagrams, maps, charts and graphs text features. On Monday, the students and the teacher used various tour guide books' labeled diagrams, maps,

charts and graphs depending upon the student's interest to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used various tour guide books' labeled diagrams, maps, charts and graphs to question. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used various tour guide books' labeled diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, and main body of the text to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *Going to Bat for Equality* and were asked to make either a labeled diagram, map, chart or graph and explain why the text feature chosen was the most appropriate. Each student was given an article from this scholastic newsletter based on his or her reading level. The on-grade level students received the article *Surprise Guest* and the low level students received *Global Population*.

Week 8. The teacher introduced the sidebars text feature. On Monday, the students and the teacher used the text: *Earth's Changing Surface* and *Our Changing Earth* sidebars depending upon the students reading level to predict the main idea of the text. The assessment question was: What do you expect to learn about? On Tuesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Earth's Changing Surface* and *Our Changing Earth* sidebars to question. The assessment question was: What do you think the main idea will be? On Wednesday, the teacher and the students used the text: *Earth's Changing Surface* and *Our Changing Earth* sidebars and main body of text to make connections while reading. The assessment question was: How do the text features lead you to this conclusion? On Thursday, the students were given the scholastic newsletter, *Election 2012* and were asked to make a sidebar.

Summary

Downward trends of comprehension of expository text in content courses and standardized tests, recommendations by the Common Core State Standards to incorporate more expository text into the curriculum, and the lack of understanding many citizens have to understand informational text suggest that reading comprehension of expository text must be taught in order for students to understand and comprehend everyday reading materials: the newspaper, sports magazines, business magazines, and college textbooks. Recommendations by researchers suggest that text feature walks help to improve the students' ability to comprehend expository text through predicting, questioning, and connections. This study was conducted in an elementary school in Northwest Arkansas for an 8-week period.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to provide analyses of data collected for the study designed to address the research question, “Does instruction through text feature walks improve comprehension of expository text in one group of fifth-grade students?” Data are presented through narrative text and supported with tables and figures. The intent of the study is to determine if a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue about text features: table of contents, index, glossary, headings, subtitles, types of print, pictures and captions, labeled diagrams, maps, charts, graphs, and sidebars, to predict, question, summarize, and clarify misleading or complex sections of text, improves the ability to make meaning of informational text.

Twenty-six students from a local elementary school participated in the study. Over the course of 8-weeks, students participated in daily text feature walks. Scores were determined by measuring comprehension reached through prediction, questioning, and summarizing using text features. Daily scores for comprehension were gathered and recorded during the study.

Baseline Data

Baseline data were established by calculating comprehension of expository text using Flynt and Cooter’s (2004) tool to score reading comprehension. The pre-assessment scores were obtained December 15 through 20, 2011, and on January 18 and 21, 2012. Flynt and Cooter’s scoring procedure assesses students’ comprehension of nonfiction text. Scores reflect students’ grade level of comprehension and percentage correct when answering questions about the passage read. These scores were collected before the commencement of the study to establish

baseline comprehension of expository text prior to explicit informational text instruction focused on using text feature walks.

Students' comprehension scores of expository text were established by reading levels and by percentage correct at their grade level. The highest possible reading level is 12, expected grade level is 5, and the lowest possible reading level is 1. The highest possible percentage of comprehension questions answered correct is 100 and the lowest is 0. The maximum-recorded percentage was an 88 and the minimum-recorded was 50. Thus, the range was 38. The mean score was 79. The median score was 75. The mode was 75 (see Appendices L1 & L2 for individual student scores). There were 0 comprehension scores that were identified as outliers, because they were not greater than 1.5 times the Inter-Quartile Range or below the Lower-Quartile value.

Comprehension scores were categorized into achievement levels based on the level of comprehension the student scored. A level 5 was considered grade level or average, anything above was above grade level or above average, and anything below level 5 was below grade level or below average. In order to compare end results with the baseline data, each of these categories were given a specific range of scores that did not change when the end results were analyzed. Scores above a reading level of 5 were classified as above grade level; scores of 5 were classified as grade level; and scores of 4 or lower were classified as below grade level. There were no scores classified as above grade level, 4 scores classified as grade level, and 19 scores classified as below grade level. There were 4 scores at a reading level of 5, 7 scores at a reading level of 4, 7 scores at a reading level of 3, and 5 scores at a reading level of 1. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of students who scored in each achievement category.

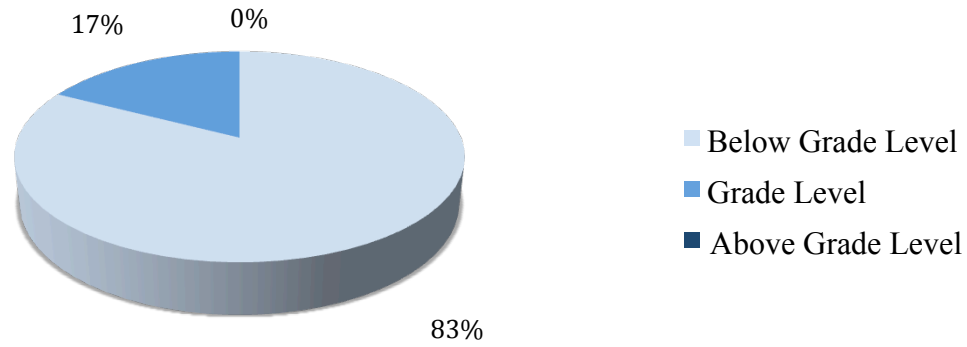


Figure 4. Percentage of students in each achievement category.

During Intervention

In order to measure comprehension during the current study, daily individual student comprehension scores (see Appendices M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, & M8) were recorded. Students demonstrated comprehension by responding to a prediction, questioning, connection, or application comprehension activity at the end of each lesson. These responses were scored using a 5-point rubric (see Appendices I1, I2, I3, & I4). Daily scores were averaged at the end of each week to get a mean for the daily achievement for that week. The highest possible comprehension score average was a 5, and the lowest possible comprehension score was a 0. Weekly comprehension averages increased gradually from week 1 through week 3. There was a slight decrease weeks 4 and 6. During weeks 7 and 8 the comprehension scores began increasing again (see Figure 5).

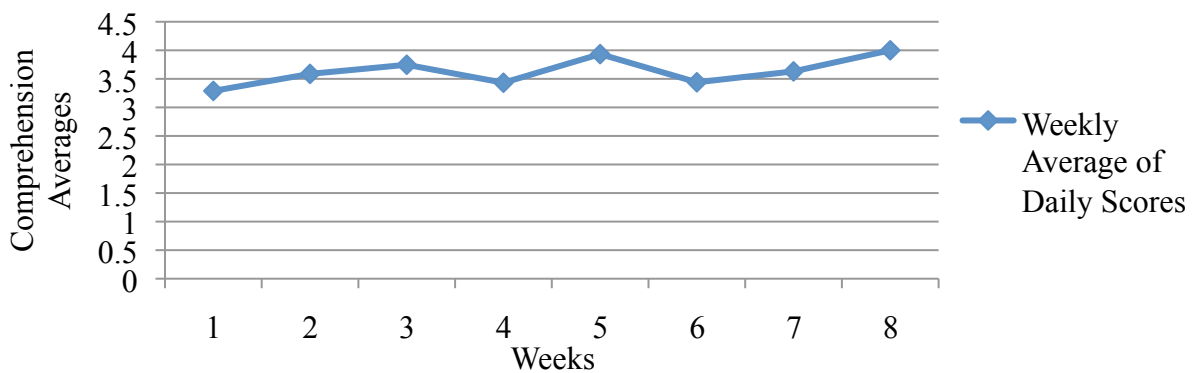


Figure 5. The weekly means of daily scores for comprehension.

Post Intervention

To determine the effectiveness of text feature walks, the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* was administered at the conclusion of the intervention. The post-assessment scores were obtained March 7, 8, and 12, 2012. The same form of the test was given in the same manner as before the intervention. The students' individual comprehension scores were measured and analyzed to determine if text feature walks impacted their comprehension of expository text.

Students' comprehension scores were established by reading levels and by percentage correct at their grade level. Students read selected passages from the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* based on their initial sentence placement level and then answered questions to determine a comprehension score and grade-level. The highest possible percentage correct was 100 and the lowest was 0. The maximum-recorded percentage was a 100 and the minimum-recorded was 63. Thus, the range was 37. The mean score was 87. The median score was 75. The mode was 75 (see Appendices L1 & L2 for individual post-intervention scores). There was no comprehension score that was identified as an outlier. The highest possible reading level is 12, expected grade level is 5, and the lowest possible reading level is 1. The maximum recorded grade-level was 5, and the minimum recorded grade-level was 1. The range was 4, the mean was 3.02, the median was 3, and the mode was 3. Figure 6 illustrates individual student pre- and post-intervention comprehension scores and grade-level as measured by the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory*.

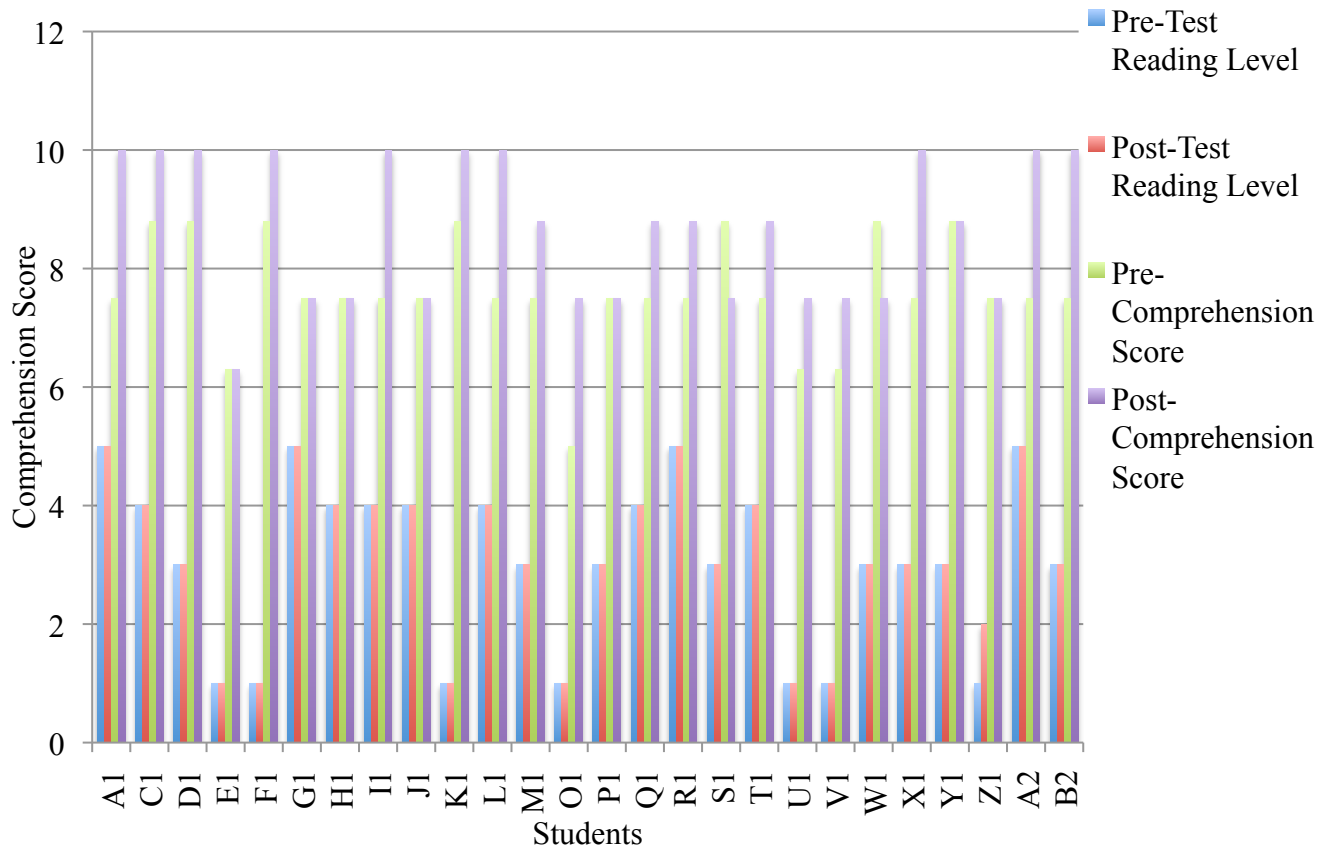


Figure 6. Individual student comprehension scores and grade-level.

Note: comprehension scores are represented in .10 to maintain a scale.

Post-intervention data were also organized into three achievement categories: above grade level, grade level, and below grade level. There were 0 scores classified as above grade level, 4 scores classified as grade level, and 22 scores classified as below grade level (see Appendices L1 & L2 for individual student grade level). The number of scores above grade level, on grade level, and below grade level remained the same. There were 4 scores at a reading level of 5, 7 scores at a reading level of 4, 8 scores at a reading level of 3, 1 score at a reading level of 2, and 6 scores at a reading level of 1. Figure 7 illustrates the percentages of students in each category for both pre- and post- intervention data.

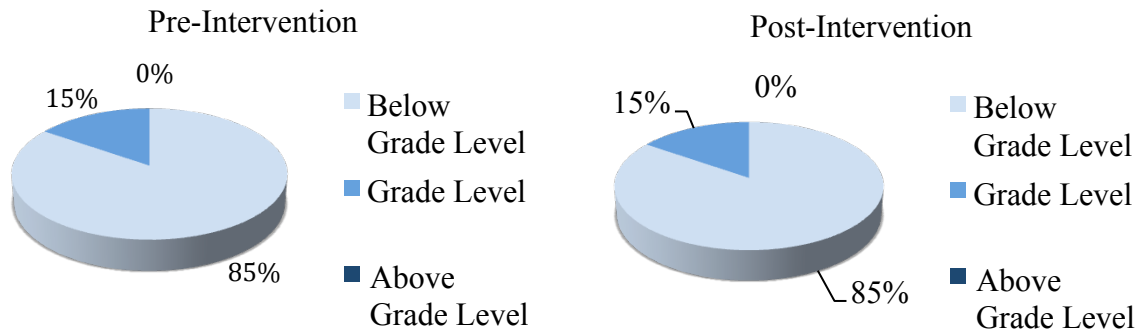


Figure 7. Percentage of students' achievement categories in comprehension.

Data Analysis

In order to measure students' comprehension, the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* was administered before and after the implementation of the intervention. Before the text feature walk instruction was used, the average comprehension score of the participants was 76. After the intervention, the mean score was 87. These results were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test with an alpha level set at .01. This analysis did reveal a significant difference between the pre- and post- intervention comprehension scores, $t(26)= 2.68$.; $t Stat= 3.79$; $p<.0004$. The mean increased 11 percentage points on the posttest scores, which was significant (see Appendix N1 for complete results). The *t*-test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results Obtained from *t*-test for Reading Comprehension of Expository Text Scores

<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Post-test</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>tstat</i>	P
N	Mean	N	Mean			
26	76	26	87	2.68	3.79	.0004
P < .01						

Subpopulations

The comprehension scores of subpopulations were also analyzed to determine if there were any relationships in the findings in terms of gender, English language proficiency, and special services received.

Male and female. Scores were noted in regards to gender. The difference in the pre- and post intervention mean scores of females was a 3-point decrease while the difference in mean scores of males increased by 9 points. Comprehension mean scores for males increased 5 points more than comprehension scores for females (see Appendices O1 & O2 for male and female pre- and posttest scores). These results were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test assuming unequal variances with an alpha set at .05. This analysis did not reveal a significant difference between growth of male and female comprehension scores (see Appendices O1 & O2 for complete results). There were 4 comprehension scores that were identified as outliers, because they were greater than 1.5 times the Inter-Quartile Range below the Lower-Quartile value and were not included in any of the *t*-tests. Figure 8 illustrates the pre- and post- intervention means of male and female comprehension scores.

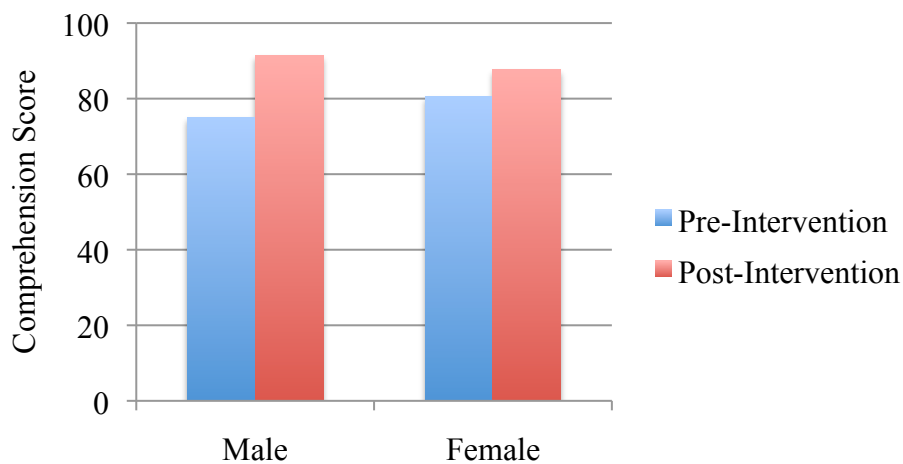


Figure 8. Pre- and post- intervention scores by gender.

English language proficiency. Scores were also noted with regards to English language proficiency (ELP). The difference in the pre- and post- intervention mean scores of the non-English language proficient students was 7, and the difference in mean scores of English proficient scores was 10. Comprehension scores for non-English language proficient students increased 3 points more than English proficient students' scores. There was no comprehension score that was identified as an outlier. Figure 9 illustrates the pre- and post- intervention means of non-English language proficient and English language proficient students (see Appendices P1 & P2 for individual non-ELP and ELP pre- and post-test scores). These results were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test assuming unequal variances with an alpha level set at .05. This analysis did not reveal a significant difference between growth of non-English proficient and English proficient comprehension scores (see Appendices P1 & P2 for complete results). Figure 9 illustrates the pre- and post- intervention means of English language proficient and non-English language proficient comprehension scores.

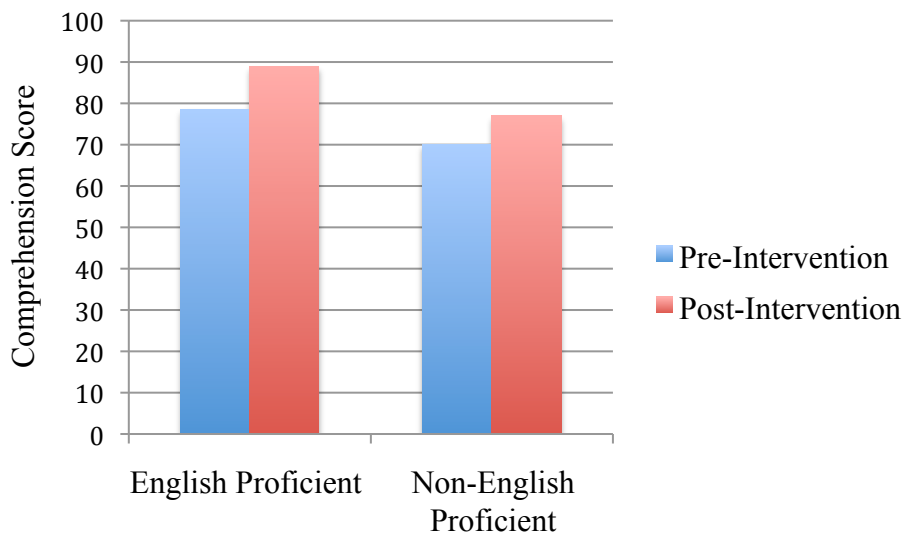


Figure 9. Pre- and post- intervention scores by English language proficiency.

Special services. Scores were noted with regards to students who receive special services. The difference in the pre- and post-intervention mean scores of students who receive special services was 18 while the difference in mean scores of students who do not receive special services was 9. Comprehension scores for students who receive special services increased 5 points more than comprehension scores for students who do not receive special services. There was no comprehension score that was identified as an outlier. Figure 10 illustrates the pre- and post- intervention means of students who receive special services and students who do not receive special services (see Appendices Q1 & Q2 for individual non-special services and special services pre- and post-test scores). These results were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test assuming unequal variances with an alpha level set at .05. This analysis did not reveal a significant difference between growth of non-special services and special services comprehension scores (see Appendices Q1 & Q2 for complete results). Figure 10 illustrates the pre- and post- intervention means of special services and non-special services comprehension scores.

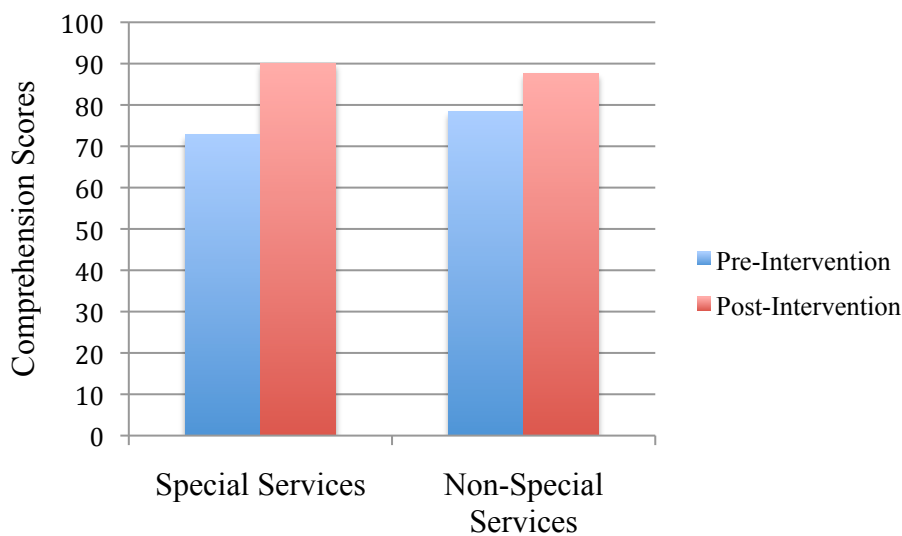


Figure 10. Pre- and post- intervention scores by special services.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records were recorded during the 8-week intervention addressing the research question, “Does instruction through text feature walks improve comprehension of expository text in one group of fifth-grade students?” Records were analyzed and then organized into three different categories according to patterns and themes, which emerged. These categories were group participation, confidence in presenting to the class, and details provided in predictions, questions, and connections.

Throughout the course of the intervention, the students began to stay on task and work together on producing a prediction, question, or connection from a provided text. Students began discussing their answers with their tablemates and providing feedback on ways to make the student’s prediction, question, or connection deeper. The students moved away from wanting their prediction, question, or connection picked; to lets make a prediction, question, or connection using all of our responses. For example, on February 28, 2012, Student G1 stated, “Now that we have each shared our predictions, lets make a new prediction together, that is deeper and more detailed.”

The students began to display working together near week 3 of the intervention, but as the study progressed, the working together greatly increased. On January 23, 2012, I noticed Student C1 providing feedback to Student H1 on a way to make his question more in-depth. As I continued walking around, I went back to Student H1, Student I1, Student A1, and Student C1 and observed them discussing a detail they wanted to add to their group question. Student C1 stated, “We should add something more specific, like the exact location of where we think the travel guide is going to talk about.”

Additionally, the students' confidence in presenting predictions, questions, and connections continually improved throughout the study. For example, on February 7, 2012, Student V1 raised his hand to share his questions he had made for the day using the biography on his reading level. I also noted on March 1, 2012, Student V1 stood up voluntarily to describe the different types of weathering and erosion. This is an unusual behavior of his and he is usually shy. On February 14, 2012, Student T1 raised his hand to share his prediction he found in the newspaper of where he believed the earthquake would be going next since it had hit J.B. Hunt Elementary. Student T1, stood up in front of the class with a strong speaking voice and used eye contact while sharing his prediction.

As the study progressed, the students provided more in-depth details of predictions, questions, and connections depending upon the text feature and text used. During week 5 on headings, subtitles, and types of print using biographies based on the students' interest and readiness, students became more interested with in-depth predictions, questions, and connections. On February 7, 2012, Student V1 and Z1 wrote down their questions without being prompted to do so about what they wanted to learn more about when they read the text. During week 7 on maps, charts, graphs, and labeled diagrams using a tour guidebook, students began producing well thought out connections to the text. On February 23, Student V1 used his tour book to make a connection about the weather in Louisiana and Arkansas (see Appendix R for observed anecdotes).

Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis of all data collected for the purpose of measuring the effects of text feature walks on fifth grade students' reading comprehension of expository text

abilities. The next chapter provides a conclusion of the study, implications that can be drawn from the study, recommendations for further research, and limitations imposed on the research.

Chapter V

Discussion

The ability to comprehend expository text is imperative in order to understand everyday reading materials: the newspaper, sports magazines, business magazines, and college textbooks. Miller and Veatch (2010) note that students lack the necessary literacy to comprehend nonfiction text. Additionally, literature (Miller & Veatch, 2010; Ramsay, 2010) indicates that reading comprehension of expository text is an unfamiliar idea, but is vital to making sense of the text. Research (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2008; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010) concludes that text feature walks improve students' ability to comprehend expository text.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text, in a fifth-grade classroom. This study addressed the research question, "Does instruction through text feature walks improve comprehension of expository text in one group of fifth-grade students?" The results of the present study suggest that text feature walks improved comprehension of expository text. The results were obtained by analyzing the daily performance tasks, which increased from week 1 to week 8, as well as the pretests and posttests which revealed a significant increase in comprehension of expository text for all students regardless of male and female, English language proficiency, and special services.

Eighteen students' comprehension scores improved from the pretest to the posttest, 6 students' scores remained the same, and 2 students' scores decreased. When compared with their pretest scores, 70% of the students' comprehension scores improved, 23% stayed the same, and .08% went down. A paired-samples *t*-test conducted on the means of the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* revealed a significant difference. Additionally, 80% of the males' reading

comprehension scores improved significantly after the text feature walk instruction. Whereas only 67% of the females' comprehension scores improved notably after the text feature walk instruction. A paired-samples *t*-test conducted on the difference of means of the *Flynt and Cooter Reading Inventory* revealed there was not a significant difference between growth. Furthermore, 68% of the proficient English language students significantly increased in comprehension scores compared to 43% of non-proficient English language students, who slightly increased. Also, 100% of students who receive special services improved notably after the text feature walk instruction. Sixty percent of students who do not receive special services improved slightly after the text feature walk instruction.

Daily tasks required students to demonstrate their comprehension of the text on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. Daily strength scores were averaged to obtain a weekly group average of daily scores revealing an overall growth of 14%. Weekly scores increased weeks 1 through 3 and slight dips in weeks 4 and an increase in comprehension weeks 7 and 8. The highest weekly group average of daily scores was 4.0, which occurred on week 8 as they were studying sidebars, and the lowest weekly average of daily scores was 3.3 which occurred on week 1 as they were introduced to the text features. There were no scores that changed achievement categories.

Conclusions

Comprehension scores significantly increased after the text feature walks instruction. Results of the present study revealed that this group of fifth-grade students was able to comprehend expository text more effectively after the text feature walks intervention for 8-weeks. Nearly 70% of the students improved in their comprehension scores. Males' comprehension scores increased slightly more than females. Proficient and non-proficient

English language students increased in comprehension. Students who receive special services increased notably more after the intervention than students who do not receive special services in comprehension. Reading comprehension skills increased slightly from week 1 to week 8. Text feature walk instruction did not improve students' achievement scores in a short period of time.

These results indicate an increase in the students' ability to comprehend text while reading from the beginning of the intervention to the end of the intervention. These findings are similar to those found by Ness (2007) and Ramsay (2010) that although students may be exposed to expository text in their reading and language arts classes, as well as, in content classes, they still struggle to comprehend text intended to inform because they lack appropriate reading strategies. Additionally, these results are similar to those of a study conducted by Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2010), which suggested that text feature walks help students anticipate their learning and comprehend more fully the content being studied.

Limitations

As with any study, there were factors over which the researcher had no control that may have affected the results of this study. Some factors may have positively impacted results, and others may have negatively impacted the results. A factor that may have boosted comprehension scores is natural maturation. Due to this study being conducted over a 10-week period, it is likely that some students' growth could be attributed to natural maturation.

Factors that may have negatively impacted comprehension scores are students being pulled out for special services, the time between the pretest and the start of the intervention, time constraints, and the level of text difficulty. Due to schedule interruptions, text feature walk instruction was moved to different times of the day, which effected the number of students who left for special services. Also, the pretest was given before Christmas break and the intervention

began after. This could have affected their scores. Each day the researcher had 45 minutes to model, guide, and assess students' comprehension. Comprehension scores were for more difficult text, perhaps reflecting a lower accuracy score. It was likely that some students' growth could have been inhibited due to these limitations.

A factor that may have impacted intervention results was the daily subjective grading system. This rubric has not been tested for reliability and validity. The result of this measure must be considered with the knowledge that the lack of testing of the instrument may reflect error of measurement in either direction.

Implications

Based on the findings of this present study, the use of text feature walks may improve fifth-graders' ability to comprehend text. The results of this study imply that text feature walks may improve students' ability to make meaning of expository text. The results also imply that text feature walk instruction may be slightly more effective for males than females when used to impact comprehension. Results imply text feature walk instruction is effective for both proficient and non-proficient English language students when used to improve comprehension. The results also imply that text feature walk instruction is more effective for students who receive special services rather than for students who do not receive special services to improve comprehension. During intervention, conclusions imply that students' use of predictions, questions, summarizing and clarifying misleading or complex sections of text improved this group of students' ability to make meaning of informational text. The text feature walks are effective for improving comprehension scores in a short period of time. The overall comprehension scores increased significantly, which implies that the use of text feature walks improves students' ability to make meaning of expository text.

Conclusions were drawn from the observed anecdotes that were recorded for the study. The anecdotal records imply that students became more comfortable in working in groups, confident in presenting to the class, and provided more well thought out predictions and questions. Students began to display working together, by providing feedback to each other on their predictions, questions, and connections. Throughout the study, students became more confident in presenting predictions, questions, and connections to the class. As the study progressed, students' predictions and questions provided more in-depth details and were able to be answered by reading the text.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, recommendations are made regarding future intervention and research. Recommendations are made suggesting that using text feature walks is a way to improve comprehension of expository text with all students. It is recommended that text feature walk instruction be implemented with males, proficient English language students and non-proficient English language students, and classrooms who have students that receive special services and students who do not receive special services.

Future research. Recommendations for future research include the length of the study, integration into curriculum, small group instruction, and implementation in other grade levels. Because comprehension increased gradually from week 1 to week 8, it is suggested that the text feature walks intervention be implemented over a longer period of time with more minutes per day to determine if the results are valid. It is suggested that text feature walk instruction be integrated into the classroom curriculum. By integrating it into science or other subjects that contain expository text, an increase in automaticity implementation would occur. Also, by integrating text feature walk instruction into the curriculum, students would be able to receive

reading instruction with literature circles or basal readers. It is suggested that small group instruction be implemented. By including small group instruction, the teacher would be able to provide more one-on-one instruction on using the text features to guide the students reading. It is suggested that text feature walks be integrated into other grade levels. By integrating text feature walks after the pre-test, students may comprehend the text with ease.

Future use for instruction. Recommendations for future use include various leveled expository texts, informational newspapers and magazines, and applying the text feature. It is suggested that various leveled expository texts be provided to students throughout the study. By providing leveled texts for students, students are receiving instruction on their level. This benefits the student by helping him or her improve his or her comprehension. Additionally, it is suggested that informational newspapers and magazines be included in the daily instruction. By including informational newspapers and magazines, students are receiving a real life example of how they can use text feature walks in their everyday reading. Applying text features is another suggestion for the study. This allows the students to show comprehension of the text, as well as, their knowledge of the text feature.

Summary

This chapter has examined the conclusions of the study along with limitations of the study and implications. Additionally, recommendations for future research and future use of the study were discussed. Overall, this study examined the effects of instruction through text feature walks on comprehension of expository text in a group of fifth-grade students to find that a technique involving the teacher and students taking turns leading dialogue to predict, question, summarize and clarify misleading or complex sections of text improved this group of students' ability to make meaning of informational text.

References

- Adams, M.J. (2009). The challenge of advanced texts: The interdependence of reading and learning. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Reading more, reading better: Are American students reading enough of the right stuff?* (pp. 163-189). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Akhondi, M., Malayeri, F., & Samad, A. (2011). How to teach expository text structures to facilitate reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(5), 368-372.
doi:10.1598/RT.64.5.9
- Anderson, R.C. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading*. Washington: National Institute of Education.
- Arkansas's State Data Tables [ADE] 2006-2009. (2012). Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data [Data File]. Retrieved from
<http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/tables/summary?years%5B%5D=2006&years%5B%5D=2007&years%5B%5D=2008&years%5B%5D=2009&viz=table&states%5B%5D=4&state=®ion=>
- Berlin, P. (personal communication, October 27, 2011)
- Bluestein, N.A. (2010). Unlocking text features for determining importance in expository text: A strategy for struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(7), 597-600.
- Bohn-Gettler, C.M., & Rapp, D.N. (2011). Depending on my mood: mood-driven influences on text comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 103(3), 562-577.
doi:10.1037/a0023458
- Brimmer, K.M. (2004). *Using thinking aloud procedures to promote reading comprehension of expository texts with intermediate grade level students*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Philosophy, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.

- Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/ social studies, science, and technical subjects appendix a: Research supporting key elements of the standards glossary of key terms.* (2010). Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
- Cote', N., Goldman, S.R., & Saul, E.U. (1998). Students making sense of informational text: Relations between processing and representation. *Discourse Processes*, 25(1), 1-53. doi:10.1080/01638539809545019
- Daniels, H. (2002). Expository text in literature circles. *Voices from the Middle*, 9, 7-14.
- Dorn, L.R. (2006). A closer look at meaning in reading comprehension. *The Reader*, 30 (1), 1-3.
- Durkin, D. (1978-1979). What classroom observations reveal about reading comprehension instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 14(4), 481-533. doi:10.1598/RRQ.14.4.2
- Dymock, S. (1993). Reading but not understanding. *Journal of Reading*, 37(2), 86-91.
- Flynt, E.S., & Cooter, R.B. (2004). *Reading inventory for the classroom*. (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hammadou, J. (2000). The impact of analogy and content knowledge on reading comprehension: what helps, what hurts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84 (i), 38-50.
- Hedin, L.R., & Conderman, G. (2010). Teaching students to comprehend informational text through rereading. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(7), 556-565. doi:10.1598/RT.63.7.3
- Kelley, M.J., & Clausen-Grace, N. (2008). From picture walk to text feature; guiding students to strategically preview text. *Journal of Content Area Reading*, 7(1), 9-31.
- Kelley, M.J., & Clausen-Grace, N. (2010). Guiding students through expository text with text feature walks. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(3), 191-195. doi:10.1598/RT.64.3.4

- Kelly, M., D.W., & Tuck, B.F. (1994). Reciprocal teaching in a regular primary school classroom. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 88(1), 53-61.
doi:10.1080/002220671.1994.994483
- Miller, M., & Veatch, N. (2010). Teaching literacy in context: Choosing and using instructional strategies. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(3), 154-165. doi:10.1598/RT.64.3.1
- National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2011). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011* (NCES 2012-457). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Ness, M. (2007). Reading comprehension strategies in secondary content-area classrooms. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(3), 229-231.
- Princeton. (2012, January 6). *Worldnet: A lexical database for english*. Retrieved from <http://worldnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=specialeducation>
- Ramsay, C.M. (2010). A comparison of the effects of students' expository text comprehension strategies. *Instructional Science*, 38 (6), 551-568.
- Ruddell, R.B. (2009). *How to teach reading to elementary and middle school students: Practical ideas from highly effective teachers*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Stahl, K. A. (2004). Proof, practice, and promise: comprehension strategy instruction in the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(7), 598-609.

Stricklin, K. (2011). Hands-on reciprocal teaching: A comprehension technique. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(8), 620-625. doi:10.1598/RT.64.8.8

The common core state standards initiative. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>

Williams, J.P. (2005). Instruction in reading comprehension for primary-grade students: A focus on text structure. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39(1), 6-18.

