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Effective Comprehension Strategies After Initial Reading of Fiction and Nonfiction Texts

Abstract

Given that responsible students actively engage in their own literacy learning by developing personal literacy goals and that learning occurs when effective reading strategies are taught, this action research project asks, which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders? Research for this study takes place at Middlebrook Elementary School. Three fifth grade students participated in several reading and assessment tasks over the course of seven work sessions. The findings and implications suggest that inferring is most useful when reading fiction, summarizing proved to be an effective for both genres. Lastly, results for the questioning strategy showed that students asked clarification questions for nonfiction texts and 'I wonder' questions for fiction texts.

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Abstract

Given that responsible students actively engage in their own literacy learning by developing personal literacy goals and that learning occurs when effective reading strategies are taught, this action research project asks, which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders? Research for this study takes place at Middlebrook Elementary School. Three fifth grade students participated in several reading and assessment tasks over the course of seven work sessions. The findings and implications suggest that inferring is most useful when reading fiction, summarizing proved to be an effective for both genres. Lastly, results for the questioning strategy showed that students asked clarification questions for nonfiction texts and 'I wonder' questions for fiction texts.

Effective Comprehension Strategies After Initial Reading of Fiction and Nonfiction Texts

Comprehension is a critical component to student learning. Gillam et al. (2009) state that “comprehension is a complex set of processes that involves the encoding of facts, the activation of knowledge, and the generation of inferences to connect information in ways that make it understandable and memorable”. There is an ongoing debate between educators as to which after reading strategies prove to be most effective to students acquiring reading skills. Are there particular strategies that are more beneficial to students when reading an informational text opposed to an aesthetic text? According to Cohen and Cowen (2011), fiction texts contain characters that encounter a problem and must resolve it. They texts also contain literary elements. A nonfiction text describes a specific topic or subject. It is necessary for professionals and researchers in the field of education to critically examine and develop after reading strategies that take into account the texts students are reading. Only then will students experience success.

In order to increase reading comprehension skills it is crucial that students are exposed to a variety of reading material. Due to this fact, it is necessary to examine which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension for students. Particular emphasis will be put on the following comprehension strategies: summarizing, inferencing, and the Question-Answer Relationship strategy.

It is vital that this topic be examined because comprehension is an important component to any reading program. Learning does not occur when a student simply phonetically sounds out letters and words from a text. Learning occurs when a student is engaged in the active process of constructing meaning through the use of a variety of strategies used to achieve a set purpose through interaction with the text. Educators need to be aware of the texts they are selecting not

only when teaching these strategies, but also when they ask students to use these strategies independently.

If this topic is not explored any further, it will be detrimental to all students and all teachers as well. Appropriate texts must be selected which allow students to practice using these important comprehension strategies as they improve their reading skills. Teachers will be unable to provide the best possible instruction if they are not using appropriate reading materials to teach and reinforce these skills. Both students and teachers will benefit from this research.

According to Cohen and Cowen (2011), “excellent readers will continue to actively and consciously apply strategies to understand the text. They will construct a summary, confirm their predictions, and draw conclusions and self-monitor” (p.283). It is necessary that teachers systematically teach these strategies which will allow readers to become aware of how and when to use these strategies to gain meaning from the text. Mallette (2001) states that teachers need to do the following in order to effectively teach comprehension strategies: model comprehension strategies, guide and scaffold readers, provide feedback, and allow time for students to practice strategies using a variety of texts to gain independence and confidence.

The purpose of this action research project was to determine which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders. According to the research there are many factors that lead to increased reading comprehension in students through the use of after reading strategies. Text genre, research based strategies, instruction, and current literacy shifts all affect student comprehension. The above research indicates the need for implementation of after reading comprehension strategies that are appropriate for text genre and which will ultimately allow students to develop critical literacy skills. The findings and implications suggest that inferring is most useful when reading fiction,

summarizing proved to be an effective for both genres. Lastly, results for the questioning strategy showed that students asked clarification questions for nonfiction texts and 'I wonder' questions for fiction texts.

Theoretical Framework

Fresch (2007) contends that "literacy is conceived as a social practice that looks at what people do with literacy in their everyday lives and by actively using those practices in the classroom (p. 18). Gee (1989) defines literacy as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group" (p.18). Gee believes that much of what individuals know involves a mixture of acquisition and learning. The degree to which one understands a particular text is based upon one's discourse. Each individual has a primary discourse; this discourse is the first to expose the individual to oral and written language and various literacy events. Primary discourses are acquired in the home through socialization with family members. This discourse is usually acquired unconsciously and is used mostly in oral language. Gee (1989) defines acquisition as "the process of acquiring subconsciously without formal teaching" (p. 20). He states that "learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through skillful teaching" (p. 20). However, an individual belongs to many secondary discourses as well. Secondary discourse goes beyond the primary discourse. Secondary discourses include, but are not limited to the following: schools, workplaces, stores, churches, and businesses. Each discourse involves a set of values and viewpoints in terms of which one must speak and act, at least while being in that discourse. For example, an African American, blue-collar, female would not belong to a discourse for white, upper class men. She may attend a rally for women's

rights, in which she belongs to a discourse that includes women. Due to the fact that a person belongs to many secondary discourses, they can often oppose each other. In a sense, literacy is the control of secondary discourses. The same is true when selecting appropriate reading materials for students. The text must be aligned with one's primary or secondary discourse. If the text does not fit the student's discourse, the student will have no background knowledge on the topic and is unlikely to understand what he or she is reading.

Heath (1982) holds the belief that students extend the content of literacy events beyond bookreading. Seeing an item or event in the real world reminds them of something they read in a book. This process is called meaning-making. Individuals use their background knowledge from prior events and experiences to relate to the text they are reading. They are able to take knowledge learned in one context and shift it to another (Heath, 1982). Anderson (1977) highlights the significance of a reader having and using background knowledge resources in reading a text successfully. Through his research he determined that there is a strong relationship between cultural knowledge and reading comprehension.

Freebody and Luke (1990) define literacy as being a "multifaceted set of social practices with a material technology, entailing text, and analysis/critique of the text" (p. 15). Literacy is multifaceted, because it is not one-dimensional; there are many dimensions of literacy. Social interaction is critical when acquiring language. Interaction is what people do with language in everyday life. Freebody and Luke (1990) believe that reading and writing are nothing if not social. They believe people learn through social experiences. Our culture determines what adequate reading is for school, work, leisure, or civil purposes. Comprehension occurs when students are able to connect with characters from the books they are reading. They are able to understand the feelings and attitudes a character is experiencing based on their own lives. In

addition, if a student is reading a nonfiction text, the student reads information on a specific topic and tries to relate this information to the world around them. It is through social interactions around literacy events that people learn to read, write, and acquire language. Freebody and Luke (1990) believe that “what constitutes literacy performance are historically and culturally determined.” They argue that in order to become a successful reader in our society an individual needs to become a text user in which he or she must ask themselves “what does this mean” and a text analyst in which they ask “what does all this do to me?” These roles enable students to use texts efficiently. Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that an important task for literacy teachers is to help students personally identify with the characters’ feelings and to predict based on those feelings what might happen next. Teachers display to students versions of comprehension through demonstration and think alouds. Freebody and Luke (1990) stressed the importance of teaching and modeling specific comprehension strategies to students. This approach enables the students to understand the process that leads to comprehension.

Literacy is acquired when students are immersed in a literate society. Literacy is multifaceted and is the control of secondary discourses. Oral language promotes literacy acquisition. Oral language is a critical component to the acquisition of literacy. It is crucial that children are exposed to oral language through everyday literacy events, by conversing with members of their discourse and their secondary discourse, and by being exposed to a literacy rich environment. Stanovich (1986) and Goodman (2002) are two theorists who have studied the effects of oral language on literacy acquisition and have studied the effects of oral language on literacy acquisition. They have constructed their own thoughts on the topic and have informed others about their discoveries. Stanovich (1986) argued that if one source can identify reading failure, “then it is the failure of the individual to acquire proficiency with the structured nature of

spoken language” (p. 8). According to Goodman (2002), children talk about literacy events and experiences. Interactions such as these, influences children’s developing attitudes and values about literacy, including belief in their ability to read and write.

There are two theories that guide the following study. The first theory is the sociocultural theory. According to the sociocultural theory presented by Larson and Marsh (2009), “learners are active agents in taking responsibility for their learning and constructing goals and purposes for literacy learning” (p.131). In accordance with the theory, Larson and Marsh state that “texts are tools used to mediate learning for a variety of purposes. Text as a tool plays a key role in mediating learning” (p. 131). The sociocultural dimension of literacy defines the individual as a text user and text critic (Kucer, 2009). According to this theory, students “use literacy to negotiate and critique their interactions with the world.” Kucer (2009) defines a strategy as a “cognitive process or behavior that the individual engages so as to create meaning through written discourse.” When implementing strategies, students use their background knowledge to develop new understandings. Much of their background knowledge is dependent on their discourse. Put simply, students use strategies to make meaning from text. However, the organization of knowledge must be taken into account. The information in a text and its interconnectedness with a student’s prior knowledge structures must be considered. Background knowledge and experiences related to the content of the text impacts a student’s ability to manipulate and understand ideas.

The second theory that guides this study is the information processing theory. The information processing theory developed by Anderson (1977) states that “instruction [is] centered on teaching students to be more efficient and effective text processors through the use of strategies” (p.18). Students have an easier time understanding various texts when they are

taught specific strategies to aide them in making meaning. This research “targeted a spectrum of general text-processing strategies, including summarization, mapping, self-questioning, and predicting (p.18). Summarizing and questioning are two strategies that will be used be focused on throughout this study. This theory supports the use of using background knowledge and schema when processing text.

Research Question

Given that responsible students actively engage in their own literacy learning by developing personal literacy goals and that learning occurs when effective reading strategies are taught, this action research project asks, which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders?

Literature Review

The following literature review examines the factors that lead to increased reading comprehension in students through the use of after reading strategies. First the impact of text genre on comprehension will be explored. This exploration will be followed with an analysis of the research concerning effective reading strategies. Additionally, attention will be given to the implications of teacher attitudes and instruction on student success using these strategies. Finally, as learning standards and instruction techniques are ever-evolving, this review will explore how these changes affect what texts are being used and how this affects which comprehension strategies are taught. The research indicates that educators often fail to teach effective after reading strategies that are most appropriate for the text genre being used to promote success in developing life-long literacy skills.

Comprehension Challenges Related to Text Genre

In order to understand the following research, one must first explore the meaning of comprehension itself as well as the factors that influence comprehension. Reading is a complex task that involves a multitude of processes (Fang, 2008). McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) contend it is important to note that comprehension is a cognitive process that is affected by the reader, the text, and the content. Aaroutse and Schellings (2003) define reading comprehension as “the construction of meaning of texts. Such meaning emerges from the interaction between reader and text, between the knowledge, skill, and motivation of the reader and the text which has a specific intention, structure, and degree of difficulty” (Aaroutse & Schellings, 2003, p.387-388).

When students read they engage in a complex thinking process in which they construct mental representations of the text to gain meaning (Neufled, 2005). Research suggests that a certain amount of interpretation is employed during the reading process. These factors both occur and interact within a larger sociocultural context (Kucer, 2010). McNamara (2011) states that comprehension is a series of underlying processes that leads to global understanding. Fang (2011) argues the complex reading task involving several processes cannot be activated without the three pillars of comprehension. According to Fang (2011) the reader must have an understanding of language, possession of relevant experiences, and be able to implement a series of self-regulated strategies.

Primor, Pierce, and Katzir (2011) posit that before reading strategies for fiction and nonfiction can be employed, teachers need to realize that students first must be able to:

extract meaning from text, the reader should be motivated to pursue the task of reading; be able to read words accurately and fluently; retrieve phonological,

syntactic, and orthographic information; draw on vocabulary and background knowledge; remember what is read; and have a purpose for reading (p. 243).

Thus, as stated by Primor et al. (2011), one of the most important factors of comprehension is decoding. Efficient decoding is critical in developing reading comprehension. When decoding processes are laborious, mental resources are used to support decoding; leaving few resources devoted to the comprehension process (Primor et al., 2011). According to research, second factor that affects students' meaning-making is background knowledge. In order to create mental images students must link the information from the text with preexisting knowledge (Stromso & Braten, 2003). Lack of background knowledge is one of the reasons expository text is challenging for many readers. Students relate what they are reading to their personal daily experiences. Although Kucer (2010) agrees that readers need to cross-check text content with prior knowledge, he also cautions that background knowledge can inhibit understanding if the readers' previous experience and the text are not aligned.

The above factors are significantly affected by text genre. Texts have typically been divided into two categories. Gilam, Fargo, and St. Clair Robertson (2009) contend while both genres are used in the transmission of information, they differ in important ways. The first category is narrative text. Snow (2010) states that narrative texts are often written in a language closer to oral language. Snow (2010) claims that understanding this text would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, without background knowledge that relates to the reading. Graesser, McNamara, and Louwrese (2003) make the claim that in many ways the content of narrative texts is similar to experiences in everyday life. Dubravac and Dalle (2002) decree that narrative texts can be identified as poems, short stories, or novels. This genre is often referred to as fiction. In fiction, actions are casually linked to feelings, motivations, and goals, directed

towards solving a problem (Gillam et al., 2009). The second category of text genre is expository text, often referred to as informational text or nonfiction text. Expository text “represents a body of texts whose main purpose is to inform, such as newspapers, textbooks, instruction booklets, and brochures” (Dubravac & Dalle, 2002, p. 217). This type of text is designed to present facts and information. Gillam et al. (2009), further breaks down expository texts into the following structures: descriptive, sequence, and comparison. Ness (2011) adds that expository texts typically communicates factual content, classifies and defines a topic of interest, and communicates information about the natural or social world.

During third grade, reading activities begin to change. Best, Floyd, and McNamara (2008) contend that at this time, students move beyond narrative texts to expository texts as they begin to learn about other subject domains. This transition can be very difficult as students adjust to different text structure and increasingly difficult subject matter. Best et al. (2008) believe that “expository texts tend to place increased processing demands on the reader due to their greater structural complexity, greater information density, and greater knowledge of demands” (p. 140). Best et al. (2008) argues that children between third and fifth grades have relatively little knowledge of expository text. This argument may impede their ability to organize and process text content. Additionally, they make the claim that if children lack related knowledge about ideas in the text, their comprehension will be limited because they cannot generate accurate images. Best et al., (2008) states that although narrative text may contain unfamiliar information, most children have well-developed schemas about the settings, actions, and events described by them. Based on a large body of research comprehension is affected by text genre. Best et al., (2008) concluded in their study that children’s comprehension of narrative text is superior to the expository text. Prior research conducted by Duran, McCarthy, Graesser,

and McNamara (2007) has indicated genre identification is a skill that students need to know to be effective readers. Duran et al. (2007) claims support Best's research. Duran claimed that the sequencing of events in a narrative text aligns with the events of our everyday experiences.

Primor et al., (2011) state that narrative and expository texts "differ in their content, structure, and linguistic features and therefore require different skills from readers" (p. 244). Narrative texts in many ways follow a pattern that is similar to everyday life while expository text content is abstract and technical (Primor et al., 2011). In a study conducted by Kucer (2010), he analyzed narrative and expository text. Thirty-four fourth graders read narrative texts and thirty-five fourth graders read expository text. Kucer then analyzed the differences among students' retellings. At the conclusion of the study, Kucer reported that statistically, narrative readers recalled significantly more than expository readers. Interestingly, expository readers told less, and recalled more ideas in the retelling that did not align with the text (Kucer, 2010).

Yet another factor plays a role in how well students comprehend written text. This factor is text cohesion. McNamara, Ozuru, and Floyd (2011) claim text cohesion "represents the extent to which a text explicitly provides background information and cues to help readers relate information distributed across different parts of the text" (p. 232). Both narrative and expository texts are written in different ways which affects comprehension. Texts are considered low-cohesion when making meaning of the text require many inferences based on reader's knowledge. Texts are considered high-cohesion when elements in the text provide more explicit clues to relations within and across sentences (McNamara et al., 2011). McNamara et al., (2011) concluded that comprehension depends on knowledge and the characteristics of the text.

Lastly, another factor that affects comprehension is the transaction between the reader and the text. In 1978, Rosenblatt developed the transactional theory of literature (Rosenblatt,

1978). This theory distinguishes between aesthetic and efferent points of view. The aesthetic stance analyzes a reader's personal reactions, feelings, and emotions towards a text, whereas, the efferent focuses on the reader's drive to gather information (Ness, 2011). A student's purpose for reading affects the degree of understanding the student achieves. In some situations the focus of reading is to be informed (efferent), and in others the primary purpose is to be entertained (aesthetic). However, Coleman (2007) contends that Rosenblatt's theory is misleading. She argues that the definitions of fiction is narrative and nonfiction is expository are inadequate definitions. She believes that fiction and non-fiction can have overlapping characteristics which may or may not contain both narrative and expository writing. Background knowledge affects a student's purpose for reading; Kucer (2010) contends "the meanings carried away from the text represent a synthesis of the experiences brought to the page by the author and the reader" (p. 62). Stromoso, Braten, and Samuelstuen (2003) emphasized that strategic processing requires a student to draw on different sources of information. These sources guide the reader towards understanding of text. Thus, the reading process is affected not only by the text, but also by the approach of the reader (DuBravac & Dalle, 2002).

Research-based After Reading Strategies

Researchers have conducted studies and collected information to determine the effectiveness of various reading strategies. The purpose of reading strategies is to help students understand the meaning of the text (Wangsgard, 2010). Students also must decide which reading strategies they will be able to utilize most when they read a text. When readers prepare to read narrative or expository texts, they make adjustments to the strategies employed depending on the type of text. Researchers found that reading strategies can be tailored to the specific characteristics of the reader, the task, and the text (Aarnoutse & Schellings, 2003).

Comprehension strategies can be defined as “special knowledge of how to comprehend that readers consciously use as they attempt to understand what they read” (Neufeld, 2005, p. 303).

The genre of a text activates particular strategies that facilitate reading comprehension and assist in the encoding process (Duran et al, 2007). Keer (2004) defines strategies as “conscious, instantiated, and flexible plans readers apply and adapt deliberately to a variety of texts and tasks” (p. 38). These strategies are employed before, during, and after the reading process. This research primarily focuses on after reading strategies. As defined by Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003) reading strategies are the following:

the cognitive activities which readers can undertake before, during and after the reading of a text in order to adequately comprehend the text and prevent, identify or solve any problems which may occur during this process. Reading strategies are specific heuristics, methods or procedures which readers more or less apply intentionally to adequately process and understand the information presented in a text... are aides which reader can apply or not apply; they are not part of the objectives of reading instruction but, rather, among the means to achieve such objectives. (p. 390-391).

The strategies approach developed by Delores Durkin was implemented in a study to examine how effective strategies can be in constructing meaning. The strategies approach centers on direct teaching of specific procedures, such as summarizing, making inferences, and generating questions (McKeown et al., 2009). The study was conducted across six fifth grade classrooms. This approach was tested against the content instruction approach and basal instruction. Five narrative texts were used as well as five expository texts. Student understanding was assessed through multiple choice questions and oral recall. Finding suggested

that the content and strategies approaches led to the greatest level of comprehension (McKeown, 2009). However, the findings did not provide insight into what it is about strategy instruction that may enhance student reading. More research is needed to make that determination. To facilitate student learning, teachers instruct students on how to employ strategies that will help them organize information, reflect on a topic, and learn (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2010).

DuBravac & Dalle (2002) define an inference as generated when a reader uses his or her background knowledge and elements in the text in order to comprehend. Fang (2008) reiterates the fact that students must be able to bridge conceptual gaps in order to make inferences. There is a significant amount of research analyzing student success with generating inferences when reading narrative and expository material. Research conducted by Gillam et al., (2009) suggests that the generation of inferences is crucial for understanding narratives. Gillam et al. (2009) implemented a study in which 40 fourth grade children were asked to read both narrative and expository text and their inferencing was assessed through the use of three explicit and three implicit questions. The results of the study indicate that paraphrases were more closely related to expository text comprehension than inferences. This finding suggests that inference generation for fourth graders is more difficult with expository text than narrative text (Gillam et al. 2009). These results are consistent with prior research. In 1996, Trabasso and Magliano (1996) studied verbal inferences generated by twenty-four third grade children following the reading of narrative and expository text. Results indicated that ideas generated after reading were inferences (Gillam et al. 2009). In a study conducted by DuBravac & Dalle (2002) forty-seven students performed a comprehension task using a narrative and expository text. After reading each text, students generated inferences. The results indicated that students generated more inferences for narrative texts while exhibiting more miscomprehension for expository texts

(DuBravac & Dalle, 2002). They concluded that “because processing differs between text types, both text types should be used in the classroom so that students are exposed to both discourse structures (p. 228). This study highlights the point that significant differences exist between processing narrative and expository texts. According to research conducted by Basche, van den Brock, Risdien, Tzeng, and Trabasso (2001), it was determined that young readers are less familiar with global relations in comparison to adults. This finding suggests that young readers may lack the background knowledge necessary to make inferences from subject matter in non-fiction texts. These researchers concluded that it is difficult for young readers to make cohesive connections between the material represented in the text and their own lives (Basche et al., 2001). Primor et al (2011) concluded that “children are capable of generating inferences in narrative texts more easily than in expository texts since the content of narrative texts is in many ways similar to experiences in everyday life” (p. 244). Furthermore, Primor et al. (2011) state “understanding the relations between ideas demands logical inference making and background knowledge, which children do not always possess” (p. 244). This argument indicates that more background knowledge a reader has, the better he or she will be able to understand expository text.

A second after reading strategy that is highly important for students to use is summarizing. According to Bluestein (2010) students should be taught how to determine important points in a reading passage. The ability to identify these points enables them to construct quality summaries. This strategy is important because summaries indicate a student’s level of understanding gained from a text. Neufeld (2005) supports Bluestein’s claim that constructing summaries after reading can clarify student understandings. Adams, Carnine, & Gersten (1982) conducted research in which they concluded improved retention of information

can be achieved when students generate summary statements about what they have read. They also discovered that students at the intermediate level have the metacognitive ability to differentiate between information that is unimportant (Adams et al., 1982).

A third after reading strategy that has been proven through research to be instrumental in improving student comprehension is questioning. Basche et al. (2011) conducted a study in which he tested third graders comprehension of a text through question answering and recall tasks. They were able to conclude following the study that “questioning is an effective way to help readers construct a coherent representation of a text, because it directs readers attention to making essential connections for coherence” (p. 261). It was determined that questions direct the reader to attend to specific information in the text; this technique leads a student to recall more casually connected events in narrative text. Basche et al. (2001) conducted a study in which they compared on-line questioning and off-line questioning. Results indicated that during reading questioning led to higher comprehension of material. These results are at odds with prior research in which it was determined that fourth grade students sometimes perform better following with questioning after reading due to processing capacities (Basche et al., 2001). In a study conducted by Janssen (2002), results indicated that self-questioning enhances students’ understanding of texts. The Question Answer Relationship (QAR) was devised by Raphael (1982) as a way for students to understand that the answer to a question is directly related to the type of question asked. It helps students differentiate questions based on where the answer can be found. There are two categories of questions with four subcategories. The categories of questions are In the Book and In My Head. Students find the answers to the questions either Right There or have to Think and Search. Questions from In My Head category are Author and You and On my Own questions. It was concluded that the QAR strategy can increase

comprehension of young students (Kinniburgh & Prew, 2010). This research indicates that the strategy is effective for both narrative and expository texts. Kinniburgh & Prew's (2010) research is consistent with that of Adams et al. (1982) in that student generated questions about what they are reading improves reading comprehension. Davey & McBride (1986) investigated the importance of student generated questions for enhanced reading comprehension. The results of their study indicated that self-questioning not only enhances inferential comprehension, but also the recall of specific and verbatim passage information from the reading (Davey & McBride, 1986).

Impact of Instruction on Strategy Use

Most reading instruction takes place within the classroom. Therefore, the role of the teacher must be taken into account. The research stresses the importance of direct instruction, modeling, and scaffolding as they apply to comprehension strategies. Hartman (2001) implies that children are instructed in strategies which support comprehension. They learn why, where, and when to use them, as well as how to adapt them to various situations. Keer (2004) conducted a study in which he examined the educational benefits of explicit reading strategies instruction followed by practice on fifth graders reading comprehension achievement. Students should be encouraged to use new strategies which will allow them to understand how the strategy works and learn about the benefits it will have on their ability to process complex texts. The findings of Keer's (2004) study surmised that explicit reading strategies instruction is a feasible tool to enhance fifth graders' reading comprehension achievement. Similarly, Duke and Pearson (2002) found that there is strong research evidence that students can be taught reading comprehension strategies and that instruction is effective in improving their understandings. Neufeld (2005) found:

the ability to activate and use strategies flexibly and in a coordinated fashion as expert readers does not develop for many students simply by providing them with opportunities to read. Instead, many students benefit from instruction that explicitly teaches them a few research-supported strategies and then, over time, helps them learn to use such strategies in a flexible, coordinated, and self-regulated fashion. (p. 303).

Neufeld (2005) reiterates that the ultimate goal of teaching comprehension strategies is to help students reach a point where they independently approach and read texts in a strategic fashion. Brown, Campione, and Day (1981) research relates to Neufeld's findings. These researchers discussed the importance of systematic instruction of strategies, and teaching the student how to implement these strategies.

Aforementioned, there is an increase in teachers' use of informational text in daily classroom instruction from fourth grade to fifth grade (Ness, 2011). Due to this fact an emphasis is put on teaching comprehension strategies geared towards informational text. McKeown (2009) states that strategy instruction encourages students to think about their mental processes and to execute specific strategies with which to interact with text. She emphasizes the importance of giving students an explanation of the strategy, modeling the strategy, and then allowing time for student practice. The research verifies that a scaffolded approach to implementing strategies leads to efficient strategy usage (McKeown, 2009). Janssen (2002) conducted research in which she noted that teachers must model strategies through "think-alouds." Then, gradually, students will be able to implement the strategy on their own. Van der Meij (1993) found after observing elementary students pose questions about narrative and expository texts that students often mimic teachers in developing factual recall questions. He

purposed that teachers demonstrate use of the strategy through direct instruction and self-questioning during reading.

Teacher attitudes toward text types and their comfort level using those plays a role in how well students use after reading comprehension strategies that correspond to the different text genres. Hall and Sabey (2007) suggested that in many cases, teachers lack the methods and strategies that enable young children to successfully use informational text. When teachers better understand the rich instructional opportunities expository text provides, they will realize that it is a necessary component of literacy instruction. Teachers may make more of an effort to integrate it within instruction.

Raphael & Au (2005) insisted that implementation of the QAR strategy should be introduced to young readers before they can read independently. They claim that by beginning QAR instruction early on, it will build the foundation for success with reading comprehension. Kinniburgh & Prew (2010) developed a study in grades K-2 for the purpose of determining if the implementation of the QAR strategy in primary grades increased student reading achievement. Pre and posttest scores were used to show student growth in reading comprehension as a result of the QAR strategy. The result of this study showed that the mean score on the pretest was 58% and increased to 80% on the posttest (Kinniburg & Prew, 2010). Furthermore, the students and the teachers reported positive experiences using the strategies. Students said the strategies helped them make sense of the material, and teachers insisted that the QAR strategy would assist their students in taking reading tests (Kinniburg & Prew, 2010).

Upon reviewing the literature related to this topic, the studies measured student comprehension in various ways. Best et al. (2008) measured student comprehension using a free recall prompt, cued recall prompts, multiple choice questions. Recall was coded according to the

information children recalled that was explicitly stated in the text. Furthermore, sentences were broken down into main propositions and subpropositions. Main propositions related to the main idea of the passage, while subpropositions contained details pertaining to the main idea (Best et al. 2008). Kinniburgh and Prew (2010) used pretests and posttests to measure the results of levels of growth in reading comprehension following the implementation of the Question Answer Relationship strategy. The pretests and posttest were taken from a basal reading series to ensure an accurate representation of student growth.

Attention should also be paid to the type of materials being used to teach these strategies. When teaching strategies that are appropriate for narrative and expository text, it is essential that teachers take the time in choosing quality fiction and non-fiction books. Gill (2009) stresses that quality non-fiction books need to be clear, organized, and coherent. They should be written in a language that is easily understandable and should be filled with examples that will allow students to make connections between the text and their background knowledge. Non-fiction picture books are an excellent resource in promoting effective reading strategy skills for expository texts. Some texts blend fiction information and it becomes distorted to the reader (Gill, 2009). Readability of the text should also be taken into account (Kucer, 2010). Some research suggests that twin texts on the same topic are uniquely suited to scaffolding and extending students' comprehension (Soalt, 2005). Twin texts are fictional and informational books on the same topic that are paired often times to teach within a particular unit (Camp, 2000).

Current Shifts in Literacy Instruction

With introduction of the national Common Core Standards in the United States, reading instruction is shifting its focus. There is more of a focus on integrating nonfiction into the classroom. Fang (2010) stated that instruction needs to move beyond simply teaching the

“Fab 5.” The “FAB 5” includes the following: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Emphasis on these components does not adequately prepare students to read expository text. He argues if there is not a change, intermediate grade students will find expository texts alienating and difficult to read. Due to the fact that literacy instruction is being reformed with the implementation of the Common Core, there is more of an emphasis on decoding skills and comprehension strategies for understanding expository texts.

Text structure is a major element in understanding expository texts. Text structure is a major element in understanding expository texts. Ray and Meyer (2011) conducted research that has shown that explicit instruction with the use of text structure improves comprehension. They concluded that structural awareness and knowledge of text organization allows students to generalize more ideas, identify the main idea, and generate inferences more easily. Youchum (1991) found that fifth grade students recalled more ideas when reading comparison expository texts than when reading attribution expository texts. Analyzing text structure is referred to as the “structure strategy.” While it is not clear if greater levels of structural knowledge leads to increased comprehension, it has been proven that elementary aged students are more likely to create well-organized mental representations when they are knowledgeable about text structure (Ray & Meyer, 2011). Ray and Meyer’s (2011) findings suggest that both prior knowledge and text structure influence comprehension. Ness (2011) explains that “children may not understand how captions, text boxes, graphics, and headings/subheadings contain essential information and help readers navigate through related topics” (p. 31). Gill (2009) is in agreement with Ness. She believes early exposure to the language of non-fiction can help enhance children’s understanding of expository text and prevent difficulties many students encounter later on. Gill (2009) also examines what is referred to as the “new nonfiction”. These new nonfiction books are nonfiction

picture books. Gill (2009) describes this type of book genre as “a genre that is exploding in both quantity and quality” (p. 260). Non-fiction children’s book provides new ways to convey information that has not been done in the past. Children must be exposed to these new texts and teachers must learn new ways to share these books with children (Gill, 2009).

There are many factors that lead to increased reading comprehension in students through the use of after reading strategies. Text genre, research based strategies, instruction, and current literacy shifts all affect student comprehension. The above research indicates the need for implementation of after reading comprehension strategies that are appropriate for text genre and which will ultimately allow students to develop critical literacy skills.

Method

Context

Research for this study is set to take place at Middlebrook Elementary School*, a school located in a rural setting in western New York. The school community includes several townships which are a mix of residential, rural and suburban in makeup. The district is home to a community of approximately 6,000 residents. The Middlebrook School District is 60 square miles and serves approximately 1,110 students. The district houses two buildings, a K-5 elementary school and 6-12 middle/high school. More than 85% of the high school’s graduates continue on to higher education. Almost all special education students are served in the district. Approximately 3% of high school students are enrolled in occupational education programs through BOCES. The administrative team consists of nine administrators including the Superintendent, Business Administrator, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, Secondary Assistant Principal, Elementary Principal, Assistant Elementary Principal, Director of

* pseudonym

Curriculum and Assessment, and Director of Pupil Personnel Services. The district employs approximately 112 teachers and 92 support staff. Two of the three participants live within the district. The socioeconomic statuses of all three participants are middle class. The surrounding neighborhood is small, quiet, and has very few businesses. An empty science room will be used within the school to conduct research. The room is located at the end of an upstairs hallway and will provide a quiet atmosphere with few distractions and interruptions.

Participants

Jillian* is ten years old Caucasian female and was born on July 30, 2001. Alex* is a ten year Caucasian male and was born August 29, 2001. Kelsey* is ten years old Caucasian female born on June 4, 2001. All three students are enrolled in the same fifth grade class at Middlebrook Elementary School.

Jillian enjoys reading and chooses to read animal fiction, fantasy, and adventure books. She likes to read books by the author, Aaron Hunter. When given the choice to read fiction or nonfiction she usually chooses fiction. Her favorite subjects in school are art, math, and especially writing. When she comes across something she doesn't understand in a book, she looks at the words around it and sometimes uses a dictionary. Outside of school she likes to spend her free time drawing, reading, playing video games, and building things. She first builds something out of Legos and then makes a wood model of it. Jillian plays on the community

* pseudonym

* pseudonym

* pseudonym

soccer team as goalie. She has three pets. Jacks, a male yellow lab; Lilly a female yellow lab; and a hamster name Mishca.

Alex enjoys reading and chooses to read mysteries and nonfiction books. Although he likes nonfiction, he sometimes prefers to look at just the pictures instead of reading the text. His favorite author is R.L. Stine who writes the *Goosebumps* series. When he does not understand something he is reading he skips it, reads further and then comes back to it. Outside of school Alex plays basketball and his *Call Duty* video game. He enjoys watching television and will read if he is bored.

Kelsey enjoys reading and prefers reading fiction and realistic fiction. Her favorite subjects in school are music, reading, math, and social studies. She enjoys reading books by Ridley Pearson, who is the author of *Kingdom Keepers*. When she doesn't understand something she is reading, she will reread it, read further to see if it is explained, or ask her teacher or her parents. Outside of school she likes to read, watch movies at home, and watch movies at the theatre. She has a dog named Jenny and a cat named Fenway.

Mrs. Bryant* is the teacher of all three of these students. She is certified in Elementary Education and has been teaching for ten years.

Researcher Stance

During this research I will be acting as a privileged, active observer. A privileged observer as defined by Mills (2011) is a person who moves in and “out of the role of teacher, aide, and observer (p.74). In the past, I have taught lessons to these students as a substitute

* pseudonym

teacher. I am a familiar face to these students. While collecting research, I will be teaching these students how to use three comprehension strategies, observe their behavior while reading, and ask the students questions about their reading and use of strategies. I have received my Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education (1-6). Currently, I am working towards a Master's degree in Literacy Education. I currently have a certification for Childhood Education (1-6).

Quality and Credibility of Research

It is necessary for researchers to conduct high-quality action research. The research also needs to be credible. Mills (2011) defines credibility as “the researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained (p. 105). One way that credibility was ensured with this research was that I collected “raw” data such as student documents and audio recordings. I also debriefed with a colleague who had have ideas and suggestions on how to make changes or improvement throughout the research process.

According to Mills (2011) dependability is required when conducting quality research, this term refers to “the stability of the data” (p. 104). For this research, collected multiple forms of data. I used the overlap method when asking students about their written work and oral responses. Additionally, I had a colleague examine my data collection process. Triangulation is “the desire to use multiple sources of data” (Mills, 2011, p. 92). Collecting various forms of information improved the quality of this research. I recorded field notes, taped record interviews with students and the teacher, and also had student documents to analyze.

Lastly, confirmability is implemented in this study. Mills (2011) defines this term as “the neutrality or objectivity of the data collected” (p. 105). Triangulation is a part of this research,

meaning I collected multiple forms of data. The first form of data collected was field notes. Mills (2011) describes field notes as “the written records of participant observers” (p.76). Observations were recorded while students read assigned passages. I focused on the environment and student behavior. The second form of data was teacher and student interviews. Mills (2001) refers to this as the enquiring technique because researchers ask students, adults, and parents questions to supplement their observations. The final forms of data are student work and transcribed recordings. Students wrote summaries and their verbal responses were transcribed. Mills (2011) categorizes student work and recordings as the ‘examining’ technique, because it encompasses everything that a researcher may collect. I also avoided any biases or assumptions by reflecting on the data collection process.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Right of the Participants

Prior to starting my research, I collected informed consent forms from parents and the teacher, as well as assent forms from three fifth grade students. Consent and assent forms were signed by each of the participants’ parents, by their teacher, and by the participants themselves. These forms are designed to protect the rights of the individuals participating in the study. All names and locations will remain anonymous. To maintain confidentiality, all participants’ names and the school district were replaced with pseudonyms.

Data Collection

This study requires various forms of data be collected. I took detailed field notes as I observed students reading and using comprehension strategies. These observations allowed me to cross reference student understanding of the text with the reading process. These notes also helped me remember details about each session which will help when it comes to analyzing the

data. I also conducted interviews with each of the students and the teacher. The interviews provided me with more information on each student as well as ongoing instruction in the classroom. Student interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the data collection period. Additionally, I collected the written summaries and post-it notes the students produced. Lastly, I tape recorded all sessions and transcribe each of them to ensure that no information was missed.

This study focuses on the use of comprehension strategies after reading fiction and nonfiction texts. The following strategies were taught: inferring, summarizing, and questioning. The strategies were taught through direct instruction and time was given for students to practice using the strategy. I worked with one student at a time to ensure that distractions did not occur. I also did not want them to overhear each other's thought processes, because it would have interfered with the accuracy of the data. After the students had been taught the strategy and practiced using it, they were given two passages to read and the strategy was implemented. The passages were given one at a time and use of the strategy was assessed each time. I took notes and make observations as the students read. Follow-up questions were asked to determine the student's thought process while implementing the strategy.

The first after reading comprehension strategy that was taught was the inferring strategy. After direct instruction and practice the students were asked to read a fiction passage selected from the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* (QRI) 5th edition. Additionally, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne and *Harry Houdini: A Magical Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod were used. During reading I observed the student's actions and behaviors. I then removed the passage from the student and ask a series of implicit comprehension questions related to the passage. Two days later, the student was handed a second passage, this time a nonfiction passage. The student read

the passage and again I took notes during this time. I again removed the passage from the student and again asked implicit comprehension questions. After I had a discussion with the student on how he or she used the strategy. Based on my observations and how the student responds to questions I asked follow up questions to determine the student's thought process when using the strategy. These clarifications will add depth and accuracy to the data.

The second after reading comprehension strategy is summarizing. This strategy was taught and practiced on a different day from the first strategy. A rubric was given to the students which highlighted the important components of a summary. The student was given the opportunity to ask questions if he or she needs anything clarified. After direct instruction and practice summarizing and using the rubric, the student received a fiction passage from the QRI and asked to read it. Again I made observations and took notes. Upon completion of the text, I allowed the student to keep the passage to reference as the student wrote a summary of the passage according to the criteria already discussed. Two days later the student was then given a nonfiction passage and the process was repeated. Finally, I had a conversation with the student about the use of the strategy and may ask particular questions in reference to the summary he or she wrote.

The final comprehension strategy for the purposes of this study is questioning. This strategy was taught and the students had the opportunity to practice using it. The student was given a nonfiction passage from the book *Harry Houdini: A Magical Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod and asked to write down questions he or she had on post-it notes during and after the reading process. In this book, MacLeod chronicles Houdini's life; she describes the danger that the magician faced as well as the incredible strains oftentimes put on his body. She blends factual information with the dramatic episodes that characterized Houdini's life. The process was

repeated once more using fiction text, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne. Browne writes children's picture book told in four different perspectives on a day in the park, and gradually the characters all come into focus. There's a mother, her son, a father and his daughter. Each character's voice is presented in a slightly different font. But though the setting always remains the same, it's seen differently by each of the four people. A discussion took place with the student to gain more insight into the student's thought process as he or she developed the questions.

Data Analysis

Multiple forms of data were collected throughout the methods portion of the action research project. Three students and their teacher were interviewed, active observations were recorded, student work was collected, and discussions between the students and researcher about student work were noted. The first step I took in the analysis of the data was to code the student group interview, the teacher interview, the active observations, as well as the transcribed discussions between the students and the researcher. Mills (2011) defines coding as “ the process of trying to find patterns and meaning in data collected through the use of surveys, interviews, an questionnaires” (p. 129). After coding the data once, I began to see themes emerging, however, before deciding on themes I went back to code the data once more. I also looked over the students' work to see how the information correlated to the codes. After coding the second time and noting the student work, I again reviewed all of the data and color coded the codes into themes.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the information collected presented reoccurring topics from all of the data sources as well as the participants. After careful analysis, the following three themes emerged:

Effective use of strategies according to text genre, Metacognition throughout reading and assessment processes, and lastly the relationship between text genre and student interest.

Effective use of strategies according to text genre

The inferring, summarizing, and questioning strategies were explicitly taught throughout the data collection period of this action research project. Prior to teaching the strategies, I asked each student to tell me what they already knew about each strategy. All three students demonstrated sufficient understanding of summarizing and questioning, but had difficulty defining inferring. Of the three students, only Jillian gave a description. On February 28, 2012, during the student group interview, Jillian said that when she infers she looks “at what the author writes and tries to make sense of it.” Kelsey responded during the same interview by saying “I’ve heard of it before, but I just don’t know what it is.” Alex stated “I’m not sure what it is.” For instance, after assessing all of the students, I interviewed their teacher on March 15, 2012. I asked about the comprehension strategies she is encouraging within the classroom. She responded “we encourage a lot of visualizing; we’ve done constant making connections so they’re monitoring their comprehension and trying to work on inferencing and that’s the tough one.”

Based on the students’ responses as well as the teachers, it can be concluded that the students could not define inferring. A reason for this could be that this strategy is not focused on as much as other strategies. Mrs. Bryant commented on how she incorporates nonfiction into the curriculum. On March 15, 2012, during the teacher interview she said “we have tried to do more nonfiction [with the implementation of the Common Core Standards], but we push it all during the content areas, they don’t even realize they’re doing it, but its all science and social studies.” Inferring is not a focus when reading, because often the purpose of

nonfiction in the classroom is to learn new content and understand new information. The inferring piece is done through discussion. For example Mrs. Bryant stated during the teacher interview on March 15, 2012 “we use *Weekly Readers* as a way to incorporate nonfiction” into the curriculum. This instruction involves having students read articles about current events as their classmates listen. Afterwards, they discuss the articles as a whole group and make connections. Often they will do a crossword or similar writing activity to test their knowledge on what they learned. This is just one way in which inferring tends to not be used in nonfiction, it corresponds to a study conducted by Dubravac & Dalle (2002) in which they concluded expository text “represents a body of text whose main purpose is to inform, such as newspapers, textbooks, instruction booklets, and brochures” (p. 217). As mentioned above in the methods section, I explicitly taught the inferring strategy to the students prior to assessing them using a fiction and nonfiction text. After reading each text genre they were asked four implicit comprehension questions and four explicit questions. Explicit questions are those where the answer can be found in the text. Implicit questions require the reader to think beyond the text. They are higher level thinking questions in which the reader has to infer about ideas presented in the text. A list of the questions for both passages is located in Appendix A. Table 1 displays the correct and incorrect responses given for both the fiction and nonfiction passages taken from the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* 5th edition.

Table 1 illustrates the number of comprehension questions the students answered correctly. Eight questions were asked for the fiction passage and eight questions were asked for the nonfiction passage. Of the eight questions for each passage, eight questions for each passage, four were implicit questions and four explicit questions. The implicit questions require students to infer. These questions allowed me to see if this strategy worked best with fiction or

nonfiction. The explicit questions were used to gauge the student's overall understanding of the book.

Table 1

Student Inference Scores for Implicit and Explicit Questions According to Genre

Student	Fiction	Nonfiction
Jillian	4/4	2/4
	3/4	4/4
Kelsey	4/4	1/4
	3/4	3/4
Alex	4/4	1/4
	4/4	2/4

Note: Implicit = # correct/ # given

Explicit: = correct/ # given

Both passages above were leveled for fifth grade students. Looking at the data in the table it is clear that none of the three students had trouble using the after reading inferring strategy for the fiction passage. They each answered all four implicit questions correctly. They also scored well with the explicit questions which demonstrate a strong understanding of the passage. There are two factors that contributed to these scores; the first is that the subject of the text was familiar to them. On March 8, 2012 during a post assessment discussion, Kelsey stated the questions for the fiction passage “were easier and already learned about Martin Luther King.” Given that these students have been placed together in the same class for both fourth and fifth grade, it is safe to assume that both Alex and Jillian are also familiar with Martin Luther King Jr. Through their research, Primor et al. (2011) states “understanding the relations between ideas

demands logical inference making and background knowledge, which children do not always possess (p. 244). The second factor that led to these scores was both Kelsey and Jillian prefer reading fiction as opposed to nonfiction. On February 28, 2012, Alex claimed “I like nonfiction, but sometimes it’s harder.” A reason for the scores could account for the fact that the students have more experience using the inferring strategy with fiction as opposed to nonfiction. During the teacher interview, Mrs. Bryant explained how English Language Arts is incorporated into the curriculum. She stated “we start with read aloud and then we have a lot of independent reading, small group work, word study, and writing. Students are mainly using fiction when asked to use these strategies in small groups.” They may be more experienced, implementing the strategy with fiction vs. nonfiction. When asked about reading strategies Mrs. Bryant stated “we encourage a lot of visualizing; we’ve done constant making connections so they’re monitoring their comprehension and trying to work on inferencing and that’s the tough one.” The third factor for the scores represented in the table is that inferencing is often problematic and students struggle with it. The high explicit scores are an indication that the students had an overall understanding of the content in the passages. A fourth factor that is apparent from the scores is that the students had more difficulty reading the nonfiction passage. The explicit question scores are lower which indicates the students had trouble understanding the material. This indication could explain why the implicit scores for the fiction passage were so high and the nonfiction not as high. The research conducted by DuBravac & Dalle states that when generating an inference a student must use his or her background knowledge and elements in the text in order to comprehend. If the student cannot understand the text, they are unable to connect to prior knowledge and therefore, will find it more difficult to infer. The results of a study conducted by Gillam et al. (2009) indicate that paraphrases were more closely related to expository text

comprehension than inferences. These findings suggest that inference generation for fourth graders is more difficult with expository text than narrative text.

The second strategy that was taught was summarizing. Each of the students wrote a summary after reading a fiction passage and again after reading a nonfiction passage. After writing each summary, they were asked to fill out a rubric in which they rated themselves on a scale of one to four for each of the four components of a quality summary. Following the completion of the rubric the student and I discussed why the student rated himself/herself the way that he/she did. Table 2 represents student self-assessment scores for the fiction passage “Margaret Mead”. The rubric is broken down into the following four criteria: Content, Organization, Vocabulary, and Relevance. To receive points for content, the student must clearly communicate their knowledge of the reading. Organization requires the reader to write the main idea and details in a sequential order. Vocabulary asks the student to use effective and engaging words to make the writing interesting. Lastly, relevance calls for the writer to ensure that ideas are related to the text. An example of the original rubric can be seen in Appendix B. The rubric is set on a scale of 1 to 4. One indicates the lowest amount of points a student can receive, and four is the maximum amount of points a student can receive. The total score represents the total number of points awarded over the total points possible.

Table 2

Summary Rubric Scores for Fiction Passage

Student	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Relevance	Total Score
Jillian	3	4	3	4	14/16
Kelsey	4	3	3	4	14/16
Alex	3	3	2	4	12/16

Note: Points awarded on a scale of 1 to 4 with a total possible score of 16 points.

The data in the above table demonstrates a firm understanding of how to construct a quality summary. Jillian gave herself a four for both organization and relevance. She gave herself a three for content and vocabulary. After scoring herself, she was asked to explain how she evaluated her work. I had discussions with each student after they wrote and scored their summaries. These conversations were transcribed as part of the field notes. She said of her summary, “I gave myself a three [for content], because I didn’t use a very effective engaging vocabulary, but I used a variety of them.” Jillian exuded confidence with her explanation of her summary score.

Kelsey gave herself a four for both content and relevance. She explained why she gave herself threes for organization and vocabulary. “For organization I gave myself a three, because I thought that I put my ideas in order from the beginning, middle, and end. And for vocabulary, I gave myself a three again, because I thought I used some good words that I used gradually.”

Kelsey’s analysis of her work also demonstrated that she was confident with her work.

Overall, Alex scored himself two points lower than Jillian and Kelsey did. He only awarded himself a four for relevance. According to field notes, he seemed hesitant when scoring himself and less confident. On March 6, 2012 when explaining how he scored himself, he said “well, for content I gave it a three because in my mind I kept thinking that I need to put them in order and I got messed up. For vocabulary I only gave that one a two, because I only showed some use of words, I don’t think I used very strong words.” Alex appeared to be the most cautious when scoring himself. His hesitation is noted in the field notes.

Of the three students, Kelsey and Alex spent the greatest amount of time scoring themselves. Interestingly, each of them gave themselves their lowest marks in vocabulary. A

possible explanation for this is that their focus was on incorporating the proper information into their summaries and in a logical order. This reasoning is supported with Bluestein's (2010) claim that students should be taught how to determine important points in a reading passage. The students' focus here was on incorporating important information, not on engaging use of word choice.

Table 3 represents the scores for the nonfiction passage. The table displays the self-assessment scores each student awarded himself or herself. Table 3 represents student self-assessment scores of their written summaries following the nonfiction reading of "The Octopus". A three for each criterion or a total score of 12/16 is representative of grade level work.

Table 3

Summary Rubric Scores for Nonfiction Passage

Student	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Relevance	Total Score
Jillian	3	4	3	4	14/16
Kelsey	4	4	3	4	15/16
Alex	4	4	3	4	15/16

Note: Points awarded on a scale of 1 to 4 with a total possible score of 16 points.

Looking at the self-assessments recorded in Table 3 it is clear that the students scored themselves the same or better than they did for the fiction passage. Jillian awarded herself the same amount of points for each criterion for the nonfiction summary as the fiction summary. When asked to explain which summary was easier to write, she said "the fiction, because it's a little easier, because you don't have to give the facts about it." Kelsey and Alex's total self-evaluation scores appear to demonstrate that they were much more confident when writing summaries for the nonfiction text than for the fiction texts. Kelsey felt that the organization of

her nonfiction summary improved from her fiction summary. Although, she left her vocabulary score the same as her fiction summary. What is interesting is even though she scored herself higher for the nonfiction summary she claimed that the fiction was easier to write. She reasoned on March 8, 2012 “the fiction is easier to write, because I usually read fiction. In nonfiction you have to list a lot more.” During the same discussion according to field notes, Kelsey stated that she is required to summarize for nonfiction more than fiction. She said “we aren’t allowed to write summaries for our reader responses.” This restriction is a possible reason for the better score on the nonfiction passage. She has more explicit writing summaries for nonfiction than fiction texts. Adams, Carnine, & Gersten (1982) conducted research in which they concluded improved retention of information can be achieved when students generate summary statements about what they have read. They also discovered that students at the intermediate level have the metacognitive ability to differentiate between information that is unimportant (Adams et al., 1982). This finding correlates to the improved scores for the nonfiction summary in both content and relevance. Alex demonstrates a bit more confidence with his nonfiction summary. According to my field notes, he prefers to write summaries for nonfiction texts than fiction. During our discussion on March 8 2012, he said it’s easier to write a summary for “nonfiction because I’m more into nonfiction. I don’t read nonfiction that often, but I’ve always felt strong reading nonfiction.” Alex gave himself a four for relevance in both passages. He gave himself an additional point for content, organization, and vocabulary for the nonfiction summary for a total score of 15/16 compared to 12/16 for the fiction passage. Another possible reason for the better scores for the nonfiction summaries is that they had experience using the rubric for fiction, so it was easier to write the second time through.

The third comprehension strategy that was taught directly was questioning. The students were asked to pose questions before, during, and/or after reading. We discussed how readers often have questions as they read. If they do not understand something they may ask a question for clarification. If the reader is curious he/she may ask an “I wonder” question. We also discussed where we might find answers to these questions. Students were not limited to a certain number of questions. They were simply asked to write down the questions that popped into their heads before, during, and after reading. After students finished reading and writing questions I asked them to determine if they were “I wonder” questions or clarification questions. We also discussed how they would find the answers to their questions. Appendix C contains the written work of the students for this strategy. Table 4 displays the number and category of questions the students asked for the fiction book, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne.

Table 4

Questions Asked During and After Reading of Fiction Passage

Student	# of questions asked	# of “I Wonder” questions	# of clarification questions
Jillian	3	3	0
Kelsey	3	2	1
Alex	2	2	0

Note: Numbers indicate the number of questions asked.

Looking at the data in the above chart, Jillian asked three I wonder questions. Kelsey asked two I wonder questions and one clarification question. Alex asked two I wonder questions. Jillian asked three ‘I wonder questions’ indicating that she understood the book. She did not have to ask any clarification questions. Kelsey asked three questions as well. She asked

one clarification question, but quickly answered her own question as she read further. Alex asked two ‘I wonder’ questions, but struggled with the book. His questions were not about the text, but about the illustrations and the pictures. Interestingly he did unconsciously ask clarification questions as he read, but did not write them down. This finding is an indication that the text might have been too difficult for him to use this strategy.

Table 5 shows the number and category of question the students asked for the nonfiction book, *Harry Houdini: A Magical Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod.

Table 5

Questions Asked During and After Reading of Nonfiction Passage

Student	# of questions asked	# of “I Wonder” questions	# of clarification questions
Jillian	1	1	0
Kelsey	3	2	1
Alex	4	4	0

Note: Numbers indicate the number of questions asked

Jillian asked one question after reading the nonfiction passage. According to field notes recorded on March 12, 2012, Jillian rushed through the reading and quickly wrote down a question she did not appear interesting the reading or the task and this could account for the limited data. Kelsey asked three questions. The clarification question had to do with the unknown vocabulary word ‘straitjacket’. It was noted in the field notes that she used the surrounding text and illustrations to answer her question. Alex appeared to be very interested in the book. He asked four I wonder questions and according to field notes spent several seconds

looking at the illustrations and rereading the text to I assume confirm or discount information he read.

After looking at the data, one can see that Jillian and Alex strictly asked “I wonder” questions for both the fiction and nonfiction passages. Kelsey’s questions were mostly “I wonder” questions, but she did ask one clarification question for each passage. While recording observations as the students read, I noticed that both Kelsey and Alex both asked questions aloud without realizing they had asked one, because neither of them wrote it down when they said it. These questions are not included in the data table above. This observation indicates that this strategy is automatic for them. They unconsciously ask themselves questions as they read and find ways to answer the questions they have. This finding correlates to the study conducted by Basche et al. (2001) in which they compared on-line questioning and off-line questioning. Results indicated that during reading questioning led to higher comprehension of material. This research appears to indicate that the student had a firm understanding of the new information presented in the text because they asked and answered their own questions while reading.

Jillian did not ask any clarification questions which leads one to believe she understood the content and vocabulary of both passages. Interestingly, Alex did not record any clarification questions for the fiction passage. However, when he finished reading and closed the book he said “I didn’t get that book.” This statement indicates he asked several clarification questions in his head, but did not record them. Possibly, due to his confusion he asked several questions one after the other and his working memory was overloaded which caused him to be unable to remember them and write them down. According to his written work, one of the questions also indicated confusion. For instance, he wondered why the author changed the font. It is relatively safe to assume that the text complexity for Alex affected his ability to use the questioning

strategy. Kelsey asked one clarification question for each passage, but according to field notes was able to answer both questions as she continued reading. Her ability to answer her own question demonstrates effective use of the strategy. The questioning strategy fulfilled its purpose here. A list of the questions each student asked for both passages can be found in Appendix D.

Metacognition throughout Reading and Assessment Processes

As students read the passages I observed and noted their reading behaviors. By watching them closely as they read I was able to see that they unconsciously used comprehension strategies as they read. Following each assessment I had discussions with each of the students about the use of the strategies to add depth to the data. I not only wanted to see if the students successfully used the comprehension strategies, I also wanted to know their thought process while using the strategies and how the strategies helped them understand the text. After the students answered the implicit questions, I asked them to explain how they reached their answer. Following the written summaries, the students explained how they developed the summary. Lastly, after students wrote down questions they had from their reading they again explained their thought process. On March 12, 2012, Alex was reading *Harry Houdini: A Magical Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod and writing down questions on post-it notes. As he read aloud he often paused and reread a section of the passage. This text contained pictures and at times he would stop mid-sentence, look at the picture to confirm or discount what he had read before continuing on. When posing a question he took his time and looked back at the text. Alex also commented to himself as he read the passage. This comment showed that he was thinking as he read. On March 13, 2012, when reading *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne he looked at the pictures on each page before reading the text and asked questions aloud when he was confused. He did not write those questions on a post-it. He struggled with this text, he read the words accurately,

but had difficulty with comprehension. It was noted in field notes that Alex struggled with this text. It was apparent that Alex struggled with the meaning of this text. When he finished reading he said “I didn’t get that book.” His working memory was trying to process too much new information. He could not effectively use the strategy, because the text was too difficult. It was not a decoding problem, but a struggle with understanding what he was reading. This finding correlates to the research of Aaroutse & Schellings (2003) who define comprehension as “the construction of meaning of texts, such meaning emerges from the interaction between reader and text, between the knowledge, skill, and motivation of the reader and the text which has a specific intention, structure, and degree of difficulty” (p. 387-388). These findings show that he was unable to process the information.

On March 12, 2012, Jillian would re-read if she made a miscue. After a miscue she would first re-read it to herself before re-reading it out loud. Also, Jillian was the only student who did not write down questions as she read; she waited until she finished reading. I observed similar behavior the following day as she read the fiction passage. Although, on this day, I noticed she did not look back at the text when writing questions following the reading. A possible reason for the limited use of the strategy is that she did not have a purpose for reading and was uninterested. As noted in field notes, her behavior was hurried and she rushed through the reading and hurriedly wrote a single question. This finding is in line with Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. A student’s purpose for reading affects the degree of understanding the student achieves.

When reading the nonfiction passage on March 12, 2012, Kelsey would make connection as she read. She made comments such as “he doesn’t look happy” and “that’s the picture from the cover.” She would also think of a question while she was reading, but finish the sentence

before quickly writing it down. She also unconsciously asked questions aloud as she read, demonstrating Metacognition. I also noticed that she looked at the picture when reading the words on a page and then looked back at the text for clarification. Kelsey independently and unconsciously uses comprehension strategies in understanding the text. This relates to Neufeld's (2005) belief that the ultimate goal of teaching comprehension strategies is to help students reach a point where they independently approach and read texts in a strategic fashion.

The Relationship between Text Genre and Student Interest

During the student interview, each student was asked to explain the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Each of them had a firm understanding of how they differ. It is also important to note that some of the students had difficulty understanding certain texts. On February 28, 2012, the first day of assessment after reading "How Does Your Body Take in Oxygen?" Kelsey stated "I don't know a lot of these questions, I was concentrating on reading and forgot to think about what I was reading." Struggles with the passages play a factor in the effective use of the comprehension strategies. This revelation supports the claim Best et al. (2008) who argued that children between third and fifth grades have relatively little knowledge of expository text. This lack of knowledge may impede their ability to organize and process text content. Additionally, they make the claim that if children lack related knowledge about ideas in the text, their comprehension will be limited because they cannot generate accurate images. Additionally, after reading the same passage and answering the comprehension questions, Alex said "I don't know, I think I did really bad on that one" referring to the nonfiction passage. On March 13, 2012 following the reading of *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne, Alex closed the book and said "I didn't get that. It was hard, because the font kept changing, and it was hard

to read.” This focus on reading indicates lack of comprehension due to overload of working memory. Neufled (2005) stated that when students read, they engage in a complex thinking process in which they construct mental representations of the text to gain meaning. When working memory is overworked, the student cannot process and retain new information. During the student interview, I asked each student if they preferred reading fiction or nonfiction. The interest level of the student is another factor that can impact the use the strategies with each text. Jillian and Kelsey both claimed to like fiction over nonfiction, while Alex prefers to read nonfiction. While interviewing Jillian on February 28, 2012, in regards to her choice of genre she said “I would have to say [I prefer] fiction. I like fantasy, animal fiction, adventure, lots of things that involve animals and animals as characters.” Kelsey replied “I like fiction and realistic fiction.” During the same student interview, Alex stated “I read nonfiction and I like to read mystery. But with nonfiction, sometimes I won’t read the thing, I might just look at the pictures. The findings of this study show that while interest plays a role in the successful use of comprehension strategies, it may not be the only factor. This conclusion can be made after careful analysis of the data. For example, Jillian correctly answered all comprehension questions that involved inferring for the fiction passage and scored a 2/4 for the nonfiction passage. She received the same score for both her fiction and nonfiction summaries. While using the questioning strategy, she asked three questions about the fiction passage while only asking a single question for the nonfiction passage. The inferring and questioning results seem to indicate that interest may play a role in effective use of comprehension strategies, but the results for the summary data show that interest does not play a role. Kelsey scored a 4/4 when answering implicit comprehension strategies and scored a 1/4 when responding to nonfiction implicit questions. This indicates that for Kelsey interest may have been a factor that lead to her scores.

For the summary strategy Kelsey improved by one point on her nonfiction summary from her fiction summary. On the third strategy Kelsey asked the same number of strategies for each genre. For Kelsey being interested in fiction may have lead to increased scores using the inferring strategy, but the results for the summarizing and questioning strategy seem to indicate that interest does not play a role in successful use of the strategy. For the inferring strategy Alex scored a 1/4 when answering comprehension questions that called on him to infer. In contrast to this score he received a 3/4 on the fiction passage. However, while using the summarizing strategy, he showed a three point improvement on his nonfiction summary from his fiction summary. Lastly, looking at the effectiveness of the questioning strategy, Alex as twice as many questions for the nonfiction passage than he did for the fiction passage. Looking at Alex's scores, it can be said that interest played a role in his use of the summarizing and questioning strategies, but no the inferring strategy. Looking at the results for all three students, it can be concluded that interest may lead to effective use of a particular strategy for a certain students, but it is not an indicator of success for all students. Each of the above students had success with various strategies according to their interests, but none of them had success with every strategy according to their genre of choice. These results indicate that although each student prefers a particular genre, interest may not always be an indicator of how successful a student will be at using a particular comprehension strategy. After each strategy was taught and assessed the students were asked to identify the text that they had an easier time using the strategy with and why. The inferring strategy was assessed on March 6, 2012. Alex was asked which passage was easier for him when using the strategy. He said "The Martin Luther King passage, because nonfiction can be a little bit harder for me, even though I like that." Jillian also thought the fiction passage was easier. Kelsey agreed with the other two. She preferred the fiction passage

and said “the questions were easier, and I already learned about Martin Luther King.” This statement indicates that prior knowledge does play a role in the successful use of comprehension strategies when reading. This finding is supported by Kucer’s (2010) readers need to cross-check text content with prior knowledge. On March 8, 2012 after the students had completed one summary for each passage, I asked which summary was easier to write. Jillian replied “the fiction, because it’s a little easier, because you don’t have to give the facts about it.” Kelsey also said fiction, she reasoned “because I usually read fiction. In nonfiction you have to list a lot more.” Interestingly, Alex found the nonfiction was easier. For Jillian and Kelsey, their scores support their claims. Jillian scored the same points for each passage, Kelsey improved one point on her nonfiction summary from her fiction summary. Alex’s score does support his claim, because he earned three more points on his nonfiction summary than he did on his fiction summary. Additionally, the research conducted by Adams et al. (1982) states that students at the intermediate level differentiate between information that is important vs. unimportant information. This could be an indicator of why the students performed better on their nonfiction summaries, because they found it easier to sort information with a nonfiction passage than they did for the fiction passage. On March 12, 2012 following the questioning strategy the students were asked for which passage did you find yourself asking more questions? Jillian responded “fiction, because if you don’t always know what the character is going to do and sometimes the characters are interesting, you want to know what’s happening.” Kelsey said “fiction, because I read it more.” On the day of the student interview, February 28, 2012, Kelsey said that sometimes she will sometimes go to the library and find a book on her own about something she learned in classes that interests her. Sometimes she takes notes on what she is reading. She said “we had to write about Amelia Earhart, and I did it at home, not many kids would do that.” Alex

agreed “fiction, because they’re unpredictable. What is interesting after looking at the data displayed in Table 4 and Table 5, Jillian asked three questions for the fiction passage and only one for nonfiction. Kelsey asked three questions for each passage and Alex asked two questions for the fiction passage, but four questions for the nonfiction passage. Kelsey’s and Jillian’s responses lined up with their scores, but Alex’s response did not. These scores could be attributed to the fact that Alex struggled to understand the fiction passage.

Implications and Conclusions

The purpose of this action research project is to determine which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders.

According to the research, there are many factors that lead to increased reading comprehension in students through the use of after reading strategies. Text genre, research based strategies, instruction, and current literacy shifts all affect student comprehension. The above research indicates the need for implementation of after reading comprehension strategies that are appropriate for text genre and which will ultimately allow students to develop critical literacy skills. The findings and implications suggest that inferring is most useful when reading fiction, summarizing proved to be an effective for both genres. Lastly, results for the questioning strategy showed that students asked clarification questions for nonfiction texts and ‘I wonder’ questions for fiction texts.

Inferring is most useful when reading fiction. Nonfiction is difficult for students to make inferences independently, because they are learning a lot of new information as they are learning a lot of new information as they read. The research of Primor et al. (2011) indicates “the reader should be... able to read words fluently; retrieve phonological, syntactic, and orthographic

information; draw on vocabulary and background knowledge; remember what is read; and have a purpose for reading” (p.243). These abilities added together leads to comprehension. The research and the findings of this study supports the claim that making inferences with nonfiction text is more challenging than making inferences with fiction text. When summarizing using nonfiction text, the students seemed more concerned with fulfilling the content and organization criterion, than with the vocabulary criterion. This could be because the nonfiction is expository text loaded with a lot more information in which the students have to decipher and organize information into their own thoughts. It is important for educators to remember that students may require more time for nonfiction summaries in order to deduce the heavily loaded informational text and put it into their own words. Additionally, at the fifth grade level, students are still adjusting to the amount of expository text they are required to read and interpret, whereas in earlier grades they had many years of practice working with fiction text. The relevance criterion results were consistent for both genres. In terms of the questioning strategy, although students did not record questions, they asked questions aloud as they read. This indicates that students tend to ask clarification questions with nonfiction text and ‘I wonder’ questions with fiction text. However, interest also plays a role. Alex asked four ‘I wonder’ questions for nonfiction, because he was interested in the text. He did not ask any clarification questions, but did claim to not understand the text. This discrepancy is an indication that the questioning strategy is automatic and unconscious for the students.

The findings discussed throughout this action research project will greatly impact my teaching of comprehension strategies. I’ve always believed that educators need to take the time to really get to know their students. This includes being aware of their interest outside of school and their home environment. It is also vital that teachers take anecdotal notes on their students

and observe what books they are drawn to and which books they like to read. The research has shown that when students are interested in what they are reading, they are more likely to understand, even if the text is more challenging. In connection with the literature, Fang (2011) discussed how the reader must have an understanding of language, possession of relevant experiences, and be able to implement a series of self-regulated strategies. It is also important to make note of student behaviors during reading and take note of strategies students are using and not using. It would be a good idea to meet with each student on a regular basis as another way of recording student strengths and weaknesses during and after reading.

Additionally, the research and finding in this study highlight the importance of after reading comprehension strategies. These strategies lead to greater comprehension of the material. Educators should also exercise caution in selecting texts when teaching these strategies. The findings in this study lead us to believe certain genres are privy to the teaching of after reading comprehension strategies that improves the overall learning of the students.

Four limitations were discovered concerning this action research project. The first limitation is the limited timeframe in which to collect the data. This project could be turned into a longitudinal study. It would be interesting to follow the data through the entire school year. This would increase the reliability of trends and patterns apparent in the data. The second limitation is the use of few texts. To improve the study, I would incorporate the use of additional texts. These texts would still be leveled for fifth grade readers, but would cover a broader range of topics. I would also vary assessment passages with published books. This study was limited to two nonfiction *Quantitative Reading Inventory* (QRI) passages, two fiction QRI passages, one fiction children's book and one nonfiction children's book. Using a more diverse selection of texts could have altered the data. Thirdly, throughout the course of this study the students met

with me at the same time and in the same room. If I were to do the study again, I might choose to meet with them separately to ensure the accuracy of the data. Students would not be distracted by one another, but also, they would not overhear each other taking the assessment which could have affected the data. Lastly, for this study I met with the students immediately after lunch. It would be interesting to compare data if students were assessed at various times. Every student is different, some work better in mornings, others in the afternoon. Likewise, some are able to focus after lunch and specials while others need to be asked back into their studies.

The results of this study raise some questions about further research. This study strictly focused on the inferring, summarizing, and questioning after reading strategies. Future studies could broaden the scope of the research by focusing on other after reading comprehension strategies. Secondly, with the implementation of the Common Core Standards, will students be more prepared for nonfiction text in fifth grade in the coming years? This inquiry could be cause for further research. At the completion of this action research project, my hope is that the reader is left to think about the impact this research could have on future instruction. Making a difference for all students' literacy learning and teaching them the strategies they need to succeed in reading and comprehending by selecting appropriate texts to teach these strategies.

The purpose of this study was to determine which after reading strategies work best with fiction and nonfiction texts in developing comprehension in fifth graders. Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. It is my hope that further research will be conducted in regards to the effectiveness of after reading strategies on student learning. Genre must also be taken into consideration when teaching these strategies.

If the goal is to have elementary students reading proficiently and taking away meaning from text, we must support these students daily as they learn how to use these strategies. We also must ensure that educators continue to grow in their professional knowledge in promoting the use of after reading strategies in accordance with text genre.

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Appendix A

Questions for “Martin Luther King Jr.” (Fiction)

1. What was Martin Luther King’s main goal? (Implicit)
2. Why had people made laws separating blacks and whites? (Implicit)
3. In some cities, what did blacks have to do on a crowded bus? (Explicit)
4. Why was Rosa Parks arrested? (Explicit)
5. What did many people do to protest Rosa Parks’s arrest? (Explicit)
6. What happened when people refused to ride the buses? (Implicit)
7. Why was Washington D.C., an important place to protest unjust laws? (Implicit)
8. Name one way in which Martin Luther King was honored for his work. (Explicit)

Questions for “How Does Your Body Take Oxygen?” (Nonfiction)

1. What is *one* of the main ideas of what you have read thus far? (Implicit)
2. Why do your cells need oxygen? (Explicit)
3. When the cells use the oxygen, what other gas do they make? (Explicit)
4. How is the air that you breathe cleaned *and* moistened? (Explicit)
5. Why can’t you hold your breath for 20 minutes?
6. Explain how air goes from your nose to your lungs. (Explicit)
7. Why are there two bronchial tubes? (Implicit)
8. Why is it important that tiny blood vessels surround each air sac? (Implicit)

Appendix B

Category	1	2	3	4	Self Evaluation	Teacher Evaluation
Content	Writing is extremely limited in communicating knowledge	Writing is limited in communicating knowledge	Writing is sufficient in communicating knowledge	Writing clearly communicates knowledge		
Organization	Ideas not ordered	Some order of main idea and details or sequence	Main idea and details or sequential	Good flow of ideas from topic sentence and details or sequence		
Vocabulary	Careless or inaccurate word choice that obscures meaning	Shows some use of varied word choice	Uses a variety of word choice to make writing interesting	Effective and engaging use of word choice		
Relevance	Ideas not related to the text	Few ideas related to the text	Many ideas related to the text	All ideas related to the text		
Comments:				Total		
				Final Grade		

Appendix C

Student summaries for “Margaret Mead” (Fiction)

Kelsey

Margaret Mead was interested about how people lived in other places. So Margaret went to live in a land named Soma. She didn't like it at first but gradually came to like the place. Margaret decided to study people in other lands for the rest of her life.

Jillian

The passage was about a woman named Margaret Mead. She studied Somoans and their language. Mead learned many things from the Soman people.

Alex

In the beginning of Margaret Mead, Margaret wanted to study how different people lived. So she moved to Soma. She studied had on languages and a lot more. When she first arrived life was hard for her. She lived in a house with no walls and no gas or electricity and lots more problems. There at one point life got better. She got better at their languages and people regarded her. So after all life got better and she was happy.

Student summaries for “The Octopus” (Nonfiction)

Kelsey

This passage is about octopi protecting themselves. It has three different ways to protect itself. One, it pushes water to the enemy. Two, it squirts dark fluid. And three, the octopus will change colors.

Jillian

The passage was about the octopus. It says the three ways it defends itself. Also what people think about them.

Alex

The octopus is about the octopuses prey and its food it eats. When an octopus knows that an enemy is coming it will change color. When an octopus knows that its food is around it will get excited and change colors.

Appendix C**Questions asked during/after reading *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne (Fiction)***Kelsey*

1. What is a mongrel?
2. Where did Charley go?
3. I wonder if he knows the family who owns Victoria?

Jillian

1. Why was the story split up into four stories?
2. Why did the author use gorillas as characters?
3. Why did the story take place in the park?

Alex

1. Why did he talk to the kid?
2. Why did the author change the font?

Questions asked during/after reading *Harry Houdini: A Magical Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod (Nonfiction)*Kelsey*

1. Why would they think the jacket was fake?
2. What is a straitjacket?
3. Why did Harry give his secrets away just to soldiers?

Jillian

1. I wonder why Harry gave away his secrets?

Alex

1. Why did he do it in the air?
2. Why did he want to fight?
3. How did he get back down?
4. How did he get out of the straitjacket?