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Looking At A More Comprehensive Picture Of Reading As Enacted By Second-Grade Readers

Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi
Wayne State University

LOOKING AT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF READING AS ENACTED BY SECOND-GRADE READERS

by

GLORIA LOPATA-PROSPERI

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Dad. His unending love, his example of a powerful work ethic, and his dedication to me and belief in me has been the inspiration in all that I do in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It was one of the best parts of the new job. I had the opportunity to visit classrooms more often and in various schools. What was remarkable, were the differences in the personalities of each school that jumped out upon entering the buildings. Some had classrooms that were bright and welcoming. They were arranged as spokes on a wheel - at the end of each one, a door opening into a classroom of children . . . talking, singing, reciting, listening. Other buildings were quiet and subdued with very little life and "Shhh" wafting from the doors.

Walking into the second grade classrooms, I made a point of noticing the books that were housed in different places within each room. As I glanced through the books that rested one upon the other in the baskets on the tables or in the baskets that lined the walls of the 'cozy' or reading area, I saw paperbacks with clear tape along the spines to keep them from falling apart. There were books with blue dots yellow dots, green and red dots, indicating reading levels. Fairy tales, songbooks, books of nursery rhymes, and poetry anthologies were abundant. What I also noticed, and common to most of the classrooms, was the absence of nonfiction text.

As I pulled up a chair to the half circle table in one classroom, I became a silent member of a guided reading group. Children were greeted, books were distributed and picture walks began. The children read and some groups even had time for a written response. As the groups came and left, again there was a commonality that I noticed. It was clear that the focus of instruction centered on fiction books.

Leaving the classroom, I meandered through the halls until I came upon the library. The librarian had created a delightful atmosphere to carry out the theme of 'growing our learning' that was woven throughout the school. A trellis bulging with plastic and silk flowers framed the

entrance to the group area. The shelves of books were dotted with stuffed animals representing diverse storybook characters. A stuffed Curious George and Clifford the Big Red Dog sat alongside the rows of books. I settled in on a soft, overstuffed chair in a corner. As groups came and left, again the common theme that rang out was that all lessons centered on fiction text.

Looking at the shelves of books, it was clear that storybooks abounded, while nonfiction books seemed to be limited. There was an area of the library where one would find encyclopedias, atlases and along a nearby wall there was a section with books on animals and one section with books on Michigan. The scales were tipped and the lack of balance was striking.

The Problem

As we move forward in the 21st century, it becomes essential to think about the demands of reading in school. In light of the preponderance of fiction text over exposition found in classrooms and used for instruction (Duke, 2000), it would seem that reading stories would be the primary task for students throughout their school experience as well as in their lives outside of school. However, it takes only a cursory look at any school curriculum or the Internet to notice that as children leave the primary-grades, the genre of text to which they will be exposed to a greater extent will be nonfiction.

It is not surprising then that a commonly heard statement is that as children move into the fourth-grade, "reading to learn" is a major focus in school (Chall, 1983). That is, as students move through the grades, the text to which they will be exposed to the greatest degree will be exposition. Further, it has been common in upper elementary grades to relinquish explicit reading instruction although students must read and process text that conveys information as its primary function (Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, (2000). This makes it critical to explore how

children in early primary grades transact with these two text types and to examine whether there are differences that perhaps should be addressed as early in their academic lives as possible.

Additionally, the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 has put pressures on many schools and educators. Research shows that children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in later years; and those who fall behind often are not able to achieve the same levels of academic achievement as their successful peers (Snow, Burns and Griffin 1998). It follows that academic success will in large part be influenced by the various types of text with which children have an opportunity to interact. As reading to learn becomes the key to academic success, understanding how primary students interact with these text types could provide crucial information to educators.

Another factor is the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP), which is the high stakes test in the state of Michigan. The MEAP test is the only common measure given statewide to all students, and serves as a measure of accountability for Michigan schools. Currently it has included a significantly greater percentage of nonfiction text as part of the content across grade levels upon which students are assessed.

Performance on this assessment holds great weight, as it has become the number one basis for evaluating the success of public schools. MEAP tests were developed to measure what Michigan educators believe all students should know and be able to achieve in five content areas: mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and writing. The test results indicate how well Michigan students and Michigan schools are performing when compared against standards established by the State Board of Education. Therefore, students' facility with multiple genres takes on an additional dimension of importance. If there are differences in how they read and

comprehend fiction and nonfiction, those differences would need to be addressed in the years prior to the test-taking years.

Further, as discussed by Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, (2003), there are many commonly held beliefs that serve to tip, rather than equalize, the balance of text types being used for instruction and made available in primary classrooms, potentially influencing proficiency with one genre over another. In the past researchers believed that young children could only handle fiction text, as nonfiction text was considered too difficult (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2002). As a result, beginning reading instruction focused on the use of fiction text. The foundation of this mode of instructional delivery was predicated on the thought that, because of their predictable structure, stories are easier to comprehend. This thinking is so deeply ingrained that almost all of the available programs for beginning reading instruction are based on story text. While estimates vary, it has been suggested that in basal readers only 12% is non-fiction text (Hoffman, McCarthy, Abbott, Christian, Corman, Curry, Dressman, Elliott, Matherne, & Stahle, 1994; Moss & Newton, 2002). However, research has clearly shown that primary children can be successful with nonfiction reading and that early opportunities to engage in nonfiction reading can serve to set the stage for later success in school (Duke, Martineau, Frank, Bennett-Armistead, 2003). Thus investigating whether differences are apparent in how each text type is processed and in the resulting comprehension need to examined and addressed.

There is also a supposition of children's preference of fiction over nonfiction (Yopp & Yopp, 2000), though this has been challenged. In a series of small-scale studies, students checked out a significantly greater number of storybooks, compared to information books, from the school library (Kamil & Lane, 1997). However, there were a larger number of information books, compared to storybooks, checked out of a neighborhood library (in the same

neighborhood). The librarians reported that there was no apparent difference in the proportions of information and story books in the two libraries. Further, it was found that although teachers were interested in doing more work with nonfiction material, they felt constrained by the curriculum. Approximately 80% of the teachers used predominantly fiction materials because they felt that nonfiction text would be "too hard" for the students. With this scarcity of nonfiction books available and lack of opportunity to be taught how to access their content with proficiency, it would seem that students are at a disadvantage when it comes to reading nonfiction text.

Finally, it has been demonstrated that good readers read different kinds of text differently. When reading fiction, good readers attend closely to setting and characters and when reading nonfiction these readers frequently construct and revise summaries of what they have read (Duke, 2000). In a study by Bernhardt, Destino, Kamil, & Rodriguez-Munoz, (1995) it was demonstrated that reading nonfiction text was correlated with science achievement while reading story text was not. This suggests that there are separable skills in reading the two types of text. Without more specific knowledge of the possible variations of how students process and comprehend these two genres, students could be placed at a disadvantage when it comes to learning science or content from a variety of disciplines.

Despite the clear importance of developing competence with nonfiction literacy, schooling fails to develop strong nonfiction reading and writing skills in many American students (Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham, & Gentile, 1994; Daniels, 1990). While this is an important consideration, to date there is limited research available on how early elementary students process and comprehend fiction as compared to nonfiction text. The ways in which young readers address these two genres bears further investigation. It can be determined in large

measure using an instrument such as the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) and that is what this study will examine.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine and compare the transaction of second-grade readers with fiction and nonfiction text. As nonfiction text becomes more prevalent in the classroom and in the world in which our children interact, it becomes an added responsibility to have as much information as possible to make valid determinations about the most effective classroom methodologies using the type of text that is made available. Gaining information as to the differences in oral reading and comprehension of fiction and nonfiction texts will serve educators in the future with respect to pedagogical decisions within their classrooms and may help to replace the primacy of fiction in early elementary classrooms. Utilizing miscue analysis, retellings, and reader interviews will provide a coherent framework for studying the processes of second-grade readers engaged in reading these two text types. A review of the literature has led me to these research questions:

(1) What are the differences, if any, in their reading processes while reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text?

(2) What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text? and

(3) What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

Rationale

Why is discovering how readers transact with differing types of text and their subsequent comprehension important? As the world grows … and shrinks, there comes with it an urgency to

redefine literacy and subsequently, literacy instruction. The ways we teach children, the ways we shape them to think or not think as a result of those teachings, have great implications. In addition, literacy must always be linked to a theory of knowledge that aligns with an emancipatory political perspective (Freire, 1973). To do so means to move from a Behaviorist approach toward one of Constructivism.

Constructivism represents the reader as one who builds mental representations as a result of combining new information from a text with prior knowledge. In so doing, readers construct meaning by organizing the content according to the structure of the text or according to their collection of cognitive understandings, select content based on established principles of importance, and connect the content through inferences and elaborations. Here, the concept of organization is represented in the reader's knowledge base as schemata, frames, and scripts as well as from an understanding of the organizational features of the text structure (Anderson, Spiro & Anderson, 1978).

In this view, for efficient and effective reading to occur, readers' sample strategic graphophonic and other information from the text in the process of using anticipatory systems to construct meaning as they interact with the text (Goodman, 1967). Rather than reading in a linear fashion, utilizing individual word identification strategies, Vygotsky (1978) asserts that human behavior is too intricately interwoven to be reflected in a linear model. He rejected the view that learning itself is a sort of linear conditioning.

> The psychologist's most vital challenge is that of uncovering and bringing to light the hidden mechanisms underlying complex human psychology. Though the behaviorist method is objective and adequate to the study of simple reflexive acts, it clearly fails when applied to the study of complex psychological processes (p.122).

This thinking is supported by eye movement studies. In an attempt to operate efficiently, studies show that the eyes do not fixate on every word during the process of reading. This is because when there is an orientation to efficiency, it would not be necessary to fixate on every word if the author's intended message can be anticipated through sampling. In fact, it was found that readers fixate approximately 60 to 65% of the words in a text (Paulson & Freeman 2003 citing Fisher & Shebilske 1985, p.149; Just & Carpenter 1987, p.37; Hogaboam 1983, p. 315; Rayner 1997, p. 319).

Goodman (1967) and Smith (1971) share that the essence of the reading process is to make sense of text. The reader can only do this through the use of a predictive strategy, so as to establish a relationship between the meanings a reader brings to the text and the meaning an author intends to communicate. The establishment of such a relationship constitutes the very definition of making sense.

To further enhance this thought, miscue analysis is offered as a source of evidence in this study, demonstrating that while reading, the readers construct a parallel text. This parallel text is made 'visible' through the miscues readers make as they interweave the words on the page with their a priori knowledge. As readers utilize cognitive strategies to make sense of the text, the picture miscue analysis paints of how the mind constructs understanding, while processing fiction compared to nonfiction text, will provide important pedagogical implications. So too, retellings will provide evidence of their comprehension in each text type.

Significance of Study

The findings and contributions of this study could provide teachers and administrators with insights of second-grade students' interactions with fiction and nonfiction text. This information may also be critical to scaffold students considered to be at-risk for failure and who

are disempowered and disenfranchised by school tracking procedures, and who typically are provided with academic opportunities which have little social or economic value (Oakes, 1985). Goodlad, (1984) has argued that we must not be duped into thinking that preparing children for an unjust world requires early exposure to unjust educational experiences. Rather, we must provide relevant information that will extend rather than restrict educational possibilities for all students.

This study will explore ways to approach learning about how students form understandings of fiction and nonfiction text. This research will approach comprehension from a naturalistic perspective, such that the goal is not only to measure comprehension, but also understand how readers are constructing an understanding of texts of differing genre. It will add to the literature why it may be important to include nonfiction text and instruction specific to that genre to a greater extent in primary classrooms, as learning to learn from nonfiction text is one of the most important forms of literacy children will encounter (Duke & Pressley, 2005).

Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) say that our theories of literacy determine what we acknowledge and what we value. The reasons are many and clear as to why it is important to compare how second-grade children read and comprehend fiction and nonfiction text and is therefore the focus of this study. Doing so may offer new insights into differences as to how they utilize cueing systems to make meaning as they read each text type and what they recall or select to remember after they read. This may provide deeper and richer understandings about ways to refine pedagogical decisions with respect to the most efficacious ways in which to provide meaningful classroom instruction.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In chapter one of this dissertation, I discussed the notion of the need to produce students who are savvy consumers of information. Oftentimes teachers are unable to or unaware of the need to assist students in becoming adroit readers of multiple types of texts. As a result, reading in any genre is viewed as the same by many children as they lack awareness that one reads different genre in different ways. Given the new and changing demands of the Information Age, limiting the parameters of preparation of our students will cause them to be weak in an area where they need to be the strongest.

Addressing the need to ensure that children's skills are in tune with the changing criteria of being literate in the 21st century is critical. The American educational system must answer the call to move our students to the level of both fiction and nonfiction literacy proficiency to the degree that is necessary to ensure their success in a global world and workplace.

Rapidly growing technological advances, the increased focus on nonfiction reading on standardized tests, and standards-based report cards has drawn attention to the need of teaching children the skill of interacting with nonfiction text and reading to learn (Moss, 2005). What is coming to light is the need to begin this process earlier in a child's academic career. While a great deal is known about narrative reading in the primary grades, relatively less research is available comparing how children transact with fiction and nonfiction text; if it may be similar or different and how that may influence literacy development of primary children.

Working in a school district where many children struggle with reading competency, I am constantly seeking opportunities to discover means that will scaffold their potential success. Because learning to read nonfiction text is so critical for the future success of all children, I was

interested in comparing the processes used and the resulting comprehension between fiction and nonfiction of second grade readers, who are reading on grade level. This could ultimately affect the thinking of educators with respect to the significance of both fiction and nonfiction text and offer opportunities in classrooms where literacy instruction using multiple genres is valued and integrated.

This chapter presents a theoretical framework, a discussion of comprehension and comprehending and factors that influence both, and a discussion of the relevance and necessity of this study. The first subsection addresses the theoretical framework in which this study is situated.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism

Constructivism represents a theory of learning in which students are the center of the learning process while the teacher is the facilitator of the learning taking place. Students construct their own understandings of concepts through problem-solving while becoming independent learners and thinkers. With respect to reading, the learner makes meaning from text by being introduced to new perspectives, using newly acquired information, and incorporating it with existing structures of knowledge and transforming it to create new meanings and understandings (Bruner, 1966).

This differs from the behaviorist approach which views knowledge as a distinctive quantity that can be delivered by the teacher, who is considered to be the keeper of the knowledge. The learner is regarded as passively receiving information. Learning to read is seen as mastery of sets of accumulated sub-skills through responses to stimuli, including practice, reinforcement, and learned behaviors influenced by the actions of the instructor (Ehri, 1994).

In contrast, constructivism suggests that the learner actively extracts knowledge from meaningful learning situations that support development of thinking. Reading is considered more than simply saying words; it is unlocking their meaning and subsequently the meaning of a piece of text. The printed word evokes a search for knowledge represented in the reader's schemata; the concepts, expectations, and beliefs that together build meaning. Kucer (2005) posits that hypotheses for word identification are developed based upon a combination of knowledge, experience, and making connections, resulting in predictions of upcoming words as one reads. The amount of time and resources exerted on word identification is variable, and it is not necessary to read every word.

The eye movement research of Ehrlich and Rayner (1981) and Zola (1984) substantiates this thinking by revealing that fixation duration is reduced as words become more predictable. In other words, differences in the duration of a fixation are not dependent upon each individual word, but rather on various factors that influence the amount of time necessary to grasp the meaning of a word including, repetition, word frequency, or previous and subsequent words.

Supporting this thinking is the eye movement research of Reichle, Pollatsek, Fisher, & Rayner, (1998) suggesting that reading is an interactive process and situations will differ as to when a word will or will not be predictable. For example, even with very little information, including word length or the first letter, a word may become highly predictable. Thus processing speeds will be variable not as a result of automaticity, but because of information present upon which to base predictions (Krashen, 1999).

Bruner (1973) asserts that the learner extrapolates meaning from existing information with learning centered in a social process. Within this context, the teacher is the agent who is able to provide the learner with support and experiences commensurate with his/her ability so

that those experiences can prove to be fruitful and will encourage the desire for further learning to occur. This would take into account Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in which he posits that all learning occurs in the context of social interactions which shape the learner's thinking. The learner arrives at different levels of thinking based upon interactions with more knowledgeable peers and adults who socially work together to co-construct and negotiate meaning just beyond the learner's current level of understanding or zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher provides the support or scaffolding necessary to help students perform a task that is just beyond their ability to perform independently.

In a constructivist view, reading is considered to be a dynamic process, in constant change, as the reader creates and transforms meanings of a text, with language being the crystallizing factor between a relationship of the reader and the writer. Vygotsky (1978) asserts that language is the tool that mediates meaning and facilitates learning. Through conversations, learners internalize and synthesize language and use it to shape their thinking. As the facilitator, the teacher creates and sustains a social learning environment that fosters student interactions and conversations. With this guidance, students and teachers are able to collaboratively work together to exchange, explain, clarify, discuss, and question ideas so as to come to understandings.

Conceptualizing what reading represents and how it occurs is a key foundational piece in any effort to study and determine what students do in the act of reading (comprehending) and how meaning emerges within a relationship between the reader and the text (comprehension). Looking at reading through a constructivist lens is important because doing so acknowledges that there is no definitive outcome of reading, that it is unique to each individual and crosses boundaries rather than being limited by them. It is particularly relevant with respect to

comparing fiction and nonfiction text. In each instance, not only do learners have to learn to read, but in the process of making sense of text, take their current understandings and align them to new information and make informed decisions as to what does and does not fit into their existing schema (Fosnot and Perry, 2005).

A constructivist view of reading then acknowledges the reader's part in thinking, rethinking, and adjusting as he/she reads. As Goodman, Watson, & Burke (1987) explain:

> To understand a holistic view of reading, we need to consider that both the reader and the author are equally active in constructing or building meaning. The text or the written material is the medium through which the reader and the author transact. The concept of transaction in the reading process, as elaborated by Rosenblatt, suggests that when a reader and an author, by way of the written text, transact, significant changes take place. (p. 20)

The focus of this study is to compare fiction and nonfiction reading and in so doing, determining if and how fiction and nonfiction text influences the way young children manipulate language in an effort to make meaning. One way to discover if there is an equivalent or greater facility with nonfiction over fiction is through the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI), which provided a description of the reading tasks as participants read these two text types thus facilitating a comparison (Martens, 1997; Theurer, 2002). The RMI is a valid instrument in that it offers a look at how each reader constructs meaning, while viewing miscues, or unexpected responses, as mechanisms that provide glimpses into how readers organize their thinking (Smith & Elley, 1995). In keeping with a constructivist stance, the RMI allows for the researcher to observe various and multiple representations of reading produced by readers as they actively construct meaning; assimilating new information into established mental structures and adapting and adjusting personal interpretations (Goodman, 1994).

Previous miscue analysis studies have measured forms of oral reading behaviors and resulting comprehension. The work of Goodman and Burke (1973) provided key findings when looking at data of readers spanning proficiency levels of low second grade to high tenth grade. Their findings showed that proficient readers attended to context and meaning to a greater extent than letters and words and less proficient readers relied on graphic information more than the proficient readers.

This was confirmed by the findings of Au, (1976) who examined second grade proficient and non-proficient readers. She also found that proficient readers demonstrated greater skill in the use of context to make sense of text than non-proficient readers. Non-proficient readers on the other hand, relied more on letters cues.

Observing the reading of second, fourth, sixth and eighth grade students, Menosky, (1971) in her dissertation noted that as readers read further into a text, the quality of miscues improve. This emphasized the significance of using complete texts when conducting reading assessments and research.

Freeman (1988) used miscue data to ascertain how well second and sixth graders were able to control reference to pronouns. His study indicated that readers were able to infer pronoun reference using background knowledge and connecting words, such as *because* and *consequently,* to interpret relationships between concepts. Miscue analysis pointed out that participants very rarely substituted words for pronouns and miscue corrections were frequent. His conclusion was that miscues were caused by readers over-generalizing strategies and application at incorrect areas of the text.

Thus, the RMI offers an opportunity to look beyond surface reading and the product of reading and rather look closely at the process of reading. It offers an opportunity to compare the

efficiency of reader's use of context and meaning along with the use of graphophonics. In this study, participants read from complete authentic texts, and a determination of comprehension was based upon retellings they provided at the end of their readings rather than constructed test questions with pre-determined answers. There is little known miscue analysis research that has compared fiction and nonfiction reading of on-level second grade students' oral reading behaviors and comprehension. This study will add to and extend the research literature.

With this in mind, I questioned whether fiction or nonfiction text would influence a proclivity toward meaning-making equally in both texts or in one type more than the other as the participants read a fiction and nonfiction text. To find these answers, this constructivist approach was used to determine both process and product. I looked at the process of comprehending through examination of cueing systems used, while the product was determined through retellings thus attaining the result of reading fiction and nonfiction text – comprehension.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the knowledge and understanding that is the end product resulting from an interaction between the reader and the text. To achieve comprehension is a complex task involving multiple, intricately interconnected cognitive processes and carries different meanings in different contexts. It involves more than simple letter-by-letter sounding out of words, and it is more than just listening to words as they are decoded. Rather it is based on the coordination of interrelated sources of information. Reading different genre types, different situations, and different reasons for reading will cause changes in a readers' facility for managing these processes (Kucer, 2005). To understand how comprehension occurs, one must look at the processes in which the reader engages to attain this outcome.

Comprehending

Active engagement of the reader, in the process of comprehending, is the key to constructing meaning from text and is a salient difference between a behaviorist and constructivist view. Further, what constitutes the meanings of words is ever-changing and idiosyncratic depending upon the context and experience of the reader. Supporting this thinking, Tierney and Pearson (1994) share:

> Consider the notion that accuracy of readers' understanding should be regarded as relative. The key point here is that what is considered an appropriate understanding is likely to vary from reader to reader and from context to context. That is accuracy of understanding is relative and should be considered a function of an individual reader and individual text characteristics, as well as a function or purpose for reading. In constructing an interpretation, a reader selects, inserts, substitutes, deletes, and connects ideas in conjunction with what he or she perceives as "making sense." And what "makes sense" depends upon the text as well as the reader's purposes and background knowledge. (pp. 509-510)

While comprehending, readers engage in cognitive and linguistic strategies including accessing visual and non-visual information, making connections, using context, and making predictions. The goal is to enact an integrated system of thinking that functions across text types and occurs before, during, and after reading. Goodman's (1994) constructivist model of reading sets forth an understanding of reading as a meaning-making process involving the deliberate and subconscious choices a reader makes as he/she reads fiction and nonfiction text. Supporting this model, in this study there was no preconceived notion of one right way to read, the expectation was not that all participants would produce the same results, and looking at all cueing systems ensured that the complete process was examined.

Factors that Influence Comprehending and Comprehension

There are visual and non-visual elements that play a role in reading. These visual and non-visual factors have the potential to influence comprehending and comprehension.

Visual Information

Visual information includes that information which resides in the text and does not carry meaning (Smith, 1988) It includes letters and words, conventions, and organizational and nonfiction tools. Visual symbols or letters are seen by readers as singular letters, clusters of letters or words. The greater the unit automatically recognized by the reader, the more efficiently reading will occur (Rayner, 1997). Proficient readers automatically process the visual information utilizing a multitude of systems to help them do so. Proficient readers also have the ability to utilize print conventions including directionality (left to right, top to bottom, and return sweep), understand the use of white space, print size, and punctuation (Clay, 2001). They utilize text tools such as a table of contents, indexes, glossaries, and illustrations (Duke, & Bennett-Armistead, 2003). When reading nonfiction text, knowledge of what these features represent and how they can support reading a text with meaning are critical. With this knowledge as a backdrop, I wondered how second-grade readers utilize visual information when reading fiction and nonfiction text at their instructional level and how this may or may not compare between the two text types.

Non-visual Information

The idea of using non-visual information was posited by Dewey and Bentley (1949) and was further refined by Rosenblatt (1978), and it is her focus on the uniqueness of a particular momentary transaction that has become known as the "transactional theory." Non-visual

information includes knowledge of texts, language, strategies, content, and the experiences a reader brings to the act of reading. This represents information in the reader's head and its influence on the thinking that is enacted in response to visual stimuli. There are many non-visual factors leading to comprehension.

Domain Knowledge

Domain knowledge of reading is a factor leading to comprehension. Domain knowledge can be characterized as the reader's knowledge of the act of reading from a metacognitive perspective and from instruction they have received (Paris & Winograd, 1990).

Alexander, (1997) shares, "the move into competence in the domain of reading comes over time and as a result of continued practice of reading and learning about reading. Competent readers value reading as an activity and are interested in knowing more about it. They are engaged readers who process text fairly automatically in terms of comprehension, so that they are able to devote attention and resources to integration, interpretation or evaluation of what they have read" (p.16).

Typically readers readily bring understandings of fiction text, as the basis of most fiction replicates life situations that can be readily understood by the reader. Further, they have had more opportunities to read fiction text as it is more prevalent in classrooms (Duke, 2000). Regarding nonfiction, not only do young readers ordinarily have less experience with it, it is comprised of structures and features with which the reader may have very little or no background understanding (Yopp & Yopp, 2000). As problems arise during reading, a reader must efficiently use cognitive processes to resolve those problems (Alexander & Jetton, 2000). This raises questions about the cognitive processes that young children use, how they are utilized and

how similar or different they are while reading fiction and nonfiction. This study provided insights addressing those questions.

Language

As noted, this study will be based on the consideration of reading from a constructivist view from which the reader can be considered to be a meaning maker, actively selecting necessary information from the text to construct meaning. This theory asserts that reading is a process of constructing meaning from the written text involving conscious and subconscious choices readers make as they sample the most useful information available from the language of the text based on their predictions, inferences, and need to confirm or disconfirm their thinking.

Language is a multi-faceted, inter-related system working together to form meaning. Knowledge of language would include utilizing phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and a reader's lexicon or bank of words that may have multiple interpretations based on culture to make meaning in text (Goodman, 1994).

Varying degrees of exposure to various texts may influence vocabulary development and usage and influence comprehension. Duke, Bennett-Armistead, and Roberts, (2003) suggest that teachers tend to focus on and discuss the technical language found in nonfiction text. Further, due to the unfamiliarity of topics, extended conversations and questioning is sparked. I would agree with Dreher, (2000) that this type of additional interaction may serve to build vocabulary and result in deeper understandings of the text.

Exposing children to the language outside of the storybook is crucial and may remove another barrier to success as they move up the grades. Experience with multiple text types provides children with the opportunity to hear and learn academic language, while using it meaningfully during oral language opportunities may increase their facility with successful

interaction with nonfiction text (Moss, 2005). This is especially important for young readers who may benefit from hearing discussions about topics, how language is used in context, and becoming part of a classroom conversation thereby deepening understanding and cementing the use of new language.

The Role of Text Structure

Fiction text has been considered to be the text type that children could read with the greatest ease and therefore its presence has dominated primary classrooms. These perceptions develop from social interactions that occur between children and adults. Those experiences yield nascent understandings of fiction text structure (Heath, 1982; Stallman & Pearson, 1990; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In the course of a conversation or watching a television show, children are exposed to a beginning, middle, and ending format which establishes a foundation for understanding fiction structure as this structure replicates a fundamental part of everyday experiences. Therefore this is considered to be a genre that presents few roadblocks to reading comprehension.

Nonfiction text, on the other hand, is described in terms of classification, illustration, comparison and contrast and procedural description (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991). It is written with the intent to inform, explain, or demonstrate. This differs from fiction experiences, as there are few, if any, early social interactions that establish familiarity with this text type, and it would seem that young children may have difficulty with this genre therefore schemata must be developed through interactions. Rather than following a beginning, middle, and end pattern, organization of information is dependent upon the type of information presented and the purpose of the presentation (Richgels, McGee, Lomax, & Sheard, 1987).

Because of a lack of early social interactions replicating these structures, children are placed at a disadvantage for developing a facility with nonfiction; however, as readers interact with each text type, they develop expectations of various cues that inform and signal specific genre structures such as fairy tales or persuasive essays. For example, stories are centered on the motivation and behaviors of the characters (Mandler & Johnson 1977), and events that take place over time (Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998). As they monitor the dynamics of these situations, readers, note changes that reflect the delineation of episodes cueing the creation of new mental representations. Early social experiences would support these understandings.

Similarly, readers use their expectations about nonfiction to guide the structuring of their mental representations. However, these expectations are more variable because as Lorch & Lorch (1995) and Meyer (1985) point out, there are multiple rhetorical structures for nonfiction genre, including description/enumeration, sequence, question and answer, compare/contrast, cause/effect and problem/solution. In addition, there may be more than one structure present within one context. In a study by Richgels, McGee, Lomax & Sheard, (1987) sixth grade students demonstrated varying amounts of awareness of structure, and their awareness differed depending upon the specific structure. Therefore, nonfiction structure presents a greater challenge.

The impact of the variance of fiction and nonfiction structures was also shown in a study of first grade students by Smolkin & Donovan, (2000). Basing their study on the work of Cazden (1965), they examined teacher contributions and student responses in Donovan's classroom during interactive read-alouds. They found genre influenced discourse with greater interaction occurring when engaged in nonfiction read-alouds. Further, as the teacher helped students gain awareness, shape their reasoning, and make connections when engaged in read-

alouds (Oyler, 1996); participants were able to extend their efforts to establish meaning in both text types, in particular in the more complex structure of nonfiction text when drawing attention to the way the structure of nonfiction needs to be negotiated.

In spite of the potential roadblocks presented by nonfiction structure, research by Stahl, Heubach & Cramond, (1997) has shown that comprehension can be increased in primary students when provided with opportunities to engage in rigorous study of text structure. "As comprehension research has shown repeatedly, awareness of text structure aids readers' comprehension" (Smolkin & Donovan, 2002 p.151).

Interest Leading to Motivation

Research has demonstrated that the facilitative factor of interest (Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, (1993) could be an influencing dynamic in how children process text. It has been found that the degree of learning is greater and deeper processing of text occurs when participants express interest in what they read. When readers read text that they did not consider to be interesting, there was a focus on proposition-specific information. However, when readers were engaged with text they considered interesting, they engaged in deeper processing of the information in the text and increased memory (Krapp, Hidi, & Renniger, 1992; McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad, & Bourg, 2000).

Hidi (1990) suggests that there is a connection between interest and automatic attention. Increased comprehension has been demonstrated based on attentional allocations. When this connection occurs learning is facilitated as cognitive resources are released leading to more effective and productive processing and increasing recall of information. Similarly, Wade, Buxton & Kelly (1999) argue that readers make connections when reading text of interest. These

connections to the information being read activate background knowledge and lead to an increase in interest and a subsequent increase in understanding of text.

Interest is important to consider because most often in schools, the text and topics students with which students engage are selected by the teacher. As noted earlier in this review of literature, all too often, there exists an imbalance in the type of text that is offered to children. Depending upon where children's interests lay, they may be denied interaction with the information they would find intriguing. Further, scholars have determined nonfiction text to be a motivating force that engages boys in particular (Levine & Goldman-Caspar, 1996; Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). As studies have determined that there is a decline in positive attitude toward reading and writing and in boys more than girls, the increased engagement that interest brings about may help correct this decline (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

For children of all ages, interest is typically higher in nonfiction reading than fiction. This has been demonstrated in a review of the literature on children's interests and preferences by Sturm, (2003). It showed that selecting and reading nonfiction text has remained fairly constant over time.

The research of Guthrie, Van Meter, McCann, Wigfield, Bennett, & Poundstone (1996) has shown that achievement is greater, student's are intrinsically motivated, and perseverance in a reading task are attributable to interest. According to reading scholars, young children should be exposed to a variety of text forms in classrooms, including nonfiction text (Feathers, 1993, 2002) and as indicated above, this interest factor is likely to result in improved reading and learning as they are motivated to find information that will answer their personal questions and read the genre they prefer.

While it has been suggested that boys prefer nonfiction text more than girls, this is not necessarily the case. In a study by Caswell & Duke, (1998), it was found that oftentimes young children, in particular boys, demonstrate a preference of nonfiction text to fiction as suggested by the number of times nonfiction text is selected for reading rather than fiction. However, Mohr (2006) reported that when asked to choose from nine highly appealing picture books, out of 190 first grade students, a greater number of children selected nonfiction text over fiction and the number included a large percentage of girls. Further, in a study by Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, & Shapiro (2007) of first graders' preferences for fiction and nonfiction books, the findings challenged the notion that boys prefer nonfiction text more than girls.

As has been shown, males and females enjoy reading both fiction and nonfiction text. In either case, if opportunities to engage with books that are interesting and therefore appealing to readers are limited, this will influence their motivation to read. It follows that lack of motivation could impact their developing proficiency with either genre and may be a factor impacting the results of this study.

Environmental Influences on Fiction and Nonfiction Reading

The Dominance of Fiction Text on the Educational Landscape

While nonfiction text and primary grades has long been considered an oxymoron of sorts, research supports the idea that exposing primary grade children to and instructing them in how to access nonfiction text as well as fiction is beneficial in aiding them in becoming adept readers. Guillaume, (1998) asserts that young children are able to not only learn to read, but if given appropriate instruction and materials, they can simultaneously be taught how to read to learn. This has been supported by research that has shown young children can successfully engage with nonfiction text (Duke, 2000; Pappas, 1993) and exposure in the primary grades can provide a

base upon which to build understandings of the text that will dominate their schooling as they move up in the grades (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003).

While presently there is a profusion of fiction text in most classrooms, this has not always been the case. Historically, American schools presented nonfiction text to a greater degree than fiction. During the time prior to and following the American Revolution, text reflected the socio-cultural influences of the time (Adams, 1990). Nonfiction text provided children with a context from which to draw understandings about their government, environment, and religion.

As industrialism gained prominence, there came with it the thinking that increasing educational opportunities would become an equalizing influence in providing opportunities for all citizens. Moving from a private matter to one addressed in the public domain, education was made available to greater numbers of children as a result of "rapid increases in enrollment due to waves of immigration, prohibition of child labor, and mandatory school attendance" (Pearson & Hamm, 2004, p. 16). Exposition continued to be the prominent genre used for instruction as the bible and books on nature were the most prevalent texts found in classrooms.

For the rest of the century, there continued to be a preponderance of nonfiction text (Venezky, 1987). Children read from the McGuffey readers, created by William McGuffey. These included stories of nature and historical writings. The Wilson's School and Family series, another widely used series, focused on scientific content, and a concentration on scientific study continued the emphasis on teaching using nonfiction text until the close of the 19th century. With a new century came a new focus in the materials used for instruction.

This change came by way of a set of reforms initiated by Harvard University president, Charles Eliot. Articulating his belief that excellent literature should be a mainstay of instructional materials for children, he influenced a transition bringing fiction text to prominence

at this time, thus igniting a shift away from nonfiction (Duke, Bennett-Armistead, Roberts, 2003).

Aside from a brief focus after World War I, there was a marked absence of nonfiction text from the educational landscape (Duke et al., 2003). There was a continued proliferation of fiction text stemming from the thinking that learning to read and write occurs naturally during observations and social interactions that spontaneously take place between children and adults (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Nelson, (1996, p. 184) suggests, "fiction is the 'natural product' of language; it precedes and is the source of theoretical thinking." Similarly, Bruner (1990 p. 121) asserts, "it is very likely the case that the most natural and earliest way in which we organize our experience and knowledge is in terms of fiction form … that the beginnings, the transitions, and the full grasp of ideas in the spiral curriculum depend upon embodying those ideas into a story or fiction form." The domination of fiction text on the instructional scene fueled the assumption that young children could not handle learning to read using nonfiction text (Moffett, 1968; Egan, 1993).

Fiction text continued to prevail as noted in a study conducted by Chall (1967) in the early 1960's. She synthesized an analysis of twenty-two reading programs and reported the findings in her now famous Learning to Read: The Great Debate, published in 1967. After reviewing the literature and interviewing three basal series authors, she concluded that the basal series used for instruction at this time were similar, including a phonics-based approach to reading and containing stories selected as being representative of an idealistic reflection of the 'American' way of life. Fiction text continued as the norm, leaving scant opportunity for young readers to be exposed to nonfiction.

The emphasis on using fiction text resulted in a trend of limiting the amount of exposure to nonfiction text that has continued, as indicated by the work of Duke (2000). Her research reveals that over the past twenty years, basal series for primary grades have averaged an incorporation of less than 20 percent nonfiction text. Further, a more recent study by Moss & Newton (2002) confirmed earlier studies by revealing that in basals in grades two, four, and six, only 20 percent of the text was dedicated to nonfiction selections. Yopp & Yopp (2000) reported that out of 126 primary teachers, only 14% of the books used in read-alouds were nonfiction. Substantiating this evidence is a national survey of kindergarten through sixth grade teachers indicating that nonfiction text is not used to a great extent for read-alouds nor even presented during classroom instructional times (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). Supporting the need for a preponderance of fiction text for instruction, Egan (1988) and Reese & Harris (1997) assert that young children comprehend fiction text more easily than nonfiction text and thus should not be exposed to nonfiction until the middle grades and above.

This thinking was upheld over time, although new research signaled it was time to open the door to exposing primary children to nonfiction text and learning how to not only learn to read but to read to learn as well. However, this ubiquitous imbalance of fiction and nonfiction continues.

Table 1 provides a clear picture of the difference in the amount of fiction as compared to nonfiction text that is currently offered in the reading program adopted for Kindergarten – grade 5 in the district the participants of this study attend.

Table 1

Comparison of Fiction and Nonfiction Text in Houghton-Mifflin

Grade	K		1		2		3		4		5	
	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF
Core Selection	88%	12%	75%	25%	80%	20%	75%	25%	67%	33%	43%	57%
Paperback			77%	23%	89%	11%	61%	39%	50%	50%	61%	39%

The discrepancy is clear and helps to explain the need to compare and identify potential differences in the reading and comprehension of the two genres by the participants in this study.

Reading Instruction Using Nonfiction Text

Regardless that the need to incorporate more nonfiction text is clear, two problems remain. There is a continued pattern of a lack of availability of nonfiction text and limited instruction in how to read nonfiction text. Durkin's seminal study (1978-1979), pointed to the disturbing reality that very little, if any, comprehension instruction during reading and social studies, took place in the 1970's, and the trend continues today at the early elementary level (Pressley, 2000; Duke, 2000).

Palmer & Stewart (2003) suggested a number of reasons why instruction with nonfiction text is limited. They conducted a study to determine how nonfiction text fit into the instructional practices of first, second, and third grade teachers. An inadequate supply of nonfiction books available at the student's appropriate reading levels resulted in teachers most often reading aloud from books that were too difficult for students to read. In addition, children were observed wearing headphones and listening to books on tape. While they observed teachers using meaningful strategies to aid comprehension such as K-W-L (Ogle, 1996), teachers essentially interpreted the information for the students. While both opportunities exposed children to

nonfiction text, there was no instruction used to guide students toward learning how to actively comprehend independently.

Further evidence indicates that primary teachers are not aware of appropriate pedagogical practices to effectively help young children navigate nonfiction texts. Howe, Grierson, and Richmond (1997) found that 58 primary teachers stated they were not aware of what appropriate comprehension strategies were to be utilized while teaching nonfiction materials. These findings were corroborated by Spor and Schneider (1999). They surveyed 435 Kindergarten to 12th grade teachers to find out how they viewed their knowledge of strategies necessary to assist students in accessing information from content text and their view of how they taught those strategies. Those responding to the survey were placed into three categories: teachers familiar with strategies, but did not use them, teachers unfamiliar with strategies, and teachers who knew and used some strategies. The findings indicated that the majority of teachers were not aware of nor did they use such strategies.

A study by Fisher & Hiebert (1990) yielded findings that further confirmed the limited amount of instruction in primary classroom using nonfiction text. In over 100 hours, there was not one recorded observation of teachers introducing, discussing or modeling strategies to assist students' reading of nonfiction text. This lack of instructional prowess in helping students learn strategies to navigate nonfiction text presents another indication that for second grade readers, fiction and nonfiction reading and comprehension results may differ and need to be investigated.

Comparing Fiction and Nonfiction Reading

Comprehension

The greater part of research comparing fiction and nonfiction reading has demonstrated that comprehension of fiction text is greater and more easily accomplished than nonfiction text

(Hidi & Hildyard, 1983; McCutchen & Perfetti, 1982; Luszcz, 1993; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Zabrucky & Moore, 1999; Wolfe, 2005). It is suggested that readers may easily derive background knowledge to comprehend narrative texts, because it resembles events enacted in people's lives (Graesser, Golding & Long, (1991), but may struggle doing so in expository texts. Comprehension in these texts is made more difficult due to the density of the information, inclusion of technical language and content (Lapp, Flood, & Ranck-Buhr, 1995), long passages that do not include a conversational tone common in narrative text (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), and because of the complexity of the structure as compared to the more familiar narrative structure (Anderson & Armbruster, 1984; Beck & McKeown, 1992; Stein & Trabasso, 1982).

Research investigating comprehension of fiction and nonfiction texts has indicated that there are differences in the strategies various readers use to process text and the way they subsequently store information and retrieve it for later use (McNamara, Kintsch, Songer, & Kintsch, 1996; Narvaez, van den Broek, & Ruiz, 1999 & Zwaan, 1994). Wolf & Mienko, (2007) suggest that the genre in which information is located may influence those differences and the resulting retrieval and usage of that information. In their study, they had college-aged subjects read a narrative and expository text, both containing information about the human circulatory system. They examined learning and memory in both text types and found that background knowledge was important in both genres.

For example, one of their findings suggested that the match between the reader's background knowledge differed for learning to occur in the narrative and expository text formats. While it was most advantageous in each case for the subject to be able to access prior knowledge; the optimal amount was greater for learning in the expository text; thus indicating

that comprehension of content may differ depending upon the genre in which information is presented.

Further evidence supporting greater comprehension after fiction reading was demonstrated in another study of college students that demonstrated recall of information was greater when reading fiction as compared to nonfiction even when the difficulty of the text was controlled (Petros, Bentz, Hammes, & Zehr, 1990). In keeping with prior research (Zabrucky & Moore, 1999), these variations were attributed to varying purposes for reading each text type, the variance in familiarity with fiction and nonfiction text, as well as in the predictability in the two genres.

Supporting the previous work were findings from a study of secondary students with a learning disability in reading and who read at instructional reading levels between grades 2 and 6 conducted by Saenz & Fuchs, (2002). Their goal was to find the skill areas in which these students demonstrated degrees of difference in reading of fiction and nonfiction text. It was found that they had greater difficulty reading nonfiction text as compared to fiction; specifically, nonfiction reading was less fluent and there was less demonstrated comprehension. Their findings indicated that literal comprehension was similar, but inferential comprehension was greater for fiction than nonfiction. They attributed this to a potential lack of prior knowledge, however prior knowledge was not assessed.

The majority of studies showing comprehension is greater for fiction than nonfiction have been conducted with adults. However, there have also been studies conducted of younger students as well. While taking different factors into consideration, results reported by Best, Ozuru, Floyd, & McNamara (2006) suggested that comprehension for fiction was stronger than nonfiction in younger students as well. In their study of fourth grade students, they focused on

the role genre, text cohesion, and prior knowledge played in comprehension. Their findings indicated that comprehension was greater for fiction texts and different features affected success in each genre. Children with greater prior knowledge comprehended better, and higher levels of prior knowledge benefitted expository comprehension more than narrative comprehension.

When examining the affect of text cohesion, they found that while high cohesion benefitted comprehension, the benefit was specific to narrative comprehension. It was suggested that the reason for this was that in order for cohesion to optimize comprehension, some level of prior knowledge of the text contents must be present. In addition, low text cohesion in nonfiction text has been found to be a roadblock to understanding for students with little prior knowledge and adding background information that has previously been left out of texts, such as synonyms, headers, and anaphoric referents (Best et.al., 2002) may prove helpful. Therefore for elementary students, who typically have little experience with nonfiction text (Duke, 2000) and subsequent low levels of content knowledge, low cohesion may not be adequate to facilitate understanding while still providing support for the more familiar fiction text.

Supporting the benefits of prior knowledge was the work of Best, Floyd & McNamara, (2008). In their work examining third grader's comprehension of fiction and nonfiction, they looked at the influence of background knowledge and decoding skills. They too found that prior knowledge was more beneficial to nonfiction comprehension as found in studies of older children mentioned above. Based upon answers to 12 multiple choice questions, they found that when confronted with unfamiliar content in nonfiction, children with little prior knowledge struggled because they were not able to produce inferences necessary for understanding to develop. The participants were better able to understand the fiction texts read. They also found that decoding skills were more important for successful fiction reading than prior knowledge

since conveying knowledge is not a feature of fiction reading and most children have the life experiences necessary to support fiction reading.

Other factors influencing comprehension were established in the work of Cunningham & Gall, (1990) who found that third grade readers' expectations of fiction and nonfiction text before and during reading were shown to influence both interest and subsequent recall Hypotheses as to why differences occurred included the thinking that when young children see pictures typical of narrative text, including characters, events, and unique settings, they considered these characteristics to be more interesting than books without these elements thus affecting their interaction with the text (Anderson, Shirey, Wilson, & Fielding, 1987).

Inferences in Fiction and Nonfiction

It is commonly held in reading research that making inferences is one of the most critical aspects of the comprehension process (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). At the core of comprehension, making inferences allows readers to fill in details omitted in a text and create elaborations of the text. To understand a writer's intent, the reader must use more than what is read on the page.

In regard to fiction and nonfiction text, readers enact inferences to a different degree (Narvaez, 2002). For example, fiction text evokes inferences to a greater degree than nonfiction text. One suggestion for this is that children interact with fiction in larger measure; they are acquainted with the structure and format thereby eliciting more predictions than when reading nonfiction text (Graesser, 1981). Additionally, fiction activates schema that supports the generation of inferences, because readers typically have more experience with reading stories as they have been used most often in teaching reading and because readers can readily draw from everyday life to fill in breaks in understanding (Britton, Van Dusen, Glynn, & Hemphill, 1990).

Students are less likely to generate inferences while reading nonfiction because faced with the demands of reading about unfamiliar topics, there is less schema from which to draw, creating difficulty filling in gaps of knowledge (Noordman, Vonk, & Kempff, 1992). Further, because of familiarity and experience with fiction text, readers more naturally engage in strategic behaviors, and may require explicit instruction to transfer these inference-making strategies to better serve their interaction with nonfiction text (Narvaez, 2002).

Leal (1992) investigated first, third, and fifth grade students and the type of talk that was influenced by various text types. A comparison was made of the nature of talk about a storybook, a nonfiction book, and a nonfiction storybook. She found that in discussions involving the nonfiction storybook, students were twice as likely to make inferences, supporting the thinking that fiction text produces more inferences, but also suggesting that making inferences about nonfiction text was a viable possibility with increased exposure and instruction to that end.

Proficient readers make inferences by accessing prior knowledge and thoughtfully combining it with information from the text to form individual interpretations. However, when prior knowledge is limited, it makes it more difficult to make inferences (Cain & Oakhill, 1998). Yuill & Oakhill, (1991) conducted a study involving 7 - 9 year old readers whereby all readers demonstrated the ability to decode but poor ability to draw inferences. One example is that they had difficulty explaining ambiguity of words in jokes (Yuill, 1998) and were unable to use deductive reasoning to explain the origin of an inference (Yuill & Oakhill, 1991). They found that readers were less able to answer questions requiring making an inference related to nonfiction text. This supported conclusions that there is a difference in the ability of readers to make inferences in fiction and nonfiction text.

It is not known to what extent the participants in my study were taught what an inference is, how one makes an inference, or the multiple types of inferences that are possible such as pronoun referents, elaborations of ideas, author's purpose, character's intentions, to name a few (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995) and the potential influence this may have had on the reading and comprehension of the texts in this study. It also raised the question as to whether the participants would make inferences while reading books at their instructional level and whether inferences would be more prevalent in one genre over another.

The Ability of Primary Children to Successfully Interact with Fiction and Nonfiction

Many studies have demonstrated the ability for young children to be successful with nonfiction as well as fiction text and have amplified the benefits of affording opportunities early in a child's academic life. One such study by Pappas (1993) contradicted the conventional wisdom of withholding nonfiction text from primary grade children due to their inability to interact with it successfully, as noted in a previous section. Her study focused on children's talk and sought to discover if and how it mirrored the language of the fiction and nonfiction books used in her study. The researcher examined the language of 20 kindergarten students with the goal of identifying particular language features reflecting typical language of picture story books or picture nonfiction books. Acknowledging that pictures played a role in influencing meaning-making, Pappas (1993) selected fiction and nonfiction texts that were "linguistically typical because the characteristic generic structure of each text itself has a major role in supplying the clues to access meanings to that text" (p.100).

She specifically sought to examine patterns in the "pretend readings" of both text types after children listened to each book read aloud by an adult. Data were collected over three days

in one-on-one sessions. In each session, the adult read a selected fiction text or nonfiction text and that was followed by the child's "pretend readings". The children demonstrated reading voices (voices differing from conversational voices) and their language suggested an implied awareness of patterns. One such pattern followed a character's identity through the story text and another pattern reflected a continuous reference by classification of topic in the nonfiction text used in her study.

It was also indicated in this study that children used technical language in the "pretend readings" of the nonfiction text, while everyday language was used in the "pretend readings" of the stories. These readings implied children's success with "reenacting or taking on the discourse properties" of each text type (Pappas, 1993, p. 125).

In support of Pappas' work (1993), research indicates that primary children can successfully attend to and oftentimes prefer reading nonfiction text. In a case study by Caswell's and Duke (1998), involving two, primary age, male struggling readers, their findings revealed that informational text can attract and appeal to even the most reluctant readers. By exploring real-world topics of interest to the participants, including themes of space, volcanoes and dinosaurs, they found that both of the participants read more deeply and retained the pertinent information found in the text. Students demonstrated progress in their reading abilities because they were allowed to choose the non-fiction topics. Thus, providing an array of opportunities for children to engage with informational text in a classroom can serve to motivate both resistant readers and help them become interested in reading.

Guillaume (1998) suggests that "children of all ages" (p.476) are able to interact successfully with nonfiction text. The seminal studies of emergent literacy by Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1984) support this thinking by demonstrating that preschoolers are aware of the

variety of forms of text. In addition, Duthie's (1994) study with first grade children showed that in their writing, they were able to exhibit the difference between nonfiction and fiction elements. Pressley (2000), citing the work of Meyer (1975), Armbuster & Anderson, (1984), Slater, Graves and Piche (1985), Block (1993), and Taylor and Beach (1984), argues that when young children are presented with opportunities to understand and use a variety of text, they are able to make sense of the text and their retention of information is greater.

Kamil & Lane (1997) demonstrated that it was possible to teach young students about both types of texts. They examined two first grade classes taught by the same teacher over a two year period of time. There was an equal amount of nonfiction and fiction text used in reading instruction. Nonfiction text instruction was embedded in theme units, and the students were given instruction in text features, text structure, and they were taught how to critically assess nonfiction text. Writing instruction and opportunities to write in fiction and nonfiction was balanced, and students were encouraged to read and write both fiction and nonfiction text in their free time. The results showed that it was possible to successfully teach first grade students of all ability levels about various types of text, text structures and text features, and they exhibited above average progress in reading. This was confirmed by Moss, Leone, & DiPillo (1997) who assessed the comprehension of nonfiction text of first grade students. They found that through oral retellings, on a scale of 1-5, out of 20 participants, 18 students scored 3 or higher.

Engagement

Student engagement has long been recognized as critical to successful reading endeavors, and it has been found that engagement can compensate for other factors causing low achievement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). There are differences that have been found when comparing engagement in fiction and nonfiction reading. In a study conducted by Moss &

Hendershot (2002), of eight sixth grade students' responses to nonfiction trade books, interesting comparisons emerged related to fiction and nonfiction texts. During their yearlong qualitative study, they collected data that revealed that there were differences with respect to engagement with fiction and nonfiction texts. In both cases, emotional bonds took shape with the people/characters in the books read, however, the nonfiction texts elicited stronger bonds and mental images than fiction texts because of the attraction of real people and situations. Another factor contributing to stronger engagement was motivation, in that participants were fascinated with the facts about which they were reading and wanted to continue learning. The researchers found that there were aesthetic responses to both genres (Rosenblatt, 1978). The influence of the predominance of and familiarity with fiction texts was apparent in that even for students with higher engagement with nonfiction; the texts they read contained narrative elements. For example, they enjoyed nonfiction books that stuck to a timeline rather than jumping from topic to topic reflecting fiction structure and books with action were preferred, another concept associated with narrative text. They also enjoyed books that included narrative devices like suspense.

Similar findings were determined by Shine and Roser (1999) with younger students. They conducted a study investigating the responses of pre-school children in a small-group setting to fiction and nonfiction text. In this setting the adult avoided providing any guidance in the conversation related to either text type. They found that when responding to an informational text, children made associations about the topic to their lives and shared what they knew relative to the topic. In comparison, the response to the fiction text was centered on an effort to figure out the story line and understand the characters' emotions. Additionally, on the whole, there were more predictions made related to the fiction text.

Moschovaki & Meadows (2005) examined the spontaneous responses to different genre by kindergarten children as fiction and nonfiction books were read to them. They wanted to discover the thinking skills enacted by these youngsters by documenting their comments and questions to determine differences in their cognitive engagement. In so doing, they established an indication of their thinking as they worked toward building their comprehension. They found fundamental differences in the way the children responded to the two text types. Similar to the findings of Shine and Roser (1999), they found in response to nonfiction, kindergarteners instantiated background knowledge and personal experiences. They also found that they labeled and produced evaluative comments to a greater extent with nonfiction text and adopted an efferent stance as evidenced in the attention focused on the content. A more aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1978) was evidenced in response to fiction books as shown by their personal responses, reliving the story through recall, and enjoying the language as indicated by chiming (rhyming, language play). They also produced more predictive and analytical comments.

Relevance and Necessity of this Study

Establishing a more transparent understanding of the different ways children think about and respond to fiction and nonfiction text may be key factors in facilitating greater proficiency with each text type. This is important because it is impossible to know what types of text may exist that do not already exist as our students grow up in this information age, we can be relatively certain that they will be expected to access information from a multitude of text modalities as they navigate within an information-seeking and information-sharing world. Therefore it is important to gather information relative to young readers as they transact with fiction and nonfiction because literacy is the vehicle through which ideas, information, and knowledge are gained, providing individuals with the academic capital needed to participate

fully in our society. They will need to accumulate and utilize an array of cognitive and linguistic skills so that they can thrive in the global arena through literacy competence.

In our schools, the degree to which fiction and nonfiction text is privileged and valued is centered upon the classroom teacher's perspective and philosophy, and the assumption cannot be made that children will transfer their ability to read one genre into competence in reading another genre (Moss, Leone, and Dipillo, 1997). With this comes the need to look at improved strategy instruction, content area instruction, approaches to comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation in this area. As Duffy (1993) argues that a prerequisite to developing metacognitive readers is to cultivate metacognitive teachers.

We need to know more about the differences in reading of these two types of texts. If one believes that reading is a multidimensional process and that readers' knowledge, strategic processing, and motivation are fundamentally interconnected, then simplistic models distinguishing "learning to read" from "reading to learn" should be supplanted with more intricately-connected and complementary models of reading development (Alexander, 2003). Since children to an ever-increasing degree will be constantly exposed to diverse text types outside of the classroom, the purpose of my work and the relevance of the questions set forth in this study become clear. It will add a perspective to the literature of the strategies young readers use while reading nonfiction text as compared to fiction text and the resulting comprehension of each text type. It will shed light on what research will be necessary in the future to further these understandings. Information from this study may extend understandings of how second-grade students interact with nonfiction text as compared to fiction text and provide information to develop and incorporate the most salient pedagogical approaches of teaching reading to that end.

Taken together, the studies mentioned provide evidence documenting that primary aged students are capable of reading both fiction and nonfiction texts. So while the capability is evidenced, previous research also lends support to the supposition that there may be differences as on-grade level second grade children read the two text types. I collected data that compared how second-grade readers, considered to be on grade level, interact with fiction and nonfiction text, perceive those interactions, and the process they use to do so. To that end, I seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the differences, if any, in their reading processes?
2. What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension? and
3. What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to compare second grade reader's transaction with text, the underlying process of reading, and the resulting comprehension as they read fiction and nonfiction text. I sought to find answers to the following questions, which emerged from the review of the literature:

1. What are the differences, if any, in their reading processes?
2. What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension? and
3. What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

With respect to my decisions about methods, I begin with a discussion about the research paradigms, then describe site selection and inclusion criteria for participants, data-collection and analysis strategies, and conclude with a discussion of plans to maintain rigor of qualitative research throughout the study. As will become clearer from what follows, the proposed study used both qualitative and quantitative data to perform an analysis of second-grade readers' strategies and resulting comprehension for reading fiction and nonfiction texts. Therefore mixed methods were used in this study.

Research Design

Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events in the participant's most natural, unchanged environment then using description as a tool to describe the data. To achieve the most comprehensive picture of a comparison of fiction and nonfiction reading, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was necessary. The underlying reason for this is that neither type of data alone would sufficiently capture the details of the research. When used

together, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data yielded a richer, more vivid, and more complete analysis, thus illuminating findings that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. They are complementary, with one method serving to inform the other (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Miscue analysis, the instrument used in this study to distinguish what readers did as they read fiction and nonfiction text in an effort to gain meaning, is a measure that offers both quantitative and qualitative insights to that end. This is important in that quantitative analysis examines reading behavior on a surface level, while qualitative analysis allows for an examination of how psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors influence a reader while reading and students' subsequent comprehension of the text (Goodman, 1967).

There were both aspects of control as well as natural occurrences in this study. For example, books were provided to the participants without offering choice of selection, the texts were offered based upon the reading levels of the participants, and all participants were asked to read two books. Pre-determined questions were used in the pre and post interviews, and a scoring system was used to determine the results of the retellings. At the same time, behavior was observed as it naturally occurred. Rather than comparing reader's proficiency or lack of proficiency with fiction and nonfiction text from a subjective stance by only asking questions, observation and recording of the processes as they occurred was utilized. As Goodman, Watson & Burke, (1987) point out, "Much of miscue analysis is on a continuum closer to naturalistic research than to experimental studies" (pp. 8-9).

Research methodology that seeks to examine participant's perceptions and actions must find a means to access their beliefs and knowledge while at the same time, acknowledging an understanding of the world from their point of view (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While naturalistic inquiry rests on five axioms, the first axiom provides the larger share of guidance relative to this

study. The first axiom assumes that there are multiple interpretations of reality that cannot be understood separately from the social, cultural, and physical context in which they occur (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39). Each of these contexts constantly shape and are shaped by the other.

Application to This Study

The first axiom was applied to this study as it examined children's transactions with texts. Meaning was examined as it unfolded, thus situating reading as a process rather than a product. Understandings were constructed and divergent based upon the experiences of the participants as will be discussed in sections to follow.

Because participants in this study were not expected to interpret the texts from the same perspective and because the researcher has no wish to control the reading events, naturalist inquiry provides a responsive means for understanding multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This thinking stands of the shoulders of Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1978) which positions the construction of meaning in a text as a personal, lived-through quality; a reciprocal and generative relationship between the reader and the text. As such, the reader and meaning of a text are both constituted during a dynamic process as the reader applies, reorganizes, and revises her construction based upon her knowledge of language and past experiences. The transactional process between the knower and the known emerges as the reader assigns meaning to and draws meaning from the text, and that encounter will always be unique.

The researcher was able to capture this by looking at real-time oral reading processes of each participant and investigated retellings as a means of portraying resulting comprehension rather than through questioning. This was accomplished by using an assessment technique that employed a high degree of resemblance and synchrony to previous classroom assessment

experiences. This limits the fragility of the claim that the data collection process was not in keeping with a real-world situation (Lincoln & Guba, (1985).

Appropriate for descriptive studies and embedded in this research design is the inductive nature of data collection and analysis. Employing an inductive method, researchers seek out patterns of meaning or themes in their data, by looking at rather than past participants' words and actions, which in this study was embedded in the retellings, oral readings, and interviews. Spradley (1980) recommends analysis of themes to identify categories of understanding within and across data, while being mindful to focus on categories of meaning from the participants' perspective rather than the researcher's. It is essential during data collection and analysis for the researcher to be cognizant of possible bias and to approach the data with an open-mind toward actively learning new information while maintaining the integrity of the participants' construction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Research Methods

Setting

This research occurred in a K-5 elementary school in an urban/suburban neighborhood where I was the Supervisor of Literacy and Language Arts. In this role, I did not supervise nor evaluate potential participants. Each grade level contains 2-3 classrooms with approximately 25 students in each classroom. A total of 387 students attend this school; 197 students (51%) qualify for free or reduced lunch. All students are residents of the community in which they live. The school's ethnic diversity includes White (2%) and African American or Black (98%).

This setting is considered to be a limited-entry social situation (Spradley, 1980). That is, the subjects are in the school in the district in which I work, yet I needed the permission of the

principal, the classroom teachers of these students, and their parents or guardians to conduct my research.

Participants

The research proceeded in two phases. The first phase located parallel classrooms that employed common, everyday teaching routines. The second phase recruited students who met inclusion criteria detailed below. The following sections discuss each of these sets of participants.

Teachers

Informal interviews with second-grade teachers provided information to delineate the extent to which they incorporate nonfiction text, and preliminary considerations suggested that there were minimal recognizable differences. Prior to the distribution of this interview (Appendix A), the building principal was contacted and apprised that this request would be made. The investigator met with each teacher after school to discuss the request for the interview. I indicated that the purpose of my research was to discover the processes, understandings, and perceptions of readers as they engage with fiction and nonfiction text. The second-grade teachers were asked to respond to open-ended questions, which provided the interviewer with an opportunity to remain open to the responses of the teachers (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). This interview occurred after school.

The ten minute interview held in an out-of-school site convenient to each teacher determined which teachers not only make fiction and nonfiction text available, but also if teaching students how to successfully navigate nonfiction text as well as fiction text was valued and implemented. Two teachers were selected based upon the findings from the interview: both second-grade teachers made nonfiction text and fiction text available to students and said they

instructed using both text types. Although I work in this district, I do not evaluate any teachers in this district, nor do I have any input into their evaluations, therefore there was little risk that participating in the research might harm their employment. The completed interview was kept in the researcher's home office. The teachers were identified as T1 and T2.

Children

Using a purposive, convenience sample of children, the invited participants – three boys and three girls from each of two classrooms – were selected based upon several criteria. Children came from two different classrooms, both where nonfiction and fiction texts are used (as determined from teacher interviews). Selected students read above their current second-grade level, were not transient (attended this school since the beginning of the academic year), and were evenly divided between boys and girls. Students' reading level was obtained from both the Developmental Reading assessment administered by the school Literacy Coach and via demonstrable grade-level reading ability. Selecting participants, who have been in the same classroom since the beginning of the school year, without interruption, controls for instruction of genre types, and consistency of classroom climate. Gender was purposefully selected, so a comparison could be made across genders.

Ultimately, data from only eight of the 12 children was included in the study, with additional data collected to safeguard against participant absences or children who voluntarily withdrew. Data for two boys and two girls from each of the classrooms was randomly selected from the pool of children with complete data sets. This approach assured having adequate data, while providing an appropriate cap on the volume of data analyzed. In addition, participants were identified in data records by a unique identifier, because of the limited number of participants and, because of the researcher's acquaintance with many children in this school, there was no

master list linking identifiers to consent/assent forms. This was very important for reducing the potential that something I found out as a researcher would become known in the school and also reduced the potential for loss of confidentiality which is the greatest risk to the children and teachers.

Student recruitment and consenting procedures followed Internal Review Board Guidelines. A letter of invitation (Appendix B) was mailed to parents/guardians of all second-grade students. The letter invited them to allow their child to voluntarily participate at their child's school. The letter provided descriptions of the research activities and parents were invited to attend a session with their child where they learned more about the study. If they were willing to allow their child to participate, but could not attend this session, I contacted them by phone and they were able to obtain any information they desired about the study.

Parental consent procedures minimized potential for coercion. The principal investigator presented the consent form (Appendix C) along with verbal clarification to address any questions or concerns. After excusing the parents and un-consented children, the parents interested in their child participating were encouraged to ask questions. Parents/guardians were also asked to sign the Parental Permission/Research Informed Consent form (Appendix D). If more parents agreed than were needed for this study, I would have used a lottery process and draw names until the participant pools are filled. Signed consent forms were kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home office.

Likewise, the consent procedure for children minimized potential for coercion. I explained the assent form to the second grade boys and girls at the time of the first assessment. The assent outlined why they were invited, provided assurances of confidentiality, and explicated the voluntary nature of their participation and ability to discontinue at any time (Appendix E).

The principal investigator documented participants' oral assent at the first meeting with each child (Appendix E) and kept consent forms in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home office.

Data Collection

The data from eight children was included in the study, four from each selected classroom where fiction and nonfiction text were available. Since all participants completed all tasks, participants were randomly selected to be included in the findings of this study. The number of participants was limited because of the amount of data typically produced from miscue analysis, retellings, and interviews. Various data collection protocols were deployed and detailed descriptions will be discussed for each of these data-collection strategies.

Miscue Analysis

The Reading Miscue Inventory provided informed understandings about students' reading processes. This contrasts the de-contextualized measures of reading and comprehension garnered from standardized tests focusing on letter recognition, matching and blending letters and sounds, word identification, and oral reading fluency and recall with the intent of sorting and labeling readers categorically on a normal curve. (e.g., Iowa Tests of Basic Skills®, ITBS, DIBELS (2004). Typically readers, identified as placing in the lowest categories, are labeled as disabled and are subjected to drills of basic reading skills instruction including decoding letters and sounds. Claims to objectively assess such a complex process as reading using measures such as these are considered naive and oversimplified (Goodman, 1967; Goodman & Burke, 1972; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Drawing from empirical evidence occurring in a natural context would yield a more clear understanding of children's reading comprehending processes and resulting

comprehension of fiction and nonfiction text through observations of the processes they employ. Such evidence can be gleaned from the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI).

In my study, I used miscue analysis, which helped me make inferences about how readers constructed meaning as they read text. A "miscue" is defined in The Literacy Dictionary of the International Reading Association as "a deviation from text during oral reading or a shift in comprehension of a passage" and adds the important note “miscues are not random errors, but are attempts by the reader to make sense of the text.” For this reason, they “provide a rich source of information for analyzing language and reading development.” (Harris & Hodge,1995, p.155). The miscue inventory and the retelling provided insight into a child’s ability to use context to establish meaning, motivation to seek meaning, ability to self-correct, growth in developing fluency, and ability to read with fluency and expression.

Developed by Kenneth Goodman, miscue analysis has been used as a research instrument in studies involving children and adults (e.g., Paulson, 2000; Duckett, 2001) providing both qualitative and quantitative data. When analyzing the behaviors and strategies of readers, it was important to not only gather numerical data including numbers of words that have been read incorrectly or missed, but to also note the impact of the miscues on meaning. Miscue analysis allows rich qualitative description of readers’ proficiency, while also providing descriptive statistics that offer a snapshot of a reading (Paulson, 2000). Miscue analysis allows researchers to become consciously aware of the readers understanding of language and the process of reading in real-time and can be referred to as the reader’s ongoing comprehending process. Examining this process, Goodman, Watson, & Burke (1987) assert that miscues become an entry point through which discoveries can be made about the individual reader, the strategies used in the reading process, and the language cueing systems the reader controls.

A reader is supported in the utilization of the three-cueing systems. The first is the grapho-phonic cueing system or how a word looks and sounds (orthographically and phonologically), the syntactic cueing system or grammatical structures of the text (structure or organization of language), and the semantic/pragmatic cueing systems (meaning-filled relationships of words, phrases, and sentences within a text and how these are used by the social community) (Y. Goodman, Watson, and Burke, 1996).

An analysis of the oral readings occurred following the procedures in Goodman, Watson, & Burke, (1987). The strength of an informal assessment such as miscue analysis is the ability to derive specific clues about the particular set of strategies young reader's implement for gleaning meaning from text.

Each child provided two readings, each lasting 5-8 minutes during two different sessions, one to two days apart, from texts that were appropriate to their instructional level as determined by the Developmental Reading Assessment.

The students were told, prior to their reading, that they would be asked to retell the text after they read it. Each student orally read one fiction and one nonfiction text. I counter-balanced text order (fiction / nonfiction and nonfiction / fiction) across males and females. As readings occurred, readers were audio-taped and those were transcribed at a later date word for word. A knowledgeable colleague verified the reading transcription by listening to the tape and looking at the transcription. This provided additional opportunities to hear the readings multiple times and to be able to ensure an accurate transcription. This also provided an enhanced opportunity to revise and verify the recording of readers' miscues.

Procedures followed those routinely used by classroom teachers when they assess students' reading strategies using these techniques. As the students read their text, they received

no assistance. If they hesitated for more than 60 seconds they were encouraged to do whatever they do when they are reading alone and come to a word they don't know. This is an important piece of miscue analysis in that it gives the researcher crucial information of what readers do when they are reading alone (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1996).

Text Selection

Students read two texts, one fiction and one nonfiction, that met several criteria. The fiction texts were new to the reader with a clear beginning, middle, and end; the nonfiction text was also new to the reader and organized around specific information or major concepts. Both texts were long and challenging enough to produce a sufficient number of miscues for patterns to appear and they were written in language that supports readers (Y. Goodman, Watson, Burke, 1987). They were also equal in length to the greatest degree possible. The texts were difficult enough to challenge readers' strategy use, but not so difficult that they were unable to read independently. Thus, the texts were considered to be at the appropriate level.

Texts from the Pearson Learning Group were used. The reading levels of the subjects were determined by the Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) scores that were administered by the Literacy Coach. I provided texts which were matched to readers' capability. Each student was asked to read aloud from both a fiction and nonfiction text that corresponded to his/her instructional level as determined by the DRA.

The reading level of the fiction and nonfiction texts that were used in this study were congruent as the levels will be determined by Pearson Learning Group, which is the same company that produces the Developmental Reading Asssessment. In the case of both, the fiction and nonfiction texts, prior knowledge and interest level of the reader was not taken into consideration.

Retellings

So that comprehension of the fiction and nonfiction text could be assessed, each student provided a retelling after reading each text. Retelling provides a cogent, dynamic tool that offers insights into the cognitive processing involved in comprehension. A retelling can be used to examine the comprehension differences that may occur across nonfiction and fiction text. The retelling or account of what has been read was audio-taped and provided evidence of the reader's comprehension of the text. Retelling a story "provides powerful opportunities for readers to relive, rehearse, modify, and integrate their interpretations of the author's messages into their own reality-in other words, the opportunity to enhance the construction of meaning" (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987, p. 44). It also served as a measure of comprehension of the texts read. A retelling provided insights into the breadth and depth of a reader's understanding of a story or nonfiction text and indicated how and if the readers are utilizing strategies including making inferences about what they have read. The Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) retelling guide was used to record the retelling following an oral reading assessment.

The retelling guide maps the child's retelling onto an original version of the text to see both the quality and quantity of information recalled. Just & Carpenter (1984) concur that using retellings of texts provides information about what children comprehend. Retellings have been used to study children's understanding of story grammar (Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Stein & Glenn, 1979), their understanding of motives (Shannon, Kameenui, Baumann, 1988) and the use of certain cohesive text features (Pappas, 1987; Pappas & Brown, 1988; Sulzby, 1985).

A student's initial retelling took place with no prompts used to encourage a response. I did not provide any information or ask questions regarding the content of the story or the

nonfiction text that was read. Neither my body language nor facial expressions provided any indication that the student was right or wrong as he/she retold the text. After the initial retelling, I probed the student for information, if necessary, using open-ended questions that did not reveal any information about the story. For example, "You mentioned . . . Is there anything else you want to add?"

The following are the suggested retelling procedures, which were followed (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987, p. 49):

Avoid giving the reader information from the text.

Include in questions and comments only information introduced by the reader.

Don't rush yourself or the reader. Think through your questions and patiently wait for the reader's reply.

Make your directions and questions very clear and avoid giving more than one question at a time.

Don't take "I don't know" for an answer. Rephrase questions to get the information another way. At the same time, don't exhaust the reader with too great a focus on any one topic.

Let students develop a topic and reach their own conclusions before changing the subject.

Ask open-ended questions. Questions that can be answered with a yes or no or with single words often limit the reader's presentation potential.

Retain any non-words or name changes given by the reader.

Each text requires a retelling guide developed specifically for this research. The Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) retelling outline protocol was followed in developing retelling guides for each of the pieces of literature selected. Given that a comparison was made between the fiction and nonfiction reading, the retelling guide offered a

sound organizational structure to that end. The fiction retelling protocol was based on a 100-point scale and included character recall and development and content including theme, plot, events, and subtleties. Each nonfiction retelling protocol (one per text) was developed noting references to specific information, generalizations, and major concepts. The use of textual evidence and prior knowledge to draw inferences, and generating original conclusions was noted. This was also based on a 100-point scale.

These protocols provided an outline of the selections in order to follow the reader's retelling and to collect anecdotal information about the retelling. They were useful in developing appropriate questioning during the student's retelling.

I read each selection thoroughly to have a clear understanding of the texts being read by the children. Doing so not only assisted me in the construction of the guide, but also scaffolded my ability to ask relevant questions of the student. Based on this reading, I developed a list of events for each fiction and a list of information for each nonfiction text.

The guides for the fiction and nonfiction texts were validated using teachers engaged in literacy work. Groups of five literacy coaches were asked to participate in a two-stage process. First, each individual read one of the texts. Then they were given the list for that text developed by the investigator. This included information for each category for fiction text. They then independently rated the level of importance of information in each category by ranking the information on a scale of one to three, with the rank of three being most significant and one being least significant. Second, in groups, each person then listed any inferences and the text data that supported them. This information was compared among each group of literacy coaches, who collectively determined the ranking for each item. Having knowledgeable peers help in

creating these guides ensured reliable and valid scores and ensured that the scores from each text were comparable across texts (see Appendices M-R).

As I utilized retellings, it is important to note that Pappas (1991) and Sulzby (1985) have suggested that researchers be aware that reader retellings may be influenced by the social context of the reader. I have described in a previous section, rigorous naturalistic inquiry incorporates a means of managing and regulating the researcher's influence on the settings and on the explanation of events. My study addressed the participants while they were at their home school thus the context was familiar and normal to them. Additionally, they were involved in data collection processes with which they were familiar from past experiences, as they were also utilized as classroom assessment tools.

Reader Interviews

Prior to reading the first text, the participants were informally interviewed with the reader interview. This provided information regarding the student's attitudes about reading and the reading process (Goodman, Watson, Burke, 1987, Appendix F). This protocol has been used in research to show readers' metalinguistic knowledge about reading and the impact each model of reading instruction has on readers' beliefs about reading and on how they read (Harste & Burke, 1977). Participant's perceptions of their readings of fiction and nonfiction text were drawn from the reader interview. It provided additional insights into how and why readers navigate fiction and nonfiction texts in the ways that they do.

Using the reader interview the researcher sought to find out student's perspectives about genres, how books are selected, and tastes and preferences regarding various genres. Additionally, students may articulate self-awareness of strengths as a reader and how he/she helps his/herself as a reader. With respect to engaging students in an interview, Schensul,

Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) assert that, "[a]n in-depth interview is a special kind of conversation" (p.135). Involving students in this type of discourse should mirror everyday conversation and uncover their thinking. It allows the participant's voice to be heard and not be over-shadowed by the researcher's thinking and words (Merriman, 1998).

Subsequent to the reading of each text, the participants were interviewed once again. A second interview drew information using a specific set of questions about perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text. While I may have observed something I considered to be important happening during data collection, my interpretation of the event may not convey what a participant meant. The interviews served to elaborate on emerging conjectures during the retelling.

I was interested in hearing comments, reflections, and explanations as to why students read and retold in specific ways (Appendix G). Questions for the interviews gave greater control to the respondents (Reissman, 1993) as they provided a frame for responding. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed at a later time. By transcribing the audio-tapes, I captured all necessary information.

Field Notes

As a student was reading and retelling the story, I took field notes as I observed the participants during the data-collection process. This aided me in paying attention to details that occurred while the participants were engaged in miscue analysis or the interviews. These served as a record of my observations of participants using an abbreviated accounting such as single words or phrases. For example, if they indicated any facial expressions, body language, or oral comments, I wrote these observations on the retelling and interview protocols and the typescript

that accompanied the miscue analysis. Soon after the participants provided this information, I added to the field notes creating what Spradley (1980) refers to as an expanded account.

I did this keeping in mind the underpinnings of language identification, verbatim and concrete principles (Spradley, 1980). Language identification refers to the notion that all language used as entries must be identified and set apart so as to make the speaker recognizable. I adhered to the verbatim principle to ensure that the language used by the participants did not become distorted or misunderstood and distinguished between the participant's and observer's language. Finally, utilizing concrete verbs and nouns provided the researcher with distinct language from which to draw an expanded account. Focusing on separating concrete language from language that creates generalizations substantiated my study.

Researcher Journal

As the primary research tool in this study, it was essential to take heed of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) articulation of the nature of the knower and the known. As an insider to this research, I needed to reduce bias. To that end, I documented research logistics, preliminary findings and conjectures, values, and the impact the research may have had on me as it unfolded, as well as the potential impact I may have had on the research. I used this as a source to accurately represent the perspectives of the participants as the thoughts and ideas recorded in this journal offered fruitful sources of information (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999) while helping me maintain neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1980). This journal served to offer transparency into the research process.

Data Analysis

There were three sources of data in this study. They include: 1) the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987), 2) RMI retelling guides (Goodman,

Watson, & Burke, 1987), 3) the pre- and post-reader interviews.

Reading Miscue Inventory

The Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) offered a way of determining a reader's strengths, weaknesses, interests, and attitudes toward reading. It provided substantive data on how readers make meaning and brings to light difficulties a reader may experience when reading text, thereby offering meaningful insights into how a reader becomes successful. I performed an analysis of the reading behaviors of each participant using miscue analysis coding forms based on the Goodman Taxonomy of Reading Miscues (Goodman, 1973). Ultimately a taxonomy – or organization - emerged providing both word and sentence level data. This served as the outline and basis for writing my findings (Spradley, 1980).

While there are multiple procedures that are available, I used Procedure I miscue analysis (see Appendix H) and followed the work of earlier researchers (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987) which included word level coding and added sentence level coding. This procedure examined each miscue the reader made and the influence of the language systems. Numerical data from the miscue analysis provided information regarding the reader's use of reading strategies.

This was analyzed separately through questions concerning Syntactic Acceptability, Semantic Acceptability, Graphic Similarity, and Sound Similarity for each coded miscue (Goodman, et al., 1987). The relationships of the systems were analyzed to determine a reader's strengths and weaknesses and were noted under Meaning Construction and Grammatical Relationships on the coding form. Each miscue was listed on the coding form and analyzed, using the answers to the following questions (Goodman, Burke, Watson, 1987):

Semantic Acceptability - Does the miscue occur in a structure that is semantically acceptable in the reader's dialect (p.83)?

Syntactic Acceptability - Does the miscue occur in a structure that is syntactically acceptable in the reader's dialect? Semantic acceptability cannot be coded higher than syntactic acceptability (p.84).

Meaning Change - Does the miscue result in a change of meaning? This question is asked only if the miscues are both syntactically and semantically acceptable (p.89).

Correction - Is the miscue corrected? This examines the overt successful and unsuccessful self-correction attempts that reflect the reader's confirmation strategies (p.90-91).

Graphic Similarity - How much does the miscue look like the word (92)?

Sound Similarity - How much does the miscue sound like the expected response (p. 94)?

The oral reading was transcribed while listening to the audio-tape and the transcription was used to code the miscues. This yielded percentage scores reflecting the cueing systems that the reader made use of while he/she was reading, presenting a profile of the reader. This information provided a "window on the reader's selection and use of strategies" (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987, p.103). As a result of the analysis, patterns emerged. Two colleagues, familiar with this process and I served as raters who established inter-rater reliability. We listened to each audiotape independently and then completed the miscue analysis coding form. In order to establish inter-rater reliability, scoring of each item was analyzed by the two raters and the researcher's so that each one could be compared across raters.

Retelling Analysis

Likewise, retelling analysis followed set procedures for using the Retelling Guide Procedure 1 (Goodman, Y., Watson, & Burke, 1987), audio-taped retellings were analyzed. Two

colleagues, both familiar with these procedures, independently scored the retellings. In a fiction retelling, 40 points can be allotted to the character analysis which will include naming characters and providing information related to the character in the context of the story. 60 points can be distributed for major and minor events, plot and theme. Nonfiction may distribute 40 points for specific information, 30 points for generalizations, and 30 points for major concepts. It should be taken into account that exact language used in the retelling guide does not have to be articulated by the participant and alternative, meaningful language is acceptable (Goodman, et.al, 1987). The two raters' and the researcher assigned values to the retelling and scoring was analyzed item-by-item. Final scores for each item used were those on which there was a two-thirds agreement as noted above. The percentages obtained from the retelling yielded results that provided information as to how much of the text the reader comprehended. For example, all sections of the retelling guides were compared across three raters. When two or more of the three raters agreed on each section of the guide, these scores were regarded reliable. Out of a total of 115 items rated across six guides, 114 of these items reached at least two-thirds agreement between raters, which gave a reliability of 99% for the retelling guide assessments. The scores for both the fiction and nonfiction texts were then compared. Comparisons included comparison of genders results, comparison across texts and relationships between miscues and retelling scores. Emerging patterns were noted from each retelling of the text.

Analysis of Interviews

The central forms of qualitative data collected included student interviews, along with field notes taken during readings, retellings, and interviews. These data were organized in order to discover patterns of behaviors observed and collected. Locating and following patterns in my data collection rested on the appropriate analysis of the data.

Rigor

Because there are two central types of analysis – that using a quantitative approach and the other associated with qualitative data, there are two forms of rigor built into the design and performance of the study. Miscue and retelling analysis depend in great measure on inter-rater reliability, as discussed above, while analysis of interviews and field notes depends on trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in a study brings about trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility can be accomplished through triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. The credibility of a study refers to how the researcher demonstrates data that is representative of the numerous constructions possible regarding the phenomenon and that reconstructions made by the researcher are "credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296). Credibility was accomplished through triangulation (of method and sources), peer debriefing, and member checks.

In order to ensure useful information to the researcher, it is critical that the collection of data is triangulated. I used multiple methods of data collection resulting in redundancy in the data. They included oral readings, retellings, and pre- and post-interviews occurring prior to and after reading each text. In addition, I took observational notes of students while they engaged in reading, retelling and interviews. It is important to use "multiple sources of data to make sure that if one data set or source proves to be unreliable or incomplete, others will suffice to provide the information needed to answer each research question posed" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 131). I was able to confirm the accuracy of the data obtained from one method with data collected from other methods (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Likewise, triangulation comes

from having multiple participants in each "cell" of the design, two girls and two boys in each of the classrooms, for instance.

For example, to establish redundancy for reading processes in fiction and nonfiction text, I used the data from miscue analysis, the retelling, the post-interview, and my field notes. Redundancy for comprehension was established using the retelling, and post-interview for fiction and nonfiction text. Redundancy for students' perceptions of themselves as readers and of their instruction was established in the pre- and post-interviews for each text type. Redundancy for sources was demonstrated as two girls from Teacher 1's class and two boys from Teacher 2's class read nonfiction and then fiction text and two boys from Teacher 1's class and two girls from Teacher 2's class read fiction text and then nonfiction. The observational notes provided additional information as one other source of information to uncover similar issues or domains.

Peer debriefing was crucial in this study as knowledgeable colleagues played the "devil's advocate" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.308). In establishing trustworthiness, I discussed my findings with my advisor and another colleague in the field of reading education to determine if there were inconsistencies or errors in my interpretations of findings. This allowed me to explore "aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985. p. 308). Peer debriefing sessions occurred one time per week or every other week depending upon the pace of data collection; for instance, how many students were available for data collection per session.

Member checks performed in the pre- and post-interview provided opportunities for interaction with each participant, around emerging findings. Here "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions were tested with members of those stake holding groups from which the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 310). As I collected data, I

could have seen or heard something significant during data collection, and my immediate interpretations may or may not have supported the information the subject was conveying. The post-interviews served to confirm or disconfirm my initial interpretations of events during the data collection process.

In order to ensure transferability, the researcher must address both the phenomenon under study as well as the research process designed to study it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability cannot be determined by the researcher, but must come from readers being persuaded that my study site parallels another target site. This can only occur if the researcher can "provide the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). As a researcher, one must be cognizant of the way the researcher accounts for the data reconstruction. It was my responsibility as a researcher to provide the information to make transferability possible. After careful analysis of all the data, I provided findings and interpretations. To demonstrate dependability, the researcher "seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability *and* factors of phenomenal or design induced change" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 299).

An audit check of the qualitative research analysis was performed by the methodologist on my committee and established confirmability. My audit trail included consistent references to data sources:

Raw data such as audiotapes and the retelling analysis.

Data reduction and analysis products such as my written research journal, condensed observation notes, domain and taxonomic analysis worksheets, concepts, and hunches.

Data reconstruction and synthesis products such as themes, definitions, my findings and conclusions, and a final report, with connections to the existing literature and an integration of concepts, relationships, and interpretations.

Materials relating to intentions and dispositions such as personal notes and expectations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.319-320).

Thus, for this study trustworthiness establishes confidence in the truth value of the findings, principally underpins research rigor and consistency of findings, while minimizing the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Based on the design, this study demonstrated rigor through inter-rater reliability for quantitative data and credibility, via triangulation, peer review and member checks, transferability, confirmability, and dependability for the qualitative data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I present the qualitative and the quantitative results for each of the research questions. The primary data are a result of 1) the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987), 2) RMI retelling guides (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987), 3) the pre- and post-reader interviews. Additional qualitative data has been determined by my field notes. The data analysis will provide answers to the questions regarding the second-grade participants,

1. What are the differences, if any, in their reading processes while reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text?
2. What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension after reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text? and
3. What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

For the statistical analysis of the data, performing a repeated measure MANOVA was considered; however, this parametric test could not be used because certain assumptions were not met. The samples were not random, predictions about how a particular statistic will perform or an assumption of equal distribution in repeated samples of equal size could not be made. In addition, use of parametric tests is based on the assumption that the sampling distribution is normal as long as the sample is big enough. In the case of this study, there was a small sample size and a lack of assurance that there would be normal distribution of the variables.

Therefore, an "exact test" to handle this low power was necessary, and the Mann-Whitney U Test was performed. This is a non-parametric test which makes no assumptions about

the distribution of the data. It ranks data rather than using their raw values to calculate the statistics. Further, looking at the descriptive data was necessary as the point was to describe what the data showed rather than making inferences based on the data, and also to simplify the large amounts of data in a clear and sensible format. Using a single indicator to describe a set of observations may result in a distortion of the data or loss of important features, therefore the results will be presented and discussed throughout the chapter.

Looking at Participants' Reading of Fiction and Nonfiction

Proficient readers utilize strategic actions to sustain processing while reading by coordinating different and varied opportunities to integrate visible and invisible information as discussed in chapter 2. For the purposes of this dissertation, the participants could be considered proficient in so far as they all read above their grade level as determined by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

The participants were assessed within two weeks prior to the onset of this study to determine their reading levels. These were determined by the DRA reading assessment, a product of the Pearson Company. All participants were assessed at independent reading levels that fell into the range of level 34 or level 38 (there is no level 36), which correspond to levels typical for third grade readers; therefore these participants could be considered reading above grade level. Five participants read at level 34 and three read at level 38.

Following the DRA procedures, students were provided books that were above these levels, or what would be considered their instructional levels. The text selections were leveled by Pearson, the company that produces the Developmental Reading Assessment, taking the following factors into consideration:

> … genre, content, themes, vocabulary and word choice, sentence length and complexity, print features such as length of texts, font size, and spacing, number of illustrations in fiction texts, organizational and graphic features such as headings, labels, diagrams, maps, flowcharts, and timelines in nonfiction texts (Pearson, 2005, p.11).

Table 2 details the participants and their independent reading levels as noted in the section with their name. The order of presentation of readers is arbitrary. Levels accompanying titles indicate the publisher's assigned reading levels of the books read for this study.

Table 2

Participants' Reading Levels, Fiction / Nonfiction Titles and Text Levels

	Alexis Level 34	Anika Level 38	Brionna Level 38	Brandi Level 34	Alan Level 34	Andrew Level 34	Bryce Level 34	Brandon Level 38
Fiction	All the Way Under Level 40	All the Way Under Level 40	Cry Foul Level 50	A Trip through Time Level 38	Cry Foul Level 50	All the Way Under Level 40	All the Way Under Level 40	Cry Foul Level 50
Nonfiction	The Navajo Way Level 38	A Pack of Wolves Level 40	A Pack of Wolves Level 40	Let's See Level 38	A Pack of Wolves Level 40	A Pack of Wolves Level 40	A Pack of Wolves Level 40	A Pack of Wolves Level 40

As mentioned, the DRA scores were obtained by the Literacy Coach and provided by the classroom teacher within two weeks prior to the miscue analysis. Based on these scores, the researcher offered potential fiction and nonfiction books to the students to read. A fiction book was offered one level above the reader's independent reading level. Participants were asked to read a portion of the beginning of a book. If the participant made less than 5 miscues after reading the first 100 words, I asked that the reader stop reading and another book in the same genre at an incrementally more difficult level was offered and the process was repeated until the participant made a minimum of 5 miscues but no more than ten miscues within the first 100

words. Given that each text was over 700 words in length, and taking into consideration that as one reads further into a text, fewer miscues are typically made, I needed to feel confident that at the end of each text, a minimum of 25 miscues would be produced, thereby providing a detailed description of not only the number of miscues, but more importantly, the pattern of miscues produced by the readers (Y. Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987). If this did not occur, I would have had to return on a different day and start the process again using different texts. That was unnecessary as a minimum of 25 miscues were produced during each reading of the selected texts.

To determine the nonfiction text level, I began by asking the participant to read a nonfiction text at the same level that was determined for the fiction reading. The text was designated as too difficult if the reader made more than 10 miscues within the first 100 words. In this case, the participant was asked to stop reading and another book in the same genre at an incrementally less difficult level was offered until the participant made a minimum of 5 miscues but no more than ten miscues within the first 100 words. As a result, four out of the eight participants, Anika, Brandi, Andrew, and Bryce, read a nonfiction text that was on the same level as the fiction text (Same Level) and four participants, including Alexis, Brionna, Alan, and Brandon were provided with a nonfiction text that was one level lower than the fiction text they read (Different Level). The need for a lower level nonfiction text could have been necessary because they may have had less experience with nonfiction text and/or due to the fact that the structure may have been less familiar to these students.

Text Comparisons

In order to clearly understand the representation of the following data, it is necessary to examine the texts the participants read to get a picture of how the text may have influenced any or all aspects of reading processes.

All The Way Under was the fiction text that four participants read. This text could be considered a typical fiction text in the sense that it contained the elements of a story (plot, characters, setting, conflict, resolution and theme). The first line served as the gateway to the storyline. It had very little picture support with three pictures incorporated in this seven page book. One picture was on the first page, a second picture was on the next to last page, and a final picture was on the last page. Three participants, Alexis, Andrew, and Bryce, who read this Level 40 fiction text, came to the session having current independent reading levels identified at Level 34. One participant, Anika, had a reading level identified as Level 38.

Brionna (Level 38), Alan (Level 34) and Brandon (Level 38) all read *Cry Foul*, a Level 50 book about boys playing basketball with a sub-theme of immigration difficulties. This book had a more difficult story line with only three pictures. The first picture was on page three and showed Ramon walking down the street bouncing a basketball. A second picture was on the sixth page depicting some boys playing basketball on a vacant lot in the city, and one was on the last page; the two main characters, one with his arm around the shoulder of the other one. This level was selected for these participants because upon reading the first page of lower level fiction texts, the participants did not make a sufficient amount of miscues and this warranted providing a book that would be difficult enough to demonstrate the students' use of strategies.

One student, Brandi (Level 34), read a Level 38 book entitled, *A Trip through Time*. This book offered a great deal of picture support with one picture next to each page of text for a total

of five pictures. The story line was about two children, who took a trip back in time during a visit with their grandparents.

Six out of eight participants, Anika (Level 38), Brionna (Level 38), Alan (Level 34), Andrew (Level 34), Bryce (Level 34) and Brandon (Level 38) read the nonfiction text entitled *A Pack of Wolves* (Level 40). This text offered picture support throughout. There were photographs on the same page as the text on five pages, a series of five photographs next to one full page of text, one page with only text and one page on which there was text and a map. Along with the photos, this text had headings for different sections, captions under each picture, and a map on the last page with a chart title and key, denoting which states protected wolves.

One participant, Alexis (Level 34), read the Level 38 nonfiction text, *The Navajo Way*. This text presented strong picture support on every page in the form of photographs; six pages with one photo plus text, five pages with multiple photos plus text, one page with a photo and no text, and text plus a map and key on another page. The final page depicted a graphic organizer with eight small photos. All but one picture had captions.

Brandi (Level 34) read a Level 38, nonfiction text, *Let's See*. This book had strong picture support. Each page but four had large, distinctive photographs. Two facing pages shared a labeled drawing, and one additional page had a labeled drawing. One page listed technical vocabulary in bold print with definitions of each word.

Comprehending – Reading Processes in Fiction and Nonfiction Text

A miscue analysis was completed for each genre read. Miscue analysis provides a comprehensive, qualitative description of how readers make sense of text, while also providing descriptive statistics that offer a snapshot of the processes readers utilize to do so.

Each participant was asked to read a fiction and nonfiction text and aspects of these readings were coded using the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI). Two knowledgeable peers also coded the RMI and values agreed upon by at least two out of three coders were assigned to the final coding form.

An aspect of reading of interest was the ease or difficulty of reading for students. One measure of reading ease is the number of miscues a reader makes. Therefore, miscues per hundred words (MPHW) were considered as well as the use of the cueing systems for each miscue. Additionally, I wanted to look at processes used during reading at the larger text level.

Miscues per Hundred Words

Determining miscues per hundred words (MPHW) for each of the readers provides a more equitable way to look at their miscues, given the texts were not all the same length or difficulty.

Overall, males and females combined made 2.78 more MPHW while reading nonfiction than during fiction reading. A test of this difference was significant for the one-tailed t-Test and approached significance for the two-tailed t-Test. Females made 3.75 fewer MPHW and males made 1.80 fewer MPHW during fiction reading than while reading nonfiction.

Of interest, and the beginning of an emerging pattern, was that the data showed that there was a greater difference in the average number of MPHW between female fiction and nonfiction reading and less of a difference between male fiction and nonfiction reading. This suggests that males were more able nonfiction readers than females and more consistent in their reading efforts of both genres (see Table 3).

Table 3

Comparison of MPHW between Fiction and Nonfiction

	Fiction	Nonfiction
Females	11.85	15.6
Males	11.2	13
Average	11.52	14.3

When looking at MPHW based on participants who read the same level texts (Figure 1) and different level texts (Figure 2), the data again showed that in each case, more MPHW were made during nonfiction (6.94) reading than fiction (5.79), except for Brandon who had slightly less MPHW during nonfiction reading (See Appendix K).

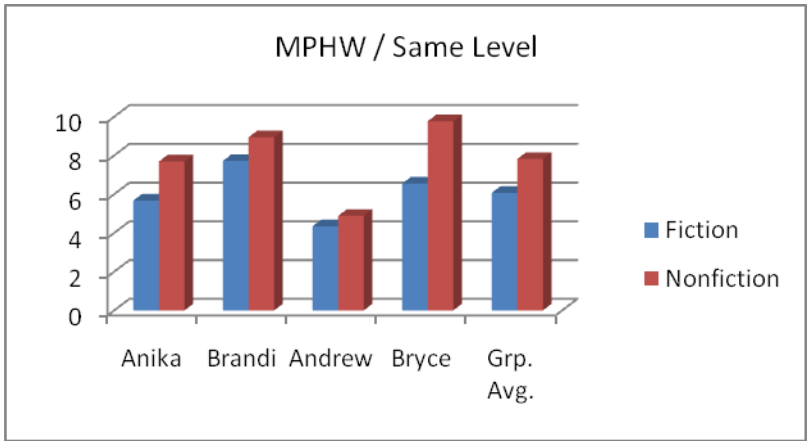


Figure 1: Comparing MPHW between Genres of Same Levels

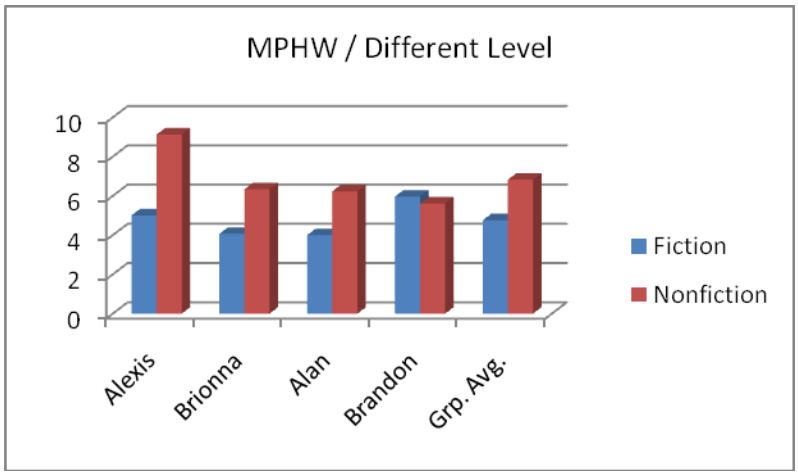


Figure 2: Comparing MPHW between Genres of Different Levels

When looking at a comparison of males and females who read same and different level texts, the data (see Table 4) show that when reading the same level text, the difference in the number of MPHW between fiction and nonfiction was similar for both boys and girls. It was also shown that females average more MPHW than males but the difference was not significant (See Appendix L).

Table 4

Comparison of Mean MPHW by Text Level by Genre

	Same Level			Different Level		
	Fiction	Nonfiction	Difference	Fiction	Nonfiction	Difference
Females	6.70	8.32	1.62	4.54	7.73	3.19
Males	5.45	7.33	1.88	4.99	5.93	0.94

However, the difference between fiction and nonfiction MPHW for females reading different level texts was three times greater than that of males, again showing a greater discrepancy between females and males with females demonstrating greater difficulty. Examples came from Alexis' reading of The Navajo Way, a nonfiction text of a different level in which she read the sentence *Navajo rugs have bold designs.* in this way - *Navajos hugs have blood destin.* The

sound of her voice markedly lowered as she reached the end of this sentence containing multiple miscues. The same held true as she produced a sentence with multiple miscues in another section. Here she read the sentence *Melted pitch is used for a glaze.* in this way – *Melt poetry is used as a glass.* Again while making multiple miscues she lowered her voice, but this time quizzically looked at me when she finished and then continued reading. In contrast, while reading her fiction text, she read with a confident, even toned voice as she made few miscues and often self-corrected when she did as in the sentence, *"I could always hurt (hunt - self-correction) for seashells, play in the sand or chase the birds."*

These results raise three questions. Could it be that more interaction with one text type over another influenced their reading? What part does prior knowledge play? Or could interest in one text type over another have influenced their reading? Future research may hold these answers.

While there were fewer MPHW for both males and females during fiction reading, the association that fiction reading was more successfully accomplished, should not be interpreted in such a simplistic manner. What is important is not the *number* of miscues; rather it is the *quality* of miscues that paints the picture of the reader and how he/she processes text (Y. Goodman, 1972). It bears noting that proficient reading may be indicated with a higher number of miscues that are semantically and syntactically acceptable. An example is the sentence *Later that day the lifeguard taught me how to put my head under water. as Later that day the lifeguard told me how to put my head under the water.* While a lower number of miscues that do not have syntactic and semantic acceptability, as *in the sentence, I noticed the lifeguard was still standing by.* being read as *I nort the lifeguard was still by*, may indicate a less proficient reader as can be ascertained through word level and sentence level analysis.

Sentence Level Processing

According to Goodman & Marek, (1996) readers are efficient when they can make changes within a sentence that do not interfere with meaning. They go on to say that readers are effective when they produce such patterns or make corrections when necessary, thus syntactically and semantically acceptable constructions indicate skillful reading. Sentence level processing includes analysis of syntactic and semantic acceptability and meaning maintenance. In sentences, acceptable syntactic structures can occur without having acceptable semantic structures.

Sentence level processing was assessed for each sentence. Percentages were determined assessing all sentences whether or not miscues were produced. This view portrays how the reader interacts with the text as a whole. At the sentence level, students demonstrated greater proficiency as they read fiction over nonfiction.

Students had higher percentages of syntactic and semantic acceptability in the fiction text, thus suggesting that they were more adept at producing syntactically and semantically acceptable constructions within the sentences in fiction text (see Table 5).

Table 5

Comparing Mean Percentages and Standard Deviation of Sentence Level Processes across Text Type

	Syntactically Acceptable	Semantically Acceptable	Meaning Maintenance
Fiction	80.79 (0.045)	72.6 (0.045)	71.9 (0.046)
Nonfiction	72.3 (0.075)	63.7 (0.087)	63.7 (0.082)

sig. < 0.05 (2 tailed)

These constructions support meaning, as they are grammatically sound. Meaning maintenance was also greater during fiction reading. Looking at the results of the Mann-

Whitney U Test shows the significance levels for the variable of text type. The sentence level variables showed statistical significance (See Appendix J).

Efficient and effective reading would seem to evoke a demeanor of confidence and poise, therefore it was interesting to observe the difference in behaviors as participants read the two genres, keeping in mind the readings occurred on two separate days. The actions of two males corresponded with their word level scores; nonfiction being weaker and fiction being the stronger of the two. For instance, the longer Bryce read his nonfiction text, the less straight he sat in his chair. He had to be reminded twice to sit up, rather than continue reading while slowly slouching downward. During his fiction reading, while not sitting perfectly straight, he slouched less and did not require re-direction from me. As Andrew read his nonfiction text, he appeared nervous as he continuously put his index finger into his mouth. He had to be asked repeatedly to please keep his finger out of his mouth so I could hear him read clearly. This was not the case to the same degree during his fiction reading. He began by putting his finger in his mouth, but did not continue once asked not to do so.

Alexis, on the other hand, appeared confident during both readings. She would look up at me frequently after reading three to four sentences, smile and continue reading. This occurred throughout her nonfiction and fiction readings; however her nonfiction scores were among the weakest of all participants.

When looking at the comparison of same (S) and different (D) text levels at the sentence level, in all areas the participants' percentages were higher when reading a lower level nonfiction text (see Table 6).

Table 6

Comparing Mean Percentages of Sentence Level Processes across Text Type and Text Level

	Avg Syntactic Acceptability		Avg Semantic Acceptability		Avg Meaning Maintenance	
	S	D	S	D	S	D
Fiction	79.49	81.88	73.82	71.39	72.95	70.97
Nonfiction	67.11	77.43	58.92	68.40	58.99	68.16
Difference	12.38	4.45	14.90	2.99	13.96	2.81

The percentages indicating difference highlight the impact of the level of text read and reveal that there was not much overall difference in the subjects across the fiction texts, but large differences across the nonfiction but these differences were not statistically significant (See Appendix K). Taken together these data showed that participants had greater success with fiction reading and reading a lower level nonfiction text. At the same time, even if more miscues were made, that does not mean they were reading less well if fewer miscues equate to poorer quality in particular with same level nonfiction than for different level nonfiction.

Word Level Processing

In word level processing, meaning construction and grammatical relationships are assessed. The quality of miscues and the effectiveness and efficiency of the reader is demonstrated through measures of meaning construction, which is the primary goal and driving force of reading. Meaning construction is divided into three areas including no loss, partial loss, and loss. These areas are represented by the value of semantic acceptability, meaning change, and/or correction of a miscue. An example can be found in the Brandi's reading the word ***sled*** rather than ***sleigh*** in the sentence *It looks like Santa's sleigh*. and when she corrected her reading of ***Where*** for *You're* in the sentence *"You're right," Rosa agreed*. In each case, meaning construction was supported. The grammatical relationships are divided into four categories

including strength, partial strength, overcorrection, and weakness. These categories are represented by the syntactic acceptability, semantic acceptability and/or the correction of a miscue (see Appendix J).

The Word Level table (Table 7) shows that students were less effective and efficient while reading nonfiction, shown by difference in meaning construction and grammatical strength during fiction reading.

Table 7

Word Level Mean Percentage of Meaning Construction and Grammatical Relationships for Fiction and Nonfiction

	Meaning Construction	Grammatical Relationships
	No Loss (NL)	Grammatical Strength (GS)
Fiction	42.6	38.7
Nonfiction	27.6	25.6

When grouping the variable of text type, the Mann-Whitney U Test showed that there was a statistically significant difference for no loss of meaning ($U=7.0$, $p<.05$) and grammatical strength ($U=11$, $p<.05$).

To develop the analysis on a deeper level, I divided the word level analysis of the average of miscued words from each section into thirds to establish more specific patterns of miscues (Table 8). In keeping with the notion that as children read more and more of a text; they develop more efficient use of the cues presented and utilization of graphics decreases, most participants showed less loss of meaning as they moved from the middle part of the text to the last third of their fiction reading which is typical (Goodman & Burke, 1967). Only Brionna showed more loss and Brandon showed no change from the middle to the end.

Table 8

Percentage of Comparison of Meaning Loss and Grammatical Weakness from First Third to Second Third to Final Third of Students Who Read the Same / Different Level Texts

Same		Anika		Andrew		Brandi		Bryce	
		F	NF	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF
Meaning Loss	1st	8.8	20.3	13.6	17.0	12.2	21.2	28.1	12.8
	2nd	27.9	13.5	35.6	2.1	15.9	24.2	27.0	27.7
	3rd	5.9	43.2	15.3	36.2	13.4	27.3	6.7	28.7
Grammatical Weakness	1st	6.5	10.8	10.2	10.6	7.3	12.1	15.7	6.4
	2nd	18.2	6.8	20.3	17.0	7.3	12.1	15.7	12.8
	3rd	6.5	35.1	15.3	25.5	7.3	9.1	3.4	10.6

Different		Alexis		Alan		Brionna		Brandon	
		F	NF	F	NF	F	NF	F	NF
Meaning Loss	1st	10.3	21.5	29.5	11.7	29.0	16.4	22.0	16.7
	2nd	19.1	33.8	24.6	18.3	17.7	18.0	19.8	14.8
	3rd	14.7	21.5	14.8	43.3	25.8	24.6	19.8	44.4
Grammatical Weakness	1st	7.4	23.1	9.8	1.7	11.3	8.2	13.2	11.1
	2nd	2.9	29.2	11.5	8.3	8.1	13.1	8.8	7.4
	3rd	7.4	23.1	9.8	20.0	3.2	9.8	14.3	27.8

Nonfiction reading produced a different picture. All participants except Alexis had greater loss of meaning in the last third of their nonfiction reading from their second third. This may signify a decreased ability to make meaning in this genre. For some, the text may have been

too difficult and they may have given up. Difficulty of the text may have been expressed when about half-way through his nonfiction reading, Brandon began yawning and continued yawning until the end. His scores from his second to his last section of his book demonstrated the greatest difference in meaning loss corresponding to his apparent waning stamina, loss of interest, or boredom with a text with which he had difficulty reading.

A comparison of word level data of texts read at the same and different levels was made. There was greater construction of meaning and grammatical strength during fiction reading when same levels were read. In nonfiction reading, meaning construction was about the same in both levels, with grammatical strength slightly higher when different levels were read (see Table 9).

Table 9

Mean Percentage of Meaning Construction and Grammatical Strength Comparing Text Levels at the Word Level – Fiction and Nonfiction Text Level Data

	Meaning Construction		Grammatical Strength	
Levels	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction
Same	47.5	27.0	44.3	23.8
Different	37.6	28.3	33.1	27.4

Meaning construction was stronger for fiction when making a comparison between fiction and nonfiction at the same and different levels, as was grammatical strength. While this may be a result of the text structure being more complex and/or unfamiliar or lack of background knowledge or related to the specific text read in each case; this requires further investigation as it raises the question as to why when bumped down a level there is still a disparity while reading nonfiction text.

Corrections

Self-correction offers additional insight into this dynamic process as appropriate correction depends upon ongoing comprehension. It is one indication of a reader's ability to determine if meaning has been compromised and how to get back on course. Proficient readers do not necessarily correct each miscue; they may silently correct, or they may ignore miscues clustered within a phrase. Self-corrections are related to miscue quality and offer insights into the reader's ability to utilize the confirming strategy. Self-corrections in this case are based upon the successful correction of a miscue indicating that the student can use the cueing systems to make the correction. Once Alan completed the following sentence in which he produced the miscue royal, he went back and self-corrected: *(Wolves are very royal / loyal* [self-correction] *and caring for each other.)*

On average, participants demonstrated a higher number of self-corrections (6.9 pts.) (Table 10), while reading fiction than nonfiction. This would not only lead to greater syntactic and semantic acceptability, but once again indicates a greater proficiency with fiction genre.

Table 10

Mean Percentages of Self-corrections by Text Type by Same/Different Levels

Genre	Total Group	Level Same	Level Different
Fiction	19.4	18.0	20.8
Nonfiction	12.5	9.8	15.3

Greater proficiency with fiction was demonstrated regardless of the text level in either genre. The greatest difference occurred between fiction and nonfiction self-corrections when both genres were of the same level, possibly indicating that when reading nonfiction text, participants are better able to facilitate understanding when provided with a lower level text. An example

can be seen in sentence 15 of the nonfiction text, *A Pack of Wolves*. Both Brionna and Anika miscued the word *climate.* Brionna, who read a different level, was able to self-correct, while Anika, who read the same level was not. The same held true for both participants regarding the word *patrol* in sentence 27 in the same text, with Brionna able to self-correct once again, but not Anika.

This also raises the question of why did these participants self-correct more during fiction reading? Could it be because they are better readers of fiction due to greater exposure, prior knowledge, or interest? In each case, participants self-corrected more during fiction reading, with girls correcting more as will be shown in the section on gender.

Gender

Sentence Level Processing

While there were no areas that showed statistical significance according to the Mann-Whitney U Test, in the case of these readings overall, except for the area of semantics and MPHW, where the differences were slightly in favor of males, females scored slightly higher than or equal to males (See Appendix L) in each sentence level category while reading fiction text (see Table 11).

Table 11

Mann-Whitney U and Exact Sig. (2 tailed) Using the Grouping Variable of Gender

	No Loss	Grammatical Strength	Graphics	Syntax	Semantics	Meaning Maintenance	Retell	MPHW
Mann-Whitney U	22.00	25.00	27.00	25.00	29.00	28.50	24.50	22.00
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	0.328	0.505	0.645	0.505	0.779	0.744	0.457	0.328

The fact that there may be no significant differences in fiction reading could be due to the fact that with only 4 students in each category, there is not enough of a spread of rank to show differences. Compared to males, in fiction reading, females produced more syntactically acceptable sentences (3.4 pts.), semantically acceptable sentences (2.2 pts.), and maintained meaning more often (1.5 pts.).

While reading nonfiction, the results favored the females as well. Regarding syntactic acceptability, girls produced more acceptable sentences (2 pts), as well as more semantically acceptable sentences (7.1 pts.). However, boys had a slightly higher percentage of meaning maintenance (1.3 pts.) (see Table 12). There was also a large discrepancy between semantic acceptability and meaning maintenance for females (8.9 pts.) but they are about the same for males.

So although the girls were able to produce sentences that made sense, the boys more often produced sentences that maintained the intended meaning of the author. For example, in the text *A Pack of Wolves*, Alan read the sentence, *When they don't, the lead wolf growls or nips their necks,* he changed the word 'lead' to 'leader', thereby not changing the intended meaning. However when Brionna read the sentence, *They spit up chunks of food as the pups lick their mouths*, she read the word 'mouths' as 'mother' thereby changing the intended meaning that the pups lick the mouths of the members of the pack who all help to take care of them.

Table 12

Mean Percentages for Syntax, Semantics, and Meaning Maintenance by Text Type

Text Type	Data	Females	Males
Fiction	syntactic acceptability	82.5	79.1
	semantic acceptability	73.7	71.5
	meaning maintenance	72.6	71.1
Nonfiction	syntactic acceptability	73.3	71.3
	semantic acceptability	72.0	64.9
	meaning maintenance	63.1	64.4

Additionally, during fiction reading, Brandi read with greater proficiency than during nonfiction. While syntactic acceptability was slightly stronger during fiction reading (75.7%) than nonfiction (71.6%) at the sentence level, there was a drop in semantically acceptable sentences and meaning maintenance during nonfiction reading. She effectively constructed semantically acceptable sentences and maintained meaning while reading fiction but was less effective while reading nonfiction (Figure 3). For example, she read the sentence, *The fly in the top photo sees flowers as they appear in the bottom photo,* in this way – *The fly in the top tomato sees flowers as they a pear in the bottom of the potato.*

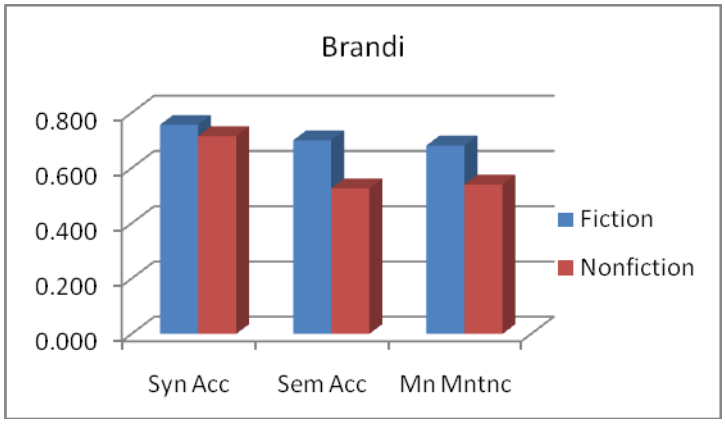


Figure 3: Brandi's Sentence Level Percentages

Brandi successfully corrected miscues only 8.8% of the time while reading nonfiction, indicating she was not effectively or efficiently using the confirming strategy; if she was not correcting silently, which was not probable given her low retelling scores (53%). Evidence of this is found in the miscues which resulted in a high loss of meaning score (72.7%) and a lower semantic score (52.7%).

Similarly, on the sentence level, Alexis demonstrated syntactic acceptability 84.6% of the time while reading fiction and 73.6% while reading nonfiction. Her sentences were 74.8% semantically acceptable during fiction reading as compared to 59.8% during nonfiction reading (Figure 4).

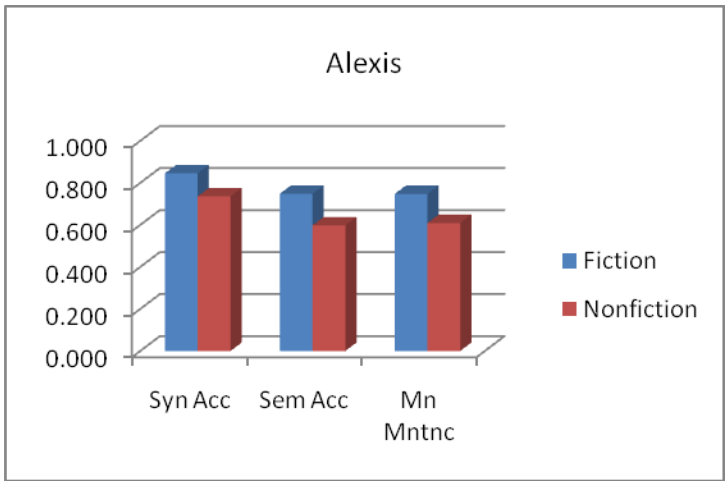


Figure 4. Alexis' Sentence Level Percentages

The differences in her scores in these categories were comparable to those of Brandi. While percentages do not always paint a clear picture, clarification came by way of noting that she tended to substitute non-words more often while reading nonfiction. Her particular choice of non-words indicated an understanding of syntax but did not provide specific meaning-making information. Occurrence of non-words provides evidence of readers' knowledge of the syntax of the language. An example is Brandi's substitution of the word 'uncled' for 'unclenched'. While the non-word does not necessarily assist in meaning-making, it may resemble the part of speech

necessary to fulfill the patterns and constraints of the sentence structure; thus indicating a recognition that that place in the sentence requires a particular part of speech in order to be grammatically correct. As she supplied this substitution, it was apparent that the meaning remained unclear to her as she repeated her substitution three times and used her index finger to point at it as she did so. She only pointed at a word one other time, and that was when she produced a miscue later in her reading of the same text.

The data show that the difference between semantic acceptability and meaning maintenance for females in nonfiction indicates that females were producing sentences that made sense but did not maintain the author's intended meaning. The males, however, had similar scores on both of these measures. So while one would expect females to be higher than males with nonfiction as they were quite a bit higher with fiction, what is notable, and in keeping with a common theme that emerged, is that females show a slightly larger difference in meaning maintenance between their fiction and nonfiction reading than males.

Word Level Processing

Examining miscues at the word level, it appeared that the females had more success while reading fiction than nonfiction. Unlike at the sentence level, where there was not such a substantial difference in maintaining meaning between the two genres, females demonstrated a larger difference (9 pts.) in their ability to construct meaning between fiction and nonfiction at the word level. This was indicated by the 21.1 pt. greater meaning construction scores during fiction reading for females. Compared to males, females experienced 16.3 pt. more meaning construction during fiction reading (see Table 13), but, it is hard to say whether females are more effective at fiction reading or less effective at nonfiction reading than males, in particular when

the majority of females indicated that they found fiction easier and nonfiction more difficult to read, as will be discussed in a later section.

Table 13

Word Level Mean Percentages Comparing Meaning Construction (MC) and Grammatical Strength (GS) of Females and Males by Genre

Data	Females		Males	
	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction
Avg Meaning Construction	50.7	29.6	34.4	25.7
Avg Grammatical Strength	45.2	28.1	32.1	23.1

Using the variable of gender, differences were not statistically significant (see Appendix J).

Males were more consistent with less difference between their fiction and nonfiction readings, experiencing less of a decrease between the two genres in meaning construction. This was supported in statements coming from their reader interviews by two out of four males. (Reader interviews will be discussed in-depth later in this chapter.) Bryce stated that he had *"no problem"* reading either text. When asked if he had any problems reading either genre, Brandon indicated *"not that much."* Their female counterparts, on the other hand, had a different outcome. As noted, females demonstrated a 21.1 pt. difference, as evidenced by Brandi's greater loss of word meaning (30 pts.) during nonfiction reading supported by her comment that, *"I kept messing up on the words"* as well as Alexis' 32.8 pt. loss, and her comment when asked if either book presented a problem – "*Uh, like a little problem in that one"* while pointing to the nonfiction text. Males, on the other hand, showed an 8.7 pt. difference.

When looking at grammatical strength, girls demonstrated a marked difference (17.1 pts) between their fiction and nonfiction reading while males only showed a 9 pt. difference. Again,

there was a greater difference when comparing female's reading of each text type than with male's reading of the two genres, once more supporting the common theme emerging from the data that there were greater differences between females' reading than males' reading of these two genres.

Successful Self-Corrections

Self correction rates provide an opportunity to identify if and how well these students self-monitored while reading. Females and males self-corrected more while reading fiction text; with females self-correcting more than males while reading both fiction (8.8 pts.) and nonfiction (5.28 pts) (see Table 14).

Table 14

Mean Percentages of Self-Corrections by Gender and Genre

	Females	Males
Fiction	23.78	14.95
Nonfiction	15.18	9.9

Fewer corrections could be a result of reading beyond the miscue, gathering more information and, using that, constructing meaningful understandings while leaving the miscue uncorrected, or it could be due to lack of understanding. For example, Andrew self-corrected 1:24 miscues during nonfiction reading and his retelling score was 47%. With this low score, it may appear as though he was not reading ahead and gaining additional information. At the same time, his score may have been even lower if he did not read ahead. While it is not possible to make this determination at this time, studies of eye movements could shed light on this in future research.

There were lower rates of self-correction during nonfiction reading than during fiction reading for both males and females; thus supporting the data indicating more proficiency with

fiction than nonfiction text, or less need to correct as miscues that are high quality do not need correction. Further, as the data suggest, there was reason to self-correct given low no loss and meaning maintenance percentages. Alan, Anika, Bryce, and Brionna self-corrected to almost the same degree while reading fiction and nonfiction text although they each stated that they considered one genre more difficult than the other (see Table 15).

Table 15

Ratio of Self-Correction Rates per Participant by Genre

Genre	Alan	Alexis	Andrew	Anika	Bryce	Brandon	Brionna	Brandi
Fiction	1:8	1:4	1:8	1:6	1:10	1:6	1:7	1:5
Nonfiction	1:10	1:8	1:24	1:8	1:9	1:10	1:5	1:12

Alexis and Brandon also had similar rates. Andrew and Brandi showed a significantly greater spread between their self-correction rates, with Andrew's being a 16 pt. difference. Only Brionna and Bryce self-corrected at a better rate during nonfiction reading. These scores correlate to Brionna's ability to maintain meaning to a greater extent during nonfiction reading; however, it did not correlate in this way to Bryce's meaning maintenance score. This may be the case for Bryce because his nonfiction text was the same level as his fiction text and may have been too difficult for him.

Answer to Question Number 1

In answer to question number one regarding the second grade participants: What differences, if any, occur in the reading processes while reading fiction and nonfiction text? A key finding that surfaced was regarding the differences expressed by genders related to consistency and inconsistency while reading these two text types. These males exhibited more

consistency among their readings of each genre, while these females had less consistency while reading the two text types and demonstrated less proficiency with nonfiction reading.

In addition, participants read fiction with greater proficiency than nonfiction text, and there were distinctive differences as participants read each genre. Although readers engage in complex and strategic actions in response to the demands of the text they are reading, these actions cannot be seen, but that they are or are not occurring can be informed by evidence of reading behaviors. These differences were exhibited as the participants utilized and integrated the various language cueing systems with greater efficiency and effectiveness during fiction reading. In addition, during fiction reading, females used appropriate grammatical structures more often and meaning was established and maintained with greater frequency.

Differences were also apparent in the comparison of corrections made while reading each genre. The pattern of more self-corrections occurring during fiction reading indicates a more fluid processing of this text type, scaffolding the self-correction process. It is also an indication that participants were engaged more in monitoring whether text made sense, sounded right, and looked right. As stated in the literature, participants' previous experiences with texts will influence how they process text (Moll, 1992), therefore greater proficiency while reading fiction may be an indication that, prior to this study, participants engaged with fiction text to a greater degree.

Differences occurred in the production of MPHW. Females made more semantically unacceptable miscues than males during nonfiction reading. Both genders made more MPHW during nonfiction reading than during fiction.

Additional differences occurred between males and females in meaning maintenance and meaning construction with males doing better than females and males having less of a decrease

from fiction to nonfiction. It is of further interest to note that accuracy is the area in which females were apt to do well in their reading as shown in higher grammatical scores and more corrections, rather than in meaning maintenance. Overall, all participants had more difficulty with nonfiction, but in the case of these participants reading these books, males had more consistent scores between the genres.

Comprehension in Fiction and Nonfiction Text

Oral retellings are an effective means of determining, depending on the text type, what the reader has recalled, the readers' understanding of text characteristics, and a sense of organization of the text by way of a recounting of the story/information within the text a student has read. A retelling is a gauge of the comprehension that has taken place as a result of reading and the integration of schema of the world including beliefs, feelings, and attitudes (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 1987). It is a verbal reconstruction of meaning through the conduit of language. Based on a 100 point scale, the fiction guide was comprised of the following distribution of points: character analysis divided into recall (20 pts.) and development (20 pts.) and events (60 pts.) (see Appendix K). The nonfiction guide was also based on a 100 point scale with the following distribution of points: specific information (50 pts.), generalizations ((25 pts.) and major concepts (25 pts.). If made, inferences were also noted (see Appendix L). Both retelling guides reflected those suggested by Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987.

Comparison of Comprehension of Fiction versus Nonfiction Text

Comprehension proved to be greater in fiction reading than nonfiction reading. Participants demonstrated a 24.5 pt. higher level of comprehension of fiction text based on their retellings (see Table 16), which is consistent with the sentence level scores and the miscue level scores. There was no statistically significant difference indicated on the Mann-Whitney U Test

regarding overall total retelling scores for gender (U=24.5, p<.05) or level (U=24, p<.05), but there was for text type (U=6, p>.05).

Table 16

Percentage Retelling Score per Student by Text Type

	Alan	Andrew	Brandon	Bryce	Alexis	Anika	Brandi	Brionna	Avg
Fiction	53	85	72	80	90	80	94	83	79.63
Nonfiction	59	47	45	78	30	53	53	76	55.12

Gender

Female participants had higher retelling scores after reading fiction text than males by 14.3 pts (see Table 17).

Table 17

Retellings – Mean Percentage of Males Compared to Females by Genre

	Males	Females
Fiction	72.5	86.8
Nonfiction	57.2	53.0

On the other hand, males had slightly higher retelling scores than females while reading nonfiction text (4.25 pts.); it should be noted that males had many more points in major concepts for nonfiction (65 vs. 37) indicating a deeper understanding. For example, Bryce demonstrating his understanding of the concept that wolves play a part in sustaining the balance of nature, stated in two separate sentences in his retelling, *"Keep them safe because they give and if you're killing wolves then you're actually killing the earth."* and "*And if you destroy the trees, you're destroying their habitat so they won't be able to live anymore if you keep cutting down trees."* Further, females had a 33.75 point difference between fiction and nonfiction and males had only a 15.3 point difference. This again suggests that females had more difficulty with the nonfiction text than the males as compared with fiction reading. Additionally, it points to the larger

difference between female transactions with fiction and nonfiction than males as seen in semantic and syntactic acceptability percentages. Finally and more importantly, is the point that female scores were so much higher in fiction that this would lead one to assume they would have had higher nonfiction scores as well, but this was not the case.

For example, Alexis produced a successful retelling of the fiction text she read, *All the Way Under,* providing a cohesive rendering of the story. Additionally, she provided a detailed character analysis, including this excerpt regarding Sonya, *"Well she went to the beach with them, but she was really afraid to go in the water but she didn't want anybody to know so she just pretended it was OK."* In addition, she was able to relate most of the important events that occurred.

In comparison, the nonfiction retelling of Alexis was less complete. She related only the information that seemed to parallel what may have been familiar to her and her lifestyle. After reading *The Navajo Way*, her retelling was made up of repeated information including, *"Well they melted coins to make necklace bracelets and belts. They made up dances and songs."* She then reiterated, *"They make well you know how we make bracelets and necklaces . . . they did that and then they make up dances and we do that and songs and we do that."* She also included *"They ate at the mall."* Alexis consistently referred to the jewelry the Navajo people made, but never brought up basket weaving, weaving rugs or making pottery. An indication that she missed the concept of living on a reservation was evident by the omission of reference to living on a reservation in her retelling and leaving the miscued word 'reservation' uncorrected. Additionally, she did not include information about the Navajo men who served as Marine code breakers. The differences between her nonfiction retelling and fiction retelling were reflective of her RMI scores, which were weaker during nonfiction reading than fiction reading.

Bryce, on the other hand, did not have as great a disparity, with only a 2 pt. difference between his fiction and nonfiction retelling. He provided detailed information from both texts. He included this excerpt from his fiction retelling:

> The lifeguard, she believed she could swim, and that, so she tried. The lifeguard taught her to, wait let me think, the lifeguard taught her how to put her head under water, and her friend, her cousin, her friend taught her how to, taught her how to, surf the waves.

And from his nonfiction retelling he included this excerpt:

> I remember that in the book, that wolves travel in packs and the smell is fantastic, and that they can see mice underground, and they can see a rabbit a mile away trying to hide from the wolf, and that they all travel in packs, and in their house they warn other, other um other wolves to to um stay back, and they can eat up to one pound of meat, and they eat again about another pound of meat, and the they have each other, and then they have attacks, and in the wintertime, I mean the summertime it's easy for them to hunt, so then they have, so when they have, so like they come by themselves and they find mice and rabbits and then they eat them.

His score of 80% on his fiction retelling represented a sequential articulation of ideas and events. His nonfiction retelling was based upon a complete recounting of information organized around key text elements and for which he achieved a score of 78%. These scores serve to underscore the finding that there was less of a difference between males' interaction with nonfiction text than there was with females.

Like Alexis, Brandi also offered a comprehensive fiction retelling with a score of 94%. She included specific details about what she read and displayed a good sense of story grammar. Brandi also exhibited a substantial difference (41pts.) in her ability to comprehend fiction and nonfiction text. An excerpt from her fiction retelling follows in which she shared all of this information before stopping:

> Their dad dropped them off and they decided when and the grandma and grandpa started waving and then they said that do you have any video games that they can play and then they asked and then the grandpa said no and they said that's OK we can get on the computer game. And they said we don't have a computer. And they they said that's OK we can just watch TV and so they the grandma had looked sadly and they said Don't tell me you don't have a computer neither I mean TV neither and they didn't so they went behind she the um they went behind the house and they saw the shed and and opened the door and they saw the sled inside of it and they um they got in the sled and they had um and then they both got on it and Rose had pulled a metal thing from the thing and um it took them to 1620 and then when they got back when they wanted to go home it took them to another place and they did a play and then when they did it a third time they went back home and then they grandpa went lookin' for them and then he found them.

Brandi's lower score on her nonfiction retelling coincided with her RMI in which she maintained meaning in her nonfiction reading about half the time. Brandi included about half of the specific nonfiction points, and while articulating generalizations, she could synthesize and retell only one out of four major concepts. The factors of content and features may have influenced lower retelling scores for both girls.

In contrast, Alan's retelling scores were very similar; with his fiction retelling score 53 pts. as compared to his nonfiction score of 59 pts. He was able to retell about half of the events of the story, and included details to support those events when prompted. He had a sense of story grammar as indicated in the progression of events he related. He did not talk about the notion that the character Joseph didn't call fouls on any players, because he was afraid to upset anyone, and didn't relate the idea that he and his mother came here from another country. With respect to this nonfiction text, Alan included some specific information, but he also included details unrelated to the story as seen in this quote, *"Cause he might have lived in Antarctica and they*

don't have rims there. It's always cold and they don't have any sun there, and it's always winter." He was only able to generalize and relate major concepts 50% of the time.

One case in point that I would like to mention is Brionna, who did not demonstrate the same level of difference between her fiction and nonfiction retellings as the other females. She provided a descriptive fiction retelling, including details of the events and had a good understanding of the characters. She construed that Joseph and his mother were in a difficult position, as they constantly had to worry about being sent back to Cuba. *This was noted in her statement, "The story in the beginning was about Joseph first moving from Cuba and um his it tells you right at the beginning of the story that his mom told him to be careful and not to upset anyone cause they gonna send him back to Cuba."* In her cohesive retelling, she also recounted details such as the final score of the basketball game – *"It ended out the next game 20-17 they won."*

Brionna was the only participant who showed greater meaning-making strength and less use of phonics while reading nonfiction. This translated into a solid nonfiction retelling. With one of the strongest nonfiction retellings of all participants, Brionna related 76% of the specific information and generalized information as well.

When comparing the retelling results of those participants who read same and different level texts, in both cases fiction retelling scores were higher than nonfiction. There was only a 5.3 pt. difference between same and different level nonfiction retellings. More interestingly, there was very little difference between the fiction and nonfiction scores for those reading the same levels (26.9 pts.) and different levels (22 pts.) although those reading a different level read a nonfiction text one level lower than those reading same level nonfiction (see Table 18). It is

not clear from this study why the nonfiction score of those reading a lower level text would not have been higher and presents a need for further investigation.

Table 18

Mean Percentage of Retelling Scores for Same / Different Text Levels by Genre

	Same	Different
Fiction	84.7	74.5
Nonfiction	57.8	52.5

Technical language may have been an additional influence on what was included and excluded from the retellings. There were words in *A Pack of Wolves* that were miscued by all participants including 'admired, mates, species, scarce, diseases, and predator.' In the case of only one participant was a detail from a sentence containing the miscued word 'scarce' included in a retelling. Also, sentences that followed immediately (1-3 sentences) did not contain details included in the retellings. In *The Navajo Way,* words like traditions, hogans, and harmony were miscued, and in *Let's See* words such as optic, image, retina, and scallop were miscued, but none were in a sentence from which details were included in the retelling. As discussed, sentences containing miscues are not necessarily misunderstood and do not necessarily impact comprehension negatively, but in the case of these nonfiction texts, technical vocabulary may have influenced lower nonfiction retelling scores.

While the language in the fiction texts was not laden with technical vocabulary, there were words that were miscued and uncorrected by more than one participant including 'uninviting' and 'regretted', in *All the Way Under*, and 'assured' and 'unclenched' in *Cry Foul.* However, that did not preclude the ability to produce meaning while reading the sentences that followed, as noted by the absence of miscues and presence of high quality miscues. Miscuing these words did not hinder developing an understanding of the texts as in each case; details were

included in the retelling from sentences immediately following. Brandon miscued 'assured in sentence 44, but included details based on sentence 44 and sentence 46 stating, *"Um because Marco he was like pushing him and stuff and that's how he caused that um little bump that looked like an egg."*

Another factor influencing comprehension lies in the ability to make inferences. Supporting the work of Narvaez (2002) whose studies suggest that the extent to which inferences are generated differs between fiction and nonfiction text in favor of fiction, in this study, five participants produced inferences that were expressed in their fiction retelling. Four read the text; *All the Way Under* and each inferred that Sonya was no longer afraid to go into the water at the end of the text although it was not stated explicitly. This can be seen in the following excerpt from Alexis' retelling:

Alexis - *"Then Kate or Sonya had her and Sonya learned how to do this stuff and she said can we go maybe tomorrow?*

Researcher – "So what does that tell you?"

Alexis – *"She like the water now."*

There were no inferences made based upon the nonfiction texts.

Visual support did not appear to play a key role in scaffolding comprehension. Nonfiction texts not only had more pictures per page, but a majority was photographs. When comparing the number of pages containing pictures, the average percentage of pages containing pictures in the nonfiction texts was 83.8% compared to 35.3% in fiction texts. The fiction texts, *Cry Foul* and *A Trip through Time* each had two sets of two consecutive pages with no picture support; yet retelling scores were higher than nonfiction for three out of four readers of fiction texts.

Answer to Question Number 2

In answer to question number two regarding second grade readers: What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension after reading fiction and nonfiction text? In all cases but one, participants showed greater levels of comprehension during fiction reading and five out of the eight participants showed a sizeable difference in their retelling of fiction compared to nonfiction, with fiction being higher, and this was distributed between males and females. Alan and Bryce showed consistency in their understanding of each text type, and to a lesser degree, Brionna. Interestingly, males showed less of a drop in scores between the two genres than females and only males were consistent (Alan and Bryce). This supports the miscue data suggesting that males were more successful with nonfiction reading than females. It further supports the theme that there was a greater difference in the performance of girls as compared to boys between fiction and nonfiction reading and comprehension.

Perceptions

Participant's Perceptions of their Reading of Fiction and Nonfiction Text

Data from many of the interview questions revealed information about how the participants' viewed reading, themselves as readers, and influences on their learning how to read. These answers provided information that answered question number three regarding second grade readers: What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

The participants were asked, in a pre-reading interview, to respond to an adaptation of the Burke Reading Inventory (1977). Interestingly, none of the participants made a distinction between fiction and nonfiction reading when answering the questions. When asked what they do when they come to a word they don't know (question 1), 87.5% of the readers responded that

they sound out words they don't know, with 50% indicating this as their only strategy. Comments by the participants indicated this strong focus on words rather than meaning as a primary strategy. When asked what they did to correct a specific word that I pointed out as one of their miscued words, the responses were very word focused. They included:

Alexis - "Because you have to look at the word."
Alan - "I read it over again."
Brandi – "I just kept looking at it and I tried to sound it out."
Brandon – "I sounded it out."

This was consistent with miscue analysis data, in particular for Alan who used graphic structures 82.7% of the time during fiction and 86.5% of the time during nonfiction reading. Brandi's miscue data also demonstrated use of graphic information 76.1% during fiction reading and 82.8% during nonfiction reading. Although to a lesser degree, Alexis had miscues that were graphically similar; 64.5% while reading fiction and 67.2% during nonfiction reading. Only Brandon's fiction reading did not correspond with his perception of sounding out as a main strategy as he used graphics less than half the time (49.4%) during fiction reading although his nonfiction usage was greater (67.4%).

Two participants did not indicate sounding out as a primary strategy, but stated skipping an unknown word, reading ahead and coming back to it. Brionna stated that both her mother and teacher taught her that strategy. She stated that that would also be the advice she would give to someone who came to a word they didn't know – *"I would tell them to skip the word that they didn't know and read over the rest of the sentences and then go back to the word when they understand the rest."* While she acknowledged reading ahead as a strategy, she did not enact it while she read either text. When probed for further information, Andrew stated that he also skipped unknown words as an additional strategy - *"I skipped it and read ahead and then I knew*

what it was." This awareness of an alternative way to figure out words was not demonstrated in his fiction or his nonfiction reading.

Anika and Bryce added that in addition to sounding out, they also spell an unknown word to determine what the word is. As with Brionna, while stating alternative means of figuring out unknown words, neither one of them was observed using that as a strategy while reading. They also utilized graphics as did the others, with Anika demonstrating 77.4% usage during fiction and 87% during nonfiction reading and Bryce showing 69.6% fiction and 82.1% nonfiction usage.

Given this match of participant responses with graphic similarity miscue data, the notion of sounding out words could imply that reading instruction, at least as the children have internalized it, could be centered in a method of teaching reading that may include a letter by letter, word for word approach.

The RMI data shows that they also used syntax and semantics in their processing. Only Brionna indicated such an alternative strategy as shown in her response – *"That I said young instead of their. It didn't sound good."*Although they did not indicate these as strategies, sounding out was a strategy they did acknowledge.

All participants considered themselves to be good readers (question 9), except Brionna, whose response was "kind of." Although the perception of being good readers is one of subjectivity, in this case it can be considered accurate in that all participants were above grade level readers and felt confident in their reading ability. All fiction retellings were above 50% and only two nonfiction retellings were slightly below 50%.

The response of 'kind of' from Brionna did not match her reading proficiency. She maintained meaning well while reading both fiction (68.6%) and nonfiction (79.8%). Her retelling scores in fiction (83%) and nonfiction (76%) were also contrary to her perception of

herself as a reader. Additionally, she made statements that that did not coincide with her response including, *"Because everybody tells me I'm a good reader and I know I'm a good reader because I can read words well."* None of the respondents made a reference to being a good reader while reading one genre over the other.

Other participants gave an array of responses as to why they were good readers. These included:

> Alexis – *"Because I been practicing with my step dad when I was 2 and I got really better. Because on my birthday when I was turning 3,4,5,6,7 and then 8 and every time he sent me a gift he sent me a card saying read a lot."*
>
> Anika – *"Because I practice."*
>
> Brandi – *"Cause I go to my grandma's house and I get books and read to a lot of people and they tell me I read real good and I do better and better each time. So and they tell me to keep up the good work and keep reading."*
>
> Alan – *"'Cause I read a lot. Sometimes I read to my brother."*
>
> Andrew – *"I read a lot."*
>
> Brandon – *"Because I know all the books I read and all of them have hard words and I just figure them out myself."*
>
> Bryce – *"Because I like reading and yeah."*

The post-reader interview offered some additional insights. When asked which book they like best (question 1) participants favored fiction with only one preferring nonfiction. The reasons varied as can be seen in the following responses:

> Alexis – "Ummm. That one." (pointed to the text *All the Way Under*)
> Researcher – "Why?"
> Alexis – "Because it was a lot of words on the page and it was really nice and it taught you how to not be afraid of the water and I still really liked that book about it and because you do real stuff."
>
> Anika – "*All the Way Under."*
> Researcher – "Why?"
> Anika – " Because I want to learn how to swim too."

Alan – "*Cry Foul"*
Researcher – "Why?"
Alan – "My favorite sport is basketball and I play with my brother an he doesn't call fouls.

Andrew – "*All the Way Under*."
Researcher – "Why?"
Andrew – "Because I remembered more."
Researcher – "Why do you think you remembered more in this book?"
Andrew – "Because I think it was easier."

Brandi – *"A Trip through Time."*
Researcher – "Why?"
Brandi – "It was easier to remember and retell."

Brionna – "*Cry Foul."*
Researcher – "Why?"
Brionna – "Because it was like a funnier story."

Brandon – "Umm. I liked *Cry Foul."*
Researcher – "Why?'
Brandon – "Because I like the way how Ramon look how they was saying stuff and it was kinda funny too.

Bryce - The *Pack of Wolves."*
Researcher – "Why?"
Bryce – "Because I like wolves."

It appeared that preference of fiction text was based on three factors. One was personal connections the reader had to the story. A second related to the text being considered easier to read. The third was that the text was funny to the reader; an interesting conclusion because these texts were not considered funny by the researcher.

When asked if they had problems while reading either book (question 4), Alan stated that the fiction text was harder to read of the two - *"Cry Foul had some hard words."* This was not evident in Alan's data. He used graphics more during nonfiction reading, and his syntax score was 8 pts. higher and his semantic score 10 pts. higher during fiction reading although his fiction

text was one level higher than his nonfiction text. Meaning construction was 4 pts. higher and grammatical relationships were 5 pts. higher while reading fiction. His retelling scores were essentially the same. He made 6 MPHW during nonfiction reading as compared to 4 MPHW during fiction reading. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the fiction book *Cry Foul,* which Alan read, had few illustrations and a complex and subtle plot. This may be why he considered this book to be more difficult.

In contrast, Andrew, Brionna, and Brandi thought the nonfiction was harder to read. Both Brandi and Andrew read nonfiction texts that were the same level as their fiction texts, and that may have contributed to that thinking. While Andrew did not indicate why, Brionna attributed nonfiction being more difficult to the big words she encountered by stating, *"Cause I like it had hard words and I had to stop and think about them."* Brandi's perception was that she *"kept messing up words."* While she made only 1.2 more MPHW during her nonfiction reading, this perception may have arisen as a result of high quality fiction miscues which were more prevalent (27 pts.) than nonfiction and she made significantly more self-corrections while reading fiction (17.1 pts.). In addition, her book was about eyes and sight and reading about information unfamiliar to her may have added to this perception. Perhaps adding to this perception was that she was able to correct more often during fiction reading (17.1 pts.) and had 57% high quality fiction miscues compared to 36% high quality nonfiction miscues.

Anika stated that she had problems reading both genres and explained that they were both *"hard to read".* This did not match her miscue data in that she had higher scores while reading fiction than nonfiction. Her retelling scores also did not match her perception but did match her RMI scores, as she produced a strong fiction retelling (80%), but a low nonfiction retelling total score (53%). While considering both genres hard to read, she may have been more successful

with the fiction text due to more opportunities to interact with fiction prior to this study, thereby providing her with greater familiarity with this genre than with nonfiction. The remaining participants did not perceive their reading of either text type as problematic. Alexis and Brandon considered both texts easy to read. However, the nonfiction retelling was significantly lower than the fiction retelling for both participants. Bryce indicated he did not have any difficulties reading either text, and his retelling scores were comparable.

Answer to Question Number 3

In answer to question number 3: What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text?

All participants but one considered themselves to be good readers when asked before they performed either reading task. They did not specify if they were better readers in one genre over another.

All but one participant noted sounding out as a primary strategy to figure out unknown words. However, none distinguished this as a strategy used specifically in either genre or in one more than the other. They did not articulate an awareness of other strategies they used as indicated by their RMI, such as syntax, semantics, self-correction or self-monitoring while reading either genre.

All but one participant enjoyed reading fiction over nonfiction text. While the reasons varied, three stated personal connections to the story as their reason. One stated personal connection and because it was funny. One indicated only because it was funny. Two readers suggested that it was easier to read and because they considered it to be funny. The reason given for preferring the nonfiction text was *"Because I like wolves."*

When asked if they had problems reading either genre after both tasks were completed, their perceptions did not always correspond to the data as seen in their retelling scores. Of the three who thought fiction reading was more difficult, two had higher fiction retelling scores than nonfiction and one had comparable scores. One participant considered fiction more difficult while both scores were comparable. Two believed that both texts were easy, but their nonfiction scores were much lower than fiction. One felt that both texts were problematic, but the nonfiction score was lower in this case as well. Only one participant perceived no problem reading both texts, and the retelling scores confirmed this belief. So, while their perceptions did not always coincide with their performance, what was clear was the perception that fiction text was more enjoyable. When comparing males and females, only one male and two females indicated nonfiction was difficult, and one female considered both hard and one female and one male considered both easy and one male thought both did not present a problem and one male considered fiction easier, indicating males found nonfiction easier to read than did females.

Looking across Miscues and Retellings

In my final analysis, I also looked at the intersection of miscues and retellings. I examined each sentence for miscue quality and whether it was included in the retelling to see the relationship between the two and how they may have impacted each other. As a result of this analysis, two other noteworthy patterns emerged that did not reflect differences but rather similarities. One was that there were multiple consecutive semantically acceptable sentences that were not recalled in the retellings.

A second pattern indicated clusters of sentences from which most participants drew information included in their retellings. Within these clusters there were both semantically acceptable and unacceptable sentences. A cluster is defined as one sentence or consecutive

sentences from which one or more participants drew details included in their retellings. A cluster could not be created if only one participant read a text.

Semantically Acceptable Sentences Excluded from the Retellings

With respect to the first pattern, there were four sentence patterns possible relevant to what the participants did and did not recall in their retellings. These included:

1. Semantically acceptable not recalled in the retelling
2. Semantically acceptable recalled in the retellings
3. Semantically unacceptable not recalled in the retellings
4. Semantically unacceptable recalled in the retellings

The following three tables provide a backdrop for the ensuing discussion. The total number of these four types of sentences for each participant for each text is shown in Table 19. Table 20 provides a comparison of males and females with respect to these sentences. Table 21 offers the total number of sentences relevant to the retelling guide for each text and each portion of each text.

Table 19

Total Number of Semantically Acceptable and Semantically Unacceptable Recalled and Not Recalled Sentences for Each Participant for Each Text Type

	Fiction				Nonfiction			
	Sem. Acc.		Sem. Unacc.		Sem. Acc.		Sem. Unacc,	
	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled
Alexis	73	21	25	4	49	4	36	1
Anika	88	13	20	2	58	8	22	6
Brandi	52	15	14	9	41	6	24	3
Brionna	77	11	28	5	55	14	22	3
Alan	77	5	35	4	52	11	28	3
Andrew	87	11	23	2	54	13	25	2
Brandon	74	9	31	7	64	6	21	3
Bryce	72	7	41	3	48	8	33	5
Average	75	11.5	27.1	4.5	52.6	8.8	26.4	3.3

Sem. Acc. = Semantically acceptable
Sem Unacc. = Semantically unacceptable

Table 20

Averages of *Semantically Acceptable and Semantically Unacceptable Recalled and Not Recalled Sentences Comparing Males and Females across All Texts in Each Genre*

	Fiction				Nonfiction			
	Sem. Acc.		Sem. Unacc.		Sem. Acc.		Sem. Unacc.	
	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled	Not Recalled	Recalled
Females	72.5	15	21.8	5	50.8	8	26	2.5
Males	77.5	8	32.5	4	54.5	9.5	26.8	3.3

Sem. Acc. = Semantically acceptable
Sem Unacc. = Semantically unacceptable

Table 21

Total Number of Sentences Relevant to the Retelling Guide for Each Text and Each Portion of Each Text

Text	Beginning	Middle	End
All the Way Under	12	9	9
Cry Foul	14	3	11
A Trip through Time	18	7	14
A Pack of Wolves	12	13	17
Navajo Way	18	7	9
Let's See	5	8	4

Of these possible patterns, two were the most noteworthy. There were semantically acceptable sentences that, is sentences that made sense, that were not recalled *(Males tend to be longer (larger) than females.* Additionally, there were semantically unacceptable sentences, those with miscues that caused the loss of meaning, that were recalled correctly *(Their howls also warm (warn) other packs to kept out).*

The semantically acceptable but not recalled pattern was prevalent in both nonfiction and fiction texts. Table 22 shows a comparison of these sentences in both text types. Total number of sentences represents the total number of sentences in each text. The mean represents the average of semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences of all participants who read the identified text.

Table 22

A Comparison of Mean Percentages of Semantically Acceptable Sentences from Fiction and Nonfiction that Were Excluded from Retellings

Genre	Title	Total # of Sentences in the Text	Mean Percentages of Sem Acc. Not Recalled
Fiction	*All the Way Under*	123	57.1
	Cry Foul	121	52.6
	A Trip through Time	107	45.6
Average for Fiction			51.8
Nonfiction	*A Pack of Wolves*	94	45.2
	Let's See	74	44.6
	Navajo Ways	90	41.1
Average for Nonfiction			43.6

Sem. Acc. = Semantically Acceptable

There were a greater percentage of sentences falling into this pattern in the fiction genre with one fiction text, *A Trip through Time*, lower than the others. Thus, in reading fiction students omitted a higher percentage of high quality sentences from their retellings *(That's good," I thought. "If I get into any trouble the lifeguard can save me.")*

When examining individual participant's reading, I looked at the percentage of total number of semantically acceptable sentences for that student within each genre. Table 23 indicates the percentages across text portions - beginning, middle and ending - for each student.

Table 23

Percent of the Total Number of Semantically Acceptable Sentences in Each Genre, for Each Participant, across Text Portions

Name	Beginning		Middle		End	
	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction
Brandi	33.3	37.2	30.7	41.8	35.9	20.9
Andrew	34.7	39.4	30.5	33.8	34.7	26.7
Anika	33	36.7	31	44	36	18.6
Brionna	26.1	36.8	37.5	33.8	36.3	29.4
Alexis	36.1	33.9	31.9	32	31.9	33.9
Bryce	29.1	40.7	27.8	27.8	43	31.5
Alan	30.5	42.9	29.3	34.9	40.2	22.2
Brandon	29.3	36.2	36.6	36.2	34.1	27.5
Overall Avg.	31.5	37.9	31.8	35.5	36.5	26.3

There was a higher percentage of semantically acceptable sentences in nonfiction in the beginning and middle sections and for fiction in the ending section. The greatest difference between fiction and nonfiction was in the ending section, which was highest for nonfiction and lowest for fiction.

I then looked at the percent of semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences in each section. An example of this type of sentence would be Brandon's reading, *Wolves can hear mice under the ground with their large pointy (pointed) ears.* Table 24 indicates what percent of the total number of semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences are in different sections of each text and identifies whether or not particular sections were higher than others.

Table 24

Percent of the Total Number of Semantically Acceptable but Not Recalled Sentences for Each Genre, for Each Participant and across Text Portions

Name	Beginning		Middle		End	
	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction	Fiction	Nonfiction
Brandi	30.1	36.8	34.9	44.7	34.9	18.4
Andrew	34.5	45.4	30.9	27.3	34.5	27.3
Anika	33.3	40	31.1	44	35.6	16
Brionna	27.3	38.9	36.4	37	36.4	24
Alexis	37.5	32.7	33.3	32.7	29.1	34.7
Bryce	28.8	40	27.4	28.9	43.8	31.1
Alan	30.8	40.3	29.5	38.5	39.7	21.2
Brandon	27	35.9	36.5	34.4	36.5	29.7
Overall Avg	31.2	38.8	32.5	35.9	36.3	25.3

In fiction, the ending section had the highest percent while the ending section of nonfiction had the lowest percent.

An explanation for this may be that in fiction, typically the bulk of the story is presented in the beginning and the plot unfolds in the middle of the text. As a result, these scores could indicate that participants determined that these sections held information they considered more relevant and/or important to the story, thus they included more of them in their retelling. The low percent in the last part of nonfiction may indicate that the details from the end of the text were more readily remembered as they were the last to be read. In addition, the density of information throughout nonfiction texts may have influenced stronger recall from the most current section read. It may also have been necessary for readers to read more of the text to establish an understanding of the structure and content, which may have been unfamiliar.

When comparing the overall averages of semantically acceptable sentences in each section to how many semantically acceptable sentences were not recalled, there was a similarity in that semantically acceptable and semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences were higher in the beginning and middle sections of nonfiction and lower in the ending section.

I then examined semantically acceptable sentences excluded from the retelling out of the total number of sentences per section deemed relevant by the retelling guide in each genre. Table 25 provides a look across portions - beginning, middle and ending - of the text.

Table 25

Percentage of the Total Number of Semantically Acceptable Sentences Excluded from the Retelling Out of the Total Number of Sentences in Each Section Relevant to the Retelling Guide and across Text Portions

Name	Beginning		Middle		End	
	Fiction Not recalled	Nonfiction Not recalled	Fiction Not recalled	Nonfiction Not recalled	Fiction Not recalled	Nonfiction Not recalled
Alexis	15	67	15	43	12	78
Anika	24	36	20	57	17	38
Brandi	50	40	14	24	64	25
Brionna	17	33	7	54	14	25
Alan	15	55	10	64	19	38
Andrew	22	75	17	21	10	38
Brandon	12	55	10	57	19	56
Bryce	20	33	10	43	12	29
Overall Avg	21.9 (17.9)*	49.3	12.9	45.4	20.9 (14.7)*	40.9 (35.6)*

*= average computed without the outlier high score

The pattern seen earlier holds here for nonfiction with beginning and middle sections having higher numbers of semantically acceptable sentences excluded from the retellings than

the ending section. Also fiction is equivalent to 10-18% of not recalled sentences and nonfiction is equivalent to 35-49% of not recalled, a much higher percentage.

Overall averages with more than one average indicate the average with and without the outlier. In all cases but one, there were a greater percent of semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences in all sections of nonfiction text. Only Brandi was higher in fiction in the first and last third sections. This suggests that even important information in semantically acceptable sentences is not always included in the retellings, but does not answer why. It does not necessarily mean that readers did not comprehend those sentences or the sections from which they emanated. In fact, the RMI data for semantic acceptability shows that there was the ability to construct meaning, more so in fiction text (72%) than in nonfiction (64%) as noted in Table 13. This can be linked to the meaning maintenance scores which were higher for all participants during fiction reading, except for Brionna (11.2 pts. higher for nonfiction) and Brandon whose scores were slightly different (2 pts.). However, in the case of these semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences, participants may not have considered the information important. These patterns held true for participants reading fiction and nonfiction texts, texts at the same and different levels, and across gender.

Inclusion and exclusion of information raises the question of which factors may have influenced these results. How much did background knowledge play into these decisions? Were these topics of interest to the participants and how motivated were they? Was the structure of the text a factor? Did the nonfiction texts present more information than the participants could handle? The data in this study also raise questions as to why the reader considers certain information important or relevant enough to include in the retelling while omitting other information, whether or not the reader remembered certain relevant details at the time of the

retelling, or if these areas of the text presented comprehension challenges to the readers. These are areas for future research.

Semantically Unacceptable Sentences Included in the Retelling

Next, I examined the number of sentences per section containing information deemed relevant by the retelling guide for each student and calculated how many were semantically unacceptable in the miscue analysis, but recalled in the retelling. (*The water farmed (foamed) higher and higher around my arnklet (ankles) and legs.)* Table 26 provides a look across text portions - beginning, middle and ending - for each student.

Table 26

Number of Semantically Unacceptable Sentences Out of the Total Number of Text Sentences Containing Information Relevant to the Retelling Guide Per Section and Per Student

Name	Beginning		Middle		End	
	Fiction Recalled	Nonfiction Recalled	Fiction Recalled	Nonfiction Recalled	Fiction Recalled	Nonfiction Recalled
Brandi	2/18	0/5	1/7	0/8	0/14	1/4
Andrew	1/12	0/12	1/9	0/13	0/9	2/17
Anika	0/12	3/12	0/9	1/13	0/9	2/17
Brionna	3/14	0/12	0/3	2/13	2/11	1/17
Alexis	0/12	0/18	2/9	0/7	0/9	0/9
Bryce	1/12	1/12	1/9	1/13	0/9	3/17
Alan	1/14	0/12	0/3	1/13	0/11	2/17
Brandon	4/14	1/12	0/3	1/13	2/11	1/17

This table shows greater recall in the first section for fiction and the last section showing greater recall for nonfiction. Comparing recall, it is of interest that in the fiction ending section there is the highest percent of semantically acceptable but not recalled and a lowest percent of semantically unacceptable and recalled sentences, supporting the notion participants may not

have considered this section to hold important information. Additionally, higher semantically unacceptable recalled sentences in the last section of nonfiction supports the fact that participants may have been able to garner more understanding in the last section read for reasons indicated earlier related to memory of what was read most currently, density of content making the last part read the easiest to recall, and the need to read most of the text so as to develop an understanding of the structure. An example of a semantically unacceptable recalled sentence can be seen in the following: *(Each number (member) of the pack helps to rise (raise) the young.)* The question still remains as to why any semantically unacceptable sentences were recalled at all and also raises questions about the demand for high accuracy in reading as students recalled sentences with low quality.

Taking the analysis a step further, I looked at how many of the sentences deemed relevant by the retelling guide were semantically unacceptable (SU) and of those, how many semantically unacceptable were recalled in the retelling (SUR). Table 27 provides these results per section and for each student.

Table 27

Number of Semantically Unacceptable Sentences Recalled Sentences Out of the Total Number of Semantically Unacceptable Sentences Containing Details Relevant to the Retelling per Section Per Student

Name	Beginning		Middle		End	
	Fiction SUR/SU	Nonfiction SUR/SU	Fiction SUR/SU	Nonfiction SUR/SU	Fiction SUR/SU	Nonfiction SUR/SU
Brandi	2/5	0/2	1/5	0/3	0/2	1/2
Andrew	1/1	0/0	1/1	0/5	0/1	2/7
Anika	0/0	3/6	0/1	1/1	0/0	2/10
Brionna	3/7	0/3	0/0	2/4	2/4	1/5
Alexis	0/2	0/6	2/3	0/4	0/0	0/2
Bryce	1/5	1/4	1/4	1/5	0/0	3/10
Alan	1/5	0/1	0/0	1/3	0/1	2/9
Brandon	4/10	1/4	0/0	1/3	2/2	1/8

All participants but one, who read *A Pack of Wolves,* recalled information from low quality sentences from the last third of that text; the area where there was also the greatest concentration of sentences recalled in the retelling. An example from this section is, *(They spit up clunks (chunks) of food as the wolves like (lick) their mouths.)* This may have been related to fact that this included the section on parenting to which they may have made connections thus supporting comprehension and scaffolding meaning. The beginning section showed the greatest difference in recall with the highest being in fiction and lowest in nonfiction.

I then examined how this information related to the RMI's. Of those individuals with higher numbers of semantically unacceptable recalled sentences, I looked at the sentences preceding and following the semantically unacceptable recalled sentences to see if they provided support for meaning making.

For example, Brionna had three semantically unacceptable recalled sentences in the beginning of her fiction section, and I found that there was a semantically acceptable sentence leading up to semantically unacceptable recalled sentence number 11. Examples follow as Brionna read the the semantically acceptable sentence 10, *They always dreamed about coming to America. Prior to number semantically unacceptable sentence 11, One night they came secretal (secretly) by boat.* This was not the case prior to semantically unacceptable recalled sentences 38 and 39 in which the semantically unacceptable sentence 37 preceded them, Marco had purpsley extended his arms up and down rammed his elbow into Joseph's face. (38) The ball few out of Joseph's hands and he landed on the parv wait a thud. (39) Ramon loos cool had run toward Joseph and Marco yell Fore! Sentence 39 was followed by a semantically acceptable sentence. (40) "You know that isn't the way it works, Ramon," Marco had reminded him, rubbing his elbow.

Bryce generated three semantically unacceptable recalled sentences in his last nonfiction section. Sentences 65 and 71 were preceded by a sentence providing semantic support but only sentence 72 was followed with semantic support. Finally, Brandon had four semantically unacceptable recalled sentences in his beginning fiction section. Of these, only number 26 was preceded and followed by semantically acceptable sentences, so although he had the highest number of semantically unacceptable recalled sentences, his surrounding sentences did not seem to provide additional support.

There was no consistent pattern that could explain the inclusion of information. This raises questions about why participants were able to derive information from various semantically unacceptable recalled sentences regardless of whether or not there was surrounding sentence support. Of note is that these sentences occurred across both genres for boys and girls

and most often in the beginning section of fiction (11%) and the ending section of nonfiction (8%).

Next, I compared the inclusion of details in the retellings from semantically unacceptable sentences and semantically acceptable sentences in the fiction text, *All the Way Under* and nonfiction text, *A Pack of Wolves;* these being the texts the greatest number of participants read. So that the comparison was most relevant, rather than only looking at beginning, middle and ending sections of each text, I divided the nonfiction text into the five sections that were presented and divided the fiction text into five sections based upon story grammar aspects of beginning, episodes 1, 2, and 3 and conclusion.

First, I evaluated the average number of the low quality and high quality miscues. I noted that the section entitled Parenting had the most similar averages. I also found that the total average was about the same for high quality miscues for both genres, but this was not the case for low quality miscues and that there were consistently more high quality than low quality (see tables 28 and 29). Table 28 indicates the section on parenting with the highest number of low quality miscues and the section on protecting with the lowest number. High quality miscues were consistent across sections with the section on protecting, an outlier, and lower than the rest. The section on protecting also had the fewest sentences recalled in the retelling of any section. Table 29 indicates a low quality outlier in episode 3 and a high quality outlier in episode 1.

Table 28

Average Number of Low Quality (LQ) and High Quality (HQ) Miscues Produced by Participants Who Read A Pack of Wolves

Section	Average number of LQ miscues	Average number of HQ miscues
Meet	1.50	5.50
Life	3.17	6.00
Hunt	3.00	6.33
Parenting	5.50	6.50
Protecting	0.83	2.17
Average	2.80	5.30

Table 29

Average Number of Low Quality (LQ) and High Quality (HQ) Miscues Produced by Participants Who Read All the Way Under

Section	Average number of LQ miscues	Average number of HQ miscues
Introduction	1.25	5.75
Episode1	0.75	7.25
Episode2	2.00	4.00
Episode3	0.00	4.00
Conclusion	0.25	4.75
Average	0.85	5.15

Next I compared the average of the percentage of semantically unacceptable recalled sentences and semantically acceptable recalled sentences in each section of fiction and nonfiction texts. Here I found that there was better recall of semantically acceptable sentences in the fiction text, with the highest areas being in episode 3 and the conclusion. I also noted that there was higher recall of semantically acceptable sentences across more sections and that there were similar scores in episode 2. In the nonfiction text, there was better recall in the first and third sections and more semantically unacceptable sentences recalled across all sections of the text (see Tables 30 and 31).

Table 30

Average Percentage of Semantically Unacceptable and Semantically Acceptable Sentences Recalled in Each Section of All the Way Under

Section	Average of % SU recall	Average of % SA recall
Introduction	7.1%	28.6%
Episode1	0	17.9%
Episode2	14.3%	17.9%
Episode3	0	56.3%
Conclusion	0	40 %
Average	4.3%	32.1%

Table 31

Average Percentage of Semantically Unacceptable (SU) and Semantically Acceptable (SA) Sentences Recalled in Each Section in A Pack of Wolves

Sections	Average of % SU recall	Average of % SA recall
Section 1 (Meet)	10 %	21.7%
Section 2 (Life)	5 %	18.3%
Section 3 (Hunt)	7.2 %	35.7%
Section 4 (Parenting)	12.5%	20.8%
Section 5 (Protecting)	0	16.7%

Finally, I compared the recall of semantically unacceptable sentences and semantically acceptable sentences between males and females who read the same fiction and nonfiction texts by looking at the percentage of SU recalled sentences out of the total number of SU sentences for each section.

Of note was that different parts of the nonfiction text, such as the sections entitled Meet, Parenting, and Protecting had greater semantically acceptable sentence recall for females than for males. An example is the sentence, *Each spring, when the female is pregnant, she looks for a den near fresh water*, which both Brionna and Anika read with no micscues. The Males, on the other hand, had greater semantically acceptable sentence recall on the sections entitled Life and Hunt. An example comes from both Brandon and Bryce who read the sentence; *Traveling in a pack helps them to hunt larger animals*, with no miscues. Across all sections of fiction, females had

greater semantically acceptable sentence recall. This raises the question of whether this could be related to differences in what males and females like to read (See Tables 32 and 33).

Table 32

Comparison of Average Percentages of Semantically Unacceptable (SU) Recall and Semantically Acceptable (SA) Recall for Males and Females Reading A Pack of Wolves

		Average of % SU recall		Average of % SA recall	
Gender		Females	Males	Females	Males
	Section				
	Meet	4.8%	9.5%	47.6%	23.8%
	Life	10 %	0	16.7%	20 %
	Hunt	10 %	10 %	16.7%	26.7%
	Parenting	13.9%	11.1%	27.8%	13.9%
	Protecting	0	0	22.2%	11.1%
Total		7. 7%	6.1%	26.2%	19.1%

Table 33

Comparison of Average Percentages of Semantically Unacceptable (SU) Recall and Semantically Acceptable (SA) Recall for Males and Females Reading All the Way Under

		Average of % SU recall		Average of % SA recall	
Gender		Females	Males	Females	Males
	Section				
	Introduction	0	14.3%	50 %	7.1%
	Episode 1	0	0	28.6%	7.1%
	Episode 2	14.3%	14.3%	21.4%	14.3%
	Episode 3	0	0	62.5%	50 %
	Conclusion	0	0	50 %	30 %
Total		2.9%	5.7%	42.5%	21.7%

These data can be linked to MPHW, sentence level meaning maintenance, word level grammatical strength, and the retelling data in that they bear out and substantiate the most powerful pattern that emerged from this study; that there was greater disparity between nonfiction and fiction comprehension after reading for females than for males just as there was

greater discrepancy for females than for males during reading as noted in the section on comprehending.

Clusters of Sentences Producing Details

When examining the data charts I created, indicating where in the text participants drew information included in their retellings; sentence clusters became apparent in both genres. A cluster is defined as one sentence or consecutive sentences from which one or more participants drew details included in their retellings. Out of the total number of sentences in the fiction and nonfiction texts that more than one participant read, there were a greater percentage of sentences in clusters in nonfiction text (Table 34).

Table 34

Percentage of Sentences in Clusters in Fiction and Nonfiction Text Out of Total in Text

Text Type	Total Number of Text Sentences	Percent of Sentences in Clusters
Fiction	243	59.9
Nonfiction	94	71.4

Taking into account the sentences containing details relevant to the retelling guide, I looked at the average of the total sentences appearing in clusters in each genre. Again, there was a greater percent in nonfiction than fiction (see Table 35).

Table 35

Mean Percentages of Total Sentences in Clusters from Which Information Was Relevant to the Retelling Guide and Included in the Retelling

Text Type	Mean Percentages
Fiction	33.4%
Nonfiction	71.4%

Examples of various clusters are illustrated in the figures below. For example, in *A Pack of Wolves*, sentences 15 -19 represent a cluster of sentences. Boxes highlighted in red indicate

sentences included in the retelling. All participants except for Brandon included details in their retellings from this cluster of sentences (see Figure 5).

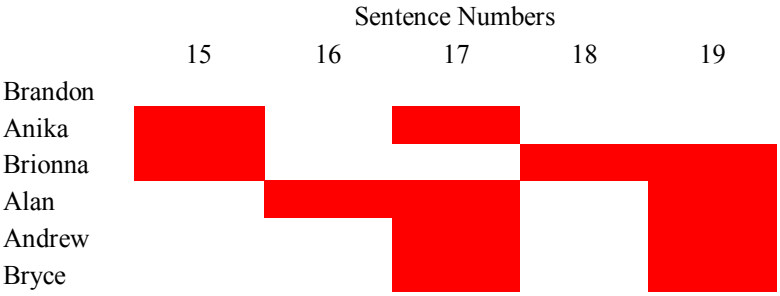


Figure 5: Examples of Sentence Clusters in A Pack of Wolves

Within these clusters, both semantically acceptable and unacceptable sentences were produced. Comparing both genres, participants included information from semantically acceptable sentences most often after reading fiction and information from semantically unacceptable sentences was included more often after reading nonfiction (Table 36).

Table 36

Comparison of Recalled Semantically Unacceptable and Acceptable Sentences Located in Clusters and Recalled in Each Genre

	Semantically Unacceptable	Semantically Acceptable
Fiction	17%	83%
Nonfiction	32%	68%

More specifically, table 37 paints a picture of the number of semantically unacceptable and acceptable sentences produced within clusters and included in the retellings in both genres. Of note, is that out of the total number of sentences included in the retellings, the majority came from sentence clusters.

Table 37

Number of Sentences per Student Included in Retellings, Number of Sentences in Clusters, and Number of Semantically Unacceptable and Acceptable Sentences in Clusters

		Sentences in Retelling		Cluster sentences	
Title	Names	Total #	Clusters	Semantically unacceptable	Semantically acceptable
Pack of Wolves	Brandon	9	9	3	6
	Anika	14	14	6	8
	Brionna	17	15	3	12
	Alan	14	12	5	7
	Andrew	15	12	2	10
	Bryce	13	11	4	7
Let's See	Brandi	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Navajo Ways	Alexis	5	n/a	n/a	n/a
All the Way Under	Anika	15	11	0	11
	Alexis	26	15	2	13
	Bryce	10	10	3	7
	Andrew	13	10	2	8
A Trip through Time	Brandi	24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cry Foul	Brandon	16	8	3	5
	Brionna	16	11	5	6
	Alan	9	7	4	3

n/a = not applicable

Given that participants were able to include information in their retellings from semantically unacceptable sentences brings up the question of why it was possible to recall information, extract meaning, and choose to include details in their retelling from clusters containing low-quality sentences in both fiction and nonfiction.

An example is found in sentences 37 and 38 from *Cry Foul,* with boxes in green indicating inclusion in the retelling and sentence quality (semantically unacceptable = SU). In this cluster, Brandon had two SU sentences included in the retelling. He read them in the following way; *(37) Marco had purposed extended his arms up and rimmed his elbow into Joseph's far. (38) The ball flew or of Joseph's hands and it land on the pavmnt with a thud.*

Regardless, he included the following information in his retelling: "Um because Marco, he was like pushing him and stuff and that's how he caused that um little bump ***that looked like an egg.*** *Along with "Yes he pushed him on the ground."* Brionna had one SU sentence (38); ***The ball*** *flew out of Joseph's hands and to landed on the parv wait a thud,* with sentence 37 excluded from the retelling. Alan had one SU sentence (37) which he read, ***Marco had purpossily extend*** *his arms up and remained his elbow into Joseph's face,* with sentence 38 excluded from the retelling (see Figure 6). These examples show accurate inclusion of details in the retellings although each sentence was semantically unacceptable.

	Sentence Numbers	
Cry Foul	37	38
Alan	(SU)	(SU)
Brandon	(SU)	(SU)
Brionna	(SU)	(SU)

Figure 6: Example of Sentence Clusters in Cry Foul

This held true for nonfiction as well. An example of clusters of nonfiction SU sentences, from which details were included, is prominent in *A Pack of Wolves* from sentence clusters 49-50. As in the previous example, boxes highlighted in green indicate inclusion in the retelling with SU or semantically acceptable (SA) sentences. In this cluster, Brandon and Brionna each had SU and SA sentences. Anika had one SU; Alan and Andrew having SA sentence each. Bryce had no sentences included from this cluster (Figure 7).

	Sentence Numbers	
The Hunt	49	50
Brandon	(SA)	(SU)
Anika	(SA)	(SU)
Brionna	(SA)	(SU)
Alan	(SA)	(SA)
Andrew	(SA)	(SA)
Bryce		

Figure 7: Examples of Sentence Clusters with Details Included

The section on Parenting produced sentence clusters from which details were included in the retellings regardless of sentence quality as seen in sentence clusters 71-75 (Figure 8) and 78, 79, 81-83 (Figure 9). This suggests that some areas of the text held details for which students may have had prior knowledge and to which they could perhaps make connections, thus aiding their comprehension. The following are examples of sentences included in the retelling.

	Sentence Numbers				
Parenting	71	72	73	74	75
Brandon	(SA)	(SU)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)
Anika	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)
Brionna	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)
Alan	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)
Andrew	(SU)	(SU)	SU	(SU)	(SA)
Bryce	(SU)	(SU)	(SU)	(SU)	(SU)

Figure 8: *Examples of Sentence Clusters with Details Included Regardless of Sentence Quality*

	Sentence Numbers					
Parenting	78	79	80	81	82	83
Brandon	(SU)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)
Anika	(SU)	(SA)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)
Brionna	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)
Alan	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)
Andrew	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)
Bryce						

Figure 9: *Examples of Sentence Clusters with Details Included Regardless of Sentence Quality*

Notably, sentence structures in all of these examples were similar. There was only one picture supporting each section, and the support provided by these pictures was easily recognizable as being aligned to the text. In each case, regardless of the quality of sentences, information from these sections was included in the retellings.

Fiction text analysis produced similar patterns. Throughout *All the Way Under*, participants drew details from clusters of sentences. For example, cluster sentences 78-81 and 84-85 (Figure 10) addressed key points of the story including Sonya believing an octopus grabbed her ankle, going under water and having trouble catching her breath, and realizing she was being helped by the lifeguard. As can be seen in this example, and as noted earlier, details were included regardless of sentence quality, a pattern that held for *Cry Foul*.

	Sentence Numbers							
	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85
Anika	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)
Alexis	(SU)	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU	(SA)	(SA)
Bryce	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)
Andrew	(SU)	(SU)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)	(SA)

Figure 10: Sentence Clusters in All the Way Under Regardless of Sentence Quality

It is important to note that participants drew additional details from sentences unrelated to clusters to a greater extent after fiction reading than after nonfiction reading, thus resulting in the higher fiction scores.

I would also point out that participants chose to include details in their retellings from sentences that adults who created the retelling guides considered to be important more often than not. A possible explanation is that information considered to be important may be more predictable and therefore readers are better able to construct meaning thus resulting in more high

quality sentences. Details that are considered to be less relevant may be less predictable resulting in less ability to construct meaning and omission from retellings.

Summary of Patterns and Variations across Participants

With respect to the process of comprehending, overall, participants were more proficient readers of fiction than nonfiction, as established at both sentence and word levels. In addition, readers used cueing systems differently while reading different text types.

Patterns found across the data served to substantiate a commonality and a key finding that emerged in this study. This was that female participants demonstrated greater differences than males in their ability to read fiction as compared to nonfiction text as shown in their RMI scores and the patterns of studnets' high quality and low quality sentences. Females also demonstrated greater discrepancies in their comprehension after reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text than males.

Participants showed greater competency with respect to their comprehension after reading fiction as compared to nonfiction text as evidenced in their retelling scores. The nonfiction retellings of males were slightly higher than those of the females. There was more consistency between the retelling scores of males when comparing genres and less consistency between female retelling scores when comparing genres.

Two additional key findings were that sentences containing information relative to the retelling guide but not containing miscues or with high quality miscues were not always included in the retellings. Additionally, participants drew details included in retellings from common areas (clusters) of the texts they read, and to a greater extent in nonfiction than fiction.

With respect to participant's metacognitive awareness, they did not express accurate perceptions of their readings. While they did notice differences in their readings, the perceptions

were most often incorrect as indicated in the data. Further, they did not have clear awareness of the strategies they used as they read nor did they articulate specificity to one genre or another.

A discussion of the significant findings will follow in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is an old story about a group of people; all of whom are blind and want to know what an elephant looks like. The first person feels the elephant's trunk, the second feels the elephant's leg, and the third feels the elephant's tail. The first person concludes that the elephant is like a snake, the second concludes the elephant is like a tree, and the third concludes the elephant is like a rope. It follows that it is not possible to create an accurate image of the entire elephant by only examining it parts.

The essence of this study was to enhance understanding of possible differences in the processes, comprehension, and perceptions of second grade students' reading of fiction and nonfiction text. I share this story as a metaphor of why multiple aspects of the participants and their reading were examined. Doing so offers a more complete picture of their transaction with each text type and sheds light on what future instructional practices may be necessary to bring forth greater efficacy as children not only learn to read but read to learn.

This chapter will situate insights gained from the findings of the data within the research literature that framed this study. I begin with a summary of the major findings addressing the research questions; the comparison of how participants interacted with fiction and nonfiction text, a comparison of their comprehension after reading, how they perceived themselves as readers of these genres, as well as additional themes that emerged. Second, a discussion of the findings will be presented. Third, implications for teaching will be discussed. Limitations and future research will be addressed and finally a conclusion of the study will be set forth.

Discussion

In the introduction of this dissertation, I argued that there may be differences in how children interact with fiction and nonfiction text. The results substantiated the research which suggests that processing during fiction reading is more deftly accomplished (Olson, 1985; Snow, 2002; Best, Ozuru, Floyd, McNamara, 2006). This was shown as participants incorporated language cueing systems with greater efficacy, participants tended to monitor their reading to a greater extent as noted in the greater number of self-corrections during fiction reading. At both the word and sentence levels, data showed greater facility during fiction reading.

Comprehension was greater after fiction reading than nonfiction. This held true when reading books at the same reading level or when the nonfiction text was one level below the fiction text. Females presented more complete fiction retellings than their male counterparts. Males conversely, were more successful in their nonfiction retellings than females; these scores corroborating the RMI data.

Participants' perceptions of their readings were not always consistent with their RMI scores and their retelling scores. They enjoyed reading the fiction text more, and they thought that it was a more difficult task to read the nonfiction text. None made reference to having more or less experience with one genre over another nor did they offer any indication that they may have been taught strategies specific to either genre. However, males did indicate that they found reading nonfiction easier than fiction.

Beyond answering the research questions, in both cases, during the process of reading and afterwards, as noted in the RMI and retelling scores respectively, a key pattern emerged. This pattern was related to gender. While the participants in this study were more successful overall in their processing of fiction text than nonfiction text, there was a notable difference

between the scores of females as they read fiction as compared to nonfiction text. In contrast, males demonstrated more consistent scores than females between the readings of one genre as compared to the other. When comparing fiction and nonfiction retellings, males were again more consistent in their comprehension scores while females demonstrated a greater inconsistency between their fiction and nonfiction results. This discrepancy will be a point of discussion to follow in a later section.

The analysis brought to light an additional pattern. This was that there were multiple, consecutive sentences that were semantically acceptable, but from which no information was included in the retellings. While there were more of these sentences overall in fiction than nonfiction, what is more significant is that out of the sentences relevant to the retelling guide, the number of these sentences in nonfiction was greater.

A final pattern surfaced indicating common areas of the text from which participants included information in their retellings. These areas were found to be scattered throughout both genres and were characterized as sentence clusters. This pattern held true for fiction and nonfiction texts, texts at same and different levels, and across genders.

Prominent Patterns that Emerged

Fiction versus Nonfiction Text during Reading

One major purpose of this study was to examine the processing aspect of the readings of these two genres as denoted by the RMI scores. Why didn't their processing look the same as they read each text type? I would suggest the following as possible reasons that played a role in the differences that occurred.

Students do not come to school automatically prepared to self-regulate metacognitive and cognitive strategies in all genres; these must be realized, developed, modified, and enacted over

time until they become internalized (Alexander, 2003). Without appropriate building of prior knowledge of reading, practice, and instruction, this cannot effectively occur. The results of this study pointed out that perhaps these participants had been exposed to, instructed in, and interacted with fiction text to a greater extent than nonfiction, as they were not able to read both genres with the same degree of proficiency. This analysis examined the individual participants' interaction with each text type and provided a glimpse into their ongoing processes. It was determined that readers actively engaged in utilizing salient cues synergistically to drive the process of making meaning to a lesser degree while reading nonfiction than fiction texts.

As mentioned earlier, an effective backdrop scaffolding efficient and effective processing of text is the ability to predict and organize ideas. Less experience and guidance in one genre over another can hinder the fluidity of operationalizing the cueing systems. Lacking the ability to deftly predict and monitor results in a weakened ability to establish appropriate grammatical structures and maintain meaning. This was demonstrated in the miscue analysis results showing a lower percentage of semantically and syntactically acceptable sentences for nonfiction reading, which may have hindered ability to organize thinking while reading nonfiction text as compared to fiction. Of the eight participants, only Brionna was able to construct meaning in nonfiction text with greater proficiency than fiction.

Except for Brandon, syntactic percentages were lower during nonfiction reading. Effective use of the syntactic cueing system or knowledge about the grammatical structure of language could be a result of having the opportunity to read an array of texts that represent a variety of syntactic patterns. Limited experience and prior knowledge with these varying sentence structures limits the opportunity to reconstruct the author's message with ease. Because these readers interacted differently with the two text types, it is possible that they may have had

fewer opportunities to interface with nonfiction text resulting in these lower syntactic percentages.

While utilizing features of nonfiction text, such as labels, captions, and headings can aid in meaning making, all but one of the participants did not read these aloud or make verbal reference to them, outwardly notice them, or seem to utilize them to garner additional information. Only Bryce read the captions and the headings. Interestingly, Bryce had the highest nonfiction retelling score, and this may have helped his understanding. It should be noted that while Bryce was the only participant who visibly interacted with text features, Brionna's retelling score was only 2 pts. lower, although she did not read them out loud. Therefore, it is difficult to know unconditionally that the other participants did not interact in some way that could not be determined through their oral reading. Some may have read the text features silently. Still others may have been taught to read the body of the text when reading out loud and perhaps return to the captions or other text features after the oral reading. While this could not be determined in this study, the predominance of participants' not reading these features out loud may serve as an indication of lack of scaffolding via direct instruction, guided practice and feedback related to strategies that support learning to read nonfiction text.

Lack of opportunity to interact with nonfiction as suggested by studies by Duke, (2000); Moss & Newton (2002) and Moss (2008), who found that there was less than a 20 percent presence of nonfiction text in primary grades and findings indicating a sizable gap in the amount of nonfiction text used for read-alouds as compared to fiction text (Yopp & Yopp, 2000; Jacobs, Morrison & Swinyard, 2000) may have contributed to limited prior knowledge relative to text features. These data are supported by the informal discussions with the teachers of these

participants, who suggested that fiction text was used most often and that there was little in the way of varied instructional strategies for fiction and nonfiction text.

Research with pre-school age children has indicated the facility of young children to successfully interact with nonfiction text (Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1984). Additionally, studies of first grade children and younger have shown that young children have the capacity to successfully interact with nonfiction text (Kamil & Lane 1997; Duke, & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Bortnem, 2008). Therefore, insufficient exposure to nonfiction text and lack of accompanying instruction could offer possible explanations for these results. However, because I did not measure the exact amount of text types present in classrooms used for instruction during the school year, nor to what degree that instruction may have occurred, this explanation must remain a speculation.

I can only conjecture as to other reasons why more participants did not outperform or equally perform while reading nonfiction and fiction texts. One reason may be related to choice in the selection of the text they read in this study. Participants were provided with texts by the researcher without being given the opportunity to choose from an assortment of titles. As motivation and interest play a key role in reading (Krapp, Hidi, & Renniger, 1992), having to read a text that was not of interest may have hampered their success. Bryce is an example supporting this as he was the participant with the highest nonfiction retelling score, and he mentioned in the post-interview that he liked the nonfiction book more than the fiction. This may have influenced participants' ability to unravel the meaning of the text as will be discussed in the next section. This adds to the findings of researchers such as McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad, & Bourg, (2000), who found that with undergraduates, interest affects the quality of learning that occurs and therefore may affect the extent to which processing strategies assist memory.

Learning is affected by interest in the determination of "how we select and persist in processing certain types of information in preference to others" (Hidi, 1990, p. 549).

Fiction versus Nonfiction Text after Reading

A second purpose of this study was to determine if there would be differences in the reader's comprehension of the two genres. The measure of this was established through retellings which provide a venue for readers to reconstruct text that they have read. While comprehension cannot be fully represented, retellings provide evidence of the reader's comprehension and offer the opportunity to present what elements of story or text have been comprehended. While it has been demonstrated that young children are able to interact successfully with nonfiction text, it has also been demonstrated that the greater their schemata the better able they are to interact successfully (Pappas, 1993). Activating schemata for text structure and content allows the reader to develop a meaningful explanation and understanding of the text. The more experience one has with a genre, it would follow that comprehension would be greater in that genre.

In keeping with the findings stated in the review of the literature asserting that more often children exhibit stronger comprehension for fiction over nonfiction as a result of greater competence in that domain (Allington, 1977; 1980), the retelling scores of the readers in my study indicated that comprehension was greater after reading the more familiar fiction text. This was also in keeping with the processing results while reading.

The research of Moss, Leone, and DiPillo (1997) and Kamil and Lane (1997) suggest that young children could learn to successfully comprehend nonfiction text as well as fiction text. My study aligned with those findings to a degree in that some participants demonstrated

successful comprehension with nonfiction text although not as strong as comprehension of fiction text. These results suggest that additional work needs to be done with nonfiction text. Because fiction and nonfiction text are comprised of different structures (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983), it would follow that the ability to successfully interact with each genre would depend upon opportunities to establish schema for each. It is well-established that fictions are comprised of an established structure (e.g., Anderson & Armbuster, 1984; Meyer, 1985) with which children are familiar at an early age. This may have influenced more fluid and complete and sequentially articulated renditions of what was read as evidenced in most fiction retellings.

However, that is not the case with nonfiction text structure, which is more variable (Cote, Goldman, & Saul, 1998). Not only were nonfiction retelling scores lower than fiction scores in this study, it was necessary to ask participants probing questions more often during their nonfiction retellings than fiction retellings to obtain additional information. This is similar to the research of Romero, Paris, & Brem, (2005) who found that, with fourth grade participants, structural differences may have been a factor in differences in comprehension after reading fiction and nonfiction text, with fiction comprehension the stronger of the two.

Another factor that may have influenced stronger fiction retellings has to do with inferences. Making inferences has been established as a way to enhance comprehension of text (Narvaez, 2000). Research has shown that inferences are evoked to a greater degree by fiction text than nonfiction text (Britton, Van Dusen, Glynn, & Hemphill, 1990). This is based on familiarity and experience interacting with fiction text which are used more often to teach children to read, and because fiction text presents a more familiar structure, based on the fact that fiction reflects the construction of everyday life events, experiences learning to read using fiction text are more plentiful, and because nonfiction text have more variable structures. Contrary to

what that research indicates, the participants in this study, while active in their reading, did not include many inferences in their retellings. This may have been a result of lack of understanding of what an inference is and limited opportunities to practice making inferences or observing inference-making during teacher modeling. Their metacognitive awareness of this strategic behavior and when and how to utilize it, may indeed not exist.

While there was a distinct difference between the fiction and nonfiction retelling scores, these findings must be interpreted with caution for a number of reasons. First, there was only one interaction with one text of each genre. Second, retelling as a classroom practice was only mentioned by one participant in the post-interview and that was in the context of fiction text. Therefore, retelling, in general, may not be a process with which these children are familiar and their past experiences engaging in retelling nonfiction text specifically may be limited, thereby potentially influencing the results. Third, Cain & Oakhill, (1998) point out that inferences are influenced by prior knowledge and these participants may have had limited background information from which to draw regarding the nonfiction texts they read, again potentially influencing their ability to fill in gaps of knowledge.

The Discrepancy between Males and Females

The data analysis revealing that participants read fiction text with greater success than nonfiction substantiates the literature in the field suggesting, that for multiple reasons, students show greater competence while reading fiction text (Heath, 1982; Stallman & Pearson, 1990; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Duke, 2000). However, this study generated an additional dynamic by pointing out that when comparing the fiction and nonfiction reading of males and females, there was more consistency in the male's reading and greater discrepancy in the female's reading of the two genres.

The difference that emerged between the reading scores of males and females underscores the thinking that over the years, from a cultural perspective, there has been a distinct influence on gender. It has been suggested that even though they may be in the same class, reading the same book, interacting with the same teacher; females and males may walk away with different educational learning experiences (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). This may be explained in part when examining how gender is socialized within a school setting.

Societies have prescribed various activities and attitudes to males and females, and reading has been viewed by society as a female role (McKenna, 1997). Elementary schools traditionally are characterized by a feminine environment, generally populated by female teachers and administrators. Women, who have been stereotyped themselves, continue these gender stereotypes by imposing them on the females and males they teach (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). These teacher dispositions influence how this 'hidden curriculum' is enacted and although they may be subconscious, serve to work against gender equity (Best, 1983). This was the case in the school that these participants attended. During the time leading up to and including the onset and completion of this study, all staff was female; this included the teachers from the classrooms of the participants, their Kindergarten and first grade teachers, the Literacy Coach who assessed them, the principal and assistant principal, as well as all single subject teachers.

Stereotyping is perpetuated through tolerance of different behaviors for males (boys will be boys), and teachers nudging females in the direction of a 'feminine ideal' by showering praise for being quiet, neat, and composed. Additionally, research (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Marshall & Reihartz, 1997) confirms that males are provided more opportunities to extend ideas, be independent thinkers and to be more animated in their demeanor than females. Thus cultural stereotyping suggests to females that the expectation is for them to be passive and conforming.

In this case, female participants may have done just that, by meeting a self-imposed need to reproduce text exactly as written as shown in their higher grammatical scores. In this way, they may have felt as though they were conforming to the wishes of the teacher and sustaining an expected academic demeanor.

Further, many educators consider literacy as being influenced by varied social customs with differences from context to context that are impacted by diverse values, variable practices, and the way in which literacy is taught, mediated, and learned (Clay, 1993). These cultural contexts, as Luke (1994) suggests, not only shape responses to text but often create a sexual partitioning of literacy. This is sanctioned and strengthened by marketing and cultural conventions and imposed by schools, thus contributing to the influences of what males and females read and why, of interaction with one genre more than another and of how reading is viewed by gender.

This may have been a contributing factor to the discrepancy between the scores of males and females. Males may have been offered more opportunities to read nonfiction texts than females, teachers may have inadvertently suggested that males read nonfiction and females read fiction, and even parents could have played an unintentional role in creating and supporting biased suppositions that sons would like nonfiction books and daughters would prefer fiction when purchasing books for their children, helping them pick out books in a library, or selecting books to read to them at bedtime. Of note is that all of the participants in this study except two, one boy and one girl, mentioned in their pre-reader interview that either their mom or (step)dad helped them learn to read, read to them, or helped them select the books that they read.

Males then may have been placed at an advantage with respect to increased access to nonfiction text and as Kamil & Lane (1997) suggest, extended opportunities to interact with a

genre results in greater success interacting with that genre. In addition, it is common when parents read nonfiction text with their children, there is greater cognitively demanding conversation such as questions, rephrasing, or encouragement to recount concepts, thereby serving to build and support critical thinking (Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, and Brody, 1990).

Skewed equity comes into play because both males and females are exposed to fiction-heavy reading books in language arts classes (Duke, 2000). However, while they both have an equal opportunity to interact with fiction texts, when considering the aforementioned influences and opportunities for males to interact with nonfiction texts to a greater degree, then males may benefit more broadly. Therefore, these may have been factors influencing the results that showed more consistency in the males' reading scores of each genre and the greater discrepancy in the results of females.

Semantically Acceptable Sentences That Were Not Recalled in the Retellings

The pattern of multiple, high quality sentences from which participants did not recall details in their retellings was prevalent in both genres. These were referred to as semantically acceptable but not recalled sentences. While there were fewer semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences relevant to the retelling guide in fiction than nonfiction, they were present in both.

With respect to fiction retellings, one possible explanation could be that semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences in the first third of the fiction text may have occurred because meaning here is more foundational to the development of background details important to building the storyline and to the development of understandings of setting, problems and characters in the story. As such, these may not have had the same importance placed on them by readers as do sentences that follow relating more of the unfolding of the plot.

In addition, some sentences offer background information relevant to the major event in the story. A case in point is when the lifeguard explains why she learned to put her head under water to Sonya, the main character, to allay her fear of the water. The *outcome* of this background information may have seemed more relevant to the reader and therefore was recalled and included in the retelling. Other examples include areas of the text which describe the scene rather than hold the action of the story. While these sentences may have been read and understood, these young readers may not have realized the relevance of the description to the development of the plot and therefore omitted any references to these sections of the text.

The greater frequency of semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences out of sentences deemed relevant in the retelling guide in nonfiction text may be attributed to many factors. First, all sentences are not important and would not necessarily be included in a retelling. In addition, the density of information in the nonfiction texts along with the variety of topics presented may have been a primary cause of not recalling such a wide range of details.

Along with this, unlike fiction text that presents the text in a fluid fashion moving from beginning to middle to end, one part scaffolding the next, the nonfiction texts in this study presented several short sections addressing different elements of information. As such, the concepts within each section were not fully developed or explained. Therefore, even if the student could produce a semantically acceptable sentence, there may have been little opportunity for a context to be established to sustain ongoing meaning-making, and there may have been little background knowledge upon which to build understandings (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Pressley, 2000). In addition, not everything is recalled by any one reader and one factor or multiple factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and geography may influence what is and is not recalled (Smith, 2006).

The higher number of semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences was consistent in all sections of nonfiction. This can be seen when looking at Brionna's reading in the section entitled, "The Hunt". Sentence numbers 55, 56, 60, and 61 contained information that could have been used in the retelling. Sentences 55 thru 61 were semantically acceptable, yet these were semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences, so although she was able to read them she did not include information from them in her retelling. This was true for Alexis, whose sentences 11-17 in *The Navajo Way* were all semantically acceptable*;* however, sentences 11, 12, 13, 15, and 17 all contained information relevant to the retelling guide, but were not recalled. Faced with unfamiliar topics, an abundance of factual material and uncommon structures may have been influencing factors. Too, they may have thought the information was unimportant, perhaps were unable to comprehend it, simply did not remember it due to the amount of new information continually being presented, or chose not to include it.

As has been stated, typically there has been a dearth of opportunities for young readers to interact with nonfiction and to not only learn to recognize the differing demands of each genre, but to establish strategies to become purposeful and intentional in their nonfiction text reading (Duke & Pearson, 2002). As suggested by the RMI data that points to better comprehending than comprehension, lacking the know-how to monitor understanding, access and apply appropriate prior knowledge, ascertain and attend to text structure, draw inferences, or determine purpose and importance may have resulted in simple word-calling more frequently in nonfiction text. Lacking the competence and dispositions to read this more complex genre then, it would be more difficult to establish and sustain comprehension in nonfiction text than fiction. The semantically acceptable, but not recalled sentences could both reflect this and represent the essence of Rosenblatt's (2005) message, "… perhaps we should say that the symbols take meaning from the

intellectual and emotional context the reader provides" (p. 63). It is the past experience and current understandings of each individual reader that determine how a particular text is understood and realized.

Sentence Clusters

A final theme that emerged was that there were multiple sentences from which two or more participants drew information utilized in the retelling referred to as 'sentence clusters.' A sentence cluster is defined as one sentence or a grouping of consecutive sentences from which participants included details in their retellings. Clusters could not be created if only one participant read a text. This pattern held true for participants reading fiction and nonfiction texts, texts at the same and different levels, and across gender. The following addresses possible reasons why sentence clusters more frequently occurred in nonfiction than fiction and reasons for the prevalence of clusters in both genres.

There are many factors that can be considered. Details extracted from common areas could demonstrate that subjects agreed about what to include in their retellings. It could also indicate that these areas represented sections about which subjects were in agreement as to what to include in the retellings. Further, it could reveal their knowledge of text structure, their content knowledge, or both or neither. It is also possible that those sentences had simpler grammatical forms.

Prior knowledge could also have been an influencing factor regarding the areas from which participants included details in their retellings. While in the case of this study there is no way to measure to what extent prior knowledge impacted comprehension, the sentence clusters seem to reflect that this was a contributing source. I believe that a factor as to why participants drew details included in their retellings from shared areas or clusters may have been based upon

common understandings that could have been elicited from life experiences, as in the first section of *A Pack of Wolves,* titled Meet the Gray Wolf. The initial source of information for the retellings came from sentence number 8 containing a reference to the fact that wolves were related to dogs (*Wolves are the largest member of the dog family*). Each participant included that information in their retelling and may well be an example of participants having prior knowledge with which to connect and remember what they read or that they identified important information based on text structure.

Other instances were found throughout this text. One example is found in sentence 54, which was related to the wolf pack hunting and killing prey. (*Sometimes one wolf goes for the throat while others grab the rear legs.*) Inclusion of this information might have been based upon prior knowledge that could have been garnered from sources including television shows or movies. Further support that participants evoked information that seemed to be based on prior knowledge was that they included information consistently from the section entitled, Parenting: A Group Effort. While replete with information, as were the other sections, participants recollected information from this section with the greatest success with multiple clusters of sentences occurring in this section. One hypothesis as to why this was so could be that they related to themselves being cared for by their mother and family as were the wolf pups, or perhaps they had experience caring for a pet. While prior knowledge is a consideration as an influencing factor, the influence of text structure, easier grammatical structures or vocabulary need to be taken into account although they were not examined in this study.

In the fiction text *Cry Foul,* multiple participants included details from sentences 37-38. This cluster may have been included because it referred to the character getting hurt while

playing a game, and they may have been able to extract meaning based on their own experience playing and injuring themselves.

The fact that readers typically drew information from the same areas is perhaps related to the fact that these clusters contained details that allowed them to build on their prior understandings; knowledge that seemed to be familiar to most participants. It also could have been related to the texts themselves, as there were clusters from which information was recalled and conversely, there were common areas that could be considered clusters from which no information was recalled. This cannot be confirmed as only a text analysis would provide that specific information as to what in the text may have affected this.

I would also argue that because there was an abundance of information presented in each nonfiction text, not only may participants have had less knowledge of such an array of facts upon which to build new understandings, but the breadth of details may have proven too overwhelming for the readers to interact with and successfully establish meaning on such a broad scale; rather they had to focus on specific areas. Moreover, certain areas may have presented information that would be common for children this age to know through experiences with television shows, movies, or school discussions, and these common understandings may be represented in the clusters.

This can be coupled with the facts that the topics tended to be removed from typical everyday life, vocabulary was specific to the content presented, there was unconnected text, and the sheer density of information could have resulted in cognitive overload. Any or all of these reasons may offer an explanation as to why there were clusters of sentences from which multiple readers drew information while other areas of the text did not resonate with the readers. Not only did the nonfiction texts present multiple facts and concepts, but with so much information

being presented readers may not have had the opportunity to think about everything they were reading and integrate all of that information with what they already knew. The areas in which clusters occurred, in both text types seemed to provide an opportunity for participants to extend the meaning of the text by making connections to their personal experiences or other texts they may have read or to which they have listened. These clusters then may have been comprised of commonly held understandings.

Clearly, the format of nonfiction reading materials differs from fiction. In general, these books contain more pictures and visuals to help the reader understand the concepts within and to enhance interest. As a matter of fact, much information may be located within these features. Research on illustrations indicates that they can enhance comprehension, but only if the text explicitly refers to the illustrations, if they do not pose a distraction, and if the illustrations are relevant to what is being read by offering a connection between text and illustrations (Andrews, Scharff, & Moses, 2002). Another study concluded that although associated illustrations and text may be useful, illustrations may also require additional working memory to be put into play, thereby interfering with reading (Gyselinck & Tardieu, 1999).

It is difficult to determine if visual support played a consistent role in scaffolding comprehension or activating background knowledge in either genre and influencing details to be recalled from sentence clusters, which sometimes occurred where there was visual support and sometimes did not. This is an area where eye movement data may have confirmed or disconfirmed how much visual representations may have impacted comprehension. This would be based on the fact that eye movement decisions are directly related to the cognitive processes occurring that direct the eye movements necessary to obtain the visual information needed for language processing to take place from the printed page (Paulson, 2000; Duckett, 2001).

Therefore, it is not known how much attention they paid to the accompanying illustrations and/or photographs, and there was no specific reference made to them by any participant. For example, in the section of *A Pack of Wolves,* entitled The Hunt, there was a photograph depicting three wolves chasing some buffalo. A sentence cluster (49-50) relevant to this photo was established with details included in the retelling by all participants but one.

The final section of *A Pack of Wolves*, entitled Protecting Wolves, did not serve as a significant source of recalled information, although there was a picture beneath the text of the first page of this section. The picture, showing a man letting a wolf out of a cage, did not directly represent the text, thus supporting the above-mentioned research of Andrews, Scharff, and Moses (2002). The caption identified what was happening in the picture, but only Alan read captions aloud and he did not include any information from this section in his retell. Others may have read the captions silently, but that seems unlikely given the absence of quiet that would indicate silent reading and the pause in reading that would accompany it. The next page included a map, located below the text, depicting states where wolves are protected, but map reading skills would be necessary to garner information from that text feature. Again, readers did not read this aloud. This was an area in which no sentence clusters occurred.

The point of this study was to discover if there were differences while reading, in subsequent comprehension after reading, and perceptions of fiction and nonfiction text, but as a result of analyzing the data, the unexpected patterns that emerged proved to produce additional and perhaps unexplored areas of interest for future research. Because of the small population involved in this study, readers should be cautioned regarding the generalizability of these results. This will be explained in the limitations of this study.

Limitations

There are several limitations that should be considered regarding the relevance of these findings and subsequent applicability to instructional settings. First, the group investigated represented a small number of males and females. Therefore it is the case that power to detect effects is limited. Not only were the numbers small, but the children were all African-American students and the study was conducted with participants from two classrooms of one school. This raises questions of the generalizability of the findings to other contexts and populations.

While the teachers in this study were referenced, observations and in-depth interviews could have confirmed the perceptions they shared. Also, it is not clear how much of their instruction was based on the basal series provided to them by the district. While many basal series purport to address teaching strategies in a variety of genres, this may or may not be accurate in this instance. Further, basals typically do not attend to the developmental needs of all students, and there is no way to measure the quantity or quality of this instruction. Additionally, the study did not examine the impact of past curriculum and the instructional quality of past teaching practices in Kindergarten and grade one that may have impacted the participants' responses.

A final limitation is that resource constraints restricted materials available for use in this study. There were a limited number of books available at the corresponding levels and of similar lengths. This may have influenced motivation and interest which have been designated as key factors in reading achievement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). For some, the texts may not have been considered engaging and the lack of choice in books made available for the participants, and the inability to make a selection should be considered a limitation. In addition, the levels of

the books used and the ways in which the progression of difficulty were determined by the Pearson Company were not taken into account.

Implications of This Study

The results of this study led to the following implications as they relate to educational considerations.

The discrepancy of female scores between fiction and nonfiction data and consistency of male scores between fiction and nonfiction data suggest that it may be warranted to pay more attention to the developmental and neurological differences between males and females and how those differences affect literacy development. Neurologist Richard Restak asserts that fundamental differences exist between the female and male brain (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1994, p. 65). Therefore school-based actions addressing gender differences should be examined along with how gender differences are linked to broader social and educational issues. Mead, (2006) suggests that given these complex interactions, a single-focus approach should be avoided, and instead, all areas should be investigated and involve all stake-holders. Administrators should become informed and provide pertinent information via relevant professional development opportunities while evaluating school culture, gender differences, and brain differences. Teachers should become informed about these gender-related issues and incorporate varied classroom strategies addressing these differences in learning. In addition, policymakers should evaluate school and district policies with a focus on elimination of gender bias and development of a conducive environment for learning for all constituents.

The results of this study showed that participants had more success reading fiction than nonfiction. This could be due to limited interaction with nonfiction books as suggested by the research of this well-documented concern in primary classrooms (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Duke,

2000; Moss, 1995; Pappas, 1991, 1993, 1997). Increasing accessibility would not only be prudent but may serve a dual purpose; first by allowing more reading instructional time using nonfiction text and second by providing additional independent nonfiction reading time. Added instructional time allowing children to interact with multiple genres on a regular basis would serve to develop an awareness of the variations inherent in each. Doing so would support the ability to judiciously utilize the information available from each of the cueing systems to make meaning in a variety of text types. This would also maximize the opportunities for and benefits of teachers modeling various comprehension strategies and for students to practice and monitor them. It would also expose children to a wider range of rich language that could support vocabulary development (Purcell-Gates & Duke, 2001).

The resolution of the paucity of nonfiction text would make more of the genre available for independent reading. Interacting independently with more nonfiction text may serve to broaden the scope of background knowledge that could be developed on various informational topics thereby aiding better understanding of what is read (Pressley, 2000). Extending that interaction to collaboration with peers, provides opportunities for social interaction, encourages questions to be explored, and expands occasions for discourse to occur which may assist students in determining word meanings in new vocabulary found in nonfiction texts (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; Pressley, 2000). Such conversations can support students in revaluing themselves and developing a wider range of strategies. Because students now live in a world where the need to actively consume as well as evaluate information becomes imperative, earlier contact offers more occasions to evaluate truth-value and solve problems (Kamil & Lane, 1997).

Introducing nonfiction text earlier in a child's school literacy experiences is one more avenue to broaden access over time. To do so seeds critical thinking, lays a foundation for

concept development, and addresses children's interest, thus motivating them to want to read (Caswell & Duke, 1998). Doing so at the pre-school and kindergarten levels through read-alouds provides a powerful venue in which to immerse children in learning new words, develop word knowledge that enhances vocabulary acquisition, and develop listening comprehension (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). This is also associated with increased achievement (Sulzby & Teale, 2003) thereby developing a stronger foundation for learning to read. Read-alouds using informational text can extend these opportunities and as studies have shown, a collateral benefit may be that children will more often select informational text as an independent reading choice once they have had it read aloud to them (Dreher, 2000).

Awareness and monitoring of one's cognitive processes are essential aspects of skilled reading (Alexander & Jetton, 2000). Oftentimes, the participants in this study talked about knowledge of multiple strategies, when in fact, it was not apparent that the strategies mentioned were used. Once it is established that students believe they know multiple strategies, it would be prudent to determine whether or not they enact the strategies they suggest they use. This would in turn lead to more responsive, productive teaching, in particular for those students with a weak strategic repertoire. Teachers must not assume that effective and appropriate strategies will be naturally acquired, transferred across genres or applied correctly. Therefore, building in sufficient time to provide students with opportunities to articulate, clarify, and reflect on knowledge and awareness of nonfiction reading strategies would be beneficial.

Along with this are the demands of the 21st century which require students to establish and teachers to address a broader strategic awareness. There is a need to become cognizant of applying nonfiction strategies in multiple venues. Attentiveness to strategy application in

alternative forms of nonfiction media, including Web 2.0 technologies, rather than limiting it to linear models of text such as books must be taken into account.

In this study, different book levels were used with respect to fiction and nonfiction text and this influenced the results as shown in the data analysis. This evidence is important in that it suggests that reading levels need to be considered when assessing the appropriateness of content textbooks. As children move up in grade levels and are required to interact with these texts, text analysis will be critical to know the true reading level of any given textbook. A science book, for example, designated for third grade may not be an appropriate match for all third grade students to successfully navigate and comprehend. As demonstrated in this study, students reading a lower level nonfiction text than the level designated as their fiction instructional level were more successful. This then points to the need for consideration of assignment of students to a textbook well-matched to their reading needs (Moss, 2005).

Future Research

There is much left to learn regarding reading instruction in the primary grades. Because fiction reading proved to be more successfully accomplished than nonfiction, this study points to a need to look at instructional practice as it relates to teaching students how to successfully interface with and make meaning from nonfiction text and determine the most effective pedagogical practices. By extending the vision of what constitutes text beyond narrative, research in how to most effectively expand the instructional repertoire of primary teachers is an area to be studied. Targeting techniques with respect to guiding students toward successful interaction with informational text is imperative. Additionally, determining the most effective ways to professionally develop teachers in becoming adept at teaching children to read and make meaning during informational text reading is essential. Oftentimes, teachers are resistant to

moving out of their comfort zones and using new instructional approaches. As Duffy (1993) argues, a prerequisite to developing metacognitive readers is to cultivate metacognitive teachers. Future research needs to determine what will be the most effective ways to effectuate change in teacher dispositions toward improved practice.

In this study it was not clear if participants utilized text features to gain meaning. Eye movement research, which offers a viable system to reframe current hypotheses as to how young children interact with text, could offer a view into if and how early readers use text features as they read nonfiction text and offer a base from which to determine adjustments that may be necessary in teaching techniques. Eye movement research could underscore the value of explicitly pointing out print as children listen to fiction and nonfiction books being read to them and the effects that may have on comprehension. Since the participants in this study were all from the second grade and with similar reading levels, selecting students with different reading levels and from different grades would add to the data. Data from eye movement / miscue analysis (EMMA) studies could supply evidence with respect to how readers of different ages use illustrations and print when reading nonfiction text.

Expanding research addressing gender differences is warranted, as in this study the discrepancy between males and females was prominent when comparing fiction and nonfiction reading. Because classrooms are microcosms of society, reflecting both its strengths and weaknesses, it follows that the normal socialization patterns of young children that often lead to distorted perceptions of gender roles are reflected in the classroom (Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, & Shapiro, 2007). Expanding research addressing gender bias and stereotyping would extend the knowledge base of how these constructs may affect learning.

This study suggests that participants may not have been adept at retelling, and suggests directions for future research using retelling procedures. Since there was a tendency for males to summarize while females tended to produce more details, looking into strategies and pedagogical approaches that might address the differential of males and females could prove fruitful. Additionally, future research should look at the impact background knowledge and various nonfiction text structures have on retelling as well as if and how instructional practices influence fiction compared to nonfiction retelling success.

Finally, participants read pre-selected texts with no personal choice involved in the topic or story read, and this may have been a factor influencing the results of this study. Future research should examine data produced when participants are provided with an opportunity to self-select stories and topics that spark interest and raise engagement. Such an opportunity offers inherently engaging materials and could provide a broader view on the connection between motivation and reading achievement.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that there is a difference in reading processes, comprehension and perceptions of reading fiction and nonfiction text. Over the years, educators have essentially been myopic in their thinking that learning to read must be centered in fiction text (Duke, 2000). In order to shift that trajectory to one of competence while interacting with nonfiction text, there are many factors that must occur. It is our responsibility to develop strategic and purposeful readers who are competent in all genres. We have to discover ways to establish dispositions and the wherewithal in both children and teachers to be successful in this teaching and learning process. This is both a challenging and exciting dilemma.

Children need to engage in multiple text types to a greater extent beginning in the primary years so they can learn to read for multiple purposes and enact strategies for different purposes at different times. If they are not provided with extended opportunities to both engage with nonfiction text and be instructed in the most efficacious ways to do so, then we set them on a course for academic failure. Children need to not only have additional opportunities to interact with nonfiction text, but consistent with that exposure, explicit instructional strategies need to be taught to help them become competent consumers of nonfiction text. We must spread the word that young children can indeed learn to read using nonfiction text and that it is not only necessary, indeed it is detrimental, to withhold this genre until children are *reading to learn*. Students need to be provided with a mental roadmap that will guide them to achieving levels of proficiency.

The demands of the 21st century require that teachers become cognizant of changes that need to occur and how to put those changes into effect. Digital technologies of the 21st century place new and different demands on young readers. No longer is text simply presented in the typical book form. While reading books is no less important, the notion of what constitutes literacy presents a widened scope and alters the characteristics of literacy as we know it. Children must become facile in reading online, non-linear, formats. Educators and researchers need to discover the best ways for children to access text while building comprehension in these varying formats, so that it can be embedded in the teaching and learning process as early in the primary grades as possible. New formats may demand new skill sets which may require the ability to read and comprehend in collaboration with others and develop skills in evaluating information for truth value, credibility and relevance. It is imperative to discover what is needed

to propel our students to become adept at responding to literacy demands of multiple genres in multiple modalities.

Because most of what is read outside of school is nonfiction, teachers should be encouraged to diversify their classrooms libraries by incorporating and making available to children more high-quality nonfiction text. They need to establish compelling, authentic reasons for children to use informational text. Rather than simply reading a book to answer the questions at the end of the chapter, teachers need to encourage children to read for inquiry and pique their interests so as to motivate them to want to discover what the text holds.

Children, teachers and parents must move away from the normative concept of what girls and boys like and do to an expectation of what both boys and girls *need* to be able to do in the 21st century. They need to help youngsters realize that they need not be constrained by cultural mores that may slot them into ways of being, but that they have access to all resources and each of them has a valid and appropriate right to that access (Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, & Shapiro, 2007).

Finally, to accomplish all of this, teachers need to be provided with the moral imperatives to engage in transformative approaches that embrace new learning opportunities. They need to understand why, early in their academic lives, children need to interact with many genres. Broadening this scope suggests the need to instill in students an understanding of the need to and the *right* to think critically about text and move away from thinking that is created *for* them and unknowingly perpetuated *by* them. Teachers need support to move from the traditions of the past and into legitimizing new conditions and pedagogy for the future. This is essential as the 21st century demands that our students become agents in the process of their thinking and learning; that they develop into thinkers and creators of what is possible and not be limited to what is.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER INTERVIEW

Do you have a classroom library?

Please describe the books in your classroom library.

Please describe the books you use for guided reading.

Please describe the books you typically use for read-alouds.

What genre studies do you do with your class?

Please describe how you balance your reading instruction.

How do you encourage vocabulary development in your classroom?

Please describe the comprehension strategies you teach to your students.

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARENTS (Copy for HIC Application)

16299 Mt.Vernon
Southfield, MI. 48075

Date Mailed

Dear Parents/Guardian:

I would like to invite your child, (insert name) to participate in a study I will be conducting at McIntyre Elementary School as part of my doctoral studies in Reading, Language, and Literature. If you are interested, please attend an nonfiction session on (insert date and time) at McIntyre Elementary School. This is the same location that your child attends school.

The study is entitled "Looking at a More Comprehensive Picture of Reading as Enacted by Second-Grade Readers." I am interested in exploring the differences in reading comprehension and reading processes as children read fiction and nonfiction books. The study will consist of attending two sessions for one half hour each. Participants will read texts orally. They will then retell what they have read to me orally.

There are no known risks for participating in this study, and there may be no direct benefits to your child; however information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

Thank you for your consideration to allow your child to participate in this study. If you would like to attend the information session, please contact me at (248) 668-1925. You may leave a message at for me to call you back. I can also be reached by e-mail at lopata-prosperig@southfield.k12.mi.us. I can also be reached by phone at 248-668-1925.

Sincerely,

Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi

APPENDIX C

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

To voluntarily agree to allow your child to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to allow your child to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant/Legally Authorized Representative	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant/ Authorized Representative	Time
_____	_____
**Signature of Witness (When applicable)	Date

_____	_____
Printed Name of Witness	Time
_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Time

** Use when participant has had consent form read to them (i.e., illiterate, legally blind, translated into foreign language).

APPENDIX D

PARENTAL PERMISSION / RESEARCH INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Study: Looking at a More Comprehensive Picture of Reading As Enacted by Second-Grade Students

Principal Investigator (PI): Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi
6541 Crest Top Dr.
248-668-1925

Purpose

You are being asked to allow your child to be in a research study of reading comprehension of fiction and nonfiction text, because he/she has been in attendance in the same second grade classroom for the entire school year and is reading below grade level.

This study is being conducted at Wayne State University and McIntyre Elementary School in Southfield, Michigan, where the principal investigator, Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi will be conducting this study. The estimated number of study participants at the proposed site is about 12. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

In this research study, there will be a comparison made of how children read stories and nonfiction books. The purpose is to discover if there are differences in how the children read these books and if there are differences in their comprehension of these books. The resulting information will provide information for teachers to use in the future to better prepare children to read each type of book successfully.

Study Procedures

If your child takes part in this study, he will be asked to read as part of his literacy block. Participants will engage in the following activities each session:

Read one book in each session.

Retell the story in his/her own words as if telling a friend who has never read the story before.

Participate in a reader interview.

The researcher will audiotape this oral reading and retelling and record notes at the same time.

For the retelling, participants may be asked to describe or explain events in the story or verbally respond to prompts about the story. These will address whether the participant is familiar with the issues in the story, familiar with the setting, etc. In the second session, the above will be repeated using a book, which will be a different genre than the first session. The participants will also be asked to respond to a reading interview prior to reading the first text and a reader's interview after each text has been read.

Benefits

There may be no direct benefits to you; however information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. For example, it may provide information that will help us make decisions about instructional strategies to use in the classrooms in this district.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Study Costs: Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You or your child will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about your child during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Your child will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies your child personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Human Investigation Committee (HIC) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.) may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child's identity. Audiotape recordings of your child will be used for research or educational purposes and your child's identity will be protected. The audiotapes will be kept in the primary investigator's office locked in a desk until they are no longer needed. At that time they will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to allow your child to take part in this study. You and/or your child are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw your child from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you or your child are entitled to receive.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi at the following phone number 248-668-1925. If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

To voluntarily agree to have your child take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to have your child take part in this study, you may withdraw them at any time. You are not giving up any of your or your child's legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____
Signature of Parent/ Legally Authorized Guardian	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Parent Authorized Guardian	Time
_____	_____
*Signature of Parent/ Legally Authorized Guardian	Date

_____	_____
*Printed Name of Parent Authorized Guardian	Time
_____	_____
**Signature of Witness (When applicable)	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Witness	Time
_____	_____
Oral Assent (children age 7-12) obtained by	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date
_____	_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Time
_____	_____
Signature of translator	Date

_____ _____

Printed name of translator Time

** Use when parent/guardian has had consent form read to them (i.e., illiterate, legally blind, translated into foreign language).

APPENDIX E

LOOKING AT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF READING AS ENACTED BY SECOND-GRADE STUDENTS

Assent Form

As a doctoral candidate in the Wayne State University Reading, Language, and Literature program, I am interested in studying how second grade students read texts. You can help me by reading two texts to me out loud and then telling me what you remember about those texts. One will be a story and the other will be an nonfiction text. You will be audiotaped as you read each text out loud and then retell it. You will also be interviewed before you read the texts and at the end of each reading. This interview will also be audiotaped. I am asking your permission to study the information from the readings, retellings and interviews. You must sign on the line below to show that you agree to take part in this study. If you choose to participate, you can later change your mind and withdraw from the study. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you this entire assent form and have had all your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature of student Date

_____ _____

Signature of witness Time

APPENDIX F

ORAL ASSENT SCRIPT

Title of Study: Looking at a More Comprehensive Picture of Reading As Enacted by Second-Grade Students

Why are you here?

This is a research study. Only people who choose to take part are included in research studies. You are being asked to take part in this study because of your participation in the reading program at _____ Elementary School as well as how old you are. Please take time to make your decision. Talk to your family about it and be sure to ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Why are they doing this study?

This study is being done to find out how boys and girls your age read fiction and nonfiction books, how boys and girls your age retell them in their own words based on your life experiences.

What will happen to you?

You will be interviewed and then asked to read a story and then retell it in your own words as if you were telling a friend about the book who has never heard it before. The next time you will be asked to read an nonfiction book and you will be asked to retell the book in your own words as if you were telling a friend about the book who has never heard it before.

How long will you be in the study?

You will be in the study for two one-hour sessions.

Will the study help you?

We cannot promise that you will benefit from this study, but the possible benefits are increased reading comprehension. Also, information from this study may help other readers and teachers understand the reading process in the future.

Will I get paid to be in the study?

Participants are not compensated in this study.

Do my parents know about this?

This study was explained to your parents/guardian and they said that you could be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

What about confidentiality?

Every reasonable effort will be made to keep your name confidential. You may help me choose a name to use in place of your real name so that I may write about this study without revealing your real name.

I will talk about this project, using the name you choose, at conferences. I will also use samples from the audiotapes of our reading sessions and discussions at public conferences, but I will use the name you choose rather than your real name.

What if I have any questions?

For questions about the study please call Glorianne Lopata-Prosperi at (248) 668-1925. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628.

Do I have to be in the study?

You don't have to be in this study if you don't want to or you can stop being in the study at any time. Please discuss your decision with your parents. No one will be angry if you decide to stop being in the study.

Your verbal agreement to be in this study means that you have heard the information just shared with you and you have had a chance to ask any questions that you might have.

Did participant give oral assent: Yes No

_____

Record Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Person obtaining Oral Assent Date

_____ _____

Print Name of Person obtaining Oral Assent Time

APPENDIX G

READER INTERVIEW

When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

Do you ever do anything else?

Who is a good reader you know?

What makes _____ a good reader?

If you know someone was having trouble reading how would you help that person?

What is the best thing you have ever read? Why did you like it?

What is the most difficult thing you have to read?

How did you learn to read?

What would you like to do better as a reader?

Do you think you are a good reader? Why?

How do you select the books you read?

APPENDIX H

POST-READER INTERVIEW

Which book did you like best?

Why?

What type of book do you enjoy reading the most?

What would you like to be able to do better when you read?

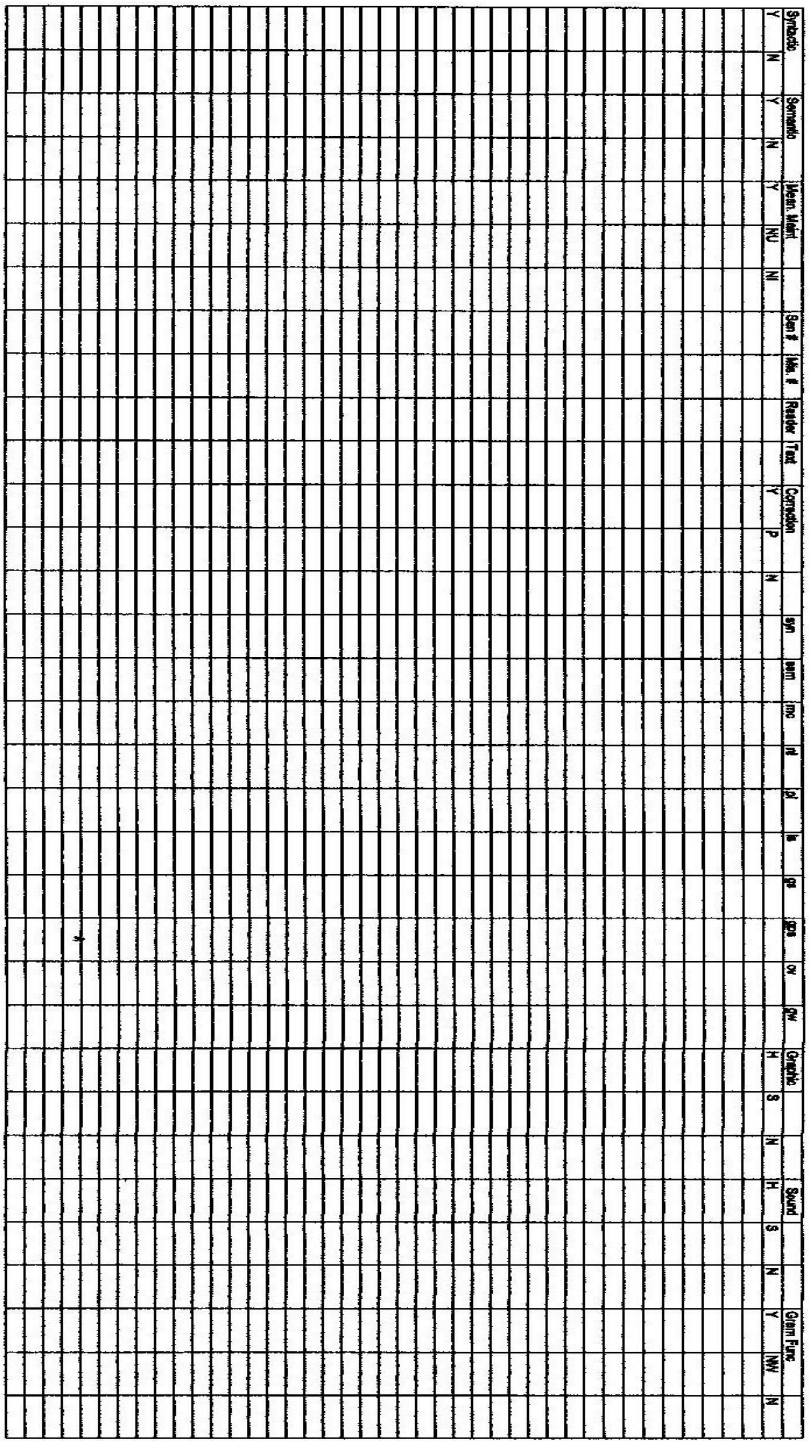
Did you have any problems while reading either book?

When you came to _____ how did you figure it out?

Did either book remind you of other books you have read?

APPENDIX I

MISCUE CODING FORM



APPENDIX J

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY TEXT TYPE

Descriptive Statistics by Text Type						
	Fiction			Nonfiction		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
No Loss	8	0.4275	0.136816	8	0.27646	0.063368
Grammatical Strength	8	0.38659	0.120657	8	0.25604	0.076557
Graphics	8	0.69705	0.120734	8	0.78752	0.077318
Syntax	8	0.80788	0.044726	8	0.72275	0.074659
Semantics	8	0.726	0.045494	8	0.6365	0.086581
Meaning Maintenance	8	0.7185	0.045972	8	0.637	0.081965
Retell	8	0.79625	0.126597	8	0.55125	0.159592
MPHW	8	5.41775	1.314333	8	7.32587	1.813393

APPENDIX K

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY LEVELS

Descriptive Statistics by Levels						
	Different			Same		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
No Loss	8	0.32988	0.112109	8	0.37234	0.147888
Grammatical Strength	8	0.30233	0.090179	8	0.3403	0.145608
Graphics	8	0.72314	0.124162	8	0.76144	0.094753
Syntax	8	0.79675	0.051291	8	0.73388	0.082615
Semantics	8	0.69887	0.064636	8	0.66362	0.096205
Meaning Maintenance	8	0.69688	0.06168	8	0.65863	0.089369
Retell	8	0.635	0.203751	8	0.7125	0.175642
MPHW	8	5.79637	1.624986	8	6.94725	1.923267

APPENDIX L

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY GENDER

Descriptive Statistics by Gender						
	Female			Male		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
No Loss	8	0.4013	0.162332	8	0.30091	0.057957
Grammatical Strength	8	0.36639	0.14132	8	0.27624	0.07445
Graphics	8	0.76955	0.706595	8	0.71503	0.132916
Syntax	8	0.77888	0.076264	8	0.75175	0.074017
Semantics	8	0.68062	0.104318	8	0.68188	0.057098
Meaning Maintenance	8	0.67825	0.097033	8	0.67725	0.056669
Retell	8	0.69875	0.222289	8	0.64875	0.157973
MPHW	8	6.82187	1.843434	8	5.92175	1.798657

APPENDIX M

RETELLING GUIDE
The Navajo Way

Specific Information
(50 points) ___

Largest native American group in the US	3
Navajos do the same things as people in other area listen to music watch TV shop at the mall go out to eat drive cars and trucks work and go to school enjoy sport	21
Many live on a reservation	4
Some have traditional jobs and some have modern jobs	
Some live in hogans and some live in modern housing	4
Legend Spider man showed them how to build a loom Spider woman showed them how to weave	6
Girls and women weave baskets	
Girls learn how to make pottery from mothers, aunts and grandmothers	4
Men and women make silver jewelry with turquoise	4
Code Talkers were Marines who made up a secret code and confused the enemy.	4

Generalizations
(25 points) ___

Navajo life reflects the past	12
Navajo life reflects the present.	13

Major Concepts
(25 points) ___

Navajo ways of living are still carried on 13

Navajo art is still made 12

Retelling

Specific Information ___

Generalizations ___

Major Concepts ___

Total Points ___

Inferences

Comments

APPENDIX N

RETELLING GUIDE
Cry Foul

Character Analysis: (40 points)
Recall (20 points)

Joseph	10
Ramon	10

Development (20 points)

Ramon	
Cousin of Joseph	*5*
Team captain	*5*
Joseph	
Just moved to America	*5*
Came secretly and had to be careful	*5*

Events (60 points)

Didn't want Joseph on his team	4
Ramon re-played yesterday's game over and over again	3
Was told he had to watch Marco for fouls	4
Gabe bounced ball to Joseph	3
Marco rammed his elbow into Joseph's face	3
Ramon yelled foul	3
Not a foul unless Joseph called the foul, but he wouldn't because he was afraid to cause trouble	5
Marco made another basket	3

The Stars wanted the new basketball in the next game because they were winners	3
Marco fouled Joseph, but he would not call the foul	4
Joseph faked Marco and leaped into the air and shot the ball	3
Marco slapped Joseph's arm, Joseph did not cry foul	4
Marco knocked Joseph to the ground and shot a basket and made it, but Joseph did not call foul	3
Ramon got more angry	3
Joseph called a foul on Ramon	4
He explained Joseph didn't have to worry about calling fouls so he wouldn't get sent back to Cuba	5
Ramon's team beat the Stars the next game	3

Points – character analysis ___
Points - events ___
Total Points ___

APPENDIX O

RETELLING GUIDE
All the Way Under

Character Analysis: (40 Points)

Recall (20 Points)

Sonya

Katie

Aunt Lisa

Uncle Jack

Development (20 Points)

Sonya
Afraid of the water
Learned not to be afraid

Katie
Loved the water
Teased Sonya
Aunt Lisa
Kind to Sonya

Uncle Jack
Drove to beach
Kind to Sonya

Events (60 points)

Katie invited Sonya to visit for a week	*5*
They went to the beach	*5*
Sonya was afraid of the water but didn't want to tell anyone	*5*
Sonya made up excuse not to go into the water	*5*
They both went into the water	*5*

Sonya thought an octopus grabbed her foot when a big wave came in 5

The wave kept her underwater 5

The lifeguard saved her 5

Sonya figured out it was seaweed, not an octopus 5

The lifeguard told her she use to be afraid of water and that she should learn to put her head underwater 5

The lifeguard taught her how to put her head under the water 5

Katie showed her how to surf the waves 5

She like the water now 5

Points – character analysis ___
Points – events ___
Total points ___

APPENDIX P

RETELLING GUIDE
A Pack of Wolves

Specific Information
(50 points)

9 out of 10 wolves are killed to protect cattle and pets	4
Largest member of the dog family	4
Curls its tail around nose for warmth	4
Can see and hear well	4
Wolves live in packs to kill large prey and to protect their land	6
They howl to keep the pack together	4
Wolves have an order; the leader hunts, divides food and settles fights	6
Pups are born deaf and blind	4
The whole pack takes care of the pups	4
Wolves are endangered and protected	6

Generalizations
(25 points)

Wolves live in packs to survive	12
Wolves need to be protected	13

Major Concepts
(25 points)

Wolves help to keep the balance of nature	12
Wolves know how to work together	13

Specific Information ___

Generalizations ___

Major Concepts ___

Total Points ___

Inferences

Comments

APPENDIX Q

RETELLING GUIDE
A Trip through Time

Character Analysis: (40 points)

Recall (20 points)

Rosa – 5

Hector – 5

Grandparents – 5

Cal and Sarah – 5

Development (20 points)

Rosa - modern Interested in kids from another time	5
Hector – modern Interested in kids from another time	5
Grandparents – Kind, old fashioned	5
Cal and Sarah – Pilgrims, played old games Like hide and seek	5

Events (60 points)

Rosa and Hector arrived at their grandparents	7
They found out that the grandparents had not computer DVD/VCR players or a TV	8
They went to the shed and discovered a sled	7
The sled spun around and took them back in time	7
They landed in Plymouth Colony and met 2 Pilgrims	8
They got back into the sled and it took them to a more recent time where they saw a girl with a hoop and stick and kids putting on a play	8
Then the sled took them back to their Grandparent's shed	7

They began to think they would have fun at their grandparents after all 8

Points – character analysis ___

Points – events ___

Total Points ___

APPENDIX R

RETELLING GUIDE
Let's See

Specific Information
(50 Points)

Many animals have more than 2 eyes and see things in different ways	8
A vulture can see food from 21/2 miles away	6
Eyes need light to see	5
Human eyes have many parts including cornea, pupil, iris, lens, retina, optic nerve	8
To see a tree, light hits the tree, bounces off and forms an upside down picture that the brain understands	8
Eyes adjust to let more or less light in	6
Glasses help fix problems with seeing well	4
You should take good care of your eyes - never look at the sun, wear goggles, and see a doctor	5

Generalizations
(25 points)

Eyes come in many shapes, sizes and colors	13
All eyes do the same thing – help people and animals see	12

Major Concepts
(25 points)

Many thing need to work together for eyes to see well	6
Eyes help you recognize people and objects	7
Eyes let you see movement	6
Eyes help you see far and near	6

Retelling

Specific Information ___

Generalizations ___

Major Concepts ___

Total Points ___

Inferences

Comments

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ABSTRACT

LOOKING AT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF READING AS ENACTED BY SECOND-GRADE READERS

by

GLORIA LOPATA-PROSPERI

December 2010

Advisor: Dr. Karen Feathers

Major: Reading, Language, and Literature

Degree: Doctor of Education

This study examined the reading of fiction and nonfiction text by second grade readers. A comparison of their reading processes, comprehension, and perceptions are highlighted. The study was conducted given the changing demands of reading in the 21st century and the current literacy experiences typically presented in elementary schools.

The study investigated three questions: For second-grade readers, some with more exposure to nonfiction text and some with less: 1) What are the differences, if any, in their reading processes? 2) What differences, if any, occur in their comprehension? and 3) What differences, if any, are there in participant's perceptions of their reading of fiction and nonfiction text? The procedures included analyzing Reading Miscue Inventories as well as retellings of fiction and nonfiction text by each participant as well as reader interviews.

The results demonstrated that processing was more deftly accomplished during fiction reading, that comprehension was greater after fiction reading and that participant's perceptions of their reading was not always consistent with their RMI and retelling scores. Additional patterns emerged showing males demonstrated more consistent scores than females between the

readings of one genre as compared to the other. Additionally, there were multiple, consecutive sentences that were semantically acceptable, but from which no information was included in the retellings. A final pattern surfaced indicating common areas of the text from which participants included information in their retellings.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

GLORIA LOPATA-PROSPERI

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

Ed.D., Reading, Language & Literature
Cognate: Administration & Supervision, Wayne State University (2010)
Education Specialist, Wayne State University, 1999
M.Ed. Elementary Education, Oakland University, 1992
Early Childhood (ZA) Endorsement, Oakland University, 1990
Bachelor of Science, Wayne State University, 1970

Professional Experience

Grants Administrator Bussey Center for Early Childhood Education,
2009 - present
Supervisor Literacy & Language Arts K-8, Social Studies, & Science, Southfield Public Schools, 2007-2009
Supervisor Literacy & Language Arts & ESL/ Bilingual K-12, Southfield Public Schools, 2004-2007
Reading Clinician, Brace-Lederle K-8, 1998-2004
Interim Principal, Brace-Lederle K-8, 1996
First Grade Teacher, Brace-Lederle, 1989 – 1998
Pre-K Head Start Teacher, Capt. Aruthur Roth Elementary School, 1971-1974
First Grade Teacher, Lincoln Elementary School, 1970-1971

Awards

Graduate-Professional Scholarship - Wayne State University	2003-2004
Graduate-Professional Scholarship - Wayne State University	2004-2005
Graduate-Professional Scholarship - Wayne State University	2005-2006
Outstanding Administrator - Southfield Partnerships	2010