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# Improving reading comprehension by considering culture and effective interventions for a struggling reader

Evette Riley

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Improving Reading Comprehension by Considering Culture and Effective Interventions for a  
Struggling Reader

By

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the action research study was to address the topic: *Improving Reading Comprehension by Considering Culture and Effective Interventions for a Struggling Reader*. The participant is a fifth grade African American female student named Sarah Brown (pseudonym). The intervention took place over a three week period. Each intervention session was 60 minutes. The first and third week incorporated partner reading with short narrative and expository stories for the first thirty minutes of each day. The remaining thirty minutes of each session during the entire intervention was dedicated to teaching comprehension strategies and introducing literary terms. The second week incorporated of sustained silent reading. The results were that Sarah showed improvement in her recall task and her overall explicit and implicit comprehension of narrative and expository literature.

## GLOSSARY

**Least Restrictive Environment:** A student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent available.

**Learning Disability:** The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards:

(i) Oral expression.

(ii) Listening comprehension.

(iii) Written expression.

(iv) Basic reading skill.

(v) Reading fluency skills.

(vi) Reading comprehension.

(vii) Mathematics calculation.

(viii) Mathematics problem solving.

(2)(i) The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards

(ii) The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development

(<http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/partb/subpartd#300.321>)

**IDEA:** IDEA, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, is our nation's special education law. The IDEA guides how states, school districts, and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. (<http://nichcy.org/laws>)

**IEP:** An acronym for Individualized Education Program

**IEP team:** A team that decides on the provisions of a student's IEP. The team consists of a parent, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, and an LEA representative. The team decided on services deemed appropriate for the student through special education.

**LEA:** An acronym for local educational agency. The LEA serves as a required member on every IEP team and the presence of an LEA is deemed necessary by the IDEA law.

**Common Core Standards:** Grade specific standards that students are required to learn at their specific grade level. These standards guide the teaching curriculum.

**Automatic:** Identifying a word correctly within 1 second time span (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011, p.41)



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## CHAPTER ONE

### **Introduction**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the child I am working with and provides adequate background information. Chapter 1 is organized as the following: introduction to the child, connection to the special education law, connection to the common core standards, and the conclusion of Chapter 1. This research is focused on comprehension and effective interventions for a struggling reader.

### **Introduction to the child:**

The student that I will be working with is named Sarah Brown. This pseudonym has been used to protect the identity and information of the student. The student is in fourth grade however she has been promoted to the fifth grade for the upcoming 2013-2014 school year. The student's chronological age at the time of this research is 10 years 6 months and 14 days. The student had her initial evaluation on May 21, 2013 determining that Sarah has a specific learning disability. Sarah attended her current school since she was in kindergarten. She does not have any medical conditions. Her behavioral strengths are helping adults, being respectful, being honest, and getting along well with others. Her behavior struggles are her ability to stay focused on a specific topic or subject area. The teacher has noted that Sarah has difficulty learning from consequences of her off task behavior. The school psychologist noted on May 20, 2013, that Sarah does not have any emotional needs or an emotional disability and the determination of services for Sarah would be solely placed upon the whole IEP team. For this profile, I have used information from the student's cumulative folder that include a running record, her current IEP, and letters and observations from teachers, parent, and the school psychologist.

Sarah has been observed to learn best in a smaller group environment. She has positive

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interactions and relationships with peers and adults. She is currently performing at the low middle school level in reading. She has been observed to rarely be on task and is missing 50% of her current assignments. Additionally, Sarah can become overly involved in social happenings in the classroom distracting her from her academic work. Academic strengths of Sarah include her ability to identify sound blends, vowels, odd vowels, and diphthongs. Sarah also has strengths in pronouncing multi-syllable words, and using chunking strategies with affixes and root words. She can also visualize during reading and support her rationale verbally and sometimes in writing. She performed higher on tests that used fictional writing.

Sarah struggles in using context clues to decode. She will often skip over words she does not know to mask her inability to sound it out. She also has trouble self-correcting herself and needs more processing time than her peers. If something does not make sense to Sarah she will not re-read the passage in order to make connections. She also struggles with predicting and inferring meaning of passages or situations. Additionally, her comprehension is a major area of struggle. In writing and reading, Sarah also has difficulty determining the most important information from the literature and summarizing what she has read or wrote. Sarah also has weaknesses in organizing her thoughts and expressing her ideas with support and content. Sarah's teacher has noted that she requires extra help from the teacher as well as extra encouragement and attention. Sarah learns best when an adult is working individually with her and providing an adequate amount of encouragement.

Sarah has taken several tests to determine her eligibility for special education. The concern came from her mother who was also concerned about Sarah's quietness and lack of initiative in asking for help in school. Her parent also expressed concern with Sarah's reluctance to expand conversations with others and expand her own thoughts.

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Previous interventions include intensive interventions 45 minutes 2 times a week in reading and math with tier 2 strategies. Currently, Sarah receives tier two interventions in language for 30 minutes 2 times per week. The focus of this has been basic language and writing skills. Sarah has shown slow and steady progress. Additionally, Sarah receives small group guided reading instruction from her teachers for 30 minutes 5 times per week. When tested using the Fontas and Pinnell (Fontas & Pinnell, 2011) benchmark, Sarah was rated on level O. This level means that she is between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade academically compared to her peers. Her mother has also signed Sarah up for tutoring at an outside agency called Sylvan for the past 2 years, periodically.

According to standardized testing, Sarah has scored on the minimal level. She has taken the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE: McGraw-Hill, 2013) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2013) assessments. Her scores on the WKCE in reading are 425 and in math she has scored a 404. Both of these are considered minimal for the WKCE rubric. On the most recent 2013 spring MAP assessment Sarah received a 186 in reading and a 190 on math. Her scores indicate that her abilities are at the lower 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. Modifications that Sarah will and have received for the duration of her current IEP include the use of manipulatives and visual aids, pre and post front loading, quiet reading corners, and adjusted assignments.

A teacher administered the Woodcock Johnson (Woodcock and Johnson, 2001) test to Sarah in May of 2013. The teacher observed that Sarah was left-handed and had a pleasant disposition yet was easily distracted during the testing. The teacher also noted that Sarah required encouraging words in order to have confidence to finish. The results of the Woodcock Johnson show that Sarah scored 76 in reading, which shows a discrepancy between her ability and

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achievement academically. In addition, Sarah's annual reading goal for her current IEP is to increase her reading level from a mid 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level to ending 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level with 80% accuracy with 3 out of 5 attempts. Her smaller benchmarks include increasing her ability to determine theme, describe characters, determine the meaning of words used in context, and demonstrate a strong understanding of text.

The focus of this research is to find effective interventions to increase Sarah's comprehension and literacy abilities. The following sections will discuss how the research connects to special education law. The section following the discussion of the special education law will discuss a direct connection of the research to the Common Core Standards.

### **Connection to the Law**

The Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) was set forth in 1975 to ensure that students with special needs were provided with the same opportunity to have an education as general education students. See the glossary for a full explanation of IDEA. IDEA is split into parts that are devoted to different services that are provided under the law. The services that Sarah is entitled to are listed under Part B- Assistance for Education of all Children with Disabilities. Part B has 8 subparts that include general regulation and appropriate services IDEA provides the least restrictive environment for Sarah and other students who receive special services. See glossary for definition of least restrictive environment. Subpart D of IDEA is titled Evaluations, Eligibility, IEPs, and Placement. The provisions that fall under Subpart B of the IDEA give a detailed description of how and why Sarah qualifies for an IEP. IEP stands for Individualized Educational Plan. On May 21, 2013, Sarah began receiving special services determined by a team of professionals. See glossary for complete explanation of the IEP team. According to the IDEA law and the provisions set forth by the complete IEP team, Sarah has a

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weakness in the following areas: remaining on task, making connections, inferences, and predictions, summarizing information, keeping her thoughts organized, and remaining encouraged during reading. According to her Individualized Educational Plan, she is entitled to receive the following services: specialized instruction in language arts for 30 minutes two times a week and small group guided reading instruction for 30 minutes five times per week. According to the IDEA law, Sarah's IEP must be in effect at the beginning of each school year and effective throughout the school year. Because of IDEA law Sarah is entitled to her current services in a special education classroom for pull out services in order to be provided with the least restrictive environment. See glossary for complete definition of least restrictive environment.

### **Connection to Common Core Standards**

The Common Core Standards are standards that guide curriculum in the state of Wisconsin. According to the Wisconsin guiding principles for teaching and learning, each child is entitled to the following:

Every student has the right to learn.

Instruction must be rigorous and relevant.

Purposeful assessment drives instruction and affects learning.

Learning is a collaborative responsibility.

Students bring strengths and experiences to learning.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/>

Sarah is a fifth grader. According to the common core standards, there are exact standards that Sarah should reach by this particular age. Reading Literature standard RL5.2 states that each student should be able to determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem

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reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. Sarah struggles in these areas. This means that an intervention focused on this standard is appropriate to increase Sarah's abilities for this grade level standard. Reading Literature standard RL5.3 states that each student should be able to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). Sarah struggles in these areas. This means that an intervention focused on this standard is appropriate to increase Sarah's abilities for this grade level standard. Reading literature standard RL5.10 states that by the end of the year each student should be able to read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently. Sarah struggles in this area. This means that an intervention focused on this standard is appropriate to increase Sarah's abilities for this grade level standard. This particular standard focuses on comprehension, which is a major weakness for Sarah. In order for her to perform at the appropriate grade level she must be able to reach these grade level standards through her academic performance.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the child I am working with and provides adequate background information. I am working with a fifth grade student who is addressed as Sarah Brown for the purpose of this research. She has weaknesses in the area of comprehension, making inferences, summarizing information, making connections, and organizing her thoughts. Sarah is a student with a specific learning disability. Chapter 1 is organized as the following: introduction to the child, connection to the special education law, and connection to the common core standards. Chapter 1 addresses the special education law that entitles every child to an equal

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opportunity of receiving an education regardless of their need to receive special services. Chapter 1 addresses the common core state standards and the connection the standards have with Sarah Brown for her specific grade level. The following research is focused on comprehension and effective interventions for a struggling reader.

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### CHAPTER TWO

#### **A Review of the Literature**

I am exploring comprehension, culture, and effective interventions for a struggling reader. This is important in the context of education because as an educator, I must consider best practices on how to reach students that are struggling with important literacy concepts. I decided to explore comprehension because I teach language arts to students with learning disabilities. I believe that an important part of closing the achievement gap is finding ways to reach students on their individual learning and academic levels. It is imperative to understand why a student may have difficulty grasping literacy concepts in order to create effective interventions to help improve the struggling reader's ability to read and write. I have included articles that encompass information about literacy, culture, and effective interventions for a struggling reader as well as students with a learning disability. I have included information about students with a learning disability because it is relevant to my research and my research participant. My research explores comprehension and culture. In order to be successful in my understanding of my own research I first have to attain an understanding of how students interact with curriculum and possible reasons why students may interact the way they do with literature. I have included one article that specifically addresses specific learning disabilities and how disabilities connect to comprehension in the general education curriculum. The article suggests that students with a learning disability may not adequately be prepared for this curriculum and assessment exams because of alternative curriculum that they receive during the school day. Another article that is included addresses the importance of teaching reading strategies to students with learning disabilities and methods on how teachers can do this effectively. The article also explains how a



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learning disability works with metacognition and how comprehension works with youth in general. I have included two articles that also address culture and the role that culture can play in the development of a student's literacy abilities. One article explores prior knowledge of a student and cultural relevancy of literature. The other article that is centered on culture explores the prediction of reading comprehension in African American and Caucasian elementary school children. The study examines the curriculum based measurement (CBM) across both cultures. Additionally, I have included five articles that focus on comprehension and the development of comprehension in the human brain. Those articles vary from topics such as the role literacy plays in our society, the factors that contribute to comprehension, the importance of comprehension in our daily lives, and the future of youth. The research that is included provides a clear view into the thought process and creation of my research.

The first section of this chapter titled *Section 1: Reading Comprehension: A General Assessment* explores comprehension in youth. The section also discusses the role that comprehension plays in literacy. Additionally, section 1 assesses the long term and short term effects of introducing comprehension strategies to children at an early age. Next, section 1 discusses monitoring students' comprehension abilities throughout their developmental years and the importance of exposure to literature and the importance of following through with comprehension as a child develops. Section 1 discusses how retaining a student's attention on content connects to comprehension. Section 2 of chapter 2, titled *Section 2: The Role of Culture in Comprehension and Effective Intervention Strategies*, explores specific elements of culture that connect to comprehension as well as effective methods for intervention. Section 1 discusses the role of socio-economic status as well as the role of a student's ethnicity. Section 2 connects culture to comprehension, explores methods that effectively reach students and explores the

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comprehension ability of a student with a learning disability. Section 2 highlights effective interventions and addresses specific methods to use when striving to increase a student's comprehension.

### **Section 1: Reading Comprehension: A General Assessment**

In this section you will read about the general development of comprehension in students. This section explores research from various researchers and applies their knowledge to the study I am conducting. In this section you will read about the importance of literacy being introduced to a student at an early age. In this section you will read about the importance of a student's ability to connect real world situations to what they are reading in order to fully comprehend what they are reading. This section discusses the relevance of a strong maternal relationship with a child in order for them to become familiar with literacy.

The study conducted by Redford, Thiede, Wiley & Griffin (2012) explored the long-term effects on students who were introduced to literacy strategies at an early age. The study explored metacomprehension of middle school students and made connections to their early exposure to literacy strategies. These strategies included meaning and inference building. The study also focused on deep comprehension that emphasized summarization, discussion, and dialogic reasoning and prediction activities throughout the elementary school years.

This research consisted of two studies. The first study was designed to evaluate exposure to different kinds of testing effects and comprehension monitoring (Redford, et al., 2012). This study was conducted early in the school year to compare new students to continuing students who have had exposure to particular methods over a longer period of time. The sample consisted of seventy-one students who fell under one of two categories. These categories were students that had been at the school for a minimum of 4 years and would be classified as a long-term student

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or students who had just started at the school and would be considered a newcomer. There were 31 long time students, 17 were female and 14 were male; 17 were seventh graders, and 14 were eighth graders. There were 40 new students. Out of the total for the new students, 22 were female, 18 were male; 22 were seventh graders and 18 were eighth graders.

For the research, these students read four science based expository texts. Each of the passages were approximately 430 words long and required the students to make inferences. The purpose was to study how well students in each of the categories comprehended the text. The participants read the four passages and answered text questions. Students answered essay type questions that asked them how well they thought they would be able to answer particular comprehension questions. Students would answer using a 0 to 5 scale. Additionally, students would answer test questions that focused on making inferences, recalling information, and connecting details.

This study found that students' judgments of their comprehension abilities were positively correlated with inference test performances for long time students. This suggested that long time students' judgments were likely based on the expectation that comprehension would be evaluated by tests of deeper comprehension rather than memory for details. In comparison, judgments were negatively correlated with new students' ability to make inferences. This means that new students associated their ability to successfully answer test questions to their memory rather than to their deep comprehension of the material. This research suggests that metacomprehension accuracy differs among students depending on their exposure to comprehension based strategies. The results were statistically significant because this research showed that students who were exposed for a longer period of time to particular strategies were more prone to depend on their comprehension of the text to complete the task (Redford, et al.,

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2012).

The second study used the data from the first study to evaluate the effect of monitoring accuracy on regulation and learning in the same sample of students (Redford, et al., 2012). The hypothesis of this study is that students' level of metacomprehension might affect whether students use comprehension monitoring to make decisions about which text to reread and what to reread in those texts. The same sample was used in study two. The texts that students read were focused on topics such as breeding, cloning, energy from food, bacteria, and the carbon cycle. The procedure of this study followed that of study one adding some changes. The first change was students were asked to generate a list of key words that captured the main idea of the text. Also, students were told they would have an opportunity to select one text to reread to increase their overall score for comprehension of that particular text.

The results for study two show that long time students still had better metacomprehension accuracy than the new students. However, the average student judgment of comprehension and average test score did not vary greatly between the two groups. The results of this test are statistically significant. The first results do not contradict the second results. Both of the results from this research suggest the same findings; students who were exposed for a longer period of time to particular strategies were more prone to depend on their comprehension of the text to complete the task (Redford, et al., 2012). Overall, this research suggests the more students are exposed to a particular comprehension and literacy strategy, the more they will use that knowledge to evaluate their own understanding of texts. Self-regulation of students' comprehension plays a major role in learning (Redford, et al., 2012, p. 554).

This suggests that the more my student is exposed to important comprehension material and strategies, the more she will have the ability to use these strategies which in turn will

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improve her learning. This research also suggests that if she is exposed to certain comprehension strategies at a younger age, she will have the ability to use these comprehension strategies in her future learning. Exposing my student to more detailed comprehension strategies, by placing her in the category of a long term student, will give her more developmental time to associate her understanding of the text with deep comprehension strategies.

The study conducted by Magmairaj and Montgomery (2012) focuses on comprehension and working memory in young students. The purpose of the study was to explore the role of processing complexity of verbal and working memory tasks in predicting spoken sentence comprehension in the average developing student. This study also explores whether simple and more complex working memory tasks have similar or different power in predicting sentence comprehension in young children. Working memory is important to explore because it has a value in predicting higher cognitive abilities in students. In this study working memory is defined as “the ability to store information in the face of cognitive processing, with both functions receiving attentional resources” (Barrouillet, Gavens, Vergauwe, Gaillard, & Camos, 2009). According to the hypothesis of the study, three factors were considered when exploring this content. The first factor is that processing and storage do not only depend on one single source in the human mind for recall. There are many sources from which humans draw memory. The second factor is the idea that what drives working memory is actually the amount of attention paid to a particular issue. This means that someone can only recall what he or she actually pays attention to and consciously embed into his or her memory. Lastly, the complexity of the material does not play a factor in whether the information is remembered but rather the duration of attention and focus given to any given content. This research suggests that attention determines what can be recalled. Additionally, memory capacity also plays a huge role in a

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child's ability to recall information. According to Montgomery, Magimairaj, & O'Malley (2008) there is evidence that children with a greater memory and attention capacity demonstrate better comprehension.

For this research 65 children ages 6 to 12 were participants. The participants included 32 girls and 33 boys. The ages ranged from 6 years old to 12 years old. The sample was comprised of 61 white children, one African American child, one mixed child, and two Asian children (Montgomery, et al., 2008, p. 673). All of the children demonstrated normal range IQ (Montgomery, et al., 2008, p. 673). The students completed a listening span task that varied in its complexity. For this research simple sentences represented a "simple working memory task" and more complex sentences representing a "complex working memory task" and lastly the participants completed a standardized sentence comprehension test. Working memory was measured using a conventional listening task where students were presented with blocks of sentences and asked to judge the truth value of each sentence and to recall the final word of each sentence following the last sentence in a block (Montgomery, et al., 2008, p. 673). "Processing complexity/difficulty was manipulated by systematically varying the syntactical structure of the sentences. The task included 20 simple sentences (Montgomery, et al., 2008, p. 673). All of the sentences presented to students included 8 words. Each child sat in front of the computer monitor, resting his or her elbows on a pad. Each child was instructed to select his or her dominant hand. Each child was then told they would hear groups of sentences and their task was to select the truth value of each sentence and to recall information that is asked. They are also instructed to recall as many of the final words as possible. Students listened through headphones. The students either selected "yes" or "no" on a screen when answering recall questions. The task was administered in an experimenter-paced fashion whereby the examiner presented each

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sentence immediately following the child's response to the previous sentence. This rapid presentation was intended to prevent the child from rehearsing the words between the sentence trials (Montgomery, et al., 2008, p. 674).

The study found that basic attentional capacity defines the predictive power of children's working memory (Barrouillet, Gavens, Vergauwe, Gaillard, & Camos, 2009). Additionally, the research suggests that complex verbal working memory tasks and simple memory tasks are predictors of children's sentence comprehension because they have a connection with attention and focus. After talking to professionals who have worked with my student over the school year, they explained to me that Sarah has difficulty expressing herself verbally when asked to recall information that she has recently learned. She uses hesitation and needs more processing time than her other classmates. I also learned from Sarah cumulative folder that she has some difficulty focusing when testing and also during direct instruction. This study is of interest and relevant to my research because the student I am working with has difficulty with verbally expressing her understanding of text and literature. This research better helps me understand how to assist my student with her comprehension and spoken sentence ability.

According to Raikes, Luze, Brooks-Gunn, Raikes, Pan, Tamis-LeMonda, Tatullo & Rodriquez (2006), there are many factors that can play a role in the development of a child's comprehension as well as reading ability in general. The study they conducted focuses on the effects the role of the mother plays in a child's ability to comprehend content later in life.

Out of 2,581 low income mothers who participated in this research, only about half said that they read daily to their children. The researchers discovered that different factors played a role in whether the mother read to her child. For example, the chances of a mother reading to their child increased if the child was the first born of the mother or if the child was female.

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Another factor that played a role in whether a mother read to her child was the mother's verbal ability and the level of education the mother received. Additionally, research suggests that Caucasian mothers read more to their children than African American and Hispanic parents (Raikes, et al., 2006, p. 931). For English speaking students, reading is associated with vocabulary and comprehension (Raikes, et al., 2006, p. 929). This suggests that the more children are exposed to reading, the greater their level of vocabulary and comprehension may be. There is an established relationship between maternal book reading and a child's vocabulary and their comprehension development which can be indicated as early as the first three years of their lives (Raikes, et al., 2006, p. 924).

For this study, 2,581 female participants with children were studied. The participants were asked questions during at least one of three interviews about the methods they use to read to their children. The mothers were categorized as follows: 39% were teenagers when they had their target child, 53% had a GED or high school diploma, 26% were married and living with a husband, 37% of mothers were white, 34% were African American, 17% were non-English speaking Hispanic, 6% were English-Speaking Hispanic, 4% were members of differing ethnic groups. The children of interest were as follows: 62% of the children were the first born child, 51% were male, and 51% of families were in the head start program. Demographic variables were also considered in this research. During one of the three sessions, mothers were administered the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised, Picture Vocabulary Test (Woodcock & Johnson, 1990) which required the mothers to provide a verbal label to the presented pictures. This was titled *maternal warmth*. Additionally, mothers were administered a series of different intelligence tests. Their children were given assessments as well. Their children were administered the Woodcock-Johnson Picture Vocabulary Test.



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The results of this study suggest that reading to a child in the first three years of his/her development is associated with comprehension, vocabulary and language. The results were statistically significant. According to the research, if a mother reads to her child, regardless of outside factors, the child may have a greater chance of stronger comprehension, vocabulary, and language in general (Raikes, et al., 2006, p. 944). This is important to my research because knowing this information will assist in my approach to working with my research participant. The implications of this research suggest that routine reading to a child is important in their comprehension development in general.

According to the study conducted by Scott, Teale, Dumets-Carry, Johnson, & Morgan (2009) effective literacy strategies do exist. This study was conducted in order to find out how an educator can be effective when working with urban children. This research suggests there are differing ways to connect literature with students who attend school in an urban setting. Culture does play a role in the perception a student has about literacy, comprehension, and an appreciation for ethnic differences. The researchers asked three teachers, that teach in urban settings and have been effective in their methods of reaching students diverse needs, to answer five questions pertaining to effectively connecting literature to culture and why, if any, there is a need for it. The questions that were asked were as follows: 1) What are the most unmet needs of urban learners? 2) What principles do you find most useful to guide your literacy practices in urban schools, and what theoretical framework underlies them? 3) What do your principles look like when translated into literacy teaching practices in the urban classroom? 4) What type of student responses signal that an instructional practice is working well for students? 5) What changes are needed to move us toward pedagogy of success for urban learners? (Scott, et al., 2009, p. 338) The researchers looked for patterns among the teachers' responses and compiled

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that information into categories to help assist and provide information for other educators.

All of the respondents discussed both the needs of urban educators as well as the needs of urban students themselves. Three significant needs of children in an urban setting were identified. The three needs are “emotional support, exposure, and changes in attitude toward education (Scott, et al., 2009, p. 339). The authors suggest without these elements present, comprehension will be difficult.

Also according to this study, in order for a student to truly advance toward literacy, the teacher must appreciate their diversity, use differentiation, raise the expectations of students, incorporate hands on activities, and partner with students in order to combine thoughts and be active participants in their education. It is important for students and teachers to be on the same page in order to make a notable change in students’ attitude toward literacy. There are also instructional practices that are key in connecting literacy to urban students. The instructional strategies incorporated must be authentic, motivational, focused, and differentiated. Students must feel a connection to literature in order to show interest and to then comprehend what is being read so they will pay more attention to the material (Scott, et al., 2009, p. 340).

This research also suggests that standardized assessments are not an effective measure of student’s achievement. It is suggested that a student’s level of participation, discussion, and responses are true indicators if a student in an urban setting is learning. Exemplifying student response is an indication of learning (Scott, Teale, Dumets Carry, Johnson & Morgan, 2009, p. 341).

This research suggests that students enter school with a possibly negative view of education. They enter feeling defeated sometimes before they even begin because of their circumstances (Scott, et al., 2009). This suggests an even greater need to encourage and support

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students when it comes to literacy in order to truly expose urban students to the importance of literacy in the mainstream culture. Teachers must first get to know and understand each individual student before they can truly make an impact on students' lives and change their view of literacy. Principles that help influence students incorporate the attitude of teachers as well.

The size of this research sample was very small and qualitative. It may have implications for interpreting the results because the sample size is small and information is gathered from only 3 educators. This may not have implications because the educators' information and expertise is relevant and based off of formal observations and concrete evidence. The information is helpful to me in my research because it suggests methods and reasons for comprehension development in youth.

According to Firmender, Reis, and Sweeny (2013) it is imperative that teachers differentiate their lessons and classroom activities in order to meet the needs of all students. Many students have differing levels of comprehension and understanding and because of this a teacher must be conscious of these differences and differentiate accordingly. The purpose of their study was to explore the need for differentiated reading instruction and content. The study explores the gap that exists in reading achievement and diverse classroom cultures across the United States. The study implicates that the gap between comprehension and fluency levels in students is attributed to the teacher's ability and effort to extend the reading curriculum to be equally above, at, and below grade level to make sure that the material is attainable to all students regardless of their levels.

The sample of this study consisted of 1,149 students in five different elementary schools that were diverse in their enrollment, diverse meaning the student population varied in each school including all different learning levels as well as gifted and talented. This is a quantitative

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study that researched the range of reading fluency and comprehension levels of elementary students in grades 3 to 5. This research explored the following four questions: What is the range of reading comprehension levels across the all students in the five elementary schools across the country? What is the average range of reading comprehension levels across classrooms at each grade level? What is the range of reading fluency across all students in five elementary across the country? What is the average range of reading fluency across classrooms at each grade level? (Firmender, et al., 2013, p. 56). With these research questions, the students that participated varied in ethnic, racial background, language diversity, and socioeconomic status. Reading comprehension was measured using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS; Hoover et al., 2003) reading comprehension subtest (form A). This consisted of reading passages that varied from narrative, poetry, and nonfiction material about science and social studies. Students then answered questions in the form of a multiple choice answer sheet that focused on recalling facts, making generalizations, and making inferences. An oral reading fluency standardized assessment was also implemented that centered on speed, accuracy, and efficiency. The students each read three passages that varied in difficulty in one minute trials. The correct words read per minute were recorded. The mean that each student received from the three trials was recorded and used for the data.

Firmender et al. (2013) found that there is a wide range of reading achievement in diverse populations of students and a strong need for teachers to differentiate both reading content and instruction to enable all students to make continuous progress in reading content and instruction to enable all students to make continuous progress in reading. It can be inferred that the data was statistically significant. Additionally, the study also found that teachers must receive training on how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students across grade levels because the

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levels of students are so diverse. Additionally, this study found that educators cannot assume that being gifted means that all students are on the same level and that all students achieve that same amount of fluency and understanding of reading just because of their grade level (Firmender et al., 2013, p. 3). As I design my intervention, it is imperative that I consider ways to reach my student through different reading methods and strategies that best cater to her reading levels.

The articles in this section provide knowledge about reading comprehension. The research provides a true definition of what comprehension is and the role it plays in the lives of youth and their literacy ability. Additionally, the above research highlights key factors and important elements of comprehension. According to Firmender et al. (2013) differentiation is key to literacy comprehension. According to Scott et al. (2009), a student's emotional and cultural upbringing can contribute to their overall view of literacy. These factors must be considered when gaining an initial understanding of the literacy abilities of my student in my research.

### **Section 2: The Role of Culture in Comprehension and Effective Intervention Strategies**

This section discusses culture and the connection that culture has with comprehension. This section explores ethnicity, socio-economic status, and curriculum development related to culture. This section discusses a child's ability to connect to literacy in order to fully understand what they are reading. This section discusses the relationship between a student's cultural prior knowledge and their comprehension of new text. This section also discusses effective strategies and methods to reach students who have difficulty with comprehension due to cultural factors. Additionally, this study addresses specific comprehension strategies that are effective with a student with a specific learning disability.

The study conducted by Garth-McCullough (2008) focuses on analyzing the prior

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knowledge of African American students and the effect this has on the relationship between cultural orientation of literature and reading comprehension to determine the effect of prior knowledge on low, mid, and high level readers. More than 100 eighth grade students from public and charter schools were participants in this research. The students read short stories from three different cultural orientations. The researcher was interested in the role prior knowledge about the culture played in the comprehension of the students. The researcher measured the effects of cultural orientation of texts, prior achievement, and prior knowledge on the students reading comprehension performance using the Rasch model (Wright & Mok, 2000) and a one way-analysis of variance (ANOVA ) as well (Garth-McCullough, 2008, p.1).

Culture can play a factor in the capabilities students demonstrate, focusing on comprehension and reading ability and the ability to apply content knowledge. According to Garth-McCullough (2008), there are arguments about African American students achievement that are centered around a blame on family, communities, as well as socio-economic factors that include an assumed lack of ability, lack of interest, and lack of motivation. Additionally, the researcher suggests educators must identify factors that influence and impede individual student needs. Social experiences are especially important because they influence students' access to curricula. The contexts of many texts explore cultural values and present information from a specific point of view. This can be conveyed through language, values, practices, beliefs, and styles that are specific to a particular cultural group. This specific study explored the cultural schema embedded in literary pieces and used this to evaluate the students' comprehension performance. According to this study most school curriculum was not designed with the African American culture as the focus and because of this, much of the reading material given to students in an urban setting is not centered around their culture but more focused on the culture of white,

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middle class mainstream society. Previous research has also found that sociocultural factors are influential in the way a student processes and relates to material.

This study is modeled after Wertsch's (1991) *Tool Kit Analogy*. This study supports the idea that a person will use the tools of knowledge that they have available to them and apply only what they know to understand new information. If a student has no understanding of the content they are learning about, they will be less likely to understand and apply new knowledge into their academia. The method that this study used was a repeated measure design. In the fall of 2011, 117 eighth grade African American students on different academic achievement levels from public and charter schools were participants in this study. Previous scores from the 2000-2001 Iowa Test of Basic Skills were used to identify students reading levels. The charter schools that participated have about 58% of students classified as low income. In the public school 84% of students were considered low income. All of the schools have predominantly African American enrollment. One half of the participants were male and 22% of the students' mothers graduated from high school. The students reading level ranged from grade 3.3 to grade 10.4. The students each read six short stories from young adult multicultural anthologies and also completed a demographic profile. Three of the stories consisted of cultural content from African American, Chinese American, and European American background. Three of the stories included a female antagonist. There were three different sessions. In the first session, students completed a demographic survey and read a passage. In the second session, students completed a prior knowledge instrument that was meant to measure their understanding and also read a passage. In the third session students read another passage. After reading a text during each session, students answered literal and questions reading multiple choice questions. This was repeated for every set of text administered to students.

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The data gathered showed that there is a high level of relation between a student's cultural prior knowledge and their comprehension of new text. This was found among students considered high, mid-range, and low achieving students. Additionally, high achieving students appeared to outperform students in the mid-range and low academic performance areas, however they all appeared to show a relation between prior knowledge of cultural relevance and comprehension. According to this research, the results support the theory that skilled readers use strategies to enhance comprehension that an unskilled reader may lack. Overall, the research also suggests that high achieving students may have a greater ability to analyze different cultural contexts because of the skills they may use which could be skimming, looking back at text, etc. The study does support the idea that cultural prior knowledge plays a role in students' comprehension of text.

Because my research is exploring comprehension and culture, the next article examines the prediction of reading comprehension ability in African American and Caucasian elementary school children. The study examines curriculum based measurement (CBM) across both cultures. According to Callahan, Hintze, Matthews, and Tobin (2002), CBM uses alternative-form test items of almost equal difficulty selected from the general education curriculum for the purpose of making educational decisions (p. 1). CBM is also an educational assessment to determine the academic needs of each student. This study is an extension of a previous study of Kranzler et al. (1999), which studied the differential predictiveness of Curriculum Based Measurement of oral reading fluency on reading comprehension of African Americans and Caucasian. Socioeconomic statuses were also explored.

According to the article, evidence and literature exist that "suggests that children from families with limited resources or children from minority backgrounds are at a greater risk for



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poorer reading outcomes than middle-class majority children (Callahan et al., 2002, p. 542).

Before the research was explored, it was hypothesized that ethnicity would not affect the slope or intercept of the data for the research participants. This is relevant to know whether ethnicity itself, along with culture, plays a significant role in comprehension and the development of comprehension in students. This is relevant to my research because this article touches on important elements that apply to my research participant. Additionally, this article explores whether a prediction of reading comprehension varies depending on ethnicity.

For this research, there were 136 participants. Of the participants, 66 were male, 70 were females, 65 were African American and 71 were Caucasian. All of the participants were enrolled in grades 2 through 5 and attended a small urban school. Of the participants, 47% of their families were considered low income, 33% were considered middle class, and 20% of the families fell within the high- income range. Students that did participate during the study received a \$5.00 gift card incentive for McDonalds to be a part of the research. For this research, material representative of the third grade level was selected and used for the research for third graders. This same pattern was followed using age appropriate reading material per grade level evaluated. Three passages were used that were 250 words long. The page that students would read was randomly selected using a number generator. The first 100 words were evaluated for readability. Additionally, students were administered the Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised (WJ-R; Woodcock & Johnson, 1989) to measure students' cognitive and academic abilities. Students participated in the CBM oral reading fluency measure as well as the WJ-R reading comprehension subtest. All tests were 15 to 25 minutes long and were conducted in the morning over a 7 day period. The administration of the tests was modeled after the directions in the testing manual. In order to test for the interaction of CBM and ethnicity, a

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separate analysis was conducted to test for slope and intercept bias. Additional, separate z scores were calculated for African American students and Caucasian students to compare based on the group average.

The results of this study focused on the differential predictiveness of CBM oral reading fluency and the reading comprehension skills of African American students and Caucasian students. The research suggests that the oral reading fluency metric was not biased when it came to ethnicity. Therefore, ethnicity itself does not play a role in the oral reading ability or understanding of material (Callahan et al., 2002, p. 548).

This information eliminates the factor of ethnicity playing a role in the oral reading comprehension of my participating student. Although other factors such as maternal connection, economic status, exposure to higher level comprehension questions in her earlier school years may impede her previous comprehension and reading fluency, according to this research, her ethnicity is not a factor.

Although previous research suggests that a student's ethnicity is necessarily an impeding factor in their comprehension development, there are other factors that contribute to a child's comprehension. If a child has a specific learning disability, it can contribute to that child's ability to comprehend and their literacy ability. According to the study conducted by Barry and Moore (2004), students with a specific learning disability (SLD) can pass state competency exams and exams in general when equipped with the correct self-monitoring tools and taught proper self-directed organizational strategies. The study explains that students with SLD are required to pass the same exams that students enrolled in general education curriculum are and are also held to the same standards. This study focuses on accountability for student achievement. The implications of the research highlight the fact that exams are used to assess

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student achievement as they move through elementary, middle, and high school. There has been controversy focused on holding students with SLD to the same standards as students who do not have a specific learning disability. Educators have debated about students with SLD abilities to perform as well as their counterparts given that they have not received the same curriculum. The research suggests that students with SLD may not have had as much time to be prepared for state exams because of pull out type instruction they receive, special programs, or alternative assignments. According to Barry and Moore (2004), students not being able to pass state achievement exams may hinder them in other areas in their life. For example, if a student needs to pass the exam to advance to the next grade level and they are not able to pass or are exempt through their IEP this may hinder them from being able to get a high school diploma and therefore may affect their financial future and ability to be independent. Barry and Moore (2004) explain that state exams that require writing samples are very difficult for students with SLD. This connects to comprehension because if a student with SLD is not able to understand and make connections with the text, they will be unable to successfully complete the writing portion of any assessment and therefore will not perform adequately on that exam. Barry and Moore (2004) implicate that students with SLD may benefit from specialized instruction designed to enhance student performance on these exams. Teachers should have this objective in mind when working with students with a specific learning disability.

This study is designed to evaluate a simple self-directed organizational strategy that is designed to help students with SLD increase their writing and comprehension scores on state exams. Twenty 8th grade students with SLD volunteered to participate in this study. Of the participants, 15 were male and 5 were girls. The average age was 13.5 years. These students have been enrolled in special education between 3 and 5 years. The comparison group consisted of

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207 general education students. Of this comparison group, 207 were boys and 93 were girls. The average age was 13.3 years. The participants were taught a self-directional strategy designed to increase student self-performance on tests. This strategy consisted of a method in which the students would use each of their fingers to prompt organization in a written essay (Barry & Moore, 2004, p.12). The fingers served as a memory stimulus and the method was taught through direct modeling. Each finger represented a specific paragraph in the traditional 5 paragraph essay. The researchers taught students specific instructions associated with each finger. The representations of each finger were as follows: the index finger represented the introduction paragraph which should include the topic of the essay and show the students understanding, or comprehension of the material, the middle finger represented the first body paragraph with supporting details, the ring finger represented another body paragraph with another supporting detail, the pinky represented the last body paragraph with the last supporting details. Lastly the thumb represented the conclusion. Students in the study were taught instructions for each of their memory finger indicators. They were given a pretest before any intervention and then given a posttest after being taught how the finger method works for comprehension and recall of the proper structure for the essay. This self-directed strategy was presented to students as a tool and explained and modeled to students for a period of 12 weeks.

This research found that teaching and implementing simple strategy instruction makes a difference in whether a student passes an assessment (Barry and Moore, 2004, p. 14). The results were statistically significant. The study also implicates that teachers are in a position to make this difference in student performance on such assessments. Before the study was conducted, the pretest showed that only 10% of students were able to compose a proper comprehensive essay. In comparison, after the self-directed organizational strategy was

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implemented, 80% of the target group students were able to compose an essay. All of these students earned a 3 or higher on the state writing rubric. This research suggests that teaching a self-directed strategy will help my student with a specific learning disability and this strategy, or one similar, can make a difference in her perception of her testing ability and her comprehension.

The study conducted by Baker, Fuchs, Gersten, and Williams (2001) explored the importance of teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities. The study had three main focus areas. According to Baker et al. (2001), the areas are as follows: the increased use of socially mediated instruction, the need to teach multiple strategies to students to improve comprehension, and controversies in how important it is to explicitly teach specific strategies versus only providing flexible frameworks to organize dialogue on text only. Students with learning disabilities are equipped with the necessary tools to process information; however they process information ineffectively (Baker et al., 2001, p. 280). This means that although they are able to take the information in, they are not able to correctly process the meaning of the information. According to Baker et al. (2001), most researchers associate this with the students' lack of ability to control and manage their cognitive activities in a purposeful way. Students with learning disabilities may not understand that they have to constantly monitor their own thoughts for understanding, as compared to proficient readers who do.

For this research, a learning disability is present when there is a gap between a student's academic achievement and their intellectual ability that leads to a student's inability to learn (Baker et al. 2001). This study focuses on metacognition of a student, which is the ability of a student to manage and control his/her cognitive activities (Baker et al., 2001). Students with learning disabilities develop an idea of how a typical story is organized and therefore become fixated with that particular structure without comprehending that different types of stories have

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different types of structures. Students with a learning disability usually develop this understanding of a story structure slower than their peers. According to this research many interventions for comprehension have been focused on building the structural knowledge of stories and teaching students how to use this knowledge to further evaluate and analyze text. Implications for this research include three conclusions concerning text for students with learning disabilities. The first is that awareness of text is developed over time. Secondly, some text types are implicitly easier to understand than others. Thirdly, the ability to break text apart is important to actually being able to understand what is being read (Baker et al., 2001). According to this research, lack of vocabulary can also be a hindrance for a student with a learning disability to comprehend literature. This is because teaching the student to understand literary terms themselves is a difficult step to overcome even before teaching strategies to understand comprehension in general. There is also a correlation between the amount of reading a student does and the amount of vocabulary they understand. “The rationale for building fluency skills is that when too much attention is allocated to low-level processes such as word recognition, not enough attentional resources are available to accomplish the higher-order processing involved in comprehension” (Baker et al., 2001, p.285). This means that when students devote more time to understanding smaller words they lose focus on trying to understand the text all together. Research also suggests that having a student read a text multiple times will help improve their literacy and comprehension of the text. This is called “repeated readings” and is a tool of intervention.

For this study, narrative and expository essays were selected to monitor students’ general improvement of comprehension. This research focused on a cross referencing technique modeled by Chan, Cole, and Barfett (1987). This technique was a cross referencing technique

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taught to 11 year old students with learning disabilities and eight year old regular education students matched on word recognition levels. The students were asked to detect “internal inconsistencies in adventure stories” (Baker et al., 2001, p. 289). The teacher did not explain to students why certain sentences may be inconsistent and students approached the task with no prior instruction. This research focused on students locating anomalies. This research suggests that narratives are more understandable to students with learning disabilities because of the general structure. This research also suggests that peer mediated instruction, such as partner reading, paragraph summary, and prediction type discussions with another peer can strengthen reading comprehension. “Strategy instruction seems to consistently improve students’ ability to see relationships in stories, answer comprehension questions, and retell what they [students] have read in a more focused fashion” (Baker et al., 2001, p. 296). Using story grammar elements is a best strategy when using interventions for students with a learning disability. This entire research is focused on investigated effective strategies and methods to better teach a student with SLD how to better comprehend text.

This information is relevant to my research because my research participant is a student with SLD and my research is centered on finding interventions that will effectively help her better understand what she is reading and how to understand key terms. For example, when designing my intervention, I will incorporate vocabulary building activities and peer mediated activities because research has shown these strategies to be effective with students with specific learning disabilities. This research also suggests teaching one strategy at a time in order to avoid overwhelming my student with so many tools at once. This research will help build an effective intervention plan to better meet the needs of my student.

According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) there are best practices in promoting

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reading comprehension in students with learning disabilities. The study conducted by Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) state that these best practices were derived from the results of an extensive literature review of research in reading comprehension with students with learning disabilities (p. 197). According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) the best practices were observed for teacher-led questioning and self-questioning strategies, followed by text enhancement strategies, followed by text enhancement strategies and strategies involving basic skills instruction and reinforcement. Reading comprehension is an important academic skill learned in school. Students with learning disabilities show a lack in reading comprehension. This may include problems in remembering the main idea, facts, details of text, interpreting, and making inferences about information (Mercer & Mercer, 1993). This suggests that if a student has a learning disability it may be difficult for them to comprehend material compared to a student that does not have a learning disability. Skill training and reinforcement influence comprehension because they promote automaticity and allow more cognitive resources to be devoted to comprehension (e.g., LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), direct instruction has been helpful in promoting comprehension among students with learning disabilities (p. 200). “ It appears that the component of direct instruction approaches, including structure, clarity, redundancy, careful task sequencing, and feedback, have been helpful in promoting reading comprehension skills in students with learning disabilities” (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997, p. 200). According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), text enhancement such as providing pictures or images, special organization of text content, and semantic relationship charts (p. 201). Illustrations, representational illustrations, imagery, and spatial organization can aid in helping a students with a specific learning disability. These are helpful when creating an intervention because they help intensify stimuli and focus significant



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attention on facts and relationships (Horton & Lovitt, 1996). According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) questioning strategies are imperative when promoting comprehension to a student with a specific learning disability. In two studies, Sachs (1983, 1984) assessed the effects that activating prior knowledge and providing pre-reading activities on reading comprehension (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1997, p. 203). In these studies the effects of pre-reading activities that focused on activating prior knowledge and increase motivation were evaluated. For these studies, concept analysis, directed reading activities, and worksheet activities were used. Upper elementary age students were asked to select their favorite illustrations of different stories, presented with questions relevant to the main idea of the story, and asked to produce examples of major concepts of the story. Another study conducted by Billingsley and Wildman (1988) compared the effects of two types of pre-reading activities with secondary students with learning disabilities (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1997, p. 204). In one condition, students were taught to think about questions they wanted to ask that were directly relevant to the material they would be reading (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1997, p. 204). In the second condition, students were provided with visual display organizing the main ideas in the literature that they would be reading and then were asked to think of questions relevant to the material. (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1997, p. 204). According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), the above discussed studies indicate that the following facilitate the recall and comprehension of reading: 1) Preteaching vocabulary and completing relevant group and independent work on content, b) Presenting graphic organizers containing main ideas prior to reading the content and generating relevant questions and c) Finding answers to questions about the story prior to reading. According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), the way that material is presented to students is important and it is important to teach strategies to students so that comprehension is attainable to them (p. 209). This is relevant

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to my research participant because it is evident that I must teach her strategies in order to improve her comprehension. I must implement patterns and strategic methods in my intervention with Sarah in order to be successful. I will also focus on using visuals and manipulatives to ensure that the strategies are effective.

According to a study by Yurick, Robinson, Cartledge, Lo, and Evans (2006) repeated readings are effective when seeking to improve a student's comprehension, reading accuracy, and reading rate in general. The researchers conducted three experiments examining the effects of peer-mediated repeated readings on students' oral reading fluency and comprehension. The first experiment consisted of a population of 8 students. All of the students were considered low achieving students in terms of reading difficulty and delayed reading achievement. The setting was an elementary school in a large urban school district. The school's enrollment consisted of 82.4% African American, 13.0% Caucasian, and 4.6% Hispanic, Asian, or Native American students. Students were pre tested using the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement-Revised (WJ-R; Woodcock, 1989). In Experiment 1 each student was taken to a room to complete two subtests. The subtests were letter-word recognition and passage comprehension. Each student had approximately ten minutes. The words read per minute were calculated. The number of comprehension questions answered correctly was measured by giving students passages with missing words and they were to fill in the blank. Students were later trained to do sustained silent reading as an independent activity for ten minutes during the duration of the experiment. Students were also offered a prize bag when they were able to read 180 words per minute with less than ten errors. As a post-test students were given an alternate form of the same test four months later. Experiment 2 and 3 were both conducted in the same school with the same demographics as Experiment 1. Experiment 2 was conducted the following year with 18 third

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grade students. The entire third grade class was engaged in the reading experiment but data was only collected from 8 students. The mean age of the students was 8-9. Four of the students were African American males, one was an African American female, one was a Caucasian male, and two were Caucasian females. In experiment two students were pre tested using the *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III (WJ-III)* (Woodcock, McGrew & Mather, 2001). Four subtests were used. The subtests were letter word identification, reading fluency, passage comprehension, and word attack. The testing time was 30 minutes. Students then entered the intervention stage. The intervention stage consisted of training students to do paired repeated readings. This consisted of pulling students out of class and reading with them in the hallway. Experiment 2's intervention also consisted of students reading an assigned passage for ten minutes and taking turns reading aloud every other paragraph. Experiment 3 was conducted with 10 general education fourth-grade students. Six students were targeted for the data collection. The average age of the students was 10 years 2 months. Three of the six students were African American females. Two of the students were African American males, and one student was a Latina female. Experiment three was conducted in the same school and during the same school year as experiment 1. Students in experiment three were assessed using four subsets. The subtests were assessed using the WJ-III (Woodcock et al., 2001). The subtests include letter word identification, passage comprehension, reading fluency, and word attack. Intervention included training students in silent sustained reading outside of the classroom in an isolated environment for ten minutes. Students were also trained in paired reading. Students were evaluated on 1 minute reading fluency and five comprehension questions. Students were post tested using the WJ-III (Woodcock et al., 2001). The findings of these 3 experiments were significant. The researchers found that all of the students increased their oral reading rate and accuracy over

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sustained silent reading. Accuracy improved with the faster reading as well. The study found that the most improvement was found in the area of comprehension. The students' comprehension increased 42% in experiment 1. The students' comprehension increased 32% in experiment 2. The students' comprehension increased approximately 50% in experiment 3. The researchers suggest that an important implication to these experiments and use in the classroom is flexibility of the intervention, time and cost efficiency, especially in an urban setting.

This information is important to my student because the experiments provide valuable information to apply to my research methods when working with Sarah. I will incorporate sustained silent reading as well as paired reading into my intervention. This information is important because it provide information that can help assist in improving my research participants comprehension of selected reading as well as her comprehension in literacy in general.

These articles provide information on culture and explain that race itself does not play a role in a student's comprehension. According to Callahan et al. (2002), socioeconomic status may contribute to a lack of reading comprehension. The previous research also suggests that other factors may contribute to a child's comprehension ability. These factors include socioeconomic status, maternal effort and connection, early exposure to literary material and strategies, and a clear understanding of the relevance of literacy and comprehension to the child. Additionally, the research provides suggestions for interventions and self-improvement that the researcher, myself, can do to more effectively reach my student and improve her comprehension. According to L'Allier et al. (2010), I must use open communication to connect to my student through multiple ways. I must communicate with other teachers and collaborate with them when using effective interventions with my student. According to Baker et al. (2001), strategies and

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patterns are effective when implementing interventions. I will focus on one method at a time in order to give my student the opportunity to master each strategy. I will provide routine for her as we work together to improve her comprehension. Her learning disability does not impede her from increasing her reading comprehension. However, her strategies need to be individualized for her individual learning level. Barry and Moore (2004) suggest introducing self-monitoring skills that will help her track her own understanding of literary text. According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), teaching specific strategies is effective when seeking to improve a student's comprehension of text.

According to a study by McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009), instruction strategies and content approaches. McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) suggest that too many students have a limited ability to understand what they are reading (p. 218). This conclusion was based off of a two year study in which two major approaches to improve comprehension in school age children were implemented over a two year period. The two approaches that were compared were content and strategies versus a control group. The content instruction focused on students' attention of text through open ended and meaning based questioning. For the strategies part of the study students were taught specific procedures to guide their access to text during their reading of the actual text (McKeown et al., 2009, p 218). All of the participants were fifth grade students that attended an urban school. In this population of students, 48% of the fifth graders scored basic or below basic in a 2005 reading assessment. Of the population, 58% were African American and 49% of the students received free or reduced lunch. Students were pre and post tested with three different assessments. The results were statistically significant in the area of narrative and expository recall. Additionally, student responses appear to favor the content approach.

According to the study the two year study was designed develop implement, and compare

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standardized instruction for representations of two major approaches targeted to enhance comprehension (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). Lessons were designed around texts that were being used in the classroom. The approaches focused on fluency, writing, vocabulary, word study, self-selected reading, and other similar language arts practices (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). The first study consisted of a consistent five- day lesson plan with scripted teacher questions. Each lesson occupied a total of 45 to 75 minute a week within one of the daily 90 minute reading blocks (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). This study was focused on contexts of classroom reading instruction. (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). The first experiment was comprised of five narrative selections (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). The second year of the experiment the same five narratives were used with different students and three expository texts were added. The hypothesis of the study is as that the “longer period of instruction might make it feasible to evaluate the effects of the instruction on comprehension text beyond those used in the classroom” (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). The format of the lessons in year one was teacher directed with students reading text aloud and teachers asking questions. The content approach was focused on using meaningful questions that students could discuss. The strategies approach was focused on teaching students specific strategies to recall information and how to participate in discussions. The strategies included summarizing important information, developing a sense of what was coming next in a story, drawing inferences to create connections, and how to form their own questions (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 224). Students were assessed using the Terra Nova reading comprehension assessment (McGraw-Hill, 2000). Year two of the study followed the design of year one. Year two of the experiment added three expository texts to the five day lesson plans and explored three additional approaches that focused on transfer of text without instructional support (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 222). Another addition to year two included a

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passage comprehension baseline test, a pretest in addition to a posttest assessment of strategies use, and teacher exit interviews. The results for year two were similar to that of year one; scores for both length and quality of recall were higher for content than they were for strategies. “Analysis of the knowledge-probe data for the expository texts did not show significant differences... for the content and basal comprehension group over the strategies group” (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 242). Additionally the research found that substance of questions asked during the lesson apparently did make a difference for the level of comprehension required by a recall task (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 242). The research also found that the substance of questions asked during recall comprehension made a difference in the amount of recall a student could make (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 242). “Differences in recall favored narratives in the content group in both years of the study (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 242). According to McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009), it is recommended that comprehension strategies be taught but should not lead the process of building understanding of a text (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 246). The researchers suggest introducing concepts such as summary, inference, and prediction with examples using short texts (McKeown et al., 2009, p. 246). The researchers also suggest focusing on discussion to elicit participation from the student and to engage them in the content.

This article is helpful to me when working with my research participant. It is helpful because I can incorporate content and strategy methods when designing my intervention. This research also directs me to teach comprehension methods and focus on using short texts that elicit discussion. This information is also relevant to my research with my student in my approach to her intervention. This research suggests using narrative and expository texts that elicit direct questioning and rich discussion.

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### **Conclusion**

Chapter 2 is dedicated solely to the research and review of past experiments that have or may not have been statistically significant. Chapter 2 finds that reading to children during their developmental years is important to the students' comprehension. Chapter 2 finds that ethnicity does not necessarily play a role in a student's comprehension. Chapter 2 finds that factors such as a student's community, socio-economic status and the stress placed on literacy in a child's younger years may contribute to the students understanding of text. The research in this chapter also finds that effective strategies included paired reading, using manipulatives, and visual elements along with questioning. The continuing chapter will discuss procedures and data collection for Sarah Brown.



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### CHAPTER THREE

#### **Procedures for this Study**

In this chapter, I am discussing the sample population, one student, who I worked with for the duration of my research. Chapter 3 also discusses the sequence of events that I used for an effective intervention, including a description of the data collection for the research.

Additionally, Chapter 3 highlights the procedures used for the duration of the study. The sequence of Chapter 3 is as follows: description of my research participant, description of the procedures used, and a description of the data collection.

#### **Description of Research Participant**

The student that I worked with is named Sarah Brown. This pseudonym has been used to protect the identity and information of the student. The student is in fourth grade; however she has been promoted to the fifth grade for the upcoming 2013-2014 school year. The student's chronological age at the time of this research is 10 years 6 months and 14 days. The student has had her initial Special Education evaluation on May 21, 2013. It was determined that Sarah has a specific learning disability. Her behavioral strengths are helping adults, being respectful, being honest, and getting along well with others. Her behavior struggles are her ability to stay focused on a specific topic or subject area. The teacher noted that Sarah has difficulty learning from consequences of off task behavior.

Sarah has been observed to learn best in a smaller group environment. She has a positive interaction and relationship with peers and adults. She has been observed to rarely be on task and is missing 50% of her current assignments. Additionally, Sarah is observed to be more involved in social happenings in the classroom than her academic work. Academic strengths of Sarah include her ability to identify sound blends, vowels, odd vowels, and diphthongs. Sarah also has

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strengths in pronouncing multi-syllable words, and using chunking strategies with affixes and root words. She can also visualize during reading and support her rationale verbally and sometimes in writing. She has performed higher on tests that have used fictional writing. Sarah struggles in using context clues to decode. She will often skip over words she does not know to mask her inability to sound it out. She also has trouble correcting herself and needs more processing time than some of her peers. If something does not make sense to Sarah she will not re-read the passage in order to make connections. She also struggles with predicting and inferring meaning of passages or situations. Additionally, her comprehension is a major area of struggle. In writing and reading, Sarah also has difficulty determining the most important information from the literature and summarizing what she has read or wrote. Sarah also has weaknesses in organizing her thoughts and expressing her ideas with support and content. Sarah's teacher has noted that the student requires extra help from the teacher as well as extra encouragement and attention. The student learns best when an adult is working individually with her and providing adequate amount of encouragement.

Previous interventions include intensive interventions 45 minutes 2 times a week in reading and math with tier 2 strategies. Currently, Sarah receives tier 2 interventions in Language! for 30 minutes 2 times per week, focusing on basic language and writing skills. Sarah has shown slow and steady progress. Additionally, Sarah receives small group guided reading instruction from her teachers for 30 minutes 5 times per week. When tested using the Fontas and Pinnell benchmark (Fontas & Pinnell, 2011), Sarah was rated on level O. She was tested on February 16, 2013. This level means her comprehension is between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade academically compared to her peers.

According to standardized testing, Sarah has scored on the minimal level. She has taken

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the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE: McGraw-Hill, 2013) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2013) assessments. Her scores on the WKCE in reading are 425 and in math she has scored a 404. Both of these are considered minimal for the WKCE rubric. On the most recent 2013 spring MAP assessment, Sarah received a 186 in reading and a 190 on math. Her scores indicate that her abilities are at the lower 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. Modifications that Sarah will and has received for the duration of her current IEP include the use of manipulatives and visual aids, pre and post front loading, quiet reading corners, and adjusted assignments.

A teacher administered the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities (Woodcock and Johnson, 2001) to Sarah in May of 2013. The teacher observed that Sarah was left handed and had a pleasant disposition yet was easily distracted during the testing. The teacher also noted that Sarah required encouraging words in order to have confidence to finish. The results of the Woodcock Johnson show that Sarah scored a standard score of 76 in reading, which shows a discrepancy between her ability and achievement academically. In addition, Sarah's annual reading goal for her current IEP is to increase her reading level from a mid-2<sup>nd</sup> grade level to ending 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level with 80% accuracy with 3 out of 5 attempts. Her smaller benchmarks include increasing her ability to describe characters, to determine the meaning of words used in context and to demonstrate a strong understanding of text.

Sarah struggles in reading comprehension and has difficulty explaining literature. Sarah also has difficulty reflecting on what she has read. Sarah's academic background is related to this study because this study focuses on comprehension and effective interventions for a struggling reader. Sarah struggles in the academic areas that are concentrated on for the purpose of this study.

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### **Description of Procedures Used**

This section describes the sequence of events used to create an effective intervention for a struggling reader. The first step that I took was to test Sarah using the Qualitative Reading Inventory - 5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). I selected literature that is on the appropriate grade level. I administered the appropriate word list test in order to assess Sarah's ability to read specific words. I then administered one appropriate grade level narrative reading inventory assessment. Next, I administered one appropriate grade level expository reading assessment. The reason that I used two types of reading pieces is because Sarah's IEP stated that she is familiar with these types of writing. Also, according to Firmender, Reis, and Sweeny (2013) it is imperative that teachers differentiate their lessons and classroom activities in order to meet the needs of all students. Next, I scored Sarah's assessments and designed an appropriate intervention that I will discuss in detail in a later part in this chapter. Next, I administered a student survey that was designed to better understand Sarah's likes, dislikes, strengths, and weaknesses when it came to her perception of self. This is to better understand her likes and dislikes and reading habits in order to create an engaging and relevant intervention for her.

With the initial information I gathered from the first day of research with my participant, I created an instructional intervention. The instructional intervention was based on the individual research participant's needs, the previous research cited and discussed in chapter 2 of this paper, and also my professional expertise as an educator. I designed a weekly lesson plan. Each daily lesson was split into parts that focused on major areas of need for Sarah. The first 30 minutes of each session was devoted to reading together. Sarah and I would alternate pages and read this way for the duration of the session during week 1. I provided Sarah with a variety of reading material that were short story narratives and allowed her to select which narrative she wanted to

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read for each upcoming day of the week. Before reading the actual story each day of the first week, I activated Sarah's prior knowledge by asking her investigation questions that allowed her to think about what she was reading before she read. These were predetermined questions that I produced after I read the text myself the night before each session. The reason that I activated prior knowledge is because the study conducted by Garth-McCullough (2008) suggests activating prior knowledge of African American students in order to determine the effect that this has on the relationship between cultural orientation of literature and reading comprehension, the effect of prior knowledge on low, mid, and high level readers. Activating prior knowledge was a main procedure because it helped Sarah understand what she was reading based off of her own cultural relevance and knowledge. Each day of the week I also introduced a new literacy term to Sarah so she could better understand the terms when I used them during our intervention. For example, on July 2, 2013, I introduced the word "foreshadow" on a note card and explained the definition to Sarah before we read to accompany the strategy of activating prior knowledge. On this day, I also taught Sarah how to follow along while reading using a bookmark and/or a pencil to track each word she is reading on each page. Additionally, the terms on each note card progressed each day of the intervention and a new term was added each day to the note card pile. As a part of activating prior knowledge, the literary term note cards were reviewed every day that a new term was added. The following are a total list of presented terms, not listed in the particular order that were taught however: foreshadow comprehension, assess sequence of events, justify, analyze, comprehend context clues, fact, and opinion, explain details, describe, and evaluate. These terms were taught because the study conducted by Baker, Fuchs, Gersten, and Williams (2001) promotes the importance of teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities. Activation of prior knowledge was consistent throughout the

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duration of the intervention. Additionally, twice per week scaffolding through activation of prior knowledge was also completed using a semantic visual. The visual aids were used to activate knowledge on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The reason semantic aids were used is because according to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997), the following facilitate the recall and comprehension of reading: 1) Pre-teaching vocabulary and completing relevant group and independent work on content, 2) Presenting graphic organizers containing main ideas prior to reading the content and generating relevant questions and 3) Finding answers to questions about the story prior to reading. After the activation of prior knowledge the first week, Sarah and I partner read each short story. We partner read because according to a study by Yurick, Robinson, Cartledge, Lo, and Evans (2006) repeated and paired readings are effective when seeking to improve a student's comprehension, reading accuracy, and reading rate in general. The same pattern of paired reading was repeated the third week of intervention as well. After exactly 30 minutes of each session, Sarah and I walked to the water fountain to get a drink of water. This is due to her lack of attention that her teachers noted in her IEP. This break was given to allow the student to regroup her thoughts and take a break from intense reading before we transitioned to the second part of each session.

After 30 minutes of partner reading and literary vocabulary term enhancement, the remaining 30 minutes of the intervention were used to implement a variety of comprehension strategies. These strategies varied from worksheets obtained from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) and were consistent with each story that was read. Each short story had a paired worksheet and comprehension materials that were provided on the worksheet. Sarah completed each comprehension worksheet in order to review the material that she had read. Another strategy used during this remaining time was manipulatives that were in the form of note cards. These

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note cards had key strategies written in the lower left corner and asked probing and critical thinking questions that Sarah answered. This was used as a procedure because according to McKeown et al., (2009) content instruction focused on students' attention of text through open ended and meaning based questioning is statistically significantly. Weeks 1, 2, and 3 followed this same pattern for the last 30 minutes of each session.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of intervention, the first 30 minutes were devoted to the same pattern of intervention as week 1 and 3. There was scaffolding and literacy note cards. This week, however, incorporated sustained silent reading and individual reading as well. Sarah was trained how to read alone and encouraged to use her pencil or a bookmark to track her reading as she went through the pages. The reason this was implemented is because according to Yurick, Robinson, Cartledge, Lo, and Evans (2006) all of the students in their research increased their oral reading rate and accuracy over sustained silent reading. I also implemented finger counting activities that allowed for Sarah to track her literacy terms on her fingers. For example, when we discussed using context clues, her index finger reminded her to look at pictures, her middle finger reminded her to look at the titles, and her ring finger reminded her to look at subtitles. This intervention was used because research by Barry and Moore (2004) found that teaching and implementing simple strategy instruction makes a difference in whether a student passes an assessment (Barry and Moore, 2004, p. 14). Additionally, I used this strategy because Barry and Moore (2004) used this strategy which consisted of a method in which the students would use each of their fingers to prompt organization in a written essay (Barry & Moore, 2004, p.12) and found it to be statistically significant. The fingers served as a memory stimulus and the method was taught through direct modeling. Throughout the duration of each session, I used language of praise and encouragement to encourage Sarah to continue to try her best.

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### **Description of Data Collection**

This section describes the data collection that was used in this study to decide if the interventions and procedures were successful. This research utilizes formal and informal assessments.

In order to analyze Sarah's reading abilities and literacy skills the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) was administered. The QRI-5 was used as a pre-test and post-test. I selected the examiner word list starting at the pre-primer level and continuing until the fifth grade level. The word lists provide a quick estimate of the student's word identification ability. The skills included in the word list assessment include evaluating knowledge of letter-sound matches, vowel patterns, and analyzing the differences between word identification in isolation and in context. I administered this word list as a pre-test and as a post-test.

In addition to the word list, I also administered level 3 narrative and expository passages from the QRI-5. This assessment was used to evaluate Sarah's implicit and explicit comprehension levels. I used the same level of the QRI-5 for the pre-test and for the post-test. During the administration of the test, the student did not struggle with reading the words in the story and if she did not appear to know a word, she read quickly through it as to avoid stopping during the reading. I used language of encouragement and praise throughout the administration of the pre and posttest. The QRI-5 served as a formal assessment for the purpose of the research. It was administered the first session and the last session.

During the first session, the informal assessment of an interest inventory was also administered. See the appendix for the completed interest survey. For the interest survey, I read each question out loud to Sarah and she wrote down her answers on the sheet. The purpose of



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this sheet was to attain information about Sarah's interests and reading habits. This information was used to better attain reading material that is of interest to the student.

During the actual intervention, I used 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level reading material and comprehension worksheets from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com). I collected data daily by using scaffolding activities that involved foreshadowing and predicting activities. I used informal and formal observations of Sarah as she read to take daily notes. See the appendix for the actual data notes. I also used the information from daily comprehension worksheets to collect data about the student and her progress. See the appendix for a sample of the worksheet.

This section describes the data collection that was used in this study to decide if the interventions and procedures were successful. This research utilizes formal and informal assessments.

The QRI-5 was used as a pre and post-test assessment. The interest survey was used to assess the student's interests for the purpose of the research. Informal and formal observations were used as data collection as well as a part of the daily intervention strategies.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 3 discusses the sample population I worked with for the duration of my research. My research participant is one female African American student who is entering the fifth grade. She struggles in the area of comprehension. Chapter 3 also discusses the sequence of events that I used for an effective intervention and includes a description of the data collection for the research. Additionally, Chapter 3 highlights the procedures used for the duration of the study. The following chapter discusses the results that were obtained during my research with my participant.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

**Results**

The purpose of the research and the specific intervention was to determine an effective intervention that focuses on comprehension in a struggling reader. During the duration of the intervention, I taught Sarah to foreshadow narratives, infer main ideas, justify her explanations with details, analyze text, create a sequence of events, recall details, predict plots, define vocabulary use context clues, and to summarize what she has read through a variety of short stories obtained from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com).

Sarah completed two types of assessments to measure her progress. I administered the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). I selected literature that is on the appropriate grade level in the form of a pre-test and a post-test. I administered the appropriate word list test in order to assess Sarah's ability to read specific words. The word lists provide a quick estimate of the student's word-identification ability. I then administered one appropriate grade level narrative reading inventory assessment. Next, I administered one appropriate grade level expository reading assessment. Pre-test and post-test literature was at the same level but different stories. Both used repeated sentence structure and were appropriate for Sarah's reading and comprehension level. See appendix for sample of the pre-test and post-test. Both the pre-test and post-test have the same amount of questions to be answered by the student. As an informal assessment, an interest inventory was also administered. See the appendix for the completed interest survey. The purpose of this sheet was to attain information about Sarah's interests and reading habits. This information was used to better attain reading material that is of interest to the student. The following data is evidence of Sarah's overall abilities in reading comprehension before and after the intervention.

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### **Pre-intervention results of the QRI-5**

On the first session of intervention, the student completed a pre-test in the form of the QRI-5. The student also completed an interest inventory. To find out the appropriate reading level of the student, I administered the word list at the pre-primer 1 level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result.

Next, I administered the word list at the pre-primer 2/3 level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Additionally, Sarah was administered the word list at the primer level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. After this list, Sarah was administered the word list at the first grade level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Next, Sarah was administered the word list at the second grade level. The student identified 90% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5. Sarah was administered the word list at the third grade level. The student identified 75% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered to be performing at the instructional level at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Lastly, Sarah was presented with the word list at the fourth grade level. The student identified 65% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered to be performing at the frustration level at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Table 1 shows the total overall correct words identified during the administration of the QRI-5. Table 1 also shows the percentage of automatically correct words read by Sarah as well as the performance level. Sarah read the word

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list at an independent level until she reached the third level. At the third level Sarah was at the instructional level. At the fourth level of the word lists, she reached the frustration level.

*Table 1*

*Pretest Results of the QRI-5 Word List Identification*

Level	Percent Total Correct Automatic	Total Correct Overall	Level
Pre-Primer 1	100%	17/17	Independent
Pre-Primer 2/3	95%	20/20	Independent
Primer	100%	20/20	Independent
First	100%	20/20	Independent
Second	90%	18/20	Independent
Third	75%	15/20	Instructional
Fourth	65%	13/20	Frustration

The word identification list along with the identified reading levels from chapter 1 of this research provided insight for the level of narrative and expository reading for the pre-test QRI-5. I administered a level three narrative titled “A Trip to the Zoo.” Table 2 displays the results of this reading inventory. I administered a level three expository titled “Where do people live?” Table 3 displays the results of this reading.

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Table 2

*Pre-test Results of the QRI-5 Narrative*

QRI-5 Measure	Results	Comments
Level/Title	Level three "A Trip to the Zoo"	Student appeared to be familiar with the concept of a zoo
Prediction Task	75% Familiar	
Accuracy	97% Instructional	
Rate	90.87 WPM	
Retelling Task	13/55 ideas recalled (23%)	
Comprehension		
Explicit	25%	
Implicit	25%	
Overall	50% Frustration	

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Table 3

*Pre-test Results of the QRI-5 Expository*

QRI-5 Measure	Results	Comments
Level/ Title	Level three “Where do People Live	Many of the terms did not appear to be familiar to student, such as rural versus countryside
Prediction Task	66% familiar	
Accuracy	96% Instructional	
Rate	85.84 WPM	
Retelling Task	14/51 ideas recalled (27%)	
Comprehension		
Explicit	25%	
Implicit	37%	
Overall	62% Frustration	

The results in Table 2 and 3 shows that Sarah performed at the frustration level for both the narrative and expository reading. See the appendix for the raw data. According to Table 2, Sarah was able to answer 25% of the explicit questions in the narrative and 25% of the implicit questions in the narrative. According to Table 3, Sarah was able to answer 25% of the explicit questions in the expository and 37% of the implicit questions in the expository reading. Table 2 and 3 both show that Sarah was familiar with the reading content during the prediction task. Table 2 shows that Sarah was able to recall 23% of the ideas when retelling the narrative reading. Table 3 shows that Sarah was able to recall 27% of the ideas when retelling the expository

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reading. Although Sarah has shown in the pretest that her word identification level is in the independent range, see Table 1, her low comprehension scores state that she is performing at level three in the QRI-5 (Caldwell & Leslie, 2011)

### **Overview of Intervention**

The intervention was held July 3, 2013, to July 17, 2013. Each daily lesson was split into parts that focused on major areas of need for Sarah. The first 30 minutes of each session was devoted to reading together. Before reading the actual story each day of the intervention, I activated Sarah's prior knowledge by asking her investigation questions that allowed her to think about what she was reading before she read. Week 1 and 3 we partner read together. During week 2, Sarah participated in sustained silent reading. Each day of the week I also introduced a new literacy term to Sarah so she could better understand the terms when I used them during our intervention. These terms were presented on notecards. Additionally, twice per week scaffolding through activation of prior knowledge was also completed using a semantic visual. The remaining 30 minutes of the intervention were used to implement a variety of comprehension strategies. These strategies varied from worksheets obtained from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) and were consistent with each story that was read. Each short story had a paired worksheet and comprehension materials that were provided on the worksheet. Sarah completed each comprehension worksheet in order to review the material that she had read.

### **Post Intervention results of the QRI-5**

On the last session of intervention, the student completed a post-test passage of the QRI-5. To measure growth of the student, I administered the word list at the pre-primer 1 level. The student identified 100 of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this

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level according to the QRI-5 result. Next, I administered the word list at the pre-primer 2/3 level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Additionally, Sarah was administered the word list at the primer level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5. After this list, Sarah was administered the word list at the first grade level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Next, Sarah was administered the word list at the second grade level. The student identified 100% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered independent at this level according to the QRI-5 result. Sarah was administered the word list at the third grade level. The student identified 95% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered to be performing at the independent level at this level according to the QRI-5. Lastly, Sarah was presented with the word list at the fourth grade level. The student identified 85% of the words correctly at this level. Sarah is considered to be performing at the instructional level at this level according to the QRI-5 result.

Table 4 shows the total overall correct words identified during the administration of the QRI-5 posttest. Table 4 also shows the percentage of automatically correct words read by Sarah as well as the performance level. Sarah read the word list at an independent level until she reached the fourth level. At the fourth level Sarah was at the instructional level. During the post-test, Sarah did not meet a level of frustration.



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Table 4

*Post test Result of the QRI-5 Word List Identification*

Level	Percent Total Correct Automatic	Total Correct Overall	Level
Pre-Primer 1	100%	17/17	Independent
Pre-Primer 2/3	100%	20/20	Independent
Primer	100%	20/20	Independent
First	95%	20/20	Independent
Second	90%	18/20	Independent
Third	85%	19/20	Instructional
Fourth	85%	17/20	Instructional

For the post test, I followed the same pattern as the testing for the pre-test. I administered a level three narrative titled “A Special Birthday for Rosa.” Table 5 displays the results of this reading inventory. I administered a level three expository titled “Cats, Lions and Tigers in Your House.” Table 6 displays the results of this reading.

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Table 5

*Post-test Results of the QRI-5 Narrative*

QRI-5 Measure	Results	Comments
Level/Title	Level three “A Special Birthday for Rosa”	Student appeared to be familiar with the concept of a birthday party
Prediction Task	91% Familiar	
Accuracy	99% Independent	
Rate	119.25 WPM	
Retelling Task	32/74 ideas recalled (43%)	
Comprehension		
Explicit	50%	
Implicit	37%	
Overall	87% Instructional	

Table 6

*Post-test Results of the QRI-5 Expository*

QRI-5 Measure	Results	Comments
Level/Title	Level three “Cats: Lions and Tigers in Your House”	Student appeared to be familiar with the different animals discussed in the reading
Prediction Task	100% familiar	
Accuracy	97% Instructional	
Rate	89.4 WPM	
Retelling Task	24/47 ideas recalled (51%)	

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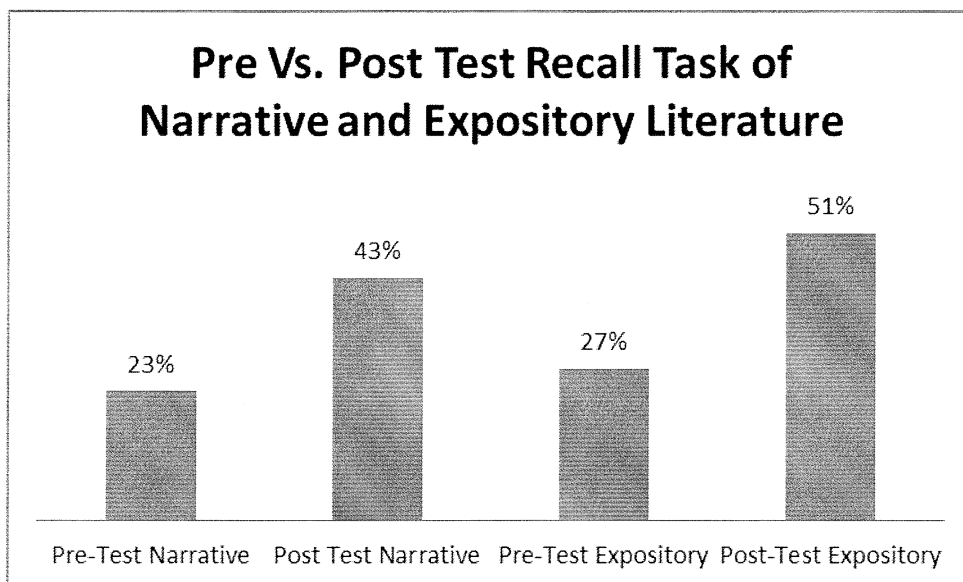
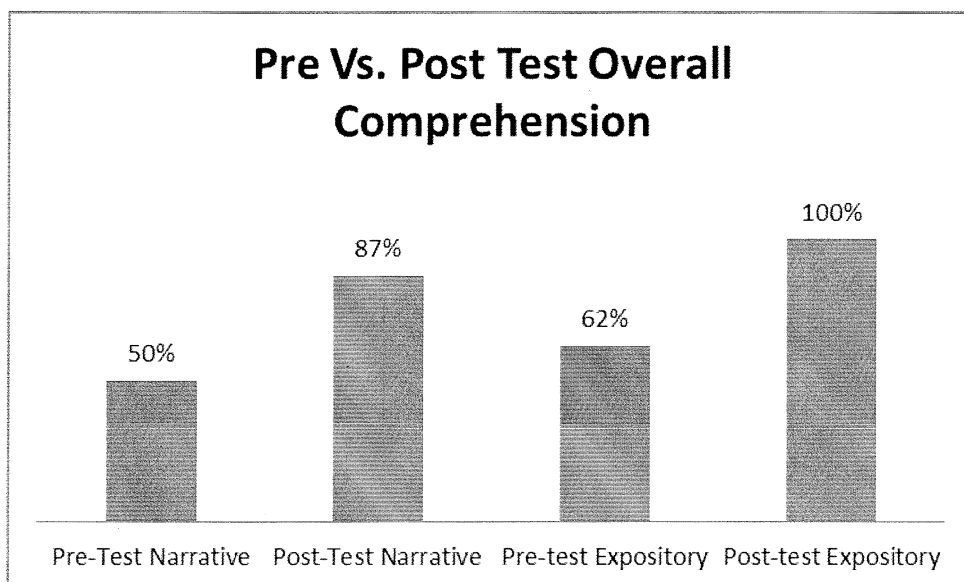
Comprehension		
Explicit	50%	
Implicit	50%	
Overall	100% Independent	

The results in Table 5 show that Sarah performed at the instructional level for the narrative reading. The results in Table 6 show that Sarah performed at the independent level for comprehension for the expository reading. See the appendix for the raw data. According to Table 5, Sarah was able to answer 50% of the explicit questions in the narrative and 37% of the implicit questions in the narrative. According to Table 6, Sarah was able to answer 50% of the explicit questions in the expository and 50% of the implicit questions in the expository reading. Table 5 and 6 both show that Sarah was familiar with the reading content during the prediction task. Table 5 shows that Sarah was able to recall 43% of the ideas when retelling the narrative reading. Table 6 shows that Sarah was able to recall 51% of the ideas when retelling the expository reading. Sarah has shown in the posttest that her word identification level is in the independent range; see table 4. Her increased comprehension scores state that she is performing at level four in the QRI-5 (Caldwell & Leslie, 2011).

#### **Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Data:**

Graph 1 and 2 shows a comparison of recall and comprehension data from the pre-test and the post-test narrative reading by Sarah. Graph 1 shows an increase of 20% of recalled items from the pre and post-test. Graph 1 also shows a 24% increase of recalled items from the pre-test and the post-test of the expository reading by Sarah.

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*Graph 1**Pre Versus Post Test Recall task of Narrative and Expository Literature**Graph 2**Pre versus Post Test Overall Comprehension*

Graph 2 above shows the comparison of data of the overall comprehension performed by Sarah during the pre-test and the post-test. According to Graph 2, Sarah showed a 37% increase

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in explicit and implicit comprehension from the pre-test narrative to the post-test narrative.

Graph 2 also shows a 38% increase of explicit and implicit comprehension from the pre-test and post-test expository reading.

### **Conclusion:**

The focus of the intervention was to increase Sarah's reading comprehension. The results indicate that Sarah showed an increase from the pre- and post-test scores. According to table 2, 3, 5, and 6, Sarah showed an increase in the retelling task as well as her overall comprehension. Graph 1 and 2 show a visual comparison of the data. The visual comparison also shows an increase in the area of recall and in the area of comprehension.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to explore methods to improve comprehension through culture and effective interventions in a struggling reader. The research question that I explored was “What are effective interventions to improve reading comprehension in a struggling reader?” I created an intervention for the student. The intervention occurred over 3 weeks and each session was a 60 minute intervention. The student-completed a pre-test and a post-test with the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). At the conclusion of the three week intervention, there is evidence that suggests the student, Sarah, improved her reading comprehension overall. In this chapter, I will discuss the connection my research has to previous research. I will also discuss the connection my research has to the common core standards. Additionally, this chapter will explain the results of my research. Chapter 5 also discusses the strengths and limitations of my research. Lastly, chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for the research participant and how to best meet her needs in the future. The first section connects the common core standards to my research.

### Connections to Existing Research

Before I was able to start my own research, I had to study and examine the research of other researchers and their work. The research that I focused on was about comprehension in children in general, factors that affect comprehension, the connection between culture and comprehension, strategies used to improve reading comprehension, and effective methods to reach a student with a learning disability. With the information and insight I gained from the research I discussed in chapter 2, I was able to gain new knowledge that connected to my own research. I was able to design an effective intervention with the information I learned from previous studies. Redford, Thiede, Wiley & Griffin (2012) suggests that the results for their study show that long time students still had better metacomprehension accuracy than the new students.

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This research led me to believe that the longer a student is exposed to comprehension strategies and the more these strategies are stressed as important to the student, the better chance they have to retain those comprehension strategies. The study by Magmairaj and Montgomery (2012) suggests that attention determines what can be recalled. Additionally, memory capacity also plays a large role in a child's ability to recall information. Since it is noted in Sarah's IEP that she can have a difficult time staying on task, I incorporated breaks into her intervention and created engaging ways to present the material to her. I also used repetition when teaching literacy terms in order to gain her attention and give her a better opportunity to learn and become familiar with the material being taught. This research suggests that attention and memory are important factors in comprehension and I designed my intervention with these factors at the forefront. Scott, Teale, Dumets-Carry, Johnson, & Morgan (2009) suggest that effective literacy strategies do exist. This study was conducted in order to find out how an educator can be effective when working with urban children. This research suggests there are differing ways to connect literature with students who attend school in an urban setting. Culture does play a role in the perception a student has about literacy, comprehension, and an appreciation for ethnic differences. This study suggested that significant needs of students who attend urban school are emotional support, exposure, and changes in attitude toward education. In my intervention, I was adamant to include praise and encouragement as Sarah and I worked together in order to support her emotionally. The intervention also included a variety of readings about different cultures and types of people in order to expose her to different types of literature. Firmender, Reis, and Sweeny (2013) suggest that it is imperative that teachers differentiate their lessons and classroom activities in order to meet the needs of all students. Many students have differing levels of comprehension and understanding and because of this a teacher must be conscious of these differences and differentiate accordingly. Because of the information obtained from this research, all of my instruction for the intervention was differentiated and although it was consistent in timing, the material differed in content and presentation. As my research became more specific, I studied

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articles about culture and effective strategies to reach a struggling reader. The study conducted by Garth-McCullough (2008) focuses on analyzing the prior knowledge of African American students and the effect this has on the relationship between cultural orientation of literature and reading comprehension. This researcher wanted to determine the effect of prior knowledge on low, mid, and high level readers. Culture can play a factor in the capabilities students demonstrate, focusing on comprehension and reading ability and the ability to apply content knowledge. Additionally, the researcher suggests educators must identify factors that influence and impede individual student needs. Knowing this information allowed me to create an intervention that incorporated scaffolding and cultural vocabulary scaffolding as well as activating prior knowledge. If literature was selected that I perceived to be outside of Sarah's cultural realm, I spent time discussing and explaining differing elements of the story and that particular culture. If a child has a specific learning disability, it can contribute to that child's ability to comprehend and their literacy ability. Barry and Moore (2004) implicate that students with a specific learning disability may benefit from specialized instruction designed to enhance student performance on standardized exams such as a simple self-directed organizational strategy. I want Sarah to be able to depend on her own thinking and recall abilities when reading literature. I taught strategies that she could refer to on her own accord because they were implemented consistently and she is comfortable with these strategies. Teachers should have this objective in mind when working with students with a specific learning disability. Therefore, when teaching methods and strategies to Sarah, I was mindful to teach meaningful strategies that she could use beyond the intervention duration. For example, scaffolding with foreshadowing, predictions, and using visual charts are all skills I emphasized that she can utilize in the future after our intervention sessions have ended. Baker, Fuchs, Gersten, and Williams (2001) promote the importance of teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities. I focused on patterns of strategies throughout the intervention in order to make the strategies memorable to Sarah. We partner read because according to a study by Yurick,



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Robinson, Cartledge, Lo, and Evans (2006) repeated and paired readings are effective when seeking to improve a student's comprehension, reading accuracy, and reading rate in general. Yurick, Robinson, Cartledge, Lo, and Evans (2006) suggest sustained silent reading plays a role in increasing students reading accuracy and comprehension as well. Because of this, the intervention incorporated one week of sustained silent reading in between the two weeks of implemented partner reading. McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) suggest incorporating content and strategy methods when designing an intervention. This research suggests using narrative and expository texts that elicit direct questioning and rich discussion.

For my intervention, this research directs me to teach comprehension methods and focus on using short texts that elicit discussion. I incorporated short narrative and expository texts that Sarah was allowed to select. I read each of the readings in advance as to prepare questions that elicited discussion about the literature that focused on both comprehension strategies and content questions.

This section made a connection between previous research and my own research. This section explains the roadmap taken to incorporate previous research to design an effective intervention for Sarah. I found that culture and the importance placed on literacy play a role in a student's connection to literature. It was also discovered that specific strategies should be taught to a students with a learning disability. Activating prior knowledge and scaffolding can be a large steppingstone with connecting literacy to students with learning disabilities. Using narrative and expository texts is effective when teaching comprehension strategies to students.

### **Connections to Common Core Standards**

My research connects to the common core standards. The intervention that I designed addressed the appropriate grade level standards for a fifth grader. Sarah is entering fifth grade. Therefore I incorporated standards that address her appropriate grade level from the previous school year and that will assist her into her current school year. My intervention addresses many

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of the common core state standards for fourth grade English Language Arts. My research highlights reading standards for literature K-5. Those standards are as follows:

RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from text.

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflect upon a topic; summarize the text.

RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, setting, or events in a story or drama drawing on specific details in the text.

RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

R.L. 5.5 explains how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

RL.5.7 Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text.

RL5.9 Compare and Contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

RL.5.10 By the end of the year read and comprehends informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

([www.dpi.gov](http://www.dpi.gov))

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My instruction and intervention was focused on major comprehension elements such as compare and contrast, analyze, predict, foreshadow, inferences, and summarizing. These comprehension strategies along with the reading intervention strategies all connected to the common core standards at Sarah's appropriate grade level. Sarah participated in activities that are appropriate for her grade level and that will help her perform at her appropriate grade level.

This section discusses the connection my research has to the common core state standards. I focused on important elements for Sarah's appropriate grade level. My research addresses the standards that will scaffold Sarah to perform at the appropriate grade level.

### **Explanation of Results**

In the two previous sections, connections to relevant research and the common core state standards was addressed. In this section, the results of my research are examined and explained. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) show that the results were statistically significant. See the appendix for actual test samples. The results show that Sarah's overall explicit and implicit comprehension did improve over the three week intervention. According to the results, Sarah placed at an independent level while performing the word list assessment during the pretest until she reached the third level of the word list vocabulary. At the third level, Sarah performed at an instructional level. As she continued to read onto the fourth level, she reached a frustration level at the fourth level of the word list vocabulary.

Additionally, during the pretest Sarah was able to recall 13/55 ideas when reading the narrative passage.. She was able to recall 14/51 ideas when reading the expository. In both readings, she performed at a frustration level in comprehension. I observed Sarah hastily reading through the material and appearing to gradually skip over words she did not know. It did not appear that she was taking her time reading or understanding what she was reading but rather reading the words without understanding. The reading ability was present, however the

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comprehension aspect was lacking. Because of this, I made it priority to explain to Sarah that she should slow down during intervention sessions and also reread passages if she is unclear of the content.

During the intervention, I had to reiterate simple tasks and roles of a reader to Sarah. I taught by modeling proficient ways to read and also by correcting her if she made a mistake. If Sarah did make a mistake, I wrote down the words in order to revisit the words later with her. I informed her that if she saw me writing during the reading period, I was only taking notes and it was nothing to worry about. I wanted to create a comfortable learning environment with her so that she felt safe and encouraged throughout the intervention. I noticed that as time went on, Sarah enjoyed selecting the short stories to read on her own. She enjoyed the freedom to decide what we would read during our session and began taking the initiative every day to skim through the books using context clues to decide which literature she wanted to read. I noticed her confidence increase every time I encouraged her or offered praise for her reading and answers. I also noticed that as our sessions continued, she began asking me questions about reading passages. This was a sign of improvement considering her teachers have said she is quiet and is easily distracted and does not participate often. I discovered that Sarah needs that extra encouragement and interest from a teacher in order to believe in herself. As she began believing it was all right to make a mistake and answer a question even if she did not know the answer, it became very obvious to me that she likes reading and may have come off as a shy reader because she was afraid to make mistakes in front of her peers. I noticed that specific pattern strategies such as notecard, literacy implementation, partner reading, visual semantic maps, paired with confidence building, did improve Sarah's comprehension overall when reading short narrative and expository texts. Sarah completed daily multiple choice questionnaires to influence her comprehension that were paired with the Reading A-Z's reading material ( [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com), 2010). I noticed that at the beginning of the intervention, she allowed me to read the questions to her and she would answer them. I also noticed that toward the end of the intervention, Sarah

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appeared more comfortable with the material and read much of the questions on her own and took the initiative in many ways when answering the comprehension questions. These questions then would develop into discussion topics. All of the texts utilized for the intervention were on the appropriate independent level for Sarah so that she could feel comfortable with the content and feel a sense of independence when completing the tasks.

When comparing the pretest to the post-test results of the vocabulary word list, Sarah did not reach the frustration level during the post-test. At the third and fourth level of the word list identification, Sarah performed at the instructional level. I believe that this data shows an improvement in Sarah's ability to read particular words as well as suggests an increase in her reading level in general. This can be due to her slowing down and taking her time when reading. This can also be due to the scaffolding and vocabulary enhancing activities that she learned during the intervention. When comparing Sarah's pre-test and post test results from the QRI-5 reading measure, the results suggests that Sarah's recall ability as well as her overall explicit and implicit comprehension increased. The results show an increase of 20% of recalled items from the pre and post-test of the narrative reading. The results also show a 24% increase of recalled items from the pre-test and the post-test of the expository reading by Sarah. Sarah showed a 37% increase in explicit and implicit comprehension from the pre-test narrative to the post-test narrative. Additionally, results show a 38% increase of explicit and implicit comprehension from the pre-test and post-test expository reading. The results are significant. The interventions strategies that I incorporated for the intervention for Sarah were effective and did improve her abilities in her greatest area of need. This is noteworthy because now Sarah is one step closer to performing on her correct grade level as well as reaching her grade level standards. During this intervention, it appeared to me that Sarah enjoyed working with me and looked forward to our daily sessions. She has also verbalized this on several occasions. Her behaviors and body language suggest to me that she had fun during our sessions and therefore this might be a reason she appeared to be engaged during the sessions. Additionally, my professional opinion is that

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Sarah's confidence was built through encouraging words and praise. She appeared to try harder every time I encouraged her and also showed signs of happiness when she was rewarded with positive language for attempting to answer a question. She would smile and become more ambitious as the sessions went on because the environment was positive and comfortable.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

It is important to explore the strengths and limitations of my research to determine the effectiveness of my research. This section explores the strengths and limitations of my research and allows me to grow as a researcher and take into account what could be done differently, if anything, in the future. One strength of this research is being able to work with a student who needed intervention in the area of comprehension. This is strength because my student's needs were met as well as related to my research topic of interest. Another strength to my research is the attendance of my student. She attended the daily sessions for the entire duration of the research, only missing one day. This is a strength because we were able to maximize the time that we did have together in order to effectively reiterate comprehension strategies for Sarah and allow her enough time to become familiar with the strategies being taught. Another strength of my research was being able to become familiar with my research participant's areas of strengths and weaknesses before the actual intervention took place. This was strength because I was able to plan according to previous assessments Sarah took as well as gain information from teachers that interact with her daily. Additionally, administering the QRI-5 as a pre and post-test is strength of this research. This is strength because this allowed me to formally measure growth and improvement and provided evidence of this progress.

Although there are many strengths to my research, there are also limitations. One limitation includes the amount of time I was able to teach effective strategies to Sarah. The intervention sessions were only three weeks long and only four days per week for one hour. This time was very limited although very rich in content. Had the intervention time span been wider,

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it may have allowed me to increase Sarah's comprehension levels even higher. Additionally, more time would have given Sarah and I a longer time to work on other areas of need which would then help her even more throughout her academic career. If this study is repeated in the future, allowing more time for an intervention would be a proper modification for future interventions.

### **Recommendations**

This section provides my professional opinion about future actions that should be taken in order to continue to improve Sarah's literary ability. The first suggestion is to allow Sarah frequent breaks throughout long periods of work time. She can become restless and I observed that after she would take a break, she was easily able to refocus. I would also suggest that Sarah continue to participate in partner reading and sustained silent reading for at least 15 minutes every night. She appears to enjoy reading and has verbally said that she does enjoy reading. Providing this extra reading time would continue to help her comprehension in reading. I would also recommend that Sarah's future educators continue to use scaffolding activities and use notecards when presenting new vocabulary terms to Sarah. She enjoys working with items she can physically see and appears to learn better from this type of pattern. I would also recommend that Sarah continue to be presented with reading material that is of cultural relevance and that caters to her interest because she shows high interest in these types of short stories. Lastly, I would recommend that daily praise and encouragement be given to Sarah throughout her academic career. From direct observation, it is clear that she thrives on her accomplishments and feels proud of trying her best when others encourage her to do so. Continual encouragement will help Sarah increase her self-confidence, when it comes to her academic abilities, and will help her continue to succeed.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 5 explores the results of my research. This chapter highlights my direct

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observations and explains the conclusions I gathered from my research with Sarah. Additionally, strengths and limitations are explored and noted for future replication of this same research. I have also provided my professional recommendations for future interventions or daily classroom learning for Sarah. Chapter 5 provides insight into my thought process through the interventions and provides a clear picture of how to improve comprehension in a struggling reader through the strategies that I selected as an educator.



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APPENDIX

Session	Instructional Plan	Specific Observations From Lesson	Concerns/Changes Warranted
1: July 1, 2013	Today's focus was to formally test Sarah using the QRI-5 and to also administer an interest inventory of her likes and dislikes	I noticed that Sarah enjoys writing, however appears to struggle with correctly relaying her thoughts on paper. She also has difficulty understanding plots of narratives and did make up details in the two stories we read that were not in the story. She has some trouble focusing and looks around the room periodically when we read together	I am concerned about Sarah's attention span. It appears that it is difficult for her to stay on task for long periods of time, however, I will do more research to learn ways to best reach her regardless of her short attention span.
2: July 2, 2013	Today, Sarah and I worked on the comprehension of foreshadowing and predicting using context clues. Sarah was very receptive to the concepts. We worked on hand movements that remind Sarah to use her pointer and middle finger to remind her to use the titles and pictures for context clues.	Sarah was very receptive to the concepts. We worked on hand movements that remind Sarah to use her pointer and middle finger to remind her to use the titles and pictures for context clues. Sarah was very receptive of the material. She understood what it meant to guess what would happen in the story. She also was excited to select between different options for the story that we read together. She and I read alternative pages and took turns	Also, I noticed that when I was reading initially, Sarah was looking at the wall and around the class. However, after I taught her how to follow along with her finger, this changed her attention 100% and followed along. I want to incorporate some physical movement and brain breaks because although Sarah paid attention during the lesson, she appeared to become lethargic during the comprehension worksheet. I also want to find a book mark or bright colored paper to offer Sarah as a word tracking device instead of using her finger to read along.
3: July 3, 2013	Today's plan was to	Today, we sat on a	I observed that

	<p>review foreshadowing, predicting, and context clues using titles and pictures. Today, I also wanted to introduce a “text tracker” for Sarah to use when reading. It looks similar to a book mark and is just a way for her to keep the lines of the text in line. Additionally, I wanted to focus on incorporating physical movement into the reading activities for the day. This is to avoid Sarah becoming tired and distracted during the lesson</p>	<p>couch side by side instead of in a chair and Sarah appeared to enjoy this. We shared the book we were reading and I held one side and she held the other. It was a very comfortable setting for her. She followed along while reading and also used the tracker to read all of the words that even I read aloud. We took turns reading every other page and I stopped periodically to ask comprehension based questions. Also, we concluded the lesson with a review worksheet that focused on comprehension based questions. We also reviewed vocabulary that she struggled with throughout the reading. I wrote them down as she stumbled over them and I wrote them on notecards at the end of reading and we reviewed together.</p>	<p>incorporating a small walk and stretches during the reading also helped Sarah focus during the instruction. She was energized and ready to focus. She appears to read words, yet not understand exactly what they mean. For future lessons, I will do more scaffolding with vocabulary words.</p>
<p>4: July 8, 2013</p>	<p>Today's plan was to revisit the key terms comprehension, context clues, and foreshadowing. These are on notecards and we reviewed them together. We also did foreshadowing for the daily story that we read.</p>	<p>Today, Sarah is reading alone with my guidance. We are also working on reading passages over in order to comprehend what the passage is about. She was taught how to read in a sustained silent reading pattern. Today, Sarah was very energetic and appeared excited to select the daily reading material. She needed to review the notecards</p>	<p>Today, I am concerned with Sarah's ability to remember key terms when there is a span of time between our meetings. She does appear to be a visual learner and now I will focus on more visual elements to continue to build her comprehension.</p>

		<p>three times because she did not recall the information from last session. However, after we reviewed them she was able to retain what they were and recite from memory. I constantly used the terms throughout the lesson in order to reiterate how to use them and what they mean. We also reviewed key terms from the reading and focused on the meaning of the words in the context of the reading.</p>	
5: July 9, 2013	<p>Today's plan is to add a new word to our notecards. The key focus is "analyze." We are going to analyze text in a narrative/expository titled "A walk in Roman shoes." We will also foreshadow using context clues. Additionally after reading the story I will ask questions using flashcards that require Sarah to analyze the text. We will also work on vocabulary building using scrabble. I will use this as a teachable moment to highlight new vocabulary to ensure Sarah understands the words we are creating.</p>	<p>Today, Sarah recalled the previous words from yesterday's lesson that were on the notecard. Repetition appears to be a useful and effective strategy for her. She was able to recall "analyze" without looking at the notecard. I noticed that she retains and comprehends the terms better when there is only one word to remember. Using the "two finger" method to recall context clues was also helpful. She read silently on her own for ten minutes and retold the details of what she read to me.</p>	<p>She used critical thinking skills to create words with scrabble. I want to research the positive effect using games as a hands on activity has on youth. If this is a routine that can be helpful, I want to continue to incorporate this for ten minutes at the end of every intervention session.</p>
6: July 10, 2013	<p>Today's plan is to review the terms we</p>	<p>Today, Sarah wanted to read the entire story on</p>	<p>I was very impressed that Sarah was able to</p>



	<p>have been using, introduce key vocabulary from the story we are reading, and introduce the word “analyze” to our comprehension key term notecards. I will also use the whiteboard and manipulatives to introduce the new vocabulary. I also have pre-written questions on post-its for Sarah to respond to.</p>	<p>her own. We used foreshadowing and she wrote her thoughts on the white board. Additionally, any word that she stumbled on I wrote down to come back and review with her. Our focus today was culture and we read about different family and community culture. I asked questions that allowed Sarah to relate this to her own family.</p>	<p>attain the meanings of different words as well as gain confidence to share her thoughts. It is very obvious that she is more comfortable with her reading comprehension and is not afraid to express herself. She also took the initiative today and volunteered to read the entire story without taking turns with me. She appears to be very interested in her sessions and today mentioned that she is “learning a lot and having fun.”</p>
<p>7: July 11, 2013</p>	<p>Our key focus today is to introduce fact versus opinion and to understand what sequence of events mean. These are added to our notecard comprehension notecards. Sarah selected to read a fiction narrative fantasy today. We are using a worksheet that will require Sarah to explain the order of events from the story.</p>	<p>I introduced fact versus opinion and also the phrase sequence of events. Sarah was familiar with fact versus opinion but had never heard of sequence of events. We spent more time learning about the order of events as well as understanding why it is important to understand these terms for the purpose of literacy development. I want her to understand why she is learning important concepts and what they mean in her daily life. We read the story, this time taking turns. Her fluency is developing and therefore I want her to continue to hear what a fluent reader sounds like and then to practice on</p>	<p>She needed more explanation of what sequence and order meant. I used real life examples from my life about my daily routine and then she did the same. Her worksheet serves as a formal assessment that she is able to explain the sequence of events.</p>

		<p>her own. Throughout the reading, I stopped and asked several clarifying questions to encourage literacy and to check for understanding. Sarah also answered written comprehension questions. I noticed that taking daily breaks help Sarah focus on the task at hand. We take a small two minute break to get a drink of water at 11:00am and she appears to look forward to those breaks and then is able to truly concentrate again. She is energized after sitting down for 30 minutes and this helps her focus. She was able to understand the difference between fact and opinion. She also read silently and appeared comfortable with doing so.</p>	
<p>8: July 15, 2013</p>	<p>Today, we will focus on compare and contrast in order for Sarah to think critically about character traits and understand what attributes separate one character from another.</p>	<p>Today I observed Sarah taking the initiative and studying the notecards on her own. I also noticed that as we read the story of her choice she followed along with her pencil as she read. She also kept reading past the one page that she usually does before I have a turn and so I let her. Her confidence has increased and this appears to help her in her reading ability. Today, Sarah made noticeable</p>	<p>Sarah was excited to take the lead by arranging the slips of paper and insisted she did not need any help and did this all on her own</p>

		<p>progress and it is evident that she is gaining the confidence to ask questions, re-read passages, and express herself. She also has memorized and is able to explain comprehension, analyze, justify, fact, opinion, compare, contrast, context clues, and sequence of events. We also used manipulatives to place slips of paper in order to show the sequence of events throughout the reading.</p>	
<p>9: July 16, 2013</p>	<p>Today's plan is to start by reviewing notecards, introducing the term "evaluate." We are also going to work with new vocabulary words that will be presented on the whiteboard. I will let Sarah write the words and I will give her the definition. We are reading about friendship and will relate the story "Turtle Tom" to real world events in Sarah's life by relating the story to the term evaluate and also focusing on character traits. We will also use post-its to create a sequence of events.</p>	<p>Sarah was receptive to the new term and did not stumble on many of the vocabulary words. She hesitated on three words that included: preserve, persistence, and guarantee. With these words we looked up the definitions in the dictionary and we used them in additional sentences so that she could grasp the meaning and understand the context that the words were used in for the story. Additionally, she was able to relate her own life and relationship with her brother with that of the main character. This focus was on character attributes and evaluating, analyzing, and justifying what was read. We also filled out a character chart that</p>	<p>The notecards are becoming second nature to Sarah and she is able to use the terms when discussing the plot of the story with me. She also asked me a question that allowed me to relate "Turtle Tom" to my own friendships.</p>

		<p>listed key traits of each character. Sarah appeared to relate evaluate to analyze but was able to relate both the story and the comprehension terms to her real life.</p>	
10: July 17, 2013	Student was absent		
11: July 18, 2013	<p>Today's plan is to administer the post test of the QRI for Sarah</p>	<p>Sarah was administered the QRI-5 word identification as well as a narrative and expository assessment</p>	<p>Sarah was very energetic and paid attention during the testing. She was very engaged in the reading of the narrative and expository and displayed much effort.</p>

Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: July 1<sup>st</sup>

Interest/Reading Survey

I will read these questions to you and you can verbally answer them. I will write down your answers. This is an interest survey to find out what you like and do not like. We will use this information to make your tutoring sessions personalized just for you and your interests.

What are your favorite things to do?

Watch tv, Movies

What are your hobbies?

sometimes Dancing

What is your favorite thing about school? Least favorite thing?

reading/gym

What is your favorite subject in school? What is your least favorite subject in school? Why?

math/social studies cause it gets really hard and some words

What kind of stories do you like to read?

Dark Diarys I don't get and fun stories

What kind of television shows do you like to watch?

Disney channel show and nickoloden

What is your favorite movie? Why?

all horror movies cause im not afraid of anything

Do you have a favorite book? If so, what is the title of the book?

my favorite book is funny books

currently reading Diary of a Whimpy Kid

Do you enjoy working with other students or would you rather work alone?

work with other students

How much time do you spend reading each week?

15 minutes a day

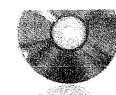
Do you and your mom or a family member read with you? What do you read?

yes we read lots of books

Are there any books that you want to read that you have not had a chance to read yet? What are the titles?

• scary Books and funny Books

Pre-test 7-1-13



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Pre-Primer 1

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. can	C	
2. I	C	
3. of	C	
4. me	C	
5. the	C	
6. in	C	
7. at	C	
8. with	C	
9. a	C	
10. he	C	
11. go	C	
12. to	C	
13. see	C	
14. do	C	
15. on	C	
16. was	C	
17. she	C	

Total Correct Automatic 17 /17 = 100%  
 Total Correct Identified      /17 =     %  
 Total Number Correct 17 /17 = 100%

Independent

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
15-17	12-14	below 12
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%

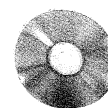
Pre-Primer 2/3

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. make	C	
2. same	C	
3. like	C	
4. doing	C	
5. were		C
6. my	C	
7. work	C	
8. write	C	
9. play	C	
10. just	C	
11. some	C	
12. they	C	
13. people	C	
14. look	C	
15. too	C	
16. other	C	
17. place	C	
18. where	C	
19. under	C	
20. help	C	

Total Correct Automatic 19 /20 = 95%  
 Total Correct Identified 1 /20 = 5%  
 Total Number Correct 20 /20 = 100%

Independent

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



Primer  
Level 1

Primer

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. keep	C	
2. need	C	
3. going	C	
4. what	C	
5. children	C	
6. thing	C	
7. why	C	
8. again	C	
9. want	C	
10. animals	C	
11. sing	C	
12. went	C	
13. jump	C	
14. read	C	
15. said	C	
16. live	C	
17. there	C	
18. one	C	
19. great	C	
20. every	C	

First

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. bear	C	
2. father	C	
3. find	C	
4. sound	C	
5. friend	C	
6. song	C	
7. thought	X	C
8. run	C	
9. enough	C	
10. brain	C	
11. air	C	
12. knew	C	
13. put	C	
14. heard	C	
15. afraid	C	
16. wind	C	
17. choose	C	
18. without	C	
19. move	C	
20. then	C	

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{20} = 0\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$

Independent

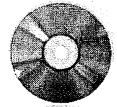
Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{1}{20} = 5\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$

Independent

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



# Examiner Word Lists



Pre test

## Second

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. morning	✓ c	
2. tired	✓ c	tried
3. shiny	✓ c	
4. old	✓ c	
5. trade	✓ c	
6. promise	✓ c	
7. pieces	✓ c	
8. suit	✓ c	
9. push	✓ c	
10. though	✓ c	through
11. begins	✓ c	
12. food	✓ c	
13. light	✓ c	
14. visit	✓ c	
15. clue	✓ c	
16. breathe	✓ c	
17. insects	✓ c	
18. weather	✓ c	
19. noticed	✓ c	
20. money	✓ c	

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{18}{20} = 90\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{20} = 0\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{18}{20} = 90\%$

Independent

## Third

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. lunch	✓ c	
2. celebrate	✓ c	
3. believe	✓ c	
4. confused		
5. motion	✓ c	
6. rough	✓ c	
7. engines	✓ c	
8. tongue		
9. crowded	✓ c	
10. wool	✓ c	
11. removed		
12. curious	✓ c	
13. silver	✓ c	
14. electric	✓ c	
15. worried	✓ c	
16. enemies	✓ c	
17. glowed	✓ c	
18. clothing		
19. interested	✓ c	
20. entrance		

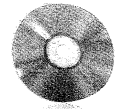
Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{15}{20} = 75\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{20} = 0\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{15}{20} = 75\%$

Instructional

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%

# Examiner Word Lists

Pre test



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## Fourth

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. sunlight	C	
2. desert	C	
3. crops	C	
4. engine	C	
5. favorite	C	
6. adaptation		
7. weather	C	
8. pond	C	
9. illustrated	C	
10. ocean	C	
11. pilot		
12. fame	C	
13. precious		
14. settlers		
15. guarded	C	
16. passenger	C	
17. memorize		
18. environment		C
19. adventurer		
20. invented		

## Fifth

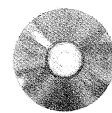
	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. attend		
2. protest		
3. movement		
4. biography		
5. attention		
6. capture		
7. oxygen		
8. tales		
9. creature		
10. obstacles		
11. divorced		
12. registration		
13. arrested		
14. poison		
15. material		
16. bulletin		
17. giant		
18. fluent		
19. pioneers		
20. pouch		

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{12}{20} = 60\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{1}{20} = 5\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{13}{20} = 65\%$

Total Correct Automatic \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Total Correct Identified \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Total Number Correct \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_%

Frustration

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



## Narrative

## Concept Questions:

What is a class trip?

"When the whole class gets to go somewhere"

(3-2-1-0)

When does "taking notes" mean to you?

"writing down facts about what they see"

(3-2-1-0)

What does "being by yourself" mean to you?

"you're alone"

(3-2-1-0)

Why do people use maps?

"To see if they are working hard"

(3-2-1-0)

Score: 9 /12 = 75 %

\_\_\_\_\_ FAM \_\_\_\_\_ UNFAM

Prediction:

"They are taking a trip to the zoo."

## "The Trip to the Zoo"

The day was bright and sunny. Carlos and Maria jumped out of bed and dressed in a hurry. They didn't want to be late for school today. It was a spe-

cial day because their classes were going to the zoo. When they got to school, all of the children were waiting outside to get on the bus. When everyone was there, the second and third graders got on the bus and rode to the zoo. On the bus, the children talked about the zoo animals that they liked the best. Joe and Carlos wanted to see the lion, king of the beasts. Maria and Angela wanted to see the chimps. Maria thought they acted a lot like people.

When they got to the zoo, their teachers divided the children into four groups. One teacher, Mr. Lopez, told them if anyone got lost to go to the ice cream stand. Everyone would meet there at noon. Maria went with the group to the monkey house, where she spent a long time watching the chimps groom each other. She wrote down all the ways that the chimps acted like people. Her notes would help her write a good report of what she liked best at the zoo.

Carlos went with the group to the lion house. He watched the cats pace in front of the glass. Carlos was watching a lion so carefully that he didn't see his group leave. Finally, he noticed that it was very quiet in the lion house. He turned around and didn't see anyone. At first he was worried. Then he remembered what Mr. Lopez had said. He traced his way back to the entrance and found a map. He followed the map to the ice cream stand, just as

everyone was meeting there for lunch. Joe smiled and said, "We thought that the lion had you for lunch!" (312 words)

3:26

Number of Total Miscues	8	$312 - 9 = 303$
(Total Accuracy):	<u>303</u>	$303 \div 312$
	97%	
Number of Meaning-Change Miscues		
(Total Acceptability):	<u>0</u>	
<b>Total Accuracy</b>		<b>Total Acceptability</b>
0-7 miscues	___ Independent	___ 0-8 miscues
8-32 miscues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instructional	___ 8-17 miscues
33+ miscues	___ Frustration	___ 18+ miscues
Rate:	$312 \times 60 = 18,720$	$206$ seconds = <u>90.97</u> WPM
Correct WPM:	$(312 - 9 \text{ errors}) \times 60 = 18,180$	$18,180 / 206$ seconds = <u>88.25</u> WPM

Retelling Scoring Sheet for "The Trip to the Zoo"

Setting/Background

- \_\_\_ Carlos and Maria jumped out of bed.
- \_\_\_ They didn't want to be late for school.
- (1)  Their classes were going
- (2)  to the zoo.
- \_\_\_ The second and third graders got on the bus and rode
- 3 to the zoo.
- \_\_\_ They talked about the animals they liked best.

Goal

- \_\_\_ Carlos wanted
- 7 to see the lion.
- \_\_\_ Maria wanted
- 6 to see the chimps.

Events

- \_\_\_ Their teacher told them
- 4 their teacher, Mr. Lopez
- 5 if anyone got lost
- \_\_\_ to go
- \_\_\_ to the ice cream stand
- \_\_\_ where everyone would meet
- \_\_\_ at noon.
- \_\_\_ Maria went
- \_\_\_ to the monkey house.
- \_\_\_ She wrote down all the ways
- \_\_\_ that chimps acted like people.
- \_\_\_ Her notes would help her
- \_\_\_ write a report.
- \_\_\_ Carlos went
- 8 to the lion house.

Problem

- \_\_\_ Carlos was watching a lion
- \_\_\_ so carefully
- 9 he didn't see his group
- \_\_\_ leave.
- \_\_\_ He noticed
- \_\_\_ that it was quiet.
- \_\_\_ He turned around
- \_\_\_ and didn't see anyone.
- \_\_\_ He remembered
- \_\_\_ what Mr. Lopez said.
- 10 He traced his way
- 11 to the entrance
- \_\_\_ and found a map.
- \_\_\_ He followed the map
- 12 to the ice cream stand.

Resolution

- \_\_\_ Everyone was there
- 13 for lunch.

Level: Three

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- They thought
- the lion had Carlos
- for lunch.

55 Ideas

Number of ideas recalled 13

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

Questions for "The Trip to the Zoo"

1. Why was it a special day for Carlos and Maria?

Explicit: their classes were going to the zoo

"They got to take a class trip to the zoo."

2. What grades were Carlos and Maria in?

Implicit: second and third

"second"

3. What animal did Carlos want to see?

Explicit: lions

"The lions and tigers"

4. Why was Maria watching the chimps so carefully?

Implicit: so she could write a report for school

"she didnt want them to get scared"

5. How did Carlos get separated from his group?

Explicit: he was watching the lions so carefully he didn't see his group leave

"He missed them"

6. What made Carlos realize that his classmates had left the lion house?

Implicit: it was quiet; he didn't hear any talking; or he turned around and no one was there

"He turned around"

7. Where did Carlos find the map?

Explicit: at the zoo entrance

"where he came from at the entrance"

8. Why did Carlos go to get a map from the zoo entrance?

Implicit: to help him find his way to the ice cream stand

"Mr. Lopez told him to"

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 2 / 8 = 25%

Number Correct Implicit: 2 / 8 = 25%

Total: 4 / 8 = 50%

Independent: 8 correct

Instructional: 6-7 correct

Frustration: 0-5 correct

With Look-Backs N/A

Number Correct Explicit:     

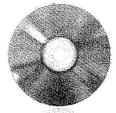
Number Correct Implicit:     

Total:     

Independent: 8 correct

Instructional: 6-7 correct

Frustration: 0-5 correct



Expository

Concept Questions:

What does "getting to work" mean to you?

"Going to work at your job" (3-2-1-0)

What does "life in the country" mean to you?

"Living in the country" (3-2-1-0)

What do farm animals eat?

"Grass" (3-2-1-0)

What does "living in the suburbs" mean to you?

"Living far away from everyone else" (3-2-1-0)

Score: 8 / 12 = 66%  
FAM UNFAM

Prediction:

"The story is about places people want to live"

"Where Do People Live?"

People live in different places. Some people live in a city. Others live in the country. Still other people live in between the city and the country. They

live in suburbs. Why do people live in these different places?

People live in the city to be near their jobs. Cities have lots of factories, schools, and offices. People work in these buildings. If people don't want to drive a long way to their jobs, they live in the city. There are many other things to do in the city. Cities have museums and zoos. They also have many movie theaters.

People live in the country to be close to their jobs, too. Many people who live in the country are farmers. They plant crops on their land. They may sell their crops or may use them to feed the animals that live on the farm. Farmers raise cows, pigs, and chickens. The main food that these animals eat is grain. There are other things to do in the country. You can find a river to fish in or take walks in the woods. The life in the country is quiet.

People live in between the country and the city. They live in suburbs. Some people think that people who live in the suburbs have the best of both worlds. They live close to their jobs in the city. The suburbs are quieter than the city. They often have many movie theaters, too. It doesn't take as long to go to either the city or the country. The suburbs are more crowded than the country but less crowded than the city. Where people live depends upon what they like most. (279 words)

Pre-test

Level: Three

3:15.2

Number of Total Miscues (Total Accuracy): <u>10</u> (279-10=269)	
Number of Meaning-Change Miscues (Total Acceptability): <u>0</u> 96%	
Total Accuracy	Total Acceptability
0-6 miscues <input type="checkbox"/> Independent	0-6 miscues
7-28 miscues <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instructional	7-14 miscues
29+ miscues <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration	15+ miscues
Rate: $279 \times 60 = 16,740 / 195 \text{ seconds} = 85.84 \text{ WPM}$	
Correct WPM: $(279 - 10 \text{ errors}) \times 60 = 16,140 / 195 \text{ seconds} = 82.76 \text{ WPM}$	

### Retelling Scoring Sheet for "Where Do People Live?"

#### Main Idea

- 1 People live
- 2 in different places.

#### Details

- Some people live
- in the city.
- Others live
- 4 in the country.
- Others live
- 3 in the suburbs.

#### Main Idea

- People live
- 5 in the city
- to be near their jobs.

#### Details

- Cities have factories,
- schools,
- and offices.
- 6 People work
- in these buildings.
- There are many things
- to do in the city.

- Cities have museums
- and zoos.
- 7 They have theaters
- movie theaters.

#### Main Idea

- People live
- in the country
- to be close to their jobs.

#### Details

- Many people are farmers.
- They plant crops.
- Farmers raise cows,
- pigs,
- and chickens.
- 9 The food that these animals eat
- 8 is grain.
- There are other things
- 10 to do in the country.
- You can find a river
- to fish in
- 11 or take walks
- in the woods.
- The life in the country
- is quiet.

#### Main Idea

- Some people think
- 12 that people who live in the suburbs
- 13 have the best of both worlds.

#### Details

- They live close to their jobs
- in the city.
- 14 The suburbs are quieter
- than the city.
- The suburbs are more crowded
- than the country
- but less crowded
- than the city.

51 Ideas

Number of ideas recalled 14

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

Questions for "Where Do People Live?"

1. What is this passage mostly about?  
Implicit: why people live where they do  
"The places people live"

2. Why do people live in the city?  
Explicit: to be near their jobs  
"so they can have more things to do"

3. Why do people want to live close to their jobs?  
Implicit: so they don't have to drive far to work; or so they don't have to get up so early to go to work  
"so they dont have to drive far to work"

4. Why would someone who isn't a farmer like to live in the country?  
Implicit: they like the quiet life; they like to fish or take walks; or they don't like noise, crowds, etc.  
"Because its quiet"

5. What is one thing that the passage says you can do in the country besides farm?  
Explicit: take walks; or fish  
"Take walks"

6. What crop would be planted by farmers who raise animals?  
Implicit: grain  
"wheat"

7. How do the city and suburbs differ?  
Explicit: the suburbs are less crowded than the city or quieter  
"Its quieter in the suburbs"

8. According to the passage, why do people choose different places to live?  
Explicit: it depends on what they like most  
"Because everyone has different jobs"

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit:  $2 \div 8 = 25\%$

Number Correct Implicit:  $3 \div 8 = 37\%$

Total:  $5 \div 8 = 62\%$

\_\_\_ Independent: 8 correct

\_\_\_ Instructional: 6-7 correct

5 Frustration: 0-5 correct

With Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: \_\_\_

Number Correct Implicit: \_\_\_

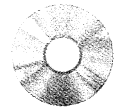
Total: \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Independent: 8 correct

\_\_\_ Instructional: 6-7 correct

\_\_\_ Frustration: 0-5 correct





Pre-Primer 1

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. can	C	
2. I	C	
3. of	C	
4. me	C	
5. the	C	
6. in	C	
7. at	C	
8. with	C	
9. a	C	
10. he	C	
11. go	C	
12. to	C	
13. see	C	
14. do	C	
15. on	C	
16. was	C	
17. she	C	

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{17}{17} = 100\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{17} = 0\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{17}{17} = 100\%$

Independent

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
15-17	12-14	below 12
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%

Pre-Primer 2/3

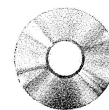
	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. make	C	
2. same	C	
3. like	C	
4. doing	C	
5. were	C	
6. my	C	
7. work	C	
8. write	C	
9. play	C	
10. just	C	
11. some	C	
12. they	C	
13. people	C	
14. look	C	
15. too	C	
16. other	C	
17. place	C	
18. where	C	
19. under	C	
20. help	C	

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{20} = 0\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$

Independent

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%

# Examiner Word Lists *Post-test*



## Primer

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. keep	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
2. need	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
3. going	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
4. what	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
5. children	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
6. thing	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
7. why	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
8. again	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
9. want	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
10. animals	<u>          </u>	<u>  C  </u>
11. sing	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
12. went	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
13. jump	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
14. read	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
15. said	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
16. live	<u>          </u>	<u>  C  </u>
17. there	<u>          </u>	<u>  C  </u>
18. one	<u>          </u>	<u>  C  </u>
19. great	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
20. every	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>

Total Correct Automatic   16   / 20 =   80   %  
 Total Correct Identified   4   / 20 =   20   %  
 Total Number Correct   20   / 20 =   100   %

*Independent*

## First

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. bear	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
2. father	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
3. find	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
4. sound	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
5. friend	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
6. song	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
7. thought	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
8. run	<u>          </u>	<u>  C  </u>
9. enough	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
10. brain	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
11. air	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
12. knew	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
13. put	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
14. heard	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
15. afraid	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
16. wind	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
17. choose	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
18. without	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
19. move	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>
20. then	<u>  C  </u>	<u>          </u>

Total Correct Automatic   19   / 20 =   95   %  
 Total Correct Identified   1   / 20 =   5   %  
 Total Number Correct   20   / 20 =   100   %

*Independent*

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



Second

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. morning	C	
2. tired	C	
3. shiny	C	
4. old	C	
5. trade	C	
6. promise	C	
7. pieces	C	
8. suit	C	
9. push	C	
10. though		C
11. begins	C	
12. food	C	
13. light	C	
14. visit	C	
15. clue	C	
16. breathe	C	
17. insects	C	
18. weather		C
19. noticed	C	
20. money	C	

Third

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. lunch	C	
2. celebrate	C	
3. believe		C
4. confused	C	
5. motion	C	
6. rough	C	
7. engines	C	
8. tongue	C	
9. crowded	C	
10. wool	C	
11. removed	C	
12. curious	C	
13. silver	C	
14. electric	C	
15. worried	C	
16. enemies	C	
17. glowed	C	
18. clothing		C
19. interested	C	
20. entrance		

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{18}{20} = 90\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{2}{20} = 10\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{20}{20} = 100\%$

Independent

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{17}{20} = 85\%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{2}{20} = 10\%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{19}{20} = 95\%$

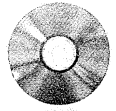
Instructional

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



# Examiner Word Lists

Post-test



## Fourth

	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. sunlight	C	
2. desert		
3. crops	C	
4. engine	C	
5. favorite	C	
6. adaptation		
7. weather	C	
8. pond	C	
9. illustrated	C	
10. ocean	C	
11. pilot	C	
12. fame	C	
13. precious		
14. settlers	C	
15. guarded	C	
16. passenger	C	
17. memorize	C	
18. environment	C	
19. adventurer	C	
20. invented	C	

## Fifth

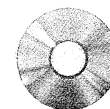
	Identified Automatically	Identified
1. attend		
2. protest		
3. movement		
4. biography		
5. attention		
6. capture		
7. oxygen		
8. tales		
9. creature		
10. obstacles		
11. divorced		
12. registration		
13. arrested		
14. poison		
15. material		
16. bulletin		
17. giant		
18. fluent		
19. pioneers		
20. pouch		

Total Correct Automatic  $\frac{17}{20} = \frac{85}{100} \%$   
 Total Correct Identified  $\frac{0}{20} = \frac{0}{100} \%$   
 Total Number Correct  $\frac{17}{20} = \frac{85}{100} \%$

Total Correct Automatic \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Total Correct Identified \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Total Number Correct \_\_\_\_\_ /20 = \_\_\_\_\_ %

Instructional

LEVELS		
Independent	Instructional	Frustration
18-20	14-17	below 14
90-100%	70-85%	below 70%



Narrative

Concept Questions:

What does "celebration" mean?

"A party"

(3-2-1-0)

What does it mean for you to miss someone?

"You want to see them because you haven't seen them in a long time."

(3-1-0)

If you are sad, how can someone cheer you up?

"By buying you a present and saying nice things."

(3-2-1-0)

How many candles are on a birthday cake?

"The age that you are"

(3-2-1-0)

Score: 11 /12= 91 %

\_\_\_\_\_ FAM \_\_\_\_\_ UNFAM

Prediction:

"The story is about celebrating a girl named Rosa's birthday at a party"

"A Special Birthday for Rosa"

Today was the day Rosa had eagerly been waiting for, her birthday! She was very happy but she

also felt sad. This would be the first birthday that she would celebrate without all her family around her. The company that Rosa's father worked for had given him a wonderful promotion. But this meant that Rosa, her parents, and her little brother, Jose, had to move to another state. Rosa liked her new home and friends. But, she really wanted to celebrate her birthday with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all around her.

They had sent presents but it wouldn't be the same if she couldn't thank them in person. They wouldn't be there to watch her blow out all the candles. And what kind of a birthday would it be without listening to her grandparents' stories about growing up in Italy and Cuba? Also, four people could never sing as loudly or joyfully as her whole family could sing together!

That night, Mama made Rosa's favorite meal. Afterwards, there was a beautiful cake. Mother, Father, and Jose sang "Happy Birthday" while the eight candles glowed. Rosa made a wish, took a deep breath, and blew out all the candles. "I know I won't get what I wished for," she said to herself, "but I'm going to wish for it anyway."

Then it was time for the presents. Rosa's father gave her the first present. It was a DVD. "I think we should play it right now before you open any more presents," her father said. He put the DVD into the

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4:03

player. Suddenly, there on the television screen was the rest of Rosa's family smiling and waving and wishing her a happy birthday. One by one, each person on the DVD asked Rosa to open the present they had sent. Her father put the DVD on pause while Rosa did this. Then they explained why they had chosen that gift especially for Rosa. After all the presents were unwrapped, her family sang some favorite songs and Rosa, her mother, father, and Jose joined in.

Then, Rosa's grandfather spoke to her. "Rosa, this is a new story, one you have never heard before. I am going to tell it to you as a special birthday gift. It is about my first birthday in this country when I was very lonely for my friends and family. It is about how I met your grandmother." When Grandfather was finished, he and Grandmother blew Rosa a kiss and the DVD was finished.

Rosa felt wonderful. It was almost like having her family in the room with her. Rosa hugged her parents and her little brother. "I didn't think I would get my wish but I did," she said. That night, when Mama and Papa came to say goodnight to Rosa, they found her in bed, already asleep, with the DVD next to her. It had been the best birthday ever. (487 words)

Number of Total Miscues (Total Accuracy):	4	$487 - 4 = 483$
Number of Meaning-Change Miscues (Total Acceptability):	0	$487 = 99\%$ accuracy
<b>Total Accuracy</b>		<b>Total Acceptability</b>
0-12 miscues	X Independent	0-12 miscues
13-51 miscues	Instructional	13-24 miscues
52+ miscues	Frustration	25+ miscues
Rate: $487 \times 60 = 29,220$	243 seconds	= 120 WPM
Correct WPM: $(487 - 4 \text{ errors}) \times 60 = 28,980$	243 seconds	= 119.25 WPM

**Retelling Scoring Sheet for "A Special Birthday for Rosa"**

**Setting/Background**

- 1 Today was Rosa's birthday.
- 2 She was happy but she also felt sad.
- This would be the first birthday she would celebrate without all her family around her.
- 3 Her father had been given a promotion.
- 4 Rosa, her parents, and her brother had to move to another state.

**Goal**

- 7 Rosa wanted to celebrate her birthday with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins around her.
- They had sent presents but she couldn't thank them in person.

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post-test

- \_\_\_ They wouldn't watch her blow out candles.
- 12 She couldn't listen to stories
- \_\_\_ her grandparents' stories
- 13 about growing up
- 15 in Italy
- 14 and Cuba.
- \_\_\_ They wouldn't sing together.

**Events**

- 16 Mama made Rosa's favorite meal.
- \_\_\_ Mother,
- \_\_\_ Father,
- 17 and Jose sang "Happy Birthday."
- 18 Rosa made a wish.
- \_\_\_ "I know I won't get it,"
- \_\_\_ she said to herself,
- \_\_\_ "but I'm going to wish for it anyway."
- \_\_\_ She blew out all the candles.
- 20 Rosa's father gave her the first present.
- 19 It was a DVD.
- \_\_\_ He put the DVD into the player.
- \_\_\_ On the television screen
- 21 was the rest of Rosa's family
- \_\_\_ smiling
- 22 and waving
- 23 and wishing her a happy birthday.
- \_\_\_ Each person asked Rosa
- \_\_\_ to open the present they sent.
- \_\_\_ They explained
- \_\_\_ why they chose that gift for Rosa.
- 24 Her family sang favorite songs
- \_\_\_ and Rosa,
- 25 her mother,
- \_\_\_ her father,
- 26 and Jose joined in.
- 27 Grandfather spoke to Rosa.
- \_\_\_ "This is a new story,
- \_\_\_ one you have never heard before.
- \_\_\_ I am going to tell it
- \_\_\_ as a special birthday gift.
- \_\_\_ It's about my first birthday
- \_\_\_ in this country
- \_\_\_ when I was very lonely.
- 28 It is about how I met your grandmother."
- \_\_\_ When Grandfather was finished,

- \_\_\_ he
- 29 and Grandmother blew Rosa a kiss.
- \_\_\_ The DVD was finished.

**Resolution**

- 30 Rosa felt wonderful.
- \_\_\_ "I didn't think I would get my wish
- \_\_\_ but I did,"
- \_\_\_ she said.
- \_\_\_ When Mama
- \_\_\_ and Papa came to say goodnight,
- 31 they found Rosa asleep
- \_\_\_ with the DVD next to her.
- 32 It had been the best birthday ever.

74 Ideas

Number of ideas recalled 32

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

"she was so happy"

**Questions for "A Special Birthday for Rosa"**

1. The story took place on what day?  
*Explicit:* Rosa's birthday

"Her birthday"

2. At the beginning of the story what was Rosa's problem?  
*Implicit:* she would not be celebrating her birthday with her whole family

"Her family was not there because they had to move away"

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3. How old was Rosa on this birthday?

*Implicit:* eight

"She turned 8"

4. What did Rosa wish for before she blew out the candles?

*Implicit:* that she would be able to spend her birthday with her whole family

"she wanted her family to be with her at her house"

5. What was on the DVD?

*Explicit:* the rest of Rosa's family wishing her a happy birthday

"Her family singing happy birthday"

6. What special birthday gift did her grandfather give her?

*Explicit:* he told her a story about when he came to the United States and how he met her grandmother

"He told her the story about how he met her grandmother"

7. How did the DVD help to solve Rosa's problem?

*Implicit:* it brought her family to her; or it helped her miss the family less

"she thought and felt like her family was there"

8. At the end of the story where was the DVD?

*Explicit:* in bed beside Rosa

"She fell asleep with it in her bed."

Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit:  $\frac{4}{8} = 50\%$   
 Number Correct Implicit:  $\frac{3}{8} = 37\%$   
 Total:  $\frac{1}{8} = 12.5\%$

\_\_\_ Independent: 8 correct

~~\_\_\_~~ Instructional: 6-7 correct

\_\_\_ Frustration: 0-5 correct

With Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: \_\_\_

Number Correct Implicit: \_\_\_

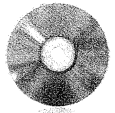
Total: \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Independent: 8 correct

\_\_\_ Instructional: 6-7 correct

\_\_\_ Frustration: 0-5 correct





# Level: Three

# post-test

## Expository

### Concept Questions:

What is the cat family?

"Group of cats, lions, and tigers / some live in different place / some in homes or the wild"

How do cats protect themselves?

"scratching"

What does a cat's tongue look like?

"A dogs tongue / pink or red but darker in the back"

What are cat sounds?

"They have a low purr sound"

Score: 12 /12 = 100 %  
V FAM \_\_\_\_\_ UNFAM

### Prediction:

"A cat family who is living with humans or in their own house and people are afraid to visit"

### "Cats: Lions and Tigers in Your House"

House cats, lions, and tigers are part of the same family. When animals are part of the same family,

they are alike in many ways. House cats are like lions and tigers in many ways, too. When kittens are first born, they drink milk from their mothers. Lions and tigers<sup>x2</sup> drink milk from their mothers, too. When kittens are born, they have claws just like big cats. Claws are used by lions, tigers, and kittens to help them keep away enemies<sup>?</sup>. As kittens get bigger, they learn to hunt from their mother. House cats hunt in the same way that lions and tigers do. They hide and lie very still. When the animal they are hunting comes close, they jump on it and grab it by the back of the neck. Cats kill other animals by shaking them and breaking their necks.

Lions, tigers, and house cats show when they are afraid in the same ways, too. Their fur puffs up, making them look bigger. They hiss and spit, too. Those are their ways of saying, "I'm afraid, don't come closer."

A cat's tongue has many uses. Because it is rough with little bumps on it, it can be<sup>x2</sup> used as a spoon. A cat drinks milk by lapping it. Because of the bumps, the milk stays on the tongue until the cat can swallow it. If you feel the top of a cat's tongue, it is rough. This makes the tongue good for brushing the cat's hair. Lions and tigers clean themselves with their tongues just like house cats do.  
(261 words)

Level 3

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Level: Three

Post-test

Number of Total Miscues <u>7</u> $261 - 7 = 254$	
(Total Accuracy): <u>97% accuracy</u> $261 - 7$	
Number of Meaning-Change Miscues (Total Acceptability): <u>0</u>	
<b>Total Accuracy</b>	<b>Total Acceptability</b>
0-6 miscues    ___ Independent    ___ 0-6 miscues	
7-27 miscues <u>X</u> Instructional    ___ 7-14 miscues	
28+ miscues    ___ Frustration    ___ 15+ miscues	
Rate: $261 \times 60 = 15,660 / 175 \text{ seconds} = 89.4 \text{ WPM}$	
Correct WPM: $(261 - 7 \text{ errors}) \times 60 = 15,240$ $15,240 / 175 \text{ seconds} = 87.0 \text{ CWPM}$	

**Retelling Scoring Sheet for "Cats: Lions and Tigers in Your House"**

**Main Idea**

- 1 Cats,
- 2 lions,
- 3 and tigers
- 4 are part of the same family.
- 4 They are alike
- \_\_\_ in many ways.

**Details**

- \_\_\_ When kittens are first born,
- 6 they drink milk
- 7 from their mothers.
- \_\_\_ Lions
- \_\_\_ and tigers
- \_\_\_ drink milk
- \_\_\_ from their mothers.
- \_\_\_ Kittens have claws.
- \_\_\_ Lions,
- \_\_\_ tigers,
- 9 and kittens use claws
- 9 to keep away enemies.
- 9 Cats hunt
- \_\_\_ in the same way

- 10 that lions
- \_\_\_ and tigers do.
- 11 They jump on the animal
- \_\_\_ and grab it
- \_\_\_ by the neck.
- 12 Cats kill animals
- 13 by breaking their necks.
- 14 When lions,
- 16 tigers,
- 15 and cats are afraid,
- 17 their fur puffs up.
- 18 They hiss
- \_\_\_ and spit.
- 19 Because a cat's tongue is rough
- \_\_\_ with bumps,
- \_\_\_ it can be used
- \_\_\_ as a spoon.
- \_\_\_ A cat drinks milk
- \_\_\_ by lapping it.
- \_\_\_ Because of the bumps,
- \_\_\_ the milk stays
- 24 on the tongue
- \_\_\_ until the cat can swallow it.
- 20 Lions
- 21 and tigers clean themselves
- 23 with their tongues
- 22 just like cats.

47 Ideas

Number of ideas recalled 24

Other ideas recalled, including inferences:

**Questions for "Cats: Lions and Tigers in Your House"**

1. What is this passage mostly about?  
*Implicit: that cats, lions, and tigers are alike in many ways*  
"lions, tigers, and cats"

# Level: Three

# Post-test

2. How are lions, tigers, and cats alike?

*Explicit:* any one of the ways presented in the story: milk from their mothers as babies; they have claws; the way they hunt; the way they show fear; or the uses of their tongues.

"Dmostly the same things like clean themselves, drink from their mom, and protect themselves and born the same way"

3. What is another way that lions, tigers, and cats are alike?

*Explicit:* any other of the above responses

"They are the same species / some are bigger and some are smaller and they scratch"

4. What is still another way that lions, tigers, and cats are alike?

*Explicit:* any other of the above responses

"They hunt or kill other animals the same way"

5. What does a cat do when it is scared or trapped in a corner?

*Implicit:* it would hiss, spit, or puff up

"It will spit and hiss"

6. Why is it important for cats to have claws when they're born?

*Implicit:* for protection from their enemies

"so they can scratch and use their claws to protect"

7. Why is the top of a cat's tongue rough?

*Implicit:* because of the bumps on it; or so it can drink

"Its like a spoon to pick up milk and it holds the milk until they swallow it"

8. Why doesn't milk fall off a cat's tongue?

*Explicit:* because of the bumps that make cups on the tongue

"The bumps hold it. It balls its tongue up so it wont fall out"

### Without Look-Backs

Number Correct Explicit: 4

Number Correct Implicit: 4

Total: 8

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