The Effects of Parent-Child Read Aloud and Comprehension Activities on the Second
Grade Student's Comprehension Performance using the QAR Evaluation Method

Michelle Henry

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

School of Education
Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

December 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Vygotsky (1978) presented ideas influential to the "constructivist" approach to education. This approach included the "zone of proximal development," and defined what is essential for student's development of a higher cognitive ability in order to become self-motivated learners. His theory also directly relates to the research regarding the important role parent's reading with their children plays on their reading and comprehension ability. The literature review examines theories that discuss the effects of parents and children reading with each other and other variables that may influence success.

This quantitative and qualitative study looks at the effects that parent-child read aloud and comprehension activities have on students' reading comprehension performance. This case study looks at three volunteer parents and their children, surveyed their current activities, and then introduced the guidelines for the parent volunteers to follow when reading with their children over a three week period. Pre and post-tests were taken to evaluate the students' performance levels in comprehension. As research suggests, parent involvement plays an important role in a child's literacy development, which is a key to every student's academic success.
This project will provide information about how specific strategies taught to parents pertaining to reading and comprehension affects the student's comprehension success.

INTRODUCTION

As a new teacher, I began to notice this bright young man, Joseph always had a book on his desk or in his hand. When I asked him how often he read each day he replied by saying "All the time." I began to notice the habits of other students in class. During choice time, some students would also choose to read, others would draw or color, and others would play a game or socialize. I began making an informal anecdotal record of the habits and behaviors of the students during free choice times and compare how well the students who were "readers" scored on standardized language arts tests and formal reading assessment to those that chose other activities. I found that there was a positive correlation between reading and higher test scores. Of the 24 number of students in the class, those who chose to read more often during choice time scored higher on most standard achievement tests, where as those who never chose to read performed significantly lower.

During teacher conferences, I was able to have a more intimate dialogue with Joseph's father. I discovered that he and his wife were avid readers and spent hours reading before and after dinner, and on weekends. They often discussed what they were reading, as a family, which spurred Joseph's interest on a variety of topics.   He mentioned that from an early age, they read to their son and once the son could read, he would read to them. These parents were both college graduates with bachelor's degrees and both valued education. They were from a middle socioeconomic family and lived modestly.

In comparison, I reflected on my own personal experience and background and realized that reading was not modeled for me while growing up. I always struggled with reading and scored average, at best, on most assessments. Although my parents valued my education and encouraged me to get a college degree, they were not college graduates. Because of my parents, I placed a sense of value on education, which encouraged my academic aspirations.

I also reflected on my own experiences as a parent. I read to my own children from infancy and had them read to me until they wanted me to leave them alone. They are both above average students and score at grade level in reading assessments, but lack a love of reading. It appeared that they viewed reading as a task rather than a source of pleasure.

Now I question my role as a parent and as a teacher. With NCLB (No Child Left Behind, 2001), the focus has been placed on the role of schools and the state driven standards, which are supposed to make learning equal for all children. These policies do not consider the effects of the family on the child's cognitive development, nor do they equip educators to meet the needs of their students (Morrow &Young, 1997) and their families.

This research reflects my curiosity about parent involvement with their child's' reading. I intend to gain and share insights by reviewing the historical research, and carry out my own research project to add more understanding about programs that use specific strategies for reading and comprehension to guide parental involvement with their children..

Statement of Problem

Although the United States Federal "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB) of 2001 leaves the responsibility for increasing student reading achievement up to educators, to what extent does the real success of the student lie in the type of support provided by parents? As we look back into the history of educational theories we find that today's thinking has been greatly influenced by Vygotsky (1896-1934) and the "social constructivist" approach to learning (Goldfarb, 2001, p 1). According to Vygotsky's educational theory of "constructivism" or "socio-cultural learning" (Haysfather, 1996), the family and community play a large role in a child's cognitive development. He believed that a child's resources of knowledge and skill are brought to a situation and depend upon experiences within their culture and stage of human development.

Vygotsky not only emphasized the importance of social factors in cognitive development and building upon a child's "background knowledge", but also the needed role of a "more able guide" (the parent) for modeling reading. He describes the child's potential learning capacity or the "zone of proximal development" (1978) as being the distance between the actual developmental level, as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance.

Gunning (2005, p309) states that Vygotsky's theories have contributed to what has come to be called, "Social Constructivist theory". This theory explains learning and comprehension as an individual task, yet as participants discuss their personal

understanding of the text, there emerges an interchange of ideas modifying perceptions.

Yet, he believed that this life long process of development was dependent on social

interaction and social leaning actually leading to cognitive development (Riddle, 2007)

Becoming proficient readers and developing more effective comprehension skills

is crucial not only to the schools, in terms of how their students perform on assessment

tests, but more importantly their future academic success. The comprehension ability of

a child is an individual task that can be enhanced by engagement and an interchange of

ideas between the parent and child. Other variables that relate to this problem are;   Does

the parents' level of and attitude toward education effect the student's success? In

addition, what type of strategies, support effects parent involvement, and student's

achievement? What role does motivation play? As you examine the research and these

variables, it is apparent that the solution to increasing reading comprehension lies in

bridging the gap between the roles of school, family, and student.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to understand the effect that parent-child read

aloud and comprehension activities have on the child's' reading comprehension ability.

By reviewing the literature on this topic I realized that many students in this country,

from all socio-economic levels and backgrounds, have reading comprehension skills that

are below grade level. In order to improve comprehension it may require several areas of

understanding and modification, including the teacher's attitudes and assumptions toward

his/her students' families, and providing families with encouragement to include specific

reading strategies into family activities, traditions, and routines.   Since reading

comprehension is a critical factor in academic success, I hope to establish more specific

and direct research in this area to help contribute strategies for home literacy that are

useful to parents, students, and their teachers.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that this case study research will show a significant and positive

effect of parent-child read aloud and comprehension activities on the students'

comprehension performance.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

The theoretical rationale is based on Vygotsky's "Social Development theory" which focuses on the connection between people, their cultural values and the tools they develop to mediate their social environment (Crawford, 1996). Initially children adopt these tools to communicate needs. He believed that the internalization of these tools led to higher thinking skills and the "zone of proximal development", as explained above. Vygotsky proposed that if a parent introduces and purposefully models reading and comprehension strategies by reading aloud and discussing the reading, fosters the child's deeper understanding of what they are reading, thus increasing comprehension (Vygotsky, 1978). The idea is for parents to take the child beyond his/her independent reading comprehension level and provide the scaffolding for the child to reach the instructional level of learning (Gunning, 2005, p 28) where the deeper cognitive learning takes place and concepts are acquired.

I have learned that it is important to implement a variety of strategies available, such as building upon the prior knowledge of each student. Prior knowledge is directly related to a student's family and social background. A child's resources of knowledge and skill, including reading comprehension ability, are dependent on past influences of other individuals in their lives. Thus, a child's resources and abilities depend on his/her family and social background as well as his/her stage of human development (i.e., cognitive and meta-cognitive thinking skills).

Another variable that promotes educational success is motivation. Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Doan Holbein (2005), examined this variable and found that

parent involvement is a beneficial. The article purposed that there are specific types of parent involvement that relate to students' motivation, such as, school engagement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, autonomy, self-regulation, goal orientation, and motivation to read. They also found that the teachers' use of parent involvement strategies was related to the students' persistence in learning, and that the children's perception of the parents' involvement was related to their perceived academic self-competence.

In another study the findings from Marchant, Paulson, and Rothlisberg, (2001) study confirm the important role that relationships among parents, teachers, and peers play on early adolescents' school achievement. In particular, students' perceptions of their parents' values about achievement had the strongest relationship with both motivation and competence. The students internalized parental values into their own learning traits.

The focus of the research gathered here is on the social factors that relate to cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1962). Cognitive skills and patterns of thinking are not innate, but are products of active participation and social interaction in our student's daily lives as they grow up (Hausfather, 1996).

Assumptions

I expect to find that if parents use read-aloud and comprehension strategies with their children, it will lead to an improvement of performance in reading comprehension. I presume that there are a variety of factors that will affect a child's reading comprehension, such as family background, parental attitude toward education, home

school connection, previous school experience, parental involvement, and motivation, as

mentioned before. Therefore, this is a vast area with many variables to evaluate and

consider with regard to each student's success. I believe that by using a purposive

sample study method, and implementing a pilot test program (consisting of 3 treatment

parent/student participants and 3 control group parent/student participants) with specific

strategies that include participant instructions. The researcher will guide the parent

participants to be sure that the instructional strategies are used in a controlled

environment over a specific period of time, with the outcome that the students'

comprehension abilities will improve.

Background and Need

The need for this research is seen in studies that have evolved over the past thirty

years. Cairney (2000) found that teachers and parents need to understand the way each

defines, values, and uses literacy and learning activities as part of cultural practices.

Such mutual understanding and cooperation between teachers and parents offers the

potential for schools to better meet the needs of the family and student. It was interesting

to note that the effort to involve parents in school agendas, but there was also a strong

emphasis on offering parents information and support. This process of reaching shared

understanding is what Vygotsky (1978) has called "intersubjectivity ", and involves a

shared focus of attention and understanding among schools, families, and communities.

Mandel Morrow and Young (1997) measure the effects on attitude, motivation,

and literacy achievement in a family literacy program, which connects school and home.

This research focused on an extensive program created to heighten the awareness of

parents, children, and teaches concerning the importance of the role they all play together

in the literacy development of children. They found a direct relationship between parent

and child motivation, reading aloud and discussion, and increase in scores on reading

comprehension tests. The research involved a multifaceted program that included the

design of an environment both at home and at school and required a variety of

assessments to measure both reading and comprehension abilities. The social interactions

accompanying these activities foster development. The emphasis on the social aspects of

learning reflect Vysotsky's (1978) theory of intellectual development, in which he

described higher order mental functions as social relationships that have been

internalized. The movement from interpsychological learning to intrapsychological

learning is apparent as children or adults are able to engage alone in literacy tasks that

previously required interaction with "more literate" others.

Similarly, Epstein, and Dauber (1991), connect school programs, parent involvement, and

teachers' attitudes as key indicators of a student's achievement and academic success.

The data used in this study were collected as the first step in a three-year action research

process in which sample schools are engaged. The process is outlined in terms that any

school can follow to improve programs and practices of parent involvement. For

example, when teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice,

parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about

their abilities to help their children, and rate the teachers a better overall. The result is

that students improve their attitudes and achievement.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review of the literature is divided into several sections: 1) what is meant statistically by "Functional Illiteracy" and the need for community involvement to change this trend, 2) the importance of parent involvement, and 3) the critical role the family and school environment play in a student's success. The literature found strongly suggests that a student's success is determined by many variables. These variables are not presented independently of each other and include; the student, family, teacher, school, community, and cultural climate of the classroom and school.

Functional Illiteracy

According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, "about 13% of all 17 year olds in the U. S. can be considered functionally illiterate" and some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension." (1984, p 8). Although these findings seem terrifying, many statistics can be skewed to present what is desired and does not take into consideration all the facts. There are two major themes reviewed in the case study research that tie into my study and contribute to my hypothesis. One theme is the role of the family including their values, education, background, and their participation in the child's education. The next theme is to set up a study in order to control the variables in the case studies, which focus on specific parent/child reading and comprehension tasks and how theses measure the improvement from pre and post-testing.   I believe that this purposive case study will fill in a very specific gap that takes into account the results of the may other wonderful studies I have found through my research.

Parent Involvement

The role the school and the teacher can play in facilitating parent involvement and student comprehension achievement has been the focus of much of the research stemming from Vygotsky and the Constructivist Theory.

The Haringey Reading Project found that some of the children whose parents were involved in their program made significant gains in reading achievement irrespective of perceived reading ability. In this project, there was a strong emphasis on offering parents information and support and less focus on the partnership between home and school (Cairney, 2000). By the 1990's Nickse (1993) estimated that there were more than 500 family literacy programs alone in the USA. This area of research is very important and has been given much attention, but has had much of the focus on the success of a program that ties school, teacher, parent, and student together.

As early as 1908, Morrow (1993) refers to studies in the U.S. that suggest that a child's learning in school begins with the parents reading to them at home. Many studies have focused extensively on the significant influence of the home environment and its impact on a child's earliest language learning (Axford, 2007; Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hannon, 1999; Morrow & Young 1997; Smith, Stoner, Shinn, & Good, 2000; Topping and Ferguson, 2005; Topping, 1992). Such practices include shared reading, paired reading, reading aloud, providing print materials, discussing literature, and promoting a positive attitude toward reading and literacy.

Morrow and Young (1997) connected the home and school literacy context by involving parents in developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive literacy activities with their children. Ninety-eight percent of their participants were from minority backgrounds. The idea was to create a program that would heighten the

awareness of parents, children, and teachers concerning the importance of the role they all play together in order to enhance children's achievement and motivation to read. This study recognized the importance of creating a program for home that supported the literature-based school program, and included teacher-modeled literature activities, literacy center time, and pleasurable parent guided literature activities intended to promote enjoyment and skill development (Teal, 1984; & Holdaway, 1979). In this study the emphasis on the social aspects of learning, reflect Vygotsky's (1978) theory of intellectual development as described as a higher order of mental function as social relationships have been internalized (Morrow, 1997).

The Morrow and Young (1997) study was carried out for one year and included 56 children in 1st through 3rd grades, with 28 in the experimental group and 28 in the control group. Pre and post-test data was used to determine achievement levels. This data was also used to determine motivational factors favoring the children who were placed in the family program. Although parents and their children were randomly selected to test and interview, all families in the treatment classrooms received the same program.   The treatments applied were defined as "The school-based program" and "The family program." The family program consisted of all the elements of the school-based program, but included specific training and tasks for the parents to follow. These tasks included activities such as reading to and with children, listening to children read, coral reading, read and retell, and talking about what was read. All of these tasks facilitated a significantly higher reading comprehension score than those from the school-based program.

School And Family Environment

The attitudes, policies, and climate of schools and classrooms have a direct influence on how connected families and communities are to the institutions. This can have a major effect on a student's academic achievement. What is presented by the school is usually reflected by the classroom teacher (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Although there was not any direct, statistical evidence to support this, Cairney (2000) describes a problem he calls "Family Deficit Explanations". Family Deficit explanations are based on "faulty assumptions" made by teachers, as well as the schools, that school achievement varies for some students because their families lack specific skills to enable them to create an environment of support that will facilitate their children to succeed at school. This suggests that the family deficit explanation can be taken further, "that there is an in-built class history within school curricula which privileges the ruling-class over the working class." These researchers imply that schools and teachers could have a direct impact on parent involvement and thus student achievement.

Epstein and Dauber (1991) challenge these other generalizations, showing that "there is a wide variation in the nature and quality of the involvement of less educated parents and that when teachers help them, parents of all backgrounds can be involved productively" (Dauber & Epstein, 1989). Dauber and Epstein investigate the relationship between school programs, teacher practices, and parent involvement. Data were used from 171 teachers in eight inner city elementary and middle schools. The two levels of schooling reflect different academics, different arrangements of classroom organization (self-contained vs. departmentalized), and difference in the need or desire for classroom support. Each of these variables had important implications as to the types and strengths of school programs, and the teachers' practices with parent involvement. The data from

this study were part of a 3-year active research process. Part of the goal of this study was

to outline a program that any school could follow to improve its programs and practices

of parent involvement.

Smith, Stoner, Shinn, and Good (2000) investigated the role of parent tutoring in

reading and the impact on student reading achievement. Here they took two parent

tutoring reading programs, one used literature books and the other used classroom basal

reading materials, and examined their effects upon children's reading achievement.

Subjects consisted of 36 student/parent pairs assigned randomly to the two treatments and

a control group. The study took place over 15 weeks. The results showed that although

the parents implemented the tutoring programs as designed; neither tutoring program had

a significant effect upon reading achievement. This study addressed many intricate

statistical differences based on treatments and assessments used, level of acceleration of

academic learning, and the effect of time on these result. They discussed the integrity of

the program and the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative measures. They were

unable to establish a clear link between parent involvement and an increase in student

achievement. The researchers explained that these faults were due to design, dependent

measures, and inconsistent collection and/or reporting of treatment data. In conclusion,

they note that parents, children, and teachers in this study all believed that the tutoring

program was worthwhile.

The need for a clearly defined program promoted by the school and teachers, to

guide parents to promote their child's reading and comprehension performance, still

exists. In my case study I feel that giving parents the tools to foster reading

comprehension in their children to be a first step to improving a child' s comprehension

and academic success.

I hope that in defining this variable the next step will be to tie in the research

reviewed here and define the specific relationship between students, parents, teachers,

and schools as well as create a program using the explicit strategies found in my case

study for parents to implement. This research will uncover factors that will be helpful in

creating a program that will assist schools, teachers, and parents to best support their

children in reading comprehension and thus achieving their greatest academic potential.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Sample and Site

The study consisted of a purposive sample of parent and student participants that were gathered in a random and volunteer basis. All information gathered in this study is and was confidential. The participant's school locations were comprised of suburban areas of various upper middle class school districts. There were two female and one male student participants and their parents for the treatment group as well as the control group. All student participants were age seven as of December 1, 2008. This study sample was 100 % Caucasian and had English as the primary language spoken. The parents involved in this study were all high school and college graduates and placed a high value on education for their children.

In these households, either one or both parents worked, but were able to be home and involved in their child's homework and school routines. The assessments and read-aloud activities for both the treatment group and the control group were performed in a consistent stress-free environment. All reading that student's participated in was at their "instructional level", where the word recognition in the context is ninety-five to ninety-eight percent (Gunning, 2005, p 28), thus creating a challenging, but low anxiety environment for the activity. The comprehension activity sessions of the treatment group also followed the above guidelines.

These traits and guidelines were taken into consideration in order to control as many variables with respect to the participants and the variables involved in this qualitative and quantitative study.

Access and Permission

Parents and their students volunteered to participant in this project and were able and willing to follow the guidelines and requirements of this study. Access to the participants was by phone and by email. All study packets were mailed to the parent participants, collected by the parent, and returned via mail or fax to the researcher for evaluation.

Data Gathering Strategies

The data gathered for this case study research project was both qualitative and quantitative. During the initial phases of this project, I met with, and interviewed a reading specialist. Through our discussion of the project, she suggested that I approach this as a pilot study in order to monitor the process closely and accumulate more qualitative and definitive data. She also suggested the use of the QAR, question and answer relationship, technique as a comprehension strategy and assessment for the study. As we discussed the previous literature reviewed and the research carried out in the past, it became clear that by controlling as many variables as possible in this pilot study would allow this study to make a clear connection between the treatment (QAR strategy) and the student's comprehension achievement.

Once the participants consented to the research study I discussed and mailed a packet with procedures, surveys, reading logs and comprehension assessments. The three participant pairs that received the treatment were given reading logs, which asked them to use the QAR strategy and record questions and answers after each read-aloud session (approximately 16 total sessions). The three control group participants were given the same packet, but were only requested to use the QAR strategy on the first and last

reading sessions, all other read-aloud sessions were not followed by any comprehension strategies.

The read-aloud sessions comprised of the students' assigned school reading homework or from a supplemental list provided by the researcher. All reading was at the "instructional" level (Gunning, 2005 p 28) to insure that each student participant was being challenged and not frustrated by the reading activity.

The participant families selected for this project were given a survey regarding family background, education, attitudes, motivation, and values regarding their child's education, and current at home reading interactions (appendix A). The students were given a checklist about voluntary reading to determine frequency of self-motivated reading and interests (see attached appendices B).

Each student was given a pre and post-comprehension ability assessment called the Question and Answer Relationship (QAR) (Appendix C, first and last sessions collected as assessments) and a supplemental Short Story, Question and Answer (SSQA) assessment. Theses assessments were used to determine the benefit of the parent/child read aloud and comprehension (QAR) sessions for the treatment group as compared to the control group.

All participant packages were mailed to parents and they were instructed over the phone and via email regarding the packet and its contents. All procedures, strategies and guidelines for the at-home reading and comprehension activities were thoroughly discussed. The parents used the reading log to report the weekly activities; time read, material read, comprehension strategy used (QAR), stress level, and environment at the

time of activities. The participants performed these activities for approximately 16

sessions. Ongoing support and feedback from the researchers was provided as needed.

After all sessions and pre and post comprehension assessments were completed

by the treatment and control group, the packets were returned via mail and fax to the

researcher for analysis. All information was reviewed, charted and reported. A follow-up

feedback survey (qualitative)was given to all the study participants in order to assess their

views of the program and their child's outcome with regard to the motivation to read and

their perception of their comprehension achievement in reading.

Data Analysis Approach

As the quantitative data from the study was reviewed, it became apparent that it

did not provide as much insight into the success of the comprehension strategy (QAR) as

concise as desired, but does show evidence of an overall improvement in comprehension.

Shown below are the statistical tables presenting the pre and post comprehension

assessment score gotten from the three treatment group participants (TP1,2,3) and the

three control group participants (CP1,2,3) and their scores on the QAR and SSQA

assessments.

Pre-Comprehension Assessment Scores (Total of QAR-8 + SSQA-4=12points)

Treatment Participant #	Total Score (out of 12 possible points)
T P 1	11
T P 2	9
T P 3	9

Control Participant #	
C P 1	10
C P 2	10
C P 3	9

Post-Comprehension Assessment Scores (Total of QAR 8 + SSQA 4=12points)

Treatment Participant #	Total Score (out of 12 possible points)
T P 1	12
T P 2	11
T P 3	12

Control Participant #	
C P 1	10
C P 2	11
C P 3	9

Here the average pre-comprehension assessment score for the treatment participants is 9.67 and their average post-comprehension assessment score is 11.67, which does show a 2 point improvement after the sixteen treatment sessions. The average pre-comprehension assessment score for the control participants is 9.33 and their average post-comprehension scores is 10, which show a very small (.67) improvement after the read-aloud sessions with out the treatment (QAR strategy).

The qualitative data collected from the treatment participants demonstrates that the QAR strategy was successful. The participants in the treatment group all commented on how much they enjoyed the comprehension activities with their children. They also noted that their children also enjoyed and were very curious and engaged in the comprehension activities, thus seeing an improvement in their child's ability to answer the four questions that related to the reading. They all noted that their child's comprehension of the stories read improved greatly. They also noted that the QAR strategy used in this study was very helpful because it allowed their child to be engaged with the story in a new and creative way. By allowing the child to not only find answers in the text, but also rely on their own experience and creativity to answer the questions that required more thought and cognitive connections.

The treatment or QAR parent participants also noted that they and their children became more motivated to do the read-aloud activities because the comprehension questions were "so fun" and "positive". They found that outside the study session both the parent and the student were more likely to engage in a discussion about various topics read or heard about throughout their day and that the entire family was becoming involved. The parents said that their child's "thinking process had become enhanced" by

the QAR activity sessions. With regard to the time requirements of the read-aloud and comprehension activity sessions the parents noted that they often were able to include this as an extension of the child's homework and that most teachers did not require any discussion or comprehension activities as part of the home reading. Although a couple of parents noted that if they were asked to answer questions or reflect on the story it usually took the form of main idea, characters, and setting.

The control group participants all said that they loved reading with their children but felt it often tedious and part of the required homework drill. They were required to do two sessions with the QAR strategy as an assessment for the first reading session and the last (sixteenth) reading session and all commented on how much they and their children enjoyed the question and answer activity.

Also, a comment made by all parents was that their child asked "Why are you asking me these questions?" This tells so much about important focus on the read-aloud and comprehension activities, they made an impact on all participants, and most importantly show a positive effect on overall comprehension success.

Ethical Standards

This study adheres to Ethical Standards in Human Subjects Research of the American Psychological Association (Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 2008). Additionally, the project was reviewed and approved by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board, number 7020.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this literature review and research project inspire me to explore my relationship as a teacher with the school, the parents and their children, and how to implement the strategies gleaned in this research to improve as a students' reading comprehension and academic success. The study somewhat successfully revealed that the Question Answer Relationship strategy implemented made an improvement in the student's comprehension performance. This was demonstrated both qualitatively and quantitatively through out the study.

The parents and children reported enjoying reading and question/answer activities more than previously carried out when not including the QAR method. Also, the data revealed an average two point improvement on the assessments after the comprehension activity sessions for the treatment participants. This activity in combination with the regular school literacy homework would be an asset to the students, parents, teachers, and schools achievement.

Future research should replicate this study in other grades and academic content areas, as well as with more extensive comprehension assessment. It may also be helpful to use other treatments in addition to QAR in order to determine what other strategies are advantageous to comprehension achievement. A longitudinal investigation of this type with the above mentioned variables, over several years, would be most beneficial.

REFERENCES

Axford, B.(2007). *Parents and their children working together: A Scaffolding Literacy case study.* Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, *30* (1) pp. 21-39.

Cairney, T. & Munsie, L. (1995, February). *Parent participation in literacy learning.* The Reading Teacher. *48* (5) pp. 392-403.

Cairney, T. (2000). *Beyond the Classroom Walls: the rediscovery of the family and community as partners in education.*   Educational Review. *52* (2) (online)/00/020163-12.

Crawford, Kathryn. (1996). Vygotskian approaches to human development in the information era. *Educational Studies in Mathematics.* 31 pp.43-62

DeHass, A.R., Willems, P., & Doan Holbein, M. F. (2005, June). *Examining the Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Student Motivation,* Educational Psychology Review. *17* (2) pp 99-123.

Epstein, J., & Dauber, S., (1991). *School Programs and Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement in Inner-City and Middle Schools.* The Elementary School Journal, *91* (3).

Goldfarb, M. f., Rozycki, E. G. (2001, March). *The Educational Theory of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1896 – 1934), (Analysis by Mary Ellen Goldfarb).*

Gunning, T., (2005, 5th edition). *Creating Literacy, Instruction for All Students.* Pearson Education, Inc.

Hausfather, Samuel J., (1996). *Vygotsky and Schooling: Creating a Social Contest for*

   learning. Action Teacher Education., 18 pp 1-10

Hannon, P, (2000). *Rhetoric and Research in Family Literacy.* British Educational

   Research Journal. *26* (1)

Hausfather, Samuel J., (1996). Vygotsky and Schooling: Creating a Social Contest for

   learning. *Action in Teacher Education.* (18) 43-62.

Holdaway, D. (1979). *The foundations of literacy.* Sydney: Ashton, Scholastic.

Marchant, G.J., Paulson, S. E., and Rothlisberg, B.A (2001). Relations of middle school

   students' perceptions of family and school context with academic achievement.

   Psychol. Schools 38(6): 505-519.

Marrow, L., & Young, J., (1997). *A Family Literacy Program Connecting School and*

   Home: Effects on Attitude, Motivation, and Literacy Achievement. Journal of

   Educational Psychology, *89* (4) pp. 736-742.

Marrow, L., & Paratore, J., (1993, November). *Family literacy: Perspective and*

   practices. The Reading Teacher. *47* (3) p. 194-200.

Nickse, R. (1993). *A typology of family an intergenerational literacy programmes:*

   implications for evaluation, Viewpoints, 15 pp 34-40.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No 107-110, 115 Stat. 1439. (2002).

   Retrieved June 21, 2007 from

   http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/107th/education/nclb/nclb.htm

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (2008).

Smith, K., Stoner, G., Shinn, M, Good, R., (2000). *Parent Tutoring in Reading Using*

Literature and Curriculum Materials: Impact on Student Reading Achievement.

School Psychology Review. *29* (1) pp 5-27.

Teale, W. (1984). *Reading to young children: Its significance for literacy development.*

In H. Goelman, A. A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy,* London:

Heinemann, pp 110-121.

Topping, K., & Ferguson, N., (2005). *Effective literacy teaching behaviors.* Journal of

Research in Reading, *28* (2) pp. 125-143.

Topping, K., (1992, July). *Short- and long-term follow-up of parental involvement in*

reading projects. British Educational Research Journal. *18* (4) p 369, 12p.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and Language.* Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental process.*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press.

APPENDIX A PARENT / STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION SURVEY

Parent / Student Background Information Survey

1. Please tell me about your family.

2. What are your hopes for your child's academic achievement?

3. What is your current routine with regard to doing homework in other academic areas (time, location, amount of assistance)?

4. Do you and/or your child read for pleasure? What types of books?

5. Do you read to or with your child? At what age did you begin?

6. Please add any other information that you would like to share about you and your family.

APPENDIX B STUDENT CHECKLIST

Student Name_____Date__

Never / Occasionally / A lot

Reading during
 free time_____/_____/_____/_____

Visits the
 library_____/_____/_____/_____

Read books on
 a variety of topic/_____/_____/_____

Talks with others
  about books____/_____/_____/_____

Checks out books
 from library___/_____/_____/_____

What are your favorite books?

Are you a good reader?

APPENDIX C

READING LOG

DATE:

Day of the Week   /   /   /
/

Time read (from – to)/
                     /   /   /

Location of activity/
                 /   /   /

Title of book read/
              /   /   /

Check off each activity done for that day
(in any order- should be relaxing and fun)
Paired read-aloud-
Child read-aloud-   /   /   /

Before reading text
 -Review cover
  (author and illustrator)-
 -Make a prediction about it-   /   /   /   /

*R*ecord dates here and list questions and answers on the back of this sheet for each* *sessions after reading the text (Question Answer Relationship) QAR*
    /   /   /   /
-Ask a question where answer is found in a sentence
     /   /   /   /
-Ask a question found in two sentences
     /   /   /   /
-Ask a question that is in their experience
     /   /   /   /
-Ask a question that combines the text and their experience

-Allow child to ask questions-
 -Review story (setting, problem,
  goal, and resolution)-   /   /   /   /

Comments or feedback: