The Effect of Interactive Read-Alouds on Student Comprehension

By

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Abstract

With elementary schools using comprehensive and demanding reading curricula, interactive read-alouds are often being neglected, or implemented without utilization to their fullest potential. Research shows that read-aloud time can be effectively utilized for comprehension instruction without sacrificing enjoyment and engagement. To investigate the impact of interactive read-alouds, I planned my read-aloud time using research based strategies. I carefully planned stops during reading to model thinking, ask questions, and facilitate student discussions. Students were assessed using graphic organizers, observations, recorded conversations, and standardized tests. Quantitative results indicated read-alouds reinforce the importance of students being read to, as well as demonstrating that interactive read-alouds are an effective way to boost student comprehension scores. Qualitative data revealed an overall improvement in student comprehension through graphic organizers and student conversation.

Keywords: non-fiction, read-aloud, interactive read-aloud, comprehension

As a second grade classroom teacher, I was interested in researching the positive effects of interactive read-alouds. I was curious to see how read-alouds, with explicit instruction, could impact student comprehension. My district had recently made the switch from using a comprehensive basal curriculum to a comprehension focused curriculum. When using the basal curriculum, I noticed students were not comprehending at the level I thought they should be. With the basal my time was taken with the many components of the curriculum, and I didn't often have time to do a daily read-aloud with my students. When I would do a read-aloud I would simply read aloud to my students. Occasionally I would stop to ask about their predictions or connections, but it was not a planned part of the read-aloud. My students were not engaged and distracted during read-aloud time. I could tell this was impacting their overall comprehension skills. This prompted my initial research and interest in interactive read-alouds. I began more carefully selecting read-alouds and thinking about what I might ask my students. I also made read aloud time a priority in my day. I began to notice my students becoming more interested and engaged during read aloud time. As my district slowly made the shift to comprehension based instruction, I began to notice students were responding well to read-alouds and I wanted to know more about the effects.   I wanted to invest more time in planning my read-alouds to make sure I was maximizing the benefits of a time my students were truly enjoying during the day. As I selected read-alouds I would use sticky notes to plan stops for questions and conversation. I investigated how my struggling readers responded to higher level comprehension strategies. I also looked at the impact of student conversation in regard to these comprehension strategies through peer conversation. Read-aloud time was suddenly enjoyable again, and I was noticing a positive impact on student comprehension.

Literature Review

Incorporating Teacher Read-Alouds and Student Comprehension

In the recent past reading aloud to children became a "must" for parents and teachers who wanted children to succeed in school. Reading aloud was called "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading" according to the seminal publication, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkenson, 1985, p. 23). Research showed the importance of reading aloud to children, especially when done explicitly as an interactive read-aloud. As teachers came to realize the importance of the practice for increasing student comprehension, the interactive read-aloud became a widely implemented practice in reading programs. Teachers continue the struggle to juggle phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing instruction. They are finding less time to sit down with their students and implement a purposeful and well planned read-aloud. Read aloud time can be an ideal opportunity to build comprehension through the use of oral language activities, listening comprehension, and text-based discussion (Santoro, Chard, Howard, & Baker, 2008). This is most effective when there is a clear routine for the read-aloud and when it is part of the daily reading program (Terblanche, 2002). There are many ways to use interactive read-alouds, make the most of instructional time, and maintain enjoyment of the text being read. Most educators agree that teachers should read aloud to their students on a regular basis, but there are few specifics on *how* to conduct a read aloud (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). Teachers should be making time in their busy days to conduct interactive read-alouds to maximize instructional time, while also modeling fluent reading and promoting the enjoyment of great literature. This can help students climb in their comprehension abilities and become better readers.

The Benefits of Teacher Read-Alouds

There are numerous benefits to reading aloud. First of all, reading books to children opens up new and interesting experiences, subjects, and ideas to which they may not otherwise have had access (Coiro, 2003). Interactive read-alouds have the potential to be powerful because they serve so many instructional purposes-to motivate, encourage, excite, build background, develop comprehension, assist children in making connections, and serve as a model for fluent reading (Wadsworth, 2008). Research by Lane and Wright (2007) supports the fact that reading aloud promotes a range of skills related to emergent literacy and can yield important academic benefits for children. Purposeful and interactive read-alouds, along with follow up conversations, give teachers an opportunity to scaffold learning for students lacking in background knowledge (Wadsworth, 2008). Read-alouds are used to motivate students to read, build topical knowledge, and model discussions relating to text. Read-alouds model expressive and enthusiastic reading, transmit the pleasure of reading, and invite listeners to be readers (Richardson, 2000, p. 3). Reading aloud is one way that teachers can promote literacy at any age (Daisey, 1993). Several researchers have shown that read-alouds are a productive way to expose students to effective listening comprehension skills. They can also develop and increase their vocabulary, concepts of print, concepts of story, and background knowledge. Children develop their concepts of patterns and structures of the written language through listening to read-alouds. Children who experience a number of read-alouds come to school better able to understand the components of structure and the function of narrative texts. Some researchers even note that the experience of being read-aloud to helps children better express themselves, connect with others, and comprehend the world around them (Fisher et al., 2004).

Specifically looking at vocabulary, interactive read-alouds can be a dynamic method for educators to use a "teacher-centered" approach for introducing and talking about new words (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Elley, 1989; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Senechal, 1997). Reading aloud provides contexts and opportunities for children to learn new words before they have the reading skills needed to gain vocabulary independently (Santoro et al., 2008). Language development skills can be fostered through reading aloud. Children, even toddlers, mimic language patterns. Children who have difficulty learning to read can also struggle with developing oral language skills. Using interactive read-alouds can produce gains in oral language development (Coiro, 2003). There is research that phonological awareness may be positively affected by using read-alouds as well (Press, 2008).

Components of an Effective Read Aloud

Researchers agree there is no single approach to reading aloud. According to research by Kaplan and Tracey (2007), when students are actively involved in storybook reading and discussion, the read aloud is more effective. Researchers indicate that there are different components of effective interactive read-alouds, but some components are standard. Also, in order for children to develop their literacy, they must be given several opportunities throughout the day to demonstrate their understanding and to practice using comprehension strategies under the guidance of the teacher (Allington, 2001).

Teachers should begin by selecting appropriate books in a variety of genres. Teachers who select high quality literature, including award-winning selections, find their students have animated discussions, and answer and ask questions thoughtfully (Fisher et al., 2004). These high quality selections should include well-written books with engaging plots and characters. They should also come with opportunities for teachers to model fluent and expressive reading.

To make high quality selections, consideration should be given to the target audience, length, cost, availability, representation of diversity, text coherence, and connection with other texts (Santoro et al., 2008). A variety of books can be used to teach different aspects of literacy, including non-fiction texts (Lane & Wright, 2007). By first selecting high quality literature the other components of reading aloud come more naturally and are more effective for students.

There is a need for teachers to preview and practice text before reading it aloud to their students. When teachers practice reading the book ahead of time they are able to read more fluently, use expression, and find appropriate stopping points for questioning and discussion (Fisher et al., 2004). Reading in a lively, engaging way by using voices, gestures, and expressions can aid in student comprehension. Educators need to set expectations for purposes and goals of the text being read at the beginning of each new read-aloud. By setting a clear purpose for reading the students will know what to focus on while the teacher reads aloud. As educators we should ask ourselves what our goals and objectives are for each lesson so we can convey this to our students.

Fluent reading should always be modeled during a read-aloud, which is why it is so important to practice ahead of time. Teachers need to be sure of pronunciations and take care not to stumble over words and sentences in the text. Animation and expression are to be modeled during read-aloud time. By reading with expression, students will become engrossed in the text and will show visible reactions as the teacher reads (Fisher et al., 2004).

Additionally, by using interactive read-alouds, teachers are able to incorporate several comprehension skills. According to Scharlach (2008), the most important strategies to model during interactive read-alouds are:

- Predicting

- Visualizing

- Connecting

- Questioning

- Main idea

- Summarizing

- Checking predictions

- Making judgments

Scharlach recommends using all eight strategies each time a read-aloud is conducted. Although this can be overwhelming at first, over time it becomes easier to implement and can flow naturally into instruction (Scharlach, 2008). Teachers should encourage students to predict what will happen in a story, as well as help students confirm or refute predictions using the text (Lane & Wright, 2007). These comprehension strategies should be developed throughout the curriculum to help the students connect to the books and enhance their understanding of text (Lane & Wright, 2007).

Teachers should consistently be using and demonstrating discussions before, during, and after an interactive read-aloud. It is important to balance different types of questioning to promote discussion. Students should be engaged in immediate and non-immediate talk. Immediate talk focuses on answering literal questions, while non-immediate talk looks at word meanings, predictions, inferences, and personal connections. Educators should find ways for students to engage in non-immediate talk several times during an interactive read-aloud (Lane & Wright, 2007). By using effective discussion techniques, many comprehension strategies can be taught in partnership with discussion. In highly effective classrooms conversation is modeled and taught throughout the year. This accountable talk has a process and a purpose. Learners

depend on one another's thinking to deepen their understanding and construct meaning (Nicols, 2006).

Text-talk is another strategy that focuses on vocabulary development (Beck & Mckeown, 2001; Beck, Mckeown, & Kucan, 2002). The teacher uses text-talk by beginning a deep discussion with children and then targeting several words from the story to discuss more in depth (Beck & Mckeown, 2001; Beck et al., 2002). The words chosen should be meaningful to the understanding of the text. Text-talk can also be used to develop comprehension skills and provide time for students to reflect on the storyline (Santoro et al., 2008).

Research suggests the importance of the read-aloud in any classroom, especially when done along with explicit instruction. Using interactive read-alouds along with specific comprehension strategies appears to have positive results for improving comprehension. Reading aloud to students is especially important in modeling fluent and expressive reading. Through reading aloud to students, students are able to view modeled fluent reading, as well as develop important comprehension strategies to aid them in reading throughout the different content areas. As children learn to read, not only do they need to see a model of fluent reading, but also have opportunities to discuss and interact with text. Reading aloud to students is conducive to enhancing student comprehension through predicting, inferring, connecting, visualizing, and a variety of other comprehension strategies. Comprehension skills improve when these strategies are put into practice (Santoro et al., 2008). Teachers need to make time for interactive read-alouds, and maximize the instructional value.

Methodology

Participants and Setting

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of a well-planned interactive read-aloud on second grade students. I used action research to gain a greater understanding of interactive read-alouds on student comprehension through written and oral responses. I conducted the study in my classroom, where I am a regular second grade classroom teacher. Thirteen second graders (seven boys and six girls) participated in this study. The table below shows the students, their gender, and their reading level. All students participated in the interactive read-alouds each day. These levels are based upon meeting the benchmark for the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Kit. The thirteen students were chosen based upon parent permission.

Participant	Gender	Reading Level
Student 1	Female	On-Level
Student 2	Male	On-Level
Student 3	Female	Below-Level
Student 4	Male	Below-Level
Student 5	Female	Above-Level
Student 6	Male	Below-Level
Student 7	Male	Above-Level
Student 8	Female	On-Level
Student 9	Male	Below-Level
Student 10	Male	Above-Level
Student 11	Male	Above-Level
Student 12	Female	On-Level
Student 13	Female	On-Level

Table 1: Study Participants. This tables shows the gender and reading level of the thirteen participants in the study.

Materials

In this study, I used a variety of read-aloud stories for my research (Appendix A). The books were chosen based on research, recommendations, curriculum requirements, and personal choice. Some of the stories I selected were mentioned in research articles as effective interactive

read-alouds. I used the Making Meaning Curriculum (Developmental Studies Center, 2008). I also used three graphic organizers (Appendices B, C, and D). For some of my read-alouds I purposefully selected non-fiction text. Children are exposed to a lot fiction read-alouds, and I wanted to be sure my students were exposed to both fiction and non-fiction. By using non-fiction text in helps to bridge the gap between reading instruction and science and social studies.

Procedures

Before my study began, I sent permission slips with all of the students in my second grade classroom. I collected data during the months of March and April. Throughout the study, I used a variety of assessments and read-aloud stories to collect data. Each day (at the same time of day), students would gather on the rug facing me. When they sat on the rug, they sat next to pre-assigned partners. These routines were set up at the beginning of the school year. During the course of the study, I conducted an interactive read-aloud each day. Normally I would do this three to four times each week. I would sometimes read the same story two or three days in a row. This allowed me to focus on different comprehension strategies, while using text students were familiar with.

Based upon research and my current curriculum, I used several strategies with each read-aloud to create an interactive environment. I read books appropriate to student interests and matched developmental, social, and emotional levels. This ias a research based strategy used in order to engage my students during the read-aloud. I previewed all book selections. This was an important step, based upon literature I had read, in order to plan purposeful instruction and ensure I was familiar with the text to model fluent reading. It allowed me to use expression and animation in my reading. With each read aloud a clear purpose was set. This was both for me and my students. It allowed me to focus my instruction on one key comprehension strategy. By

setting a purpose, students had a reason for listening to the text and knew what was expected of them. I used sticky notes to help plan instructional stops. Stopping during reading is part of my reading curriculum, but using sticky notes is an instructional strategy. This allows me to keep reading fluently and keep just the book I am reading at hand. Before, during, and after reading I thoughtfully questioned students and had them use peer conversation to apply various comprehension strategies. This strategy is research based, as well as part of my daily reading curriculum.

In order to understand how many students were comprehending text, I conducted several assessments. In February, before my study began, I completed comprehension testing on my students, as required by my school district. I used the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Kit (Appendix E). This allowed me to identify my students' current instructional and independent reading levels. This would be baseline data for my study, in order to measure student growth in reading comprehension when students were exposed to interactive read-alouds. I used Bend and Stretch, (Nettleton & Shipe, 2004) a non-fiction trade book, as an interactive read-aloud for my students.   I read the book aloud the first time, just as a read-aloud. I did not stop or discuss the book. After the first reading I had students independently fill out a graphic organizer which analyzed important information (Appendix D) and another for author's purpose (Appendix C). Before they filled out the graphic organizer I did define important information and author's purpose. I then did a second read-aloud of the story Bend and Stretch (Nettleton & Shipe, 2004). This time I used the interactive read-aloud approach. I introduced the text and set a purpose for reading (determining the important information and author's purpose). During the reading I made planned stops and asked questions. I gave students think time, and time to discuss their thoughts with their partners.   While students were discussing the books I recorded

their conversations to assess the quality of the conversation. After the second reading, I had the

second graders independently fill out the same graphic organizers. I then compared the two

graphic organizers to see if second graders were able to record the important information after

the first reading, second reading, or both. After using a non-fiction text, I decided to use a

fictional text. I read Me First, (Lester & Munsinger, 1992) a trade book. The first time I read the

book, once again, I did it just as a read aloud. After reading the story aloud I had second graders

fill out a graphic organizer on main idea and details. The next day I used Me First (Lester &

Munsinger, 1992) as a read aloud again. During the second reading I used an interactive

approach. I introduced the book, set a purpose for reading, and made planned stops. Students

were given time to think about the book and to discuss the book with their partners. While

students were discussing the book with their partners, I recorded their conversations. I used

these conversations to gain insight on the quality of their conversations and comprehension of

the story. After the interactive read aloud, students independently completed the same graphic

organizer as they had the day before with the initial reading of Me First (Lester & Munsinger,

1992). Again, I compared the two graphic organizers to see if the interactive approach had an

impact on student performance. I had the students listen to two different Time for Kids articles

and recorded their conversations to analyze if students could answer questions regarding the text.

I read *Summer of the Shark* (Giraldi, 2001) and *Wild Rides* (Grossman, 2002). Before reading

both articles I asked students to think about the important information in the text. During the

reading I stopped to allow students to discuss the important information in the sections I had read

with their partners. At the end of the article, I asked students to discuss the important

information from the entire article with their partners. I used the winter Benchmark Assessment

data for comprehension in comparison with the spring Benchmark Assessment data to see how

many levels the second graders moved up. I compared this to the fall to winter growth, to see if

there was more growth from fall to winter or winter to spring.

Findings and Results

Quantitative data results showed positive growth in student comprehension based upon

their instructional reading level through the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment from

both the fall to winter and winter to spring.   This assessment considers fluency, accuracy, literal

comprehension, and inferential comprehension. The assessment included giving each child a

book. They read the first portion of the book aloud and the second portion of the book to

themselves. After the reading students were asked comprehension questions. Their instructional

reading level was based upon how accurately they were able to answer the comprehension

questions. The span of time from fall to winter was five months, and the span of time from

winter to spring was three months. Results showed that three of thirteen students grew at a

higher rate from fall to winter. Five students grew the same amount for both time periods. Five

students grew at a more rapid rate from winter to spring. Because the time span from fall to

winter was five months, and the from winter to spring was only three months, data shows ten of

the thirteen students showed a more rapid growth in comprehension after the time I implemented

an explicit and interactive approach to my read-alouds.

The table below shows student growth by Fountas and Pinnell instructional reading

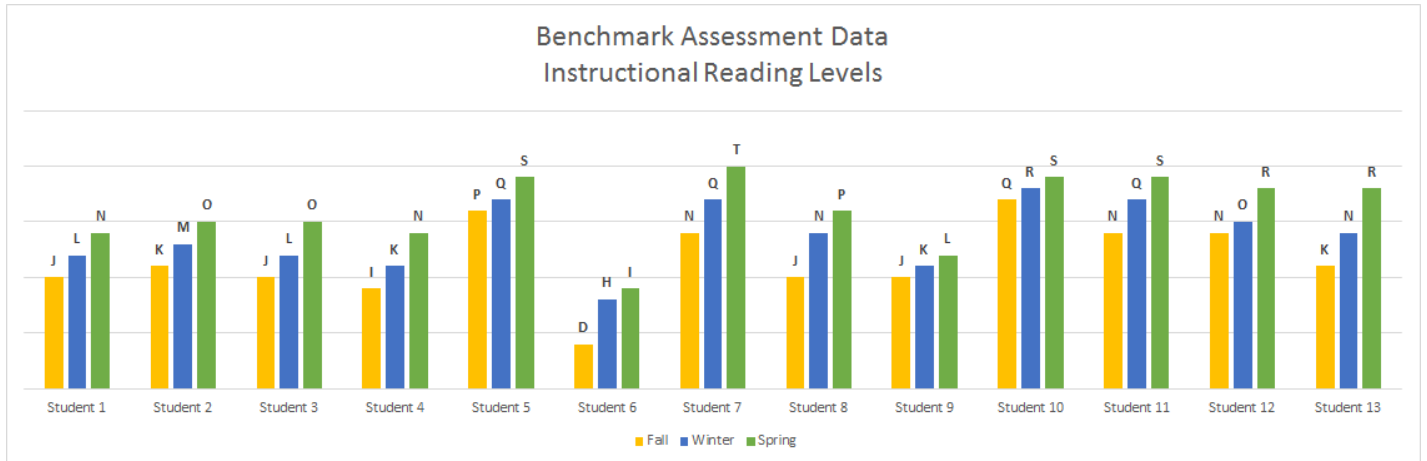levels. The letters correspond with the reading levels for each students.

Figure 1. Instructional Reading Levels. This figure shows the Fountas and Pinnell reading level.

According to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, the instructional level expectations for second grade are levels J thru M. The figure below shows how many reading level each student grew from both the fall to the winter and from the winter to spring.
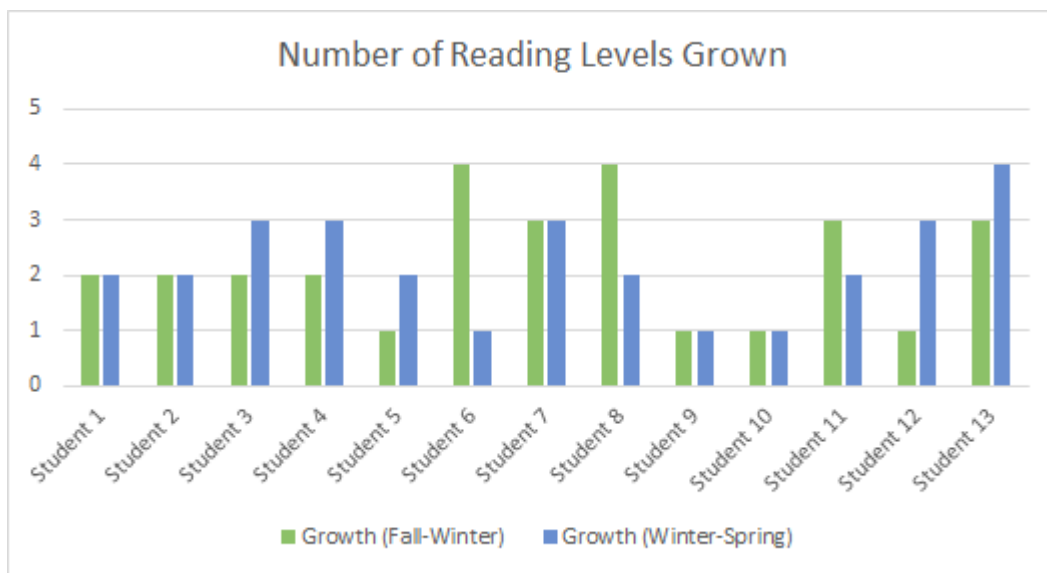

Figure 2. Number of Instructional Reading Levels Grown. This figure shows the number of Fountas and Pinnell reading levels each student grew from fall to winter and winter to spring.
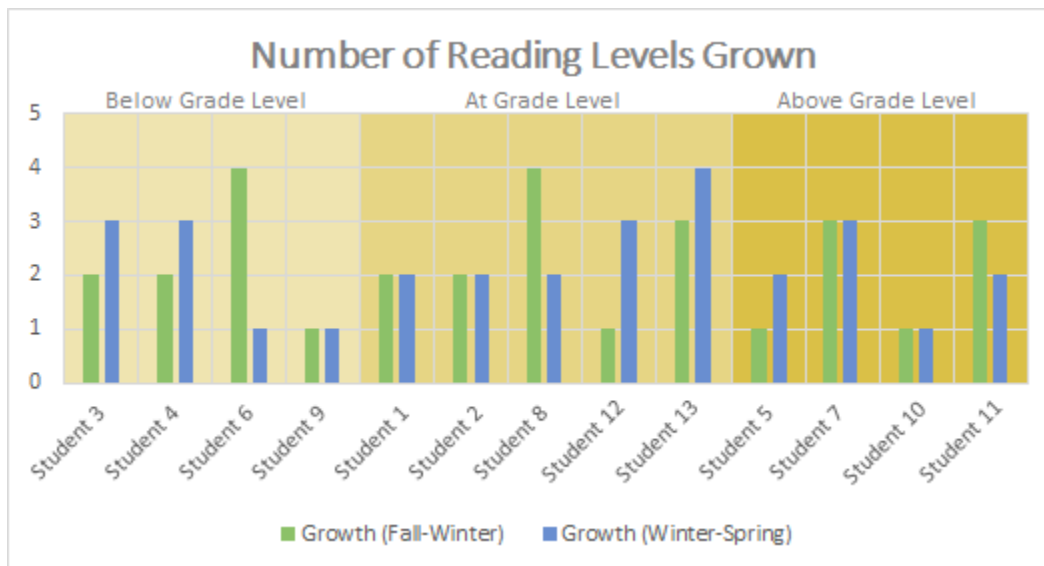
Figure 3. Differentiated Number of Instructional Levels Grown. This figure also shows the number of Fountas and Pinnell reading levels each student grew, but students are grouped by being below level, on grade level, and above grade level.

Through qualitative analysis of graphic organizers, observations, and recorded conversations, I assert that interactive read-alouds had a positive impact on my students. I used both non-fiction and fiction mentor texts for my interactive read-alouds. For the non-fiction text, after hearing the story Bend and Stretch (Nettleton & Shipe, 2004) twice, students showed more improvement on picking out the important information and author's purpose after explicit instruction and conversation after the second read (See Figures 3 and 4). After the first reading several students selected an interesting detail or made up their own information for the important information. On the first graphic organizer the information the students gave was either very general or too specific to be important information. On the second graphic organizer for important information, each of the thirteen students showed a better understanding of the important ideas. They also all added more detail to the overall graphic organizer.
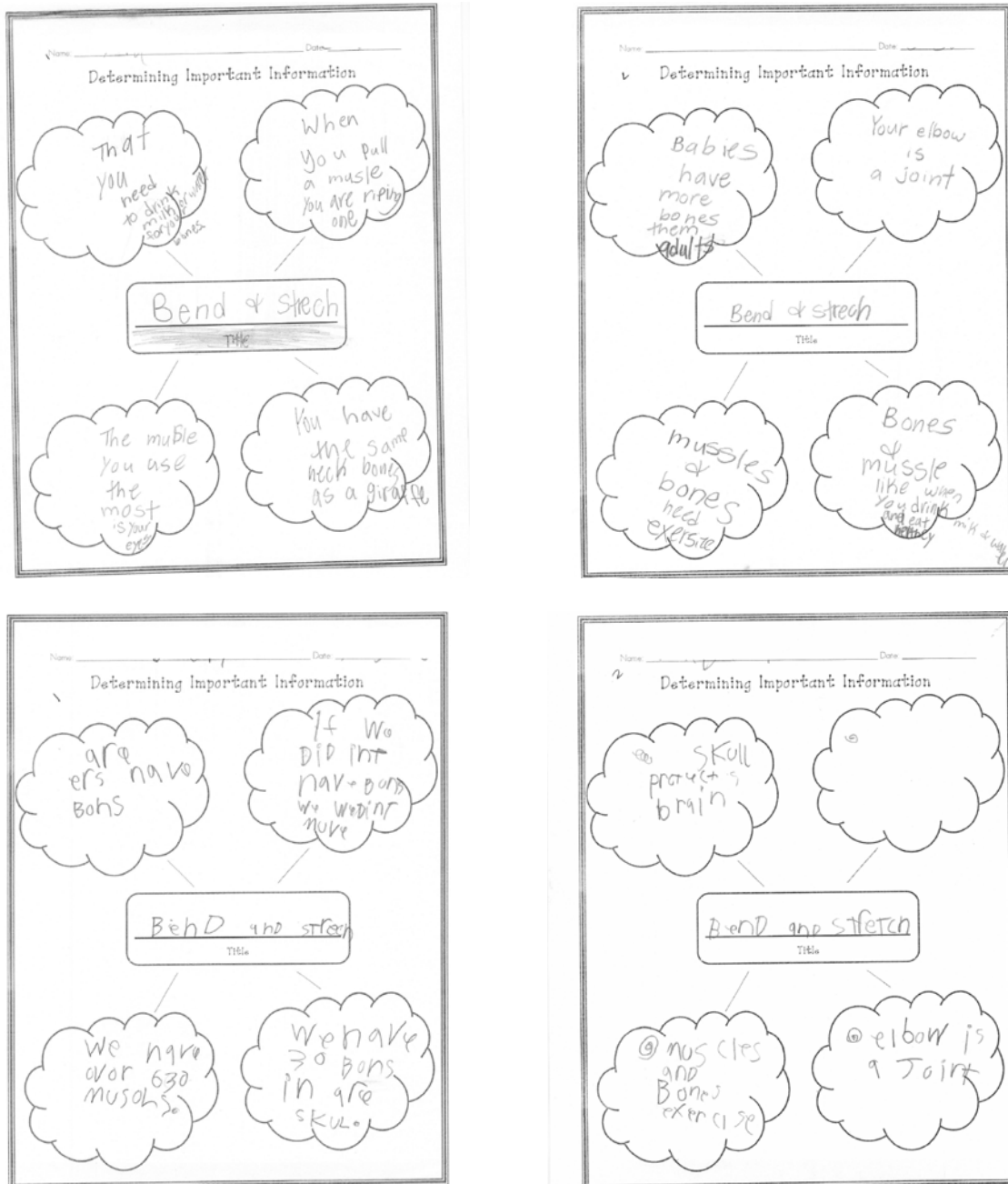
Figure 3. Top left shows work of Student 5 after first read. Top right shows work of Student 5 after second read. Bottom left shows work of Student 6 after first read. Bottom right shows work of Student 6 after second read. The comprehension strategy is Main Idea.

Figure 4. Top left shows work of Student 4 after first read. Top right shows the work of Student 4 after second read. Bottom left shows work of Student 3 after first read. Bottom right shows work of Student 3 after second read. The comprehension strategy is Main Idea.

For the fiction text, Me First, (Lester & Munsinger, 1992) my students had similar responses on the graphic organizer for main idea. The second graders were able to pick out a main idea after the first reading, but their details directly supported their main idea on the second graphic organizer. This was after having explicit instruction and time to discuss the text with their partners (See Figure 5).
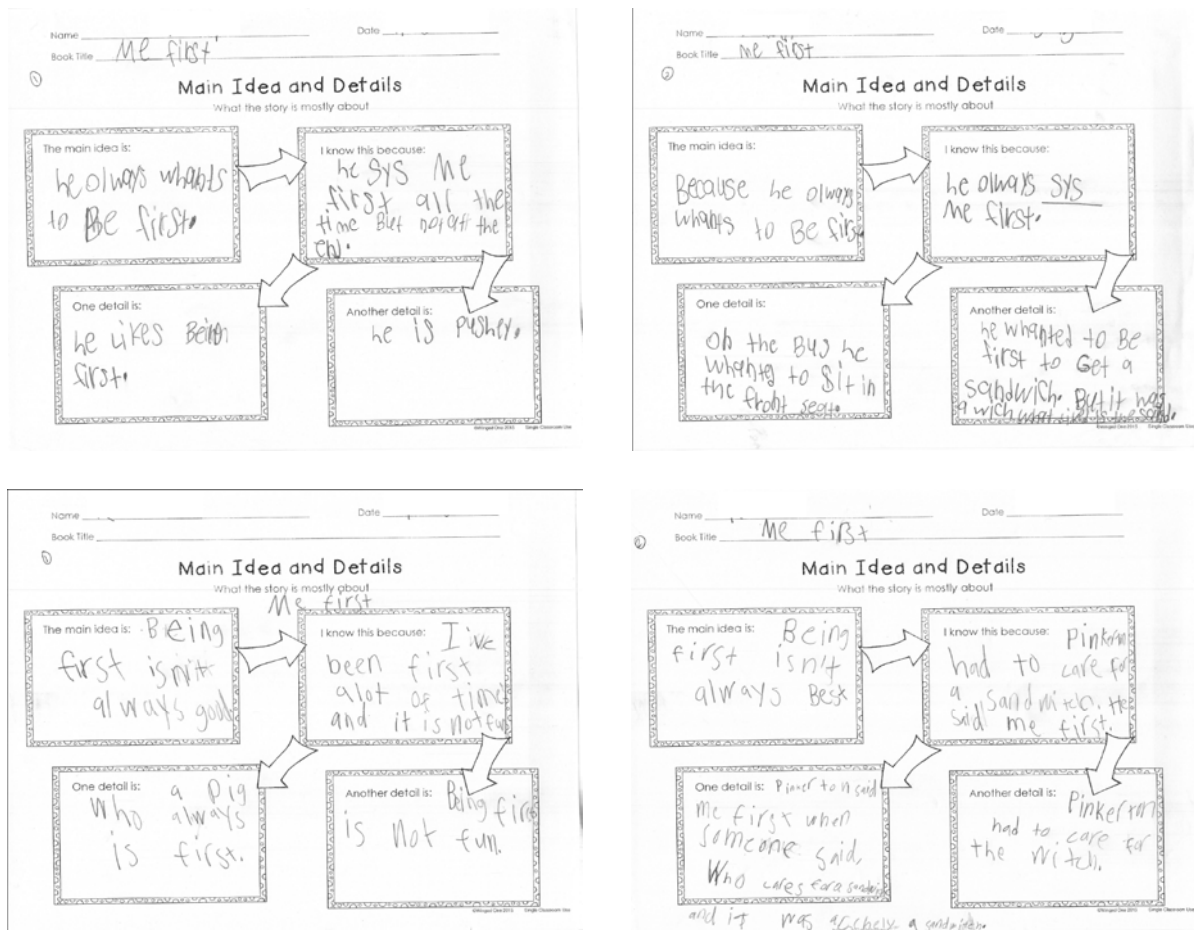
Figure 5. Top left shows work of Student 1 after first read. Top right shows the work of Student 1 after second read. Bottom left shows work of Student 7 after first read. Bottom right shows work of Student 7 after second read. The comprehension strategy is Main Idea and Details.

I observed students daily. My students were all engaged in discussions at a much higher level, and seemed to enjoy read aloud time much more. When I would occasionally do partner talk before the study, I would have students share a favorite part or a connection. After I gave a purpose for the reading, planned my stops, and asked higher order thinking questions, students succeeded in answering those questions. When I looked at students I saw them looking at one

another, nodding their heads when the other was speaking, and staying on topic of the purpose I

set for their reading or the question I asked. For example, after reading the story <u>Dem Bones</u>

(Barner, 1996) when I asked them to discuss the important information in the section I just read,

students were able to discuss why babies have more bones than adults. A student stated "Babies

have more bones than adults. This is because when you get older your bones grow together and

become harder."

Before reading <u>Me First</u> (Lester & Munsinger, 1992) for the second time, I introduced the

book and asked students to think about how the main character changes and what the important

information is in the book. After reading, I recorded student conversations about what the main

character (Pinkerton) was like at the beginning of the story. One student replied, "He pushes and

shoves to be first." Another student said, "He was pushy and always wants to be first." Another

student even cited examples from the text by saying, "He pushes to be first, like in line and on

the bus." After the story, students were asked about what lesson the author wanted us to learn

and how the main character changed. Student responses were correct, and they were able to

provide evidence from the text. When asked about the author's lesson one student even was able

to connect emotions into the story, even though they were not explicitly stated. She said, "If you

always go first it kind of, um, hurts other people's feelings." Another student said, "The author

wanted us to learn that you can't always go first."

After reading two articles from <u>Time for Kids</u> magazine, I recorded my students' partner

conversations. First I read *Summer of the Shark* (Giraldi, 2001). Students were able to pull the

important information out of the text, rather than giving details. Rather than focusing on a detail,

such as a shark biting a human leg because it looks like a seal, students were able to generalize

the information. One student said, "Sharks get confused when they see humans, but they would

rather eat seals." I found the same results with *Wild Rides* (Grossman, 2002). After giving the

students a purpose, and allow them to turn and talk during the story, they were able to pull out

important information from the non-fiction articles. When asked about how computers are used

to design roller coasters students gave answers such as, "Computers help see how fast roller

coasters can go" and "see how safe roller coasters are."

Discussion and Implications

It is apparent that using interactive read-alouds as part of a literacy block is an effective

way to build comprehension. Using both fiction and non-fiction proved to have positive results.

Teachers should be making read aloud time a priority, even with highly demanding curriculum.

By using non-fiction text in addition to fiction text, read-alouds can bridge the gap between

reading instruction and science and social studies. And more importantly teachers should be

planning their read-alouds to be a time for explicit comprehension instruction. Read-alouds

should be selected that will promote student engagement and peer conversations. Teachers

should present a purpose for the reading, and follow up with asking questions to support the

purpose. Time should be allowed for peer conversations. Read-aloud time is a time that students

enjoy, especially if a teacher is modeling fluent and animated reading. I have found that when

the students are engaged, the quality of their comprehension is higher. Overall, my students

made gains in comprehension scores on both the Benchmark Assessment test and on graphic

organizers. I believe this is because I modeled appropriate strategies and discussed them with

the students. I also developed an easy to follow routine for my classroom, and the students

appreciated knowing what to expect. The students knew exactly what I wanted them to do, and

they showed me they could do it. Students also engaged in more lively discussion, specific to

comprehension strategies and story elements. As mentioned in the research, I also found that

read-aloud time was an effective time to quickly introduce and define new words for students

and building their vocabulary. Read-aloud time is an important part elementary classroom.

Conducting this action research study helped me to learn read-aloud time is not a time of

the day to be sacrificed. It is beneficial for me to invest more time into my instructional planning

with read-aloud stories. In my future teaching I will take the time to carefully select and plan my

read-alouds. I will be sure to use both fiction and non-fiction text for read-alouds. Students

enjoyed both, and were able to have deep conversations with both the fiction and non-fiction

text. So often, teachers will gravitate toward using fiction, and through this study I realized

using non-fiction is also very engaging and successful. I will continue to promote peer

conversations. Next year and in years to come, I will establish a daily read-aloud routine that is

predictable and easy for second graders to follow. There are still some questions and I have and

will focus on:

- What are the benefits of higher level conversation in the classroom and what impact does

  it have on student comprehension at literal and inferential levels?

- How do companion texts affect student comprehension during read-alouds?

- How do read-aloud stories affect comprehension with specific content area reading in

  science and social students?

I would really like to focus on student conversation to enhance comprehension in all

areas, but am particularly interested in looking specifically at social studies and science

instruction. These are other content areas in which it feels that time is constantly being cut

and rearranged for other curricular needs. By bringing the read-aloud into science and social

studies I can help build student knowledge in those areas, as well as boost reading

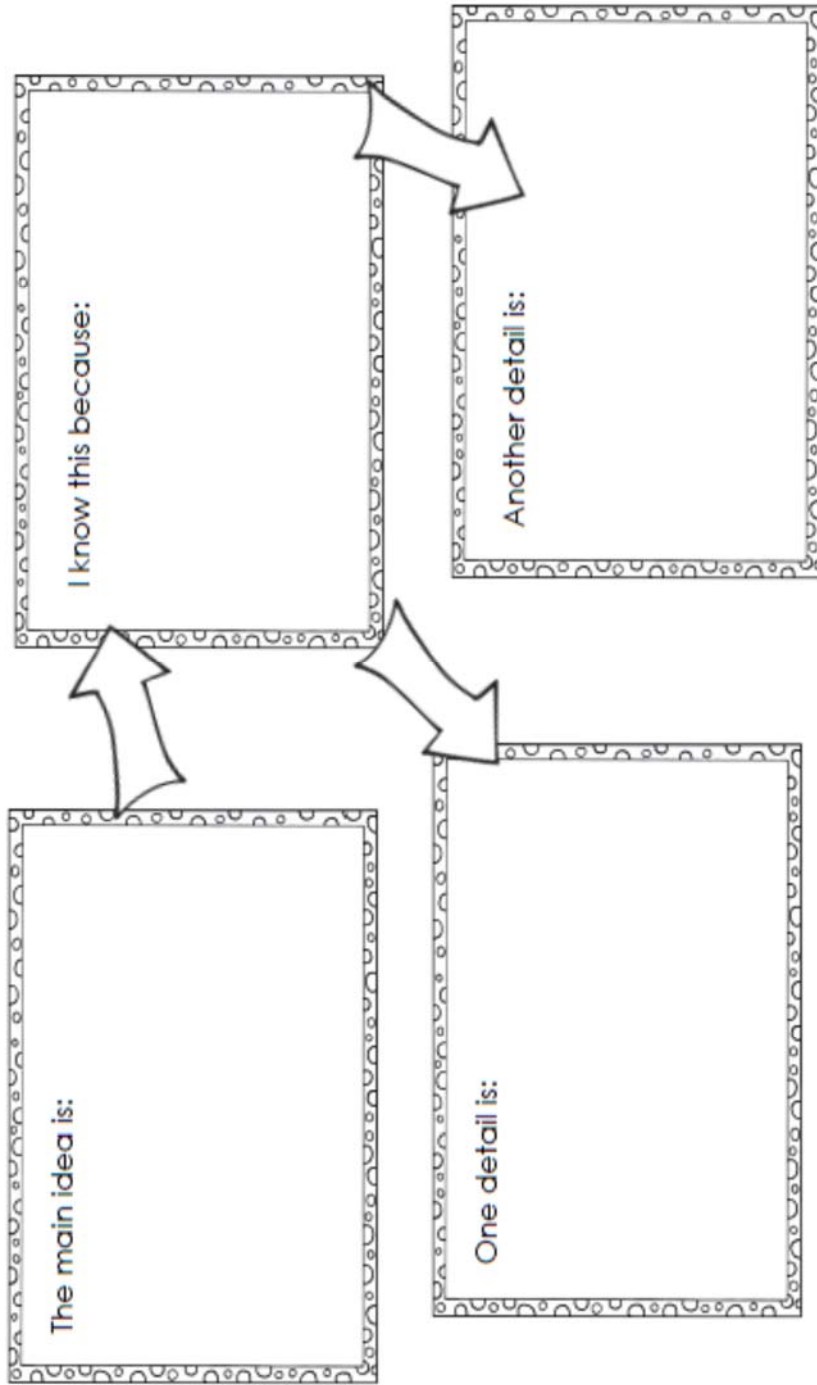comprehension!

Appendix A-Trade Books Used in Study

Book Cover	Book Title	Comprehension Focus
	Me First	Visualization, Connections, Main Idea and Details
	Bend and Stretch	Important Information, Author's Purpose
	The Incredible Painting of Felix Clousseau	Wondering
	Up North at the Cabin	Connections, Visualizing
	The Art Lesson	Wondering, Connections
	It Could Still Be a Worm	Wondering, Important Information
	Dem Bones	Important Information and Author's Purpose
	Time for Kids Magazine: Wild Rides and Summer of the Shark	Main Idea and Details

Appendix B-Main Idea and Details Graphic Organizer

Name _____   Date _____

Book Title _____

Main Idea and Details
What the story is mostly about

The main idea is:

I know this because:

One detail is:

Another detail is:

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Appendix C-Author's Purpose Graphic Organizer

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book title: _____

For the book we are reading, please write two clues that help you decide the author's purpose. Then identify the purpose along with the reason you believe that.

Clue: _____

Clue: _____

I think the author's purpose is _____

I think that because _____

Appendix D-Important Information Graphic Organizer

Name: _____ Date: _____

Determining Important Information

Title

Appendix E-Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment–Comprehension Conversation

Vanessa's Butterfly • Level N • Fiction   **Recording Form**

Part Two: Comprehension Conversation

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

Teacher: Talk about what happened in this story.

Comprehension Scoring Key

0   Reflects **unsatisfactory** understanding of the text. Either does not respond or talks off the topic.

1   Reflects **limited** understanding of the text. Mentions a few facts or ideas but does not express the important information or ideas.

2   Reflects **satisfactory** understanding of the text. Includes important information and ideas but neglects other key understandings.

3   Reflects **excellent** understanding of the text. Includes almost all important information and main ideas.

Key Understandings	Prompts	Score
Within the Text Tells 3–4 events in sequence, such as: Vanessa wanted to catch a butterfly; she was helping in the garden; she saw a beautiful butterfly; Vanessa decided not to catch the butterfly but just to watch it. *Note any additional understandings:*	What happened in this story? What else happened?	0 1 2 ③
Beyond the Text Vanessa always loved butterflies because that was the special meaning of her name. *good, likes colors* Vanessa changed her mind because she saw how beautiful the butterfly was. *She didn't want to be a butterfly catcher* Vanessa felt that the butterfly should be free. *good* *Note any additional understandings:*	How did Vanessa feel about butterflies? Why did she feel that way? Vanessa changed during the story. Tell how she changed and why. In the end, how do you think Vanessa felt about the butterfly?	0 1 ② 3

Continued on next page.

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Appendix E-Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment–Comprehension Conversation

Recording Form   *Vanessa's Butterfly* • LEVEL N • FICTION

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Part Two: Comprehension Conversation *continued*

Key Understandings	Prompts	Score
About the Text Gives an example of words the author used to describe the butterfly, such as: "graceful"; "swooped down to sip nectar"; "little beauty"; "stripes like a zebra." + zigzags The most important part of the story was when Vanessa looked closely at the beautiful butterfly and wanted it to be free. *Note any additional understandings:* vanessa liked butterflies + saw some in her yard	Give an example of a description the author used to show what the butterfly was like. Why did the author use this description? What was the most important part of the story? Why was that part important?	0 1 ② 3

Guide to Total Score

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

Subtotal Score: __7__ /9

Add 1 for any additional understandings: __1__ /1

Total Score: __8__ /10

Part Three: Writing About Reading *(optional)*

Read the writing/drawing prompt below to the student. You can also cut the prompt on the dotted line and give it to the child. Specify the amount of time for the student to complete the task on a separate sheet of paper. (See *Assessment Guide* for more information.)

Writing About Reading

0 Reflects **no** understanding of the text.

1 Reflects **very limited** understanding of the text.

2 Reflects **partial** understanding of the text.

3 Reflects **excellent** understanding of the text.

Explain what Vanessa meant when she thought to herself, "I don't need to be a butterfly catcher. I can be a butterfly watcher." You can draw a sketch to go with your writing.

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