I Don’t Remember!!!
Improving Reading Comprehension Among Struggling Readers

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Abstract

Do your students have trouble remembering something they just read? Can your students extend information beyond the text? My inquiry focuses on finding different strategies to help struggling readers remember information that they just read. I wanted my students to go further than simply reading the words on the page. I wanted them to remember what they read and make connections beyond the text. Come join me to learn more about the different strategies that are available to assist struggling readers in your classroom!
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Context

As an elementary education major at Penn State University, I have had the wonderful opportunity to be an intern in the Professional Development School. I was placed in a third grade classroom at Gray’s Woods Elementary School for the 2006-2007 school year. Gray’s Woods Elementary is located in a rural area of the State College Area School District with large plots of land and no businesses nearby. It is a growing school, as new houses are built by the day increasing the student population at an equal rate. There is very little ethnic diversity in the school as most of the children are Caucasian and were born in the United States.

My classroom is one of three third grade classes at the school. My class is comprised of 23 wonderful children. Of those students, 11 are girls and 12 are boys. One of the 12 boys moved to the school at the beginning of January from Virginia. He has adjusted well and fit into the classroom dynamic. There are few discipline problems and the students as a whole group get along well. They are all hard workers and usually never complain about the work they are completing.

Of the 23 students, I have one student who is treated with medication for an attention disorder and one who is off and on medication for the same problem in addition to a possible auditory processing disorder. Both of these students are boys. One girl is in special education, while six students attend Title I for reading, four boys and two girls. All but one boy of that same group of students attend Title I for math as well. Two female students go to speech and language therapy. Several students attend enrichment as well.
A majority of the students come from upper-middle class families with a few coming from lower socioeconomic homes. Parent participation and assistance is plentiful for most of the students.

While most of the students in the class are fluent and avid readers, there are several students who struggle with reading day in and day out. These students frequently struggle with books their peers are reading, and become frustrated because it takes them longer to complete a task compared with their classmates. Among this group of struggling learners, there are two girls and four boys. I have two students in this group who are fully capable of doing the work and succeeding, but the most minor disruption to their day causes their work to go down hill quickly. Another two students, who are also capable of success, display anxiety and always second-guess themselves. Finally, the last two students in this group, struggle with all parts of the reading process and really have to work to accomplish tasks that are minimal for their other peers. My two attention deficit students are among this group of learners.

**Rationale**

Since the beginning of the year, I have had the opportunity to work directly with my students as they are reading. In addition to working with them in our classroom, I also had the experience of working with many of them at a reading and writing program called Jumpstart. This intensive program is designed to help struggling readers and writers in third grade by focusing on comprehension, decoding, fluency, writing, and strategies that can be used while reading and writing. It was through this program that I
saw many of my students work on these areas of learning, but only improve a small amount. In particular there were six of my eleven attending students that seemed to improve in their fluency, but comprehension was still a struggle.

These six students, who are also in Title I, became members of my reading group once Jumpstart ended and regular reading classes resumed. It was through my continued work with them in this group that I noticed their significant lack of comprehension. While they could now read the words with more accuracy than before Jumpstart, their retention of the information that they read seemed to remain constant. They remembered little, if any information.

This lack of comprehension began to trouble my mentor and me. These students are all capable of success, but their lack of understanding while reading was interfering with their work. They were receiving low grades on reading assignments and ended up redoing many of the assignments completed without teacher assistance. The students took a long time to complete an assignment that other students completed with relative ease.

In addition to the difficulty with classroom work, the students also struggled with practice reading assessments. In third grade, students take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) for the first time. A major component of this state assessment is reading. In the reading assessment, students are required to answer questions about a passage they read. The district provides numerous practice tests for this state assessment, and unfortunately many students did not do well on them. The six Title I students in particular really struggled with their answers. Standardized testing is becoming a major part of the education process in today’s society, and these students are
already at a huge disadvantage when they take the tests because of their lack of comprehension.

It was seeing these difficulties among my students that helped me come to my inquiry topic. I wanted to look at the reading process and comprehension in particular. I wanted to find ways to help my students so they would not be at such a disadvantage when they take these tests this year and in the years to come.

Thus, my inquiry question became, *What strategies can I use to improve reading comprehension among my struggling readers?* By introducing and teaching the students strategies to help them remember what they read, I hoped the students would find a strategy that would help them recall the information they read. In addition, by conducting this study with more than one student, I could see if there are particular strategies that work better than others or if some do not work at all. I can then use this information for years to come as I come across other students who struggle with reading and comprehension. I will hopefully already have a handful of strategies to teach them in hopes to improve areas in reading where they have difficulty.

**Inquiry vs. Project**

As my inquiry plans began to take shape, there were several things about my students that stuck out in my mind. Reading was the main area that troubled me day in and day out. At first I thought about trying to improve reading outside of school in hopes that students reading abilities would improve with extra practice. However, I soon realized that this would be more of a project as opposed to a study. I already knew of
many ideas used by teachers that helped their students read more outside of school, so I would simply be using those already proven techniques in my classroom. The other component of reading that stuck out in my mind was many students’ lack of comprehension. Reading comprehension is important in today’s test driven society, and I wondered what I could do to help my students in this area of difficulty. I was not sure what method would help these students most since they seem to have so much difficulty. I knew these students could be capable of success if I could just find a way to help them. This led me to my main wondering of what strategies I could use to help my struggling readers because I wanted to find techniques that would help the students not only this year but in the years to come as they faced each reading endeavor.

Questions and Wonderings

The main wondering of my inquiry project was, **What strategies can I use to improve reading comprehension among my struggling readers?**

As a result of this wondering, I began to formulate other questions that I thought might come up as I completed this research process: Does a specific strategy work better for some children as opposed to others?

- How does the child’s learning style (e.g. level of anxiety, reading ability, motivation, etc.) affect his/her comprehension and the strategy/strategies he/she preferred?
- Is there a dominant strategy that works best for most of my students?
• Do certain strategies seem to work better for certain types of texts, e.g. fiction or non-fiction?

• Do using these strategies make the children enjoy reading time and the books?

I hoped by trying to find answers to these questions I could find a way for each student to find success as they read irrespective of background and personality.

**Inquiry Plan Description**

**Baseline Data**

Before beginning my inquiry project, I needed to collect baseline data so I would know where to focus my efforts. Luckily, a district reading assessment was being given, so I used this test as a starting point for my inquiry. I could determine what types of questions were causing difficulty for the students and then go from there.

The assessment contained 10 multiple-choice questions that pertained to a reading passage. Of those 10 questions, 6 could be answered just from literal comprehension, while the other 4 required inferential comprehension. The final question was a written response that had students read another short passage and compare it to the original reading. Students needed to use 3 details and explain why those details were chosen.

The total score that could be achieved was a 13. If a student scored 13-12, he/she was considered Advanced, 11-10 Proficient, 9-6 Basic, and if he/she scored 5-0 Below Basic.
The participating students scored either Below Basic or Basic on the assessment. One child scored Below Basic with a score of 4. The remaining five students scored Basic with scores ranging from 6 to 9.

B, the student who scored Below Basic, earned all 4 of his points in the multiple-choice section. He received no points for his written response. Of the questions he missed on the multiple-choice, 4 of them involved inferential comprehension. The answer was not directly provided in the passage. In the other 2 questions that he missed, the answer could be found directly in the reading. In his written response, the child had a topic sentence, but his answer simply restated facts and did not answer the desired question.

The next student, E, scored Basic with a score of 6. He received 6 points in the multiple-choice section and no points for the written response. He missed 3 inferential questions and 1 literal comprehension question. In the written response, he had a topic sentence. However, he explained how to build a worm box, instead of how to improve the one that he made. The writing also lacked correct sentence structure and capital letters.

L scored Basic receiving 6 total points. He received 6 points on the multiple-choice section. Of the missed questions, 1 was inferential, while the remaining 3 were literal comprehension questions. In the written response, L had a topic sentence, but he failed to correctly answer the question. He listed one improvement, but L did not support that answer. The rest of his response just restated data. His sentence structure was incorrect and caused the response to be confusing.
Student C also scored a 6 and Basic. However, this student scored 5 points on the multiple-choice and 1 point on the written response. Of the missed multiple-choice questions, 3 involved literal comprehension, while the other 2 required additional thinking. Her written response received 1 point. She had a topic sentence and provided 3 improvements for the worm box, however she failed to explain the reasoning for those improvements.

The fifth student, W, scored Basic as well, except he scored an 8. He received all 8 points on the multiple-choice section. The 2 questions that he missed could be answered directly from the passage. From looking at this child’s answer sheet, it was evident from pencil and eraser marks that he changed several of his answers, luckily to the correct one. W’s written response, which scored no points, did not start with a topic sentence. The student also failed to answer the question correctly. He provided an improvement, however he failed to explain that improvement. The child listed every step that was necessary to make the worm box, which was not asked in the question.

The final student, S, received 9 points on the assessment. She also scored Basic. S earned her 9 points on the multiple-choice section, missing only 1 point in this section. Her written response earned no points. The question that S missed on the multiple-choice required her to think of the definition of a word used in a sentence. Her written response started with a topic sentence, however, the rest of her answer did not even correspond with the question or passage for that matter. She listed three things that Jack should do, but those three things were for the maintenance of the worm box and were not improvements that related to the passage. The details that she listed were not found in the passage or on the question paper anywhere.
Based on the students’ assessment results, it is evident that there is difficulty with literal comprehension questions. When looking over all of the questions that the students missed, a majority of the students missed the same questions that came directly from the passage. The answers the students provided many times were the opposite of the answer that was correct. Fewer students missed the inferential questions. Based on this information, the students could have found a majority of the missed questions directly in the passage.

As far as the written response, many of the students did not even answer the desired question. They provided information that was listed in the actual question, but did not explain improvements that Jack could have made. All but one of the students started his/her response with a topic sentence, however no one managed to stay on track in supporting that sentence.

These assessment results showed that the students had difficulty with the questions that could have been answered directly from the text. Therefore, I knew that I needed to focus on a few comprehension strategies to help the students remember the information they read, as well as help them realize they can look back in the text after they read. I then researched and planned what strategies I could use with my students as our new reading group was starting.

**Researching Strategies**

After seeing the baseline data, I was able to research what strategies I thought would work best for the students. I read through numerous materials and listed the
strategies I thought might be helpful. I then tried to narrow the list down to a few manageable strategies that I thought would benefit my readers at their current reading level. I decided to use four comprehension strategies to attempt to help my readers. I read all about the strategies and ideas for how to implement the strategies with students.

After I felt I knew enough information about each technique, I decided on the order I wanted to teach the strategies so that they followed a logical progression. I did not want the students to become overwhelmed in the process. I decided to first teach visualization, and then think alouds, followed by making connections, and concluding with summarizing. My next step in the inquiry process was to implement these strategies with my struggling readers.

**Implementing Strategies**

We were just getting ready to start a new fiction book. Therefore, I decided this would be a perfect time to begin introducing strategies. As we started the new book, I introduced the students to the first comprehension technique. Since these students have difficulty learning new concepts, I decided to start with a basic strategy. The first comprehension aid I introduced to the reading group was visualization. This strategy was listed in several books and is part of the “Eight Great” Comprehension Strategies of the State College Area School District Language Arts curriculum.

When researching this strategy, I found that modeling the process was the best way to start. Zimmerman (2003) recommends to “read a few lines, stop, and describe in as great detail as possible all that you “see in your mind’” (p. 27). As a group, we read a
passage from the book. We then stopped and I explained to the group the visual that I created in my head as we were reading. I went through each detail in my head, so the students could see that I was picturing everything that was happening. It can greatly help a child when an adult shares his/her picture he/she has as he/she reads (Zimmerman, 2003, p. 25). I hoped by introducing visualization in this way, the students would understand the concept. After giving my example, the students proceeded to take turns reading.

At the next stopping point, I had the students describe what visual, if any, they had in their heads. Some students described a vague picture, while other students said they had no image in their heads at all. Since it appeared the students were having trouble visualizing their reading, we spent a lot of time describing what we were reading as the group read out loud.

After some practice with verbalizing descriptions in the story, I had the students draw the visuals they saw in their heads. At first this was met with some resistance as some children felt they were not good artists. However, I explained to them that they were all good artists, and the picture was just to help them remember what they were seeing in their heads at that particular moment. I continued using only the visualization technique with my reading group for two and half weeks. At the end of this period, all of the students understood how to use this method.

At the end of February, I introduced my students to the second comprehension strategy. This new approach was called a Think Aloud. When researching this strategy, I found that teachers seldom model this technique as the students are reading (Walker, 2005, p. 688). Therefore, I wanted to make sure I sufficiently modeled the technique
while the students read, as I know the students had not used this particular strategy at all this year. I modeled a few examples for them before I required them to do it on their own. A think aloud requires the reader to think out loud and talk about what is happening in the book. Readers are to predict and think through what they think will happen in the upcoming parts of the story.

When I felt the students had an understanding of this strategy, I asked them to think aloud to the group. The students continued to use this approach as we read through the next few chapters in the book. When they seemed to have the think aloud process down, I had the students incorporate visualizations and think alouds. The students had to draw a visual and think out loud about that image and what was to come next in the story. In addition to making the students really think about what they were reading, combining the strategies also helped the students review the approaches they had learned thus far. The particular chapter for which I wanted the students to perform this activity was full of pictures, so I covered the main picture I wanted them to visualize with post-it notes. I also covered the last paragraph of the chapter with post-its. The students then had to come up with their pictures and decide what was going to happen at the end of the chapter. Based on their responses and energy, it was clear the students enjoyed doing this activity.

Since the students had an understanding of the first two approaches, I introduced the third comprehension strategy at the beginning of March. I wanted to improve the students’ comprehension and help them extend the text beyond just reading the words on the page. There are many different kinds of connections that can be made with a text. While reading, text to self, text to text, and text to world connections can be made
I decided I wanted to focus on text to self connections, so I modeled this type of connection. While reading through the beginning of a chapter, I stopped and explained a connection that I felt to the particular part of the story. The group seemed to understand what they needed to do for this technique, so I turned it over to them and gave them a chance to make connections.

I started simply by trying to incorporate visualizations because the students were comfortable with this technique. I found a worksheet in one of the comprehension books that required students to draw a connection and then write a few sentences describing the connection. The students completed this worksheet for one chapter in the book. After they had an opportunity to complete this worksheet, I made the assignment for the next chapter a little different. Instead of having the students draw a connection they made with the text, they had to write about the connection in paragraph form in their reading response journal. This would not only require the students to make a connection, but it would also give them an opportunity to practice their written responses.

After only a few chances to practice this technique, the students were making connections without even realizing they were doing it. They would talk about a part of the story and then relate it to a movie they just saw. I was amazed at how well they did with this strategy after only a short time. Since most of the students were able to use this method pretty easily, I decided to model the last technique for the students.

This strategy is by far the most detailed, so I tried to build up to it so the students would not feel overwhelmed by it. Summarizing was the last approach I introduced after Spring Break. I started simply by having the students recall the main events that happened in the chapter we had just completed. I told the students that they did not need
to talk about every little detail of the chapter, although I was extremely happy that some
of the students could do this, but they needed to talk about the main things that happened.

As a group, we practiced this strategy and completed the first summary together.

The next chapter in our book was the final chapter. The chapter was short and did not
have a great deal of content in it. Therefore, I decided to test my students and their
comprehension skills by having them write a summary for the entire book! At first many
of the students were shocked I asked them to write what happened in the entire book, but
then once they started writing they told me it was not so bad. I think building up to this
strategy made its implementation easier.

All four comprehension strategies had been introduced and used while the reading
group read a fiction story. As we started the new Japan unit, I decided to see if the
students carried over any of the strategies they learned to a non-fiction selection. I
simply observed and interviewed students to see what strategies they used. I did not
require students to use certain methods as I had for the last book.

**Data Collection**

Through my inquiry, I used several different collection methods. The methods I
used were baseline data, field notes, samples of children’s work, interviews, assessments,
and student surveys.

A. Baseline Data
I used the district winter reading assessment as my beginning data. I copied the children’s answer sheets and then I analyzed where their problems seemed to be located. (See Appendix A)

B. Field Notes

Each reading group session, I took notes. The notes covered everything the children were doing during that particular session. I especially paid attention to the students’ verbal and non-verbal responses to new strategies. Also, if I noticed a particular change in a child or children, I would make a note of that change.

I would write the information on post-it notes because they were easily accessible, and I could quickly transfer the post-it note into a notebook by simply sticking it to the next page. I liked using the post-it note method because I did not have to carry around a large notebook so it was not as much of a distraction to the students. Periodically, I would type those written notes into the computer. (See Appendix B)

C. Samples of Children’s Work

In order to clearly be able to see if any progress was being made with students, I photocopied or kept every piece of written work the students completed. I kept the original drawings the students completed after we were finished using them for reading group. I also kept the worksheets the students completed. All of the work that was completed in the reading response journal was photocopied and kept in my files as well. (See Appendix C)
D. Interviews

During the inquiry process, I informally interviewed students to determine what they thought of a particular strategy as well as what method they found to be most helpful or least helpful. In addition to interviewing the students, I also interviewed the Title I teacher, Laurie Korman, to determine if she noticed any difference in the children’s work in her room.

(See Appendix D)

E. Assessments

At the beginning of the inquiry, the students completed an assessment. Also, at the end of the fiction book, I had them complete an assessment to determine their overall comprehension for that particular book. The book assessment had similar questions to those on the district assessment.

(See Appendix A-Baseline Data and Appendix E)

F. Student Survey

When the students were introduced to all of the reading comprehension strategies and had an opportunity to use them, I gave the students a survey. The survey asked which methods they preferred, which ones they did not, and if they think anything we did was especially helpful.

(See Appendix F)
Data Analysis

Since I needed to make sure my students understood a concept before I moved on to the next strategy, I analyzed a majority of the data throughout my inquiry. Other parts of the data I was able to scrutinize at the end of my study.

A. Baseline Data

I analyzed this piece of data at the very beginning of my study. I needed to know areas of strength and weakness for my students. I first looked at each multiple-choice question. I determined whether the question could be answered from directly looking at the text or whether it required the reader to think. Then, I looked at each child’s test and noted how many text questions they missed and how many thinking questions they answered incorrectly. By looking at this data, I saw that a majority of the students missed questions that could be answered by simply looking back in the story.

I also looked at the children’s written responses. I looked to see the structure of the child’s answer and if in fact his/her answer corresponded to the question asked. After looking over the written responses, it was evident that some of the students did not even comprehend the question that was asked because their answer did not pertain to the question asked or their response did not fully answer all parts of the question. This information gave me a good starting point for my interventions.
B. Field Notes

Throughout the duration of my inquiry, I kept detailed field notes. On the notes I recorded all conversations, reactions, and questions I asked the students. I looked at these notes at the end of each day. The notes were recorded on countless post-it notes, but then I transferred those notes into a notebook and the computer. By completing this transfer process, I was able to look at the day’s data again. I looked to see how each particular child was doing with the given strategy. When I saw that children did not really understand a strategy, I taught it another day. I moved to the next method when I saw all of the students understood at least how to use the technique.

In the daily notes, I also kept track of changes in the children’s reading behavior. Some children displayed very noticeable behavior such as raising his/her hand more often and giving detailed responses, so I immediately made note of those changes. By looking over all of the notes daily, I was able to see changes and also adjust instruction when necessary.

C. Samples of Children’s Work

I kept a copy of every piece of work the children completed during the duration of the study. When I finished teaching a particular strategy, I looked over all of the work the children completed during that particular intervention. I analyzed the quality of the children’s work; such as I knew that for one of the student’s visuals he simply copied the picture on the cover of the book so that told me he did not develop his own visual. If the student seemed to understand the approach and produce quality work, I made note of that
behavior. By looking back at children’s completed work, I was able to see whether or not they truly remembered what they read or if they were just copying their neighbor. Also, by looking over each child’s work at the end of the study, I was able to see what strategy helped the child produce the best work.

D. Interviews

I analyzed the information from the interviews throughout the duration of my inquiry. I especially used the information the children provided. Once a child told me he/she preferred a certain method, I then looked back at his/her work to see whether the written work matched their feelings. Also, if a child told me that he/she did not understand a particular method, I went back and tried to further clarify the method so that everyone understood the concept. I found these informal interviews with the students to be extremely beneficial in planning lessons and also in comparing data.

I interviewed Laurie Korman toward the end of my study. I wanted to see if the students carried over the information they learned in my class into her classroom. We discussed the students we saw a noticeable difference in their reading behaviors. By going over this information with her, I was able to see which students have had at least some success with the new strategies and which ones are still where they were prior to the interventions. I found that three students noticeably changed over the course of the study, while the remaining three are still where they were at the beginning.

E. Assessments
As I gave each assessment, I analyzed the information obtained. I looked to see what types of questions the students were answering correctly, and which questions were still causing trouble. During the first assessment, I let the children look back in their book, if they wished, as I was trying to see if they would actually look back at the story. I made note of what students looked back and then compared the answers between the students who used their book and those who chose not to use their book.

For the assessment that was given at the conclusion of the book, I looked to see if the student’s comprehension skills had improved at all. By looking at the assessment results from the first assessment to the last, I was able to see if the intervention was successful in improving comprehension for any of the students.

F. Student Survey

I gave this survey to the students after they learned all of the different comprehension techniques. I looked to see what strategies the children thought helped them and which ones they thought did not. I then looked to see if that information matched the information I had found when analyzing all of my other data. I made note of what students had the same thoughts as me and which students felt differently about their comprehension. In the survey, I also asked the students if anything we did while reading the book was helpful to them. I had my opinions about the children’s changes in their reading, but I wanted to see what each child thought about his/her own behavior. This information will also be valuable in the future when I teach something else both to these children and to others.
Claims

After analyzing my data throughout my inquiry project, I believe I have learned the following:

1. When working with children who have difficulty remembering information from a fiction text, visualization techniques are helpful in improving students’ comprehension.
2. While reading a non-fiction text, making connections is the dominant strategy used by students.
3. When students practice comprehension techniques while reading, they become more engaged with the text.
4. The students’ learning personalities did not affect the strategies they preferred to use while reading.

Evidence

Claim 1: When working with children who have difficulty remembering information from a fiction text, visualization techniques are helpful in improving students’ comprehension.

Evidence: When first introducing my students to comprehension techniques, I wanted to start with a strategy that was not too difficult. We were beginning a new fiction piece, so I wanted to make sure the strategy would align with the book the students would be reading. Visualization appeared to be the perfect fit. For the first few chapters in the book, I had the students create visuals both in their heads and on paper.
The students began by first talking about the picture they created in their head. Then, they reflected on that image and described that picture in words in their response journal.

After the students practiced talking and writing about their visuals, the group moved to actually drawing those pictures on paper. The students created a few images that depicted portions of the beginning of the story. Even after being introduced to other comprehension strategies, the students still continued to use visualization throughout the remainder of the book.

After completing the book, I gave the students an assessment asking various multiple-choice questions. The students successfully answered the questions that pertained to the beginning of the story where the visualization technique was used. Therefore, the visualization strategy appeared to be helpful for these struggling readers because they not only continued to use it throughout the rest of the book, but they also answered the questions on the test correctly that came from the beginning of the story where visualization was stressed. On a survey given after reading the fiction book, 4 out of 6 students said they preferred using this method and found it most helpful.

Claim 2: While reading a non-fiction text, making connections is the dominant strategy used by students.

Evidence: Making connections was introduced to the students while reading the fiction book. This strategy has students relate the reading to themselves, the text, and others (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 13). The students were required to make connections with certain chapters in the book. This task proved to be difficult for some of the students. They expressed difficulty in determining a connection they could make. While the
students did make connections, they were vague and some were really stretching. The students did not appear to enjoy using this strategy when reading the fiction book.

After completing that book, the class started to read a non-fiction piece. I did not require the students to use a particular strategy while they were reading, however the students were making connections on almost every page of the book. Two particular students, who struggle the most with comprehension, were relating the text to as many things as they could. These students even knew what strategy they were using when I asked them.

Since all of these students are in Title I as well, they left class this particular day and went to Title I to read another non-fiction book on the same topic. It was amazing when the children came back to class. They were making connections and comparing information from one non-fiction book to the other. Since I could not work one on one with each child during the non-fiction reading process, I interviewed the students at the conclusion of reading as well as the Title I teacher. Once again, 4 out of the 6 students used this particular strategy while reading. The students freely chose to use this strategy because, unlike the past assignments where I told them what strategy to use, there was complete freedom over the methods chosen. Making connections was the comprehension strategy children chose to use for the non-fiction text.

The Title I teacher, Laurie Korman, stressed that the children were making connections with the text in her classroom (Interview April 4, 2007). The students were talking about information they read in one book and tying it to information in the other. Whether or not the students were making the connections intentionally, they were being
made nonetheless! She also noticed their excitement for the actual reading being completed!

**Claim 3:** When students practice comprehension techniques while reading, they become more engaged with the text.

**Evidence:** Prior to beginning the inquiry project, the students were not engaging with the text at all. I have worked with this particular reading group since the beginning of the year. From the first day, these students have just read the words in the book. All they wanted to do was be the first one done. Getting finished was all they cared about and remembering what they read was of little importance. When I asked questions, few students raised their hands to answer. I had to pry information out of them.

When I first started the inquiry project, I still noticed these behaviors occurring. However, as my inquiry progressed, the students’ behaviors began to change. Many students started raising their hands to answer my questions. In fact, a calling out problem developed for one student because she wanted to answer so badly. While I did not enjoy the calling out, I was glad that this student actually remembered the information she had read.

Not only were my students asking questions, but also they were excited about the information they were reading. In fact, one day, one of the students asked another student to be quiet and not talk about the end because he wanted to read it himself. This was a huge moment because previously the children did not care about what they were reading, if someone else read it for them, they were happy. Now the students wanted to read it for themselves! I noticed a considerable change in several students and their
engagement with the text. These students could talk about what was happening in the book, and reading to the end of the chapter no longer meant getting finished, it meant finding out what happened to the characters!

Throughout the inquiry process, the students frequently used the visualization strategy. According to the addendum to the State College Area School District curriculum, “when students create mental pictures of scenarios, they become more engaged in their reading” (Rockowner, p. 12). This statement proved to be true with my students. It was through the use of this strategy that students really began to engage with the text. While they were starting to use other strategies, it was this strategy that students cited as helping them engage with the text the most.

Claim 4: The students’ learning personalities did not affect the strategies they preferred to use while reading.

Evidence: At the beginning of the inquiry process, I decided to work with six students. These students have varying learning personalities. Two of the students are fully capable of comprehending information, but if they are having a bad day, they cannot focus on their work at all. Two other students display a high level of anxiety when participating in conversations about their reading and often second-guess answers they write. The remaining two students struggle greatly while reading. By observing and noting what strategies these students preferred to use while reading the first book, I found that all but one student preferred to use visualizations.

When the students read a non-fiction selection, four of the students made connections without any prompting. The two students that did not use this strategy were
having an off day and were not really acting like themselves. The one student was off his normal medication for ADD so this may have played a factor in his behavior.

Finally, on the reading survey, I asked the students what strategy they liked to use the most while reading. All but one student said they preferred to draw pictures to help them remember. Based on the information I collected, I found the participating students preferred the same methods to help them with comprehension no matter what their learning personality.

**Conclusions**

Through this inquiry, I have learned some important information that will guide my future teaching. Based on the data I collected, I know that when trying to help any child with reading, especially struggling readers, I will first start with visualization techniques. This strategy was a favorite among my current students. Not only did the students enjoy this method, but they also retained a great deal of the information for which they created pictures. I feel that this method is a great way to start to help children with comprehension. It cannot be the sole method of comprehension assistance, but for struggling readers, it is a wonderful place to start. This method helps students interact with the text and really start to think about what they are reading.

In addition to realizing that visualization is the best place to start the comprehension process, I have learned that I want to incorporate think alouds with visualizations. If I ask students to draw a picture, I also want them to talk about the picture they created. According to Wilhelm, “…the pictures are objects to think with,
and talking about them brings new realizations to the forefront” (2001, p.116). I briefly tried this with my students, and at the conclusion of the book, the children said talking about the pictures they created helped them remember the most information. The visual think aloud requires the students to verbalize the picture they created and explain it. Since they have to explain it, students have to talk about what happened in the book and a particular section. The drawing provides an aide for the explanation process, “…the students have something they have made to talk about and think with” (Wilhelm, 2001, p. 117). After seeing success with my students when using this method, I would not hesitate to use it again.

When teaching with a non-fiction text in the future, I will stress the technique of making connections with the students. This strategy worked particularly well for the students this year. In fact, many of the students were making connections even before they were aware they were creating them. It can be hard for students to visualize informational text, so having the students connect with the information in some way gives them a way to remember what they read.

I can walk away from this inquiry with strategies to use with future students who are struggling with reading. I want children to enjoy reading and succeed at the same time. I do not want reading to be painful for students. During my inquiry, I learned that when students remember more of the text, they seem to enjoy reading more. By the end of the fiction book, many students could not wait to read the end! This was the complete opposite from the last book the students read. Prior to using these techniques, the students just read to get done, however now they are engaging with the text and paying attention to the actual storyline! Even during the non-fiction text, the students were
excited about what they were reading! I look forward to helping other students improve their reading comprehension and hopefully increase their excitement for the subject!

New Wonderings

This inquiry project has led me to think of new wonderings about reading and comprehension: Does reading out loud as a group improve the students’ comprehension?

• Does increased excitement about particular readings improve reading comprehension and the overall enjoyment for the subject?

• What other strategies can I use to help a student who still struggles with comprehension even after learning these four techniques?

• What effect does rushing to get done play on children’s comprehension and responses?
References


Rockowner, David. *Using the “eight great” comprehension strategies: An addendum to the reading language arts continuum.* State College: State College Area School District.


Appendix A

Baseline Data
LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT

GRADE 3, WINTER

STUDENT RESPONSE BOOKLET

Watching Wiggly Worms

Student Name:

Grade in School 3 grade Building 6W

Date 2-8-07

Classroom Teacher Mrs. Wiener

Teacher Administering Assessment (if different)

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Multiple Choice Score: 4/10 of 10 possible points

Open Ended Response Score: 0/3 possible points

Total Score 4/7

TOTAL SCORE

13 - 12 ADVANCED
9 - 6 PROFICIENT
5 - 0 BASIC

(CIRCLE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE LEVEL)

Winter, 2007
AFTER READING ACTIVITY ONE

Student Directions:

Read each of these questions about Watching Wiggly Worms carefully. Choose the best answer for each question and fill in the "bubble." You may look back at the article to help you answer the questions.

Here is an example to help you.

**EXAMPLE**

The title of this article is

- a. Watching Wiggly Worms
- b. Early Birds
- c. But Not Fred
- d. Frosty the Snowman

1. Why are earthworms important for gardens?
   - a. They eat harmful insects.
   - b. They keep weeds from growing.
   - c. They help make the soil healthy.
   - d. They protect plants from freezing.

2. A person would most likely use a worm box to
   - a. feed earthworms to birds.
   - b. find earthworms in a garden.
   - c. watch earthworms work in the soil.
   - d. carry earthworms from place to place.
3. Read these sentences from the passage.

But there's an easier way to watch them: You can build a worm-viewing box. Here's how you can construct a worm box.

Which word from the sentences helps the reader understand the meaning of construct?

- [ ] a. easier
- [x] b. watch
- [ ] c. build
- [ ] d. worm

4. The soil in a worm box should be kept

- [ ] a. cold.
- [x] b. damp.
- [ ] c. hard.
- [ ] d. sandy.

5. What should be done after putting worms in the worm box?

- [ ] a. Make air holes in it.
- [ ] b. Pour some sand in it.
- [ ] c. Put some gravel in it.
- [x] d. Wrap a black cover around it.

6. Why should black cloth or paper be wrapped around the worm box?

- [ ] a. to keep out the light
- [x] b. to help the soil stay damp
- [ ] c. to stop worms from escaping
- [ ] d. to prevent the soil from freezing
7. Which best tells how the information in this passage is organized?
   
   - [ ] a. from the easiest step to the hardest step
   - [X] b. in the order that the steps should be done
   - [ ] c. by the length of time needed to complete each step
   - [ ] d. from the most important step to the least important step

8. This passage would most likely appear in a
   
   - [X] a. world atlas
   - [ ] b. book of fiction
   - [ ] c. poetry magazine
   - [ ] d. science magazine

9. Read this sentence.

   Earthworms need to have air in order to survive.

   The best place to add this sentence to the passage would be in
   
   - [X] a. Step 1
   - [ ] b. Step 2
   - [ ] c. Step 3
   - [ ] d. Step 4

10. Adding decaying plant material to the box prevents the soil from getting

    - [ ] a. too warm.
    - [X] b. too dry.
    - [ ] c. too wet.
    - [ ] d. too sunny.
AFTER READING ACTIVITY TWO

Jack decided to make a worm-viewing box. He completed the following steps.
- He got a heavy cardboard box and punched holes in the bottom and in the lid.
- He filled the box by putting in a layer of gravel, a layer of sand, a layer of soil, and finally a layer of small rocks.
- He sprayed a little water onto the soil.
- He added food for the worms by planting some flower seeds and grass seeds in the soil. Three days later he put his earthworms in the box.

Describe what needs to be done to improve Jack's worm-viewing box. Be sure to explain why each improvement is needed. Use at least three details from the passage to support your answer.

Jack wanted to improve his worm-viewing box. He filled the box by putting in a little of gravel, then add a thin layer of sand, a layer of peat moss. He add food for the earth worms like dead leaves, grass along with some food scraps like apple cores, lettuce leaves, potato peels, and even coffee grounds. He needed a clear plastic box with a lid and punch holes on top and bottom of the box.
## SCASD Winter Reading Assessment Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th># of Students Who Missed It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. answer in the article</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. answer in the article</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. thinking-definition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. answer in the article</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. answer in the article</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. answer in the article, but thinking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. thinking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. answer in the article</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix B

### Field Notes

**2/13/07**  
**King Max-Chapter 1 Assessment**

The test and students answers are in the data collection file.

- L-starred and didn’t use book for multiple choice questions, used the book for writing question
- B-read out loud (to himself) both book and questions, asked what quills were (L answered), used book to answer questions, asked what to do after I gave directions immediately before
- C-didn’t use book for multiple-choice questions
- S-used her book frequently for both types of questions
- E-needed help with written response
- W-didn’t get started today

Strategy: Briefly introduced visualization, all students were able to visualize 2 pages worth of information  
(Max getting captured and hit by the bike)

**2/15/07**  
**King Max**

W-used book for assessment

**Talked about the last chapter**

- S-visual of Max scared in cage, small
- C-scared and small

**2/16/07**  
**King Max-Chapter 2**

**Read Pg. 14 together**-gave them my picture (family worried where Max might be)

**Read 15-19 independently**

- S.L-finish early (E, W, C, B finished at about the same time)
- B-trouble reading

**Read p. 19-20-asked students to draw picture in their head** (Max finding his way home when free)  
C-said no picture in my head
E-said no picture
S-asked if she could draw more than 1 picture
C-reread parts of the text and said “oh I know what to draw now”, started to draw picture
S, E-looked back in book
W-detailed drawing of hedgehog, had to be reminded to draw more

(All visualizations in data collection file)

2/21/07
King Max-Chapter 2 p. 21-24 (Max went home, his family thought he was a ghost)

What do you remember of your visual?
S, C-only ones to raise their hands before I required everyone to give an answer
S-able to recall her picture
B-a little retention, knew he drew a house
L-scientists let Max go
E-Max was in a cage
C-Max going past pond
W-Max looking at the sky

S-able to retell Ch. 2
S, B- good visuals for p. 21
L,S-p. 22 see Max stopped
S-p.22 visual-whole family surprised
C-felt sick today, not her usual self

*I had the students answer 2 questions about the chapter (questions below)

Responses
B- “This is easy I don’t need my book”
L,E-used book

*I clarified directions (use picture in head to help with response, don’t write what you saw)
S-used book
W-didn’t use book

King Max-Chapter 2 Responses
What happened at the end of the chapter?
Who did Max’s family think he was at the end of the chapter?

*I required each student to tell their visual whether or not they raised their hand (again 2 students raised their hands)

The students actual responses are in the data collection file.

My comments for the students:

S-Star, You need to use your book for spelling and make sure you use periods.
L-Star, Good Job
E-Did not finish, did #1 and not #2, You need to watch spelling and periods, re-read your answers to make sure it makes sense
B-Star, Good Job
C-Did not finish, did #1 and not #2, You need to watch your spelling and capitals!
W-Star

2/23/07
King Max-Finish Ch.2 Responses, start Ch. 3

C-Good retelling of the end of Ch.2-said Max saw everything in the park on his way home, said hi to family. His family was confused, Petunia said it was Max’s ghost, his family was trying to figure out what was on his head
Everyone-using the book for answer
S-needed to add to original answer
L-corrected answer when I reminded them to reread

Visual p. 25-26 (family reacting to realizing Max was king)
C-small garden, girls jumping in circle smiling
B-small garden, 3 hedgehogs, dressed up in skirts, jumping around
S-Mom and Dad talking near house, girls running around excited in garden
W-Max and 2 sisters playing in garden
L-thinking about castle (girls) jumping around in garden
E-garden, 3 sisters, jumping up and down

King Max Ch. 3- Pg. 27 Visual (Fox attacking the sisters)
The students actual responses are in the data collection file.

2/27/07
King Max Ch. 3-Think Aloud (Max scared off wolf with his light, told his sisters he needed them to bring him some girls...the journey to find his mate started)
B-Max’s 3 sisters outside, big shadow behind him, fox over one sister
C-started reading in wrong spot, asked why writing different for part of the text (scientist notes)
E-answered it’s their notes
*I had the students draw a picture to help them with their think aloud
W-trouble with words
B-“I like this picture a lot better” (picture he was drawing for visual)
S-I don’t (have a picture)
*Reminded B, L, E not to draw picture from the cover of the book
L-copying from B (picture)- I put a folder up between the boys (L,B) (B,E)
L-kept looking in the book saying what did he say-copied text bubble from B
B-“I am not sure what to write”
L-wrote about sisters in picture-but no sisters in picture-after I questioned this, he added sisters to hedgehog picture
S-“I see it dark at night, and they only see stage lights”
L-“There, she says it, then he says it” (text bubble)-his response after adding the sisters to the picture

3/19/07
King Max Ch. 4-Think Aloud (Prediction)
Predictions for end of Chapter 3
C-Hedgehogs on catwalk, pick out one person, married
B-Max looking for wife, didn’t find one yet, different tiny hedgehog appears
L-get married, pick 2 favorites and get married
E-get married, he is looking and finds somebody
W-Max will get the crown off his head completely
*Understood when I read it to them (p. 37) (Max being rude to his dad, his dad explained the Uncle B that his parents died)
*Students all raised their hand to share their prediction
pg. 38 (Pa and Max entering road with a car coming...what will happen to them?)
E-both run over
B-run over
W-Pa run over
C-driver see blue light, close eyes pull off road, can’t see
B-(in head he saw) Max run over
(After reading it, I had the students talk about what they just read)
E-sort of how I thought, hedgehog there
L-swerves hits mailbox (drew picture of road)
W-hit mailbox
C-blue lights scared instead, tells police, didn’t believe him
B-sharp turn, hit mailbox-blue light distracted (ALL GOT THAT PART)

pg.39 (end) (What really happened to them?)
W-run out of gas, pops tire cause hedgehogs sharp
C-road curves, wheel misses them and they are under car, not hit
B-trunk opens, keep driving
E-driving fast, hedgehogs jump out of way
L-hit curve, trunk opens

*S Absent Today
*All but W read out loud to themselves when asked to read to the end of the chapter

*I asked all students- What strategy helped you?
   C-Helps-think aloud, picture
   B-think aloud didn’t help, picture helped a little
   W-picture
   E-picture
   L-picture

3/20/07
King Max-Ch. 5
Asked a student to tell us what we had been reading
S, E, B, W all raised their hands to answer. C just start talking
C- Max was looking around, Dr. D-G saw hedgehog and other animals walking around, Max
found a girl he liked and said hi, she said I can’t talk to strangers, how dare you talk to a stranger, she bite
him on the nose
   *covered whole thing-all of the students said that when I asked for anyone to add on to the answer
L asked-What’s the girls name?
   E-starts with a B
   W-Bianca

Making Connections-introduced-Students given a worksheet to draw and write about a connection
   B-said “this is hard”…(looked over book) “ohh I found one”
   C“My Dad ran into a mailbox on the way home from the beach”
C immediately started saying her answer without raising her hand
   *Students drew their connection on the provided worksheet

3/27/07
King Max-Ch. 6
Making Connections (cont)
*I explained a connection for page 50 (seeing someone that is different from us) while we were reading out
loud together
   C-pg. 51 (top) “I can picture that” (Max and his sisters talking by the bandstand
   E-“me too”
   B-”my sister does that” (giggling)
   C-what does regal mean?
   B-sweet talk-made connection with movies
   *fluency is increasing, raising his hand to answer more
   E-looked at picture before reading for clues

   C-remembered what E.E. stood for when one of the children asked…the abbreviation stood for the
hedgehog in Latin
   *this name was at the beginning of the book
   -read last two pages out loud while reading independently
   *Students had to write about a connection in the story and explain it
   E-can’t find something (connection)
   S-can’t find connection
C-excellent connection description- remembered a lot of information from the story
S-found connection and then said that was easy when she was done
E-started his over
B,W-easily found connection

*Connections are found in data file

*I had the students write what the book has been about so far
B-This is so easy
S-this is going to be long
B,S-using books to look back
W-“Is Bianca the white hedgehog?”
L,W,C-didn’t use books while writing
E-“This is hard, I don’t remember a lot”
L-“I can’t remember, I have a bad memory” (wrote ch.6 summary first instead of the whole book)
E- “I can’t wait til field day” (I then prompted him to continue working)
B-(in the zone)…said to students, “Can you please be quiet.”
C-“I am on the biting nose part”
E,L-“I don’t even remember that part.”
E-“I don’t remember a lot.”
C-“I am going to my next page”
L-“I only remembered ch. 1 and 6”

Interviewed 3 students about strategies they were using
*Asked C about the strategies that were helping her…
-reading out loud, drawings and talking out loud about the pictures
-she notices a difference in herself

I noticed a big difference in her comprehension this week…she remembered a lot more information and was able to describe it to the class, she called out a lot without raising her hand though

*B (strategies that helped)
-Writing it down (connection) and going back
*S (strategies that helped)
-says didn’t use any of the strategies

3/28/07
King Max-Ch. 7
Retelling Introduced
What happened at the end of chapter 6?
C-tried to call out, but I stopped her
*all students raised their hands to answer
S-Max was going to walk out in the road

What does the truck driver mean? (kids playing around with the hedgehog, glued a lighthouse on his head)
E-thinks he knows it
C-thinks the kids did it to him
W-toy lighthouse on his head

What do we know about 5A?
E-Its their street
C-Its their house

Pg. 66 (after Max returns home with the crown off of his head) What do you think will happen with Max and Bianca?
C-think Bianca will like him now without the light
*smiled when realized she was right

*All think Bianca will like Max now and they will get married
B-smiled and laughed as he read the book
E-excited about a part in the book, showed B-he said-“shh I want to read it”

Students became very distracted by others moving around the room—I threatened recess because they were not working
   Asked them to tell me something that happened in the chapter before they could go out
   L-immediately answered
   E-Bianca thought Max was good looking guy
   B-Bianca said he was a good looking bore
   S-Max went home
   C-saw Bianca in the park they talked nicely (she gave much more description than the rest of the group)
   W-truck driver heard of kids hurting animals thought it was a lighthouse on his head

B really seemed excited about reading today…much more enthusiastic, etc. …C is also continuing to do very well…S remains quiet…E, L, and W seemed more concerned with recess (the weather was nice today)

4/2/07
King Max-Ch. 8
Retelling
Read the chapter together first
   I asked “What does shared the fate of so many hedgehogs mean?”
   S-sad
   * All of the students confused by this statement

Me: Why is there no signal from the transmitter?
   L-truck driver took it off, remembered the lighthouse part of the story
   C-retold kid and joke story (about why the truck driver took the crown off)

*Understood fate after we read further

Me: Who was the albino?
   B, S, L: Bianca

Me: What did the scientists want to happen?
   S-Max and Bianca get together

Me: Does Bianca realize she is talking to Max?
   *All-NO
   B- “The last picture I drew was right!”
   -excited at the end of the book

Big Events in Ch. 8
   E-He asked her to marry him
   Me: Another event…
   E-I am going to look back
   -oh the scientists think he is dead

*Gave written assignment to write summary
   E-my old one is bad, I am starting over (this one too was bad, and he rewrote it again after I asked him to)
   B-(when done) I knew a lot told E-look back at the pictures to help
   L-can’t think of 5 chapters
*Students written answers in the data file
*Gave some students the assessment
  E, B, L-took test first
    -read questions out loud to themselves
  S, W, C-wrote the rest of summary without the book

B, W-rushed through summaries…great beginnings, but lost the middle, admitted to rushing to get

done
E-I don’t know this word (cease) on test
W-says help him? (first question on page 2)
  -noticed I forgot to type the word to
  -said the test is easy *(he got a 100)*

4/4/07
A New True Japan
  *I worked near E and L…they were reading partners for whole class reading
E- looked at picture of Nagaski-*“It looks like New York”*
  Me: What is that called?
  E and L--made a connection
E, L- kept looking at pictures saying it looks like NYC
E-didn’t want to leave for Title I
L-*“hey I had a futon”*
  Me: What are you doing?
  L--Making a connection
E-writing more info than required )looking a pictures)
  E: shrimp boats, Titanic, Pacific Ocean
  E-made connections between the reading in Title I and the reading in our class
E, L- very into pictures

* I asked the students if they used any strategies while reading
  C-going back, talking about it, made connections-her Dad went away on business when he came
back taught her a Japanese letter
  B-I made connections
  W-said nothing helped-*he was off today… not much thought going on*
  S- said looking back helped her, no connections

Interview with Laurie Korman-April 4, 2007
Me: Have the children been using any comprehension strategies while reading in your room?
Laurie: Recently they started making some, especially today. They were making connections with the
book we read today. They would stop and tell me if they read about a certain thing in your room. All of
them talked about the Bullet Train.

Me: Have you noticed an increased excitement for reading with any of the children the past few
weeks?
Laurie: Today all of the children were excited about the Japan information. I had them write down facts
so they could take them back to your room since they were so interested.

Me: Have you noticed a change in engagement with any of the students?
Laurie: I have noticed a difference in C, she has a new interest in reading books. She actually wants to
read now. B is also engaging more than before. He is a little more willing to give answers. L, E, S, and W
are paying a little more attention to the book, but you know how W has his days. L and E are trying hard,
but they still struggle.

Me: Thank you for talking with me.
Laurie: Your welcome.
Appendix C

Samples of Student Work
Visualizations
I see Max going into the garden and seeing the fox picking up one of the girls and the fox runs away when he sees Max.

2-23-2007

I see the 3 girls high on dancing and dancing, and I see Max pecking over the corner and the fox getting ready to jump.
Visualizations and Think Aloud with Predictions
(predictions handwritten on back to help them when talking to group)

May looking at the girls picking a wife and every thing is dark and the crown. That's light is the stage and Max is. I think may will not find a wife.
I see all of the hedgehogs on the cat walk and one of them dawning there. I predict that we will get more.
Making Connections

One day, when we were coming home from the beach, someone had to turn to a church, and he was on the far side and we were on the other side, to the church, and he thought that we would not get hit, and we took out 5 mailboxes! This is similar to the story because a high hog but makes blue light blinded him, and he took out a mailbox.
This one time on a highway a car was going too fast. So then it hit a telephone pole. It's similar because in the story a guy was going too fast and then he hit a curve and hit a male figure.
I can connect with the story. One way I can connect with the story is that me and my brother Cole don't know where we are from, so we are very different from people in my family. The connect in the story is that Bianca is all white and the other hedgehogs have brown spikes and Bianca doesn't. That is how Bianca and me have something in common.
Summary
Student S

The story was about a hedgehog named Max, how the was in a park when two types of traps Max and wanted to know how hedgehogs live. Max took Max to the lab and made a collar for him, but they could not get it on Max because hedges do not have any neck, and they can not get it on his paws. So they had to make a transmitter.

(Continued on next page)
and make transmitter look like a hat. The next morning they took & the laten name for hedgehogs to the park and put him near the bandstand.

After that he went and saw the race go through the Lily pond and caught the other race and went under a bush and he was at napier. 5 a.m. he was home, when he got home every one was scared because they thought Max was dead and they thought it was his spirit then they went inside. They say Max and were not scared any more. After that Uncle P said that Max had a blue flashing light on his head and said Max was the king of the hedgehogs. Tim his sister and him went into the garden there and then a fox

(continued on next page)
Saw snakes blue light and ran away. After that Max wanted a queen so he told his sisters to tell all their friends to meet the king at the band stand. Then man looked at every girl and did not like any one where every one left he saw his girl mamle blank. He kept telling he will you marry me she again said no, after that he went across a road and a track allmest ran him over, but stepped he got out of the track and piled up crazy and saw a blue light on his head and said that he heard that some kids were thing him some an

(continued on next page)
cats tal so be pick up
now and took plir and took
off the transmitter and
took him across the road
and he was home. The next
day he went to go see
Beonku and he wants to
see if she would like to
take a walk she said yes.
The next day Max said
to Beonku and said will you
mary me.
Chapter 6  3-27-07

Max was having a meeting at the barn and Max saw Bianca and Max bit a snake and took it to Bianca. Also Max said to Bianca will you marry me she said no. She said you no and Max walk to the pond and the scientist were watching him.

Chapter 1

Once there was a hedgehog named Max and he lived in the barn. Some scientists named Dr. Green and Professor Duck were studying hedgehogs and they kept Max and put a thing on his head.

The scientists lost Max because the transmitter was gone. Max was wrote and Max said to Bianca will you marry me and Bianca said yes.
Appendix D

Interview Notes

Students:

3/19/07
*What strategy helped you?
  C-Helps-think aloud
  B-didn’t help, picture helped a little
  W-picture
  E-picture
  L-picture

3/27/07
*Asked C about the strategies that were helping her…
  -reading out loud, drawings and talking out loud about the pictures
  -she notices a difference in herself
*B (strategies that helped)
  -Writing it down (connection) and going back
*S (strategies that helped)
  -says didn’t use any of the strategies

4/4/07
*I asked the students if they used any strategies while reading
  C-going back, talking about it, made connections-her Dad went away on business
  when he came back taught her a Japanese letter
  B-I made connections
  W-said nothing helped-he was off today… not much thought going on
  S-said looking back helped her, no connections

Title I Teacher:
Interview with Laurie Korman-April 4, 2007
Me: Have the children been using any comprehension strategies while reading in your room?
Laurie: Recently they started making some, especially today. They were making connections with the book we read today. They would stop and tell me if they read about a certain thing in your room. All of them talked about the Bullet Train.

Me: Have you noticed an increased excitement for reading with any of the children the past few weeks?
Laurie: Today all of the children were excited about the Japan information. I had them write down facts so they could take them back to your room since they were so interested.

Me: Have you noticed a change in engagement with any of the students?
Laurie: I have noticed a difference in C, she has a new interest in reading books. She actually wants to read now. B is also engaging more than before. He is a little more willing to give answers. L, E, S, and W are paying a little more attention to the book, but you know how W has his days. L and E are trying hard, but they still struggle.

Me: Thank you for talking with me.
Laurie: Your welcome.
Appendix E

King Max Assessment

Directions: Answer all of the questions by circling the correct answer.

1. What happened to Max at the beginning of the story?
   a. He is lost
   b. He ran away from home
   c. He is sleeping in a park.
   d. He is in a cage

2. Max lived in the Garden at:
   a. Number 5A
   b. Number 5B
   c. Number 56
   d. Number 68

3. Why did Dr. Dandy-Green and Professor Duck want Max?
   a. to study creature nightlife
   b. to find out about prickles
   c. to see what hedgehogs eat
   d. to see how hedgehogs sleep

4. The scientists placed a transmitter on Max’s head because:
   a. he was a king
   b. he needed a hat
   c. they needed to track Max’s location
   d. they needed someone to carry their light

5. Why did the scientists name Max E.E?
   a. they liked the letters and they were easy to write
   b. it is the initials for hedgehog in Latin
   c. they thought that was his real name
   d. they picked the name out of a jar

6. When Max first went home his family:
   a. gave him a great, big hug
   b. yelled at him for leaving the Garden
   c. ran up to him and said hello
   d. ran away because they thought he was a ghost
7. Max wanted his sisters help him:
   a. clean his room
   b. cross the street
   c. find a girlfriend
   d. take his crown off

8. Max’s father walked out into the road without looking and he and Max:
   a. got hit by a car
   b. stepped back on the curb
   c. screamed for help
   d. caused a car to crash into a mailbox

9. The sow that Max liked was different because:
   a. she was albino
   b. she was really small
   c. she had soft quills
   d. she was best friends with his sisters

10. On page 52, it says *I have no doubts she is upset by your unwanted attentions. These attentions will cease, as of now.* What does *cease* mean?
    a. start
    b. stop
    c. continue
    d. none of the above

11. How did Max get his crown off?
    a. his father took it off
    b. a truck driver knocked it off
    c. his sisters stole it so they could have a crown
    d. it just fell off

12. When the scientists could not find Max, they:
    a. cried because they lost King Max
    b. never stopped looking for him
    c. were happy with the research they collected
    d. think Max took over as the King of all animals

13. At the end of the book, Max and Bianca decided to:
    a. be friends
    b. get married
    c. not speak at all
    d. wear matching crowns
Appendix F

Student Survey

Name: [Blank]                         Date: 4-3-07

Book: King May

Reading Survey

1. You have learned four different reading strategies. Of the four strategies you learned, which one did you like to use the most? Circle your answer.
   Visualization (Drawing Pictures)           Think Aloud (Talking about the reading)
   Making Connections                         Summarizing or Retelling

2. Of the four strategies, which one did you not like to use? Circle your answer.
   Visualization (Drawing Pictures)           Think Aloud (Talking about the reading)
   Making Connections                         Summarizing or Retelling

3. Now that you have finished the book, what strategies and activities helped you remember the information? Explain.
   I like to look back in the book and I like to draw a picture.
Reading Survey

1. You have learned four different reading strategies. Of the four strategies you learned, which one did you like to use the most? Circle your answer.

   Visualization (Drawing Pictures)  Think Aloud (Talking about the reading)
   Making Connections               Summarizing or Retelling

2. Of the four strategies, which one did you not like to use? Circle your answer.

   I like to use them all!

   Visualization (Drawing Pictures)  Think Aloud (Talking about the reading)
   Making Connections               Summarizing or Retelling

3. Now that you have finished the book, what strategies and activities helped you remember the information? Explain.

   I think that drawing a picture helped and thinking out loud helps too.