

A STUDY OF STRATEGIES AND MODELS OF INSTRUCTION USED
IN TEACHING INFORMATIONAL READING IN 8TH GRADE
HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOMS IN RURAL
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: WITH
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

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Janice Diane Taylor

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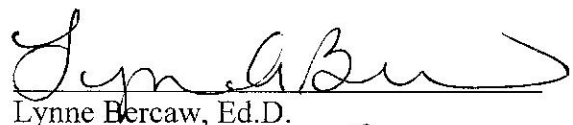
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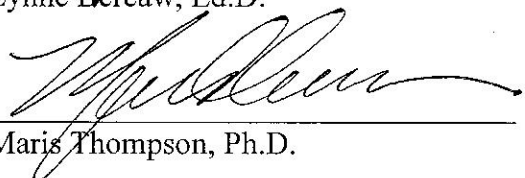
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to several influential individuals in my life. First, I would like to thank my husband of 38 years, Jeffrey W. Klink, for his continued support and encouragement of my academic and life goals. His intellectual curiosity sparks others to engage with questions of inquiry in the world. I am grateful for his unending willingness to listen to my thoughts and ideas, especially the ideas contained in this thesis. I wish to acknowledge how much I appreciate his care and kindnesses while I struggled to continue my graduate degree. Thank you for being who you are and encouraging me toward further growth and challenge.

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Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to my middle school colleagues, both past and present. Over the 25 years we worked together you have been a true professional learning community. You have participated in the creation of this thesis by allowing me to observe your classes, discuss teaching strategies with you, and by encouraging me to dig deeper. Thank you for your continued efforts to educate students and motivate them to greater achievements.

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Dr. Lynne Bercaw, I thank you for helping me to see how students are taught to read and how to reach them in a classroom setting with books. Thank you for assisting me to see how students can be taught using picture books to present complex History-Social Science ideas. Thank you for sharing novels, picture books, plays, and historical fiction that could be used to extend student's understanding of the world around them. Also, thank you for using technology in your classroom and for facilitating, with your projects, ways for your students to use it too.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

I taught for over 30 years and specifically at one middle school for 25 years. The perspective of teaching in the same place, in the same classroom, and within the same community gave me a unique viewpoint from which to observe how changes in curriculum, frameworks and standards, textbooks, state level testing, and outside influences affected the students of my middle school. This particular middle school is configured with grades five through eight and has one feeder school and for the most part feeds into one high school. The students of this middle school walk to and from school, can go home for lunch (if there is an adult present), and have physical education on the same fields that they play Little League softball and baseball and team soccer after school. There is a strong connection between the community and the school.

Adding to the normal difficulties of middle school students is that fact that at this middle school 79% of the students qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch program (“*Data-quest*”, 2011). Being members of disadvantaged socio-economic group in the United States today places these students in jeopardy of not being successful in school. To add to the difficulties these students face in life, twelve percent of the students are English Language Learners and 10.7 percent are students with special needs. The education difficulties were reflected in their scores on state level testing. As reported in the latest 2013 -2014 *School Accountability Report Card* (SARC), annual achievement test scores from the 2012-2013

school year showed that 51 percent of the students scored proficient or advanced on the English Language Arts (ELA) testing, 53 percent scored proficient or advanced in mathematics and 56 percent of the students scored proficient or advanced in History-Social Science. California state average that year was 55 percent – proficient or advanced in English Language Arts (ELA), 50 percent in mathematics and 49 percent in History-Social Science. The data for this middle school has remained constant in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics since the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) began in 1998 and the California Standards Testing (CST) for History-Social Science in 2003. Approximately half of these middle school students were able to show at least proficiency on the CSTs. However, in order to achieve greater mastery over the skills to be tested the students would need more educational support.

According to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) (2014) the population of this middle school is divided among three main groups and has been so historically. The three groups are Hispanic or Latino 64 percent, white 19.2 percent and Asian 12.6 percent with all other groups making up the other 4.2 percent (p. 2). The middle school is located in a farming community in Northern California. The county government web site reports an unemployment rate of 17.3%, with seven percent of the population involved in farming and 15 percent in government service.

There is another side to the issue of students who are disadvantaged by their families' low socio-economic situation in society. These issues that affect student performance in the classroom that come from outside the classroom are described by Diane Ravitch (2013) as, “we have made genuine progress in narrowing the achievement gap, but they (the achievement gaps) will remain large if we do nothing about the causes of the gaps”

(p. 55). The causes Ravitch (2013) refers to are racism, narrow avenues to jobs, and education (p. 58). She continues in her argument that neighborhoods that are “disproportionately poor” (p. 58) resulted in segregated schools, in which there are high levels of imprisoned parents, and children who are sequestered from the mainstream society and exposed to drugs, violence, and gang activity. These problems plagued the students of the middle school where I taught.

Starting in 1996, I taught a reading intervention class to seventh and eighth grade students who were either struggling with reading comprehension, or were English Language Learners, or recommended by the principal. Later, after No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was implemented, beginning with the CST (2002) tests the results were used to place students in the reading intervention class. In these classes there were 7th and 8th graders combined. The expectation of the placement of students into these reading intervention classes were that after working on their reading skills for additional time their scores on the summative assessment state level testing would improve and they would be able to demonstrate and consequently read at the proficient or advanced level on those tests.

I used a variety of curricula to teach the students who were assigned to the reading intervention class. In the beginning it was *Language!* by Jane Fell Greene, next Pearson’s *To Be A Better Reader*, then *Bridges to Literature* by McDougal-Little, and finally *High Point* by Hampton-Brown. Each series, by each publisher, had advantages but none seemed to help my students with their reading of informational text in their history classes.

Based on my experiences in the reading intervention classes and in teaching United States history to 8th grade students I began to ask questions of colleagues and of the research literature I was exposed to: were there strategies and techniques that could be taught

to students along with history content knowledge that would make them more successful readers of informational text?

As my knowledge of the depth of my students' lack of informational text reading ability grew, I sought solutions. In 1993, I joined a summer workshop at UC Davis, which was part of the California Subject Matter Projects; it was entitled the "UC Davis History Project." I hoped to find a solution or solutions to my students' inabilities to read the history textbook successfully. For the next 14 years, I attended workshops at UC Davis looking for answers to the reading proficiency issues of my students. Bits and pieces of an answer revealed themselves, yet a more complete instructional formula eluded me.

My questions turned into a search for research on successful reading comprehension strategies and techniques in content reading. I wanted to discover ways to teach history and the reading of informational text that would lead to successful reading comprehension skills for middle school students. Additionally, I wanted to examine the strategies and techniques that were being used presently by teachers in rural Northern California. In my search I wanted to find how we could improve, update, and effectively teach our middle school students to prepare them for successful high school content discipline reading experiences. Further, I wanted to explore how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) would ask teachers of all content disciplines to share with English Language Arts teachers, the job of teaching students to read in general, and to specifically read informational text in individual disciplines.

Statement of the Problem

Students in middle school, grades 5 – 8, are often unable to read their history textbook independently, and to comprehend what the text is telling them. Many eighth

graders are unable to read the 18th and 19th century primary and secondary source documents that make up the backbone of reading in an eighth grade History-Social Science course.

When I first taught middle school in 1986 few of my students were able to read the history textbook as a homework assignment. Nor was it possible to have students read the text silently in-class and arrive at correct answers to textbook questions or teacher directed questions.

The reasons students struggled with reading the history textbook were multiple and varied. They included very limited access to the textbook outside the classroom, so there was little time for independent practice. Many students lacked the ability to read the text at grade level. The text itself was not well-written. For example, not all paragraphs contained topic sentence. This lack of well written text could be reducing the students motivation to read. And their teachers had failed to teach them how to read informational text. Students needed more structure, direction, and guidance in reading informational text to arrive at an appropriate understanding of the historical events of the 18th and 19th centuries and their impact on our present day historical actions.

Research Questions

1. What strategies and techniques are eighth grade teachers using to teach middle school students to read expository or informational text while teaching them the content area of United States history?

2. How effective are strategies and techniques that eighth grade History-Social Science teachers use to teach the reading of expository or informational text that would lead to successful scores on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find, effective strategies and models of instruction for teaching middle school students to read informational text, and to identify the informational reading techniques and strategies that were being taught to middle school students in a rural Northern California county.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) requires content area teachers to be responsible for teaching informational reading in their discipline. In order to accomplish that goal, content area teachers must know effective strategies and techniques for informational reading, and be assisted in incorporating those strategies and techniques into their classroom practice.

Significance

The findings of this study show the difference between the type of discipline specific informational text reading 8th grade teachers of History-Social Science in rural Northern California are doing and the models of instruction and the strategies History-Social Science teachers would need to incorporate in their teaching to meet the increased need for students to understand informational text and meet the requirements of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The recommendations for specific models of instruction and strategies would be supported by the research literature and *CSU Center for Advancement of Reading*.

The findings of this study would assist teachers, principals, and district curriculum planners as they begin the process of planning the professional development necessary to change the teaching practices of individual teachers of History-Social Science within their district. It would provide an introduction to models of instruction and strategies that research has found successful in teaching middle school students how to read or how to

better read informational text. At the same time, it would show how and what type of professional development was necessary to support teachers as they make the change to teaching more informational reading in their content area, specifically the discipline of History-Social Science.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are limited to, and apply only to middle schools in one rural Northern California County. The school districts studied all have fewer than 61 students in their eighth grade History-Social Science and English Language Arts classes. The group of eighth grade History-Social Science teachers interviewed is small, five teachers, but they represent most of the rural History-Social Science teachers in the county.

Definitions

CAASPP

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress – new assessment adopted January 1, 2014. English Language Arts/Literacy is one part of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments given to California students in grades 3 – 8 and 11.

www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/cefcaaspp.asp

CDE

California Department of Education

CST

California Standards Test

CCSS

Common Core State Standards – These standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officials (CCSSO) and the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices in order to advance a set of standards to prepare students to prepare for and succeed in college and careers. (www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlconnstandards.asp)

Content Area

This is used in reference to course work offered in the curriculum in disciplines such as mathematics, science and history

Discipline

Related to a specific branch of learning, such as history

Expository text

Text that presents information and is organized in whatever way best suits the type of information being presented and the purpose for presenting it. (Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, & Slansky, 2012, p. 509)

Informational Text

Text written on a non-fiction basis to convey in truthful information concerning a subject such as mathematics, science, or history

Intervention

An instructional program that prevents or stops failure by providing additional instructional time beyond the core instruction

Literacy

Ability to listen, speak, read, write, and think. Viewing is a part of literacy that uses many of the skills and strategies involved in the other aspects of literacy (Cooper, et al., p. 510).

Methods of Instruction

Strategies and techniques that have been shown to be successful in teaching middle school students to read informational text

Models of Instruction

An instructional model is a step-by-step procedure that leads to specific learning outcomes (Estes, et al., p. 57). Samples of these models would be direct instruction model, concept development model, problem-centered inquiry, cause-effect model, cooperative learning model or Socratic seminar.

NCLB

Passed in Congress in 2002 “No child left behind” “promoted an increased focus on reading instruction to improve students’ reading performance and narrow the racial and ethnic gaps in achievement” (Tomkins, 2014, p. 91).

Primary Sources

Are original textual (e.g. letters, diaries, speeches) and non-textual sources (e.g. photographs, drawings) of information that are available to learn more about a time period, person, or particular event. They are the “raw materials of history” providing unfiltered access into the past (Library of Congress, n.d.; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012).

Prior Knowledge

(Or background knowledge.) What students already know, through learning and experience, about a topic or about a kind of text (Cooper, et al. p. 507).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem is that students in middle school, grades 5 – 8, do not read their history textbook well enough to read it independently and comprehend what the text is telling them. Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Murphy (2012) reported that:

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), two-thirds of U.S. high school students are unable to read and comprehend complex academic materials, think critically about texts, synthesize information from multiple sources, or communicate clearly what they have learned. (p. 3)

Nor do they read well the 18th and 19th century primary and secondary source documents that make up the bulk of the reading in an eighth grade History-Social Science course in California. The NAEP tests in reading were given in California 2013 and only 29% of 8th graders were reading at proficient or above level, in 2015 the results were 28% of 8th graders read at the proficient or advanced level. (National Results Overview, paragraph 5). Without good comprehension skills' understanding more complex informational text becomes more difficult with each new grade level.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is twofold 1) to discover the current approaches that eighth grade teachers in a rural Northern California county use to teach their students to read the grade level textbook and primary, and secondary source documents as suggested by Common Core State Standards (CCSS) 2) to report on the strategies and models of instruction that would provide the best access for students to learn how to successfully read

and comprehend grade level textbooks and primary and secondary documents of the 18th and 19th centuries.

This Literature Review attempts to examine multiple teaching strategies and methods of instructions that impact the teaching of informational text reading in the content area of History – Social Science in middle school classrooms as Common Core State Standards are implemented and continued.

First, there have been developments in the field of adolescent content area literacy that support specific methods of instruction in the reading of informational text. This literature review will concentrate on three significant documents:

1. *Reading Next: A Vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy*
2. *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Courses*
3. *Institute for Education Sciences: National Center for Education Evaluation*

Regional Assistance -Self Study Guide for implementing literacy interventions in grades 3 – 8

All support the direct teaching of informational text reading in the History-Social Science classroom.

Secondly, this literature review will present three research studies of strategies that include methods of instruction that foster the teaching of the reading informational text in the History-Social Science middle school classroom. Further, this literature review will present specific instructional strategies and techniques to teach and support the reading of informational text in the History –Social Science middle school classroom setting.

The research literature is clear. Content area teachers need to teach students how to read informational text (Snow & Biancarosa, 2004, p. 1 – 2 . In adolescent literacy research these strategies are the most commonly supported:

- direct instruction of reading (teaching comprehension skills) (Baumann, 1984)
- activating prior knowledge (Alvermann, Smith, & Readence, 1985)
- explicit teaching of vocabulary (Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010)
- reading done in the classroom (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008)
- conducting small group and whole class discussions guided by teachers with cooperative learning techniques (Fang & Pace, 2013)

- writing about what has been read (Armbruster, Anderson, Ostertag, 1987; Palsincsar & Brown, 1983; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick & Kurita, 1989)

According to numerous studies (Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick & Kurita, 1989; Shanahan & Barr, 1995; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Vaughn, Martinez, Linan-Thompson, & Reuteback, 2009) in middle school students need to continue to develop their academic vocabulary and their reading comprehension skills. Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) and Akhondi, Malayeri and Samad (2011) stated in order to do this students need an organized program of reading instruction that includes reading across the curriculum. As identified by Snow, Tabors, Porsche, and Harris (2007) this means in History- Social Science, science, and mathematics vocabulary and reading comprehension need to be developed intentionally through planned strategies, content area specific teaching techniques, and instructional methods that will allow students to gain independent reading skills continually through-out middle school. These strategies and methods of instruction must be planned and intentionally taught to encompass all the expository or informational reading skills middle school students need to acquire to become independent readers of text. The strategies and techniques recommended by the research

literature for reading and comprehension of History-Social Science material including primary and secondary source material are detailed here.

In 2016 the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast (REL) published a self-study guide for implementing literacy interventions in grades 3 -8. This self-study guide was designed to be used by teachers and administrators at individual school sites to evaluate the strategies they are using to teach reading within the content area discipline of History-Social Science. The self –study supports the use of direct and explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, the development of background knowledge, cooperative learning, and academic language development which includes explicit vocabulary instruction (p.6). Teachers and administrators at school sites can use the guide to evaluate their strategies for the teaching of reading within the content area discipline of History-Social Science. Two questions are key for evaluating practices for teaching informational reading according to the section *Content and Instruction*:

- 1) Does the professional development offered focus on instructional practices empirically shown to increase student achievement (practices validated with data)?
- 2) Does the plan for literacy interventions for interventionists and content area teachers reflect instructional practices empirically shown to increase student achievement such as: academic language development, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, background knowledge development, focus on building depth of word knowledge, (multiple meanings, morphological analysis), cooperative learning, and feedback? (Smith, et al, p. 6)

These questions were designed to assist teachers and administrators in examining and clarifying their instructional and support practices to smooth student progress in learning to be independent readers of informational text. The guide promotes reflection about current strengths and challenges in planning and implementing improvements in instruction and identifying needed professional learning.

In both *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Courses* (2004) and *Reading Next: - A Vision for action and research in middle and high school reading: A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2006) the recommendations are similar for teaching informational or non-fiction reading skills to middle and high school students. Both documents express a need to include in the teaching of reading of informational text the explicit teaching of vocabulary and comprehension skills, and conducting small group and whole class discussions. These strategies have been shown through the research literature to be those that content area teachers should utilize while teaching students to read in the content area of History-Social Science.

In the Carnegie Corporation report entitled *Reading Next: A Vision for action and research in middle school literacy* (2004), Dr. Catherine Snow and Dr. Gina Biancarosa lay out a plan for how secondary literacy can be improved and why it is necessary to support the improvement of the literacy instruction offered to students at this juncture in their academic career. They state:

. . . somewhat neglected in those various efforts are attention to the core reading: comprehension, learning while reading, reading in the content areas, and reading in the service of secondary or higher education, of employability, of citizenship. It is clear that getting third graders to read at grade level is an important and challenging task, and one that needs ongoing attention for researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and parents. But many excellent third-grade readers will falter or fail in later grade academic tasks if the teaching of reading is neglected in middle and secondary grades. (Snow & Biancarosa, 2004, p.1)

This simple statement by Snow and Biancarosa (2004) helps to clarify why it is necessary, as we implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS), to again examine the strategies and methods of instruction we are using to teach students to read informational text in a content area classroom as they learn to be independent readers of informational text. This concept that a middle or high school student needs to be supported as they learn to read informational

text with deeper understanding means we must go about rethinking how we teach reading in the content area subjects such as history, mathematics, and science. As Snow and Biancarosa (2004) write there are four supportive concepts to effective adolescent literacy programs. These are “direct and explicit comprehension instruction, effective instructional principles embedded in content, text based collaborative learning, and professional development that is both long and ongoing (for teachers)” (p. 4). This blending of focus, first on adolescent reading instruction and secondly on supportive professional development, if followed, would allow teachers at their individual school sites to begin assisting students in middle school and high school in more structured and constructive methods of reading informational text in their content discipline classrooms.

Furthermore, Snow and Biancarosa (2004) state that:

. . .this will require, for many of those students, teaching them new literacy skills; how to read purposefully, select materials that are of interest, learn from those materials, figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, integrate new information with information previously known, resolve conflicting content in different texts, differentiate fact from opinion, and recognize the perspective of the writer – in short, they must be taught how to comprehend. (p. 1)

There are two categories in the *Key Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs* instruction and infrastructure that are the significant elements that are focused on.

Infrastructure which was described as “direct and explicit comprehension instruction, effective instructional principles embedded in content and text based collaborative learning” (p. 4). Each teacher at a school site in individual content areas is focusing on the instructional items within their discipline and the school site as a whole is re-framing its infrastructure to better serve the goals of such instruction. Instruction is examined to highlight possible solutions to noted instructional problems. While teachers are encouraged, supported, and given time to examine their classroom instructional practices that play into acknowledged

infrastructure problems in the school site as a whole. Teachers are invited during the self-guided study to point out supports they would need to have in place in order to change or amend their classroom practices. This allows the blending of instruction for students and support for teachers at the school site to self-examine classroom practices. This self-examination is intended to lead to better classroom instruction.

The questions from the *Self-Study* help to clarify which practices are associated with instructional strategies and methods of instruction that assist students in learning to be independent readers of informational text. The *Self-Study* assists a group of teachers or teachers and administrators at a school site to make an examination of their instructional and support practices. Additionally, “the guide was designed to promote reflection about current strengths and challenges in planning and implementation, (to) spark conversation among staff, and identify areas for improvement” (p. iv). The focal point of the guidelines is to bring a staff together, both teachers and administrators, around a set of agreed upon goals that will assist students in acquiring the ability to read informational text at grade level or above through classroom instruction that is connected across content area disciplines.

In *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Courses* the nine members of the Task Force put the binder and its contents together for the purpose of guiding instruction in the single subject teacher credentialing programs at the university level. The Task Force, a group gathered from California State University (CSU) campuses, wrote six guiding principles to drive the creation of the individual courses that it intended to be offered to single subject candidates for secondary credentialing at each campus. These six core principles were: “reading processes, comprehension and content learning, adolescent literacy, assessment, differentiation, and planning and integration” (Principles and Resources:

Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading course, binder tabs, 2004). As, resources the binder contains; sample lesson plans, more than one sample syllabi; a position statement from the International Reading Association (IRA) entitled *Adolescent Literacy: A Position Statement*, plus web site addresses for links to information for an individual instructor to explore. All these resources together were aimed at the goal of helping credential candidates become competent teachers of adolescent literacy in their own content area disciplines. The Task Force met and created the binder materials in 2004 and these materials guided the CSU programs from the academic year 2006 - 2007 forward.

All three of these documents on the teaching of informational reading, *Reading Next: A Vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy* (2004), *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Course* (2004), and the *Self-Study Guide for Implementing Literacy Interventions in grades 3 – 8*, point to the research on adolescent literacy as their basis. In an analysis of their descriptions of what is needed in the field of adolescent literacy they put forward similar solutions: direct instruction, activating prior knowledge, vocabulary instruction, reading done in the classroom, class discussion of that reading guided by the teachers, cooperative learning techniques used in both individual and class discussions, and writing about what has been read. This thesis seeks to build on the concepts presented in each of these documents.

Studies that Support Teaching Reading in the Content Area of History-Social Science

Three research studies have illustrated strategies and techniques that can be effectively used in middle school classrooms to teach students to successfully read informational text. One by Fang and Pace (2013) concentrated on pre-reading discussions,

analysis of the reading by use of a graphic organizer, and post reading discussion. Also, it mentions functional language analysis, which is later discussed in the 2016 California History-Social Science Framework. A second study conducted by Vaughn, Martinez, Linan-Thompson, and Reutebuch (2009) observed the effect of presenting students with a “big idea” before they were asked to read an historical text. Also, in this study students were presented with an overview of the text that they were about to read and given vocabulary instruction with the words used in an historical context, plus a clarifying sentence relevant to the student’s own experience using that vocabulary word. The researchers only introduced four words taken from the informational text that was about to be read. Further, they used snippets of video, only three to four minutes in length, to help the students understand the idea or ideas that were presented in the reading, before showing students the video clips the researchers presented the students with one or two key questions to focus on while watching the video and after watching the video they held discussions with the students to assist them in answering the questions that were asked before the video. In this study, as the researchers delved into the actual reading it was done either with the teacher reading aloud with an expert voice or the students reading in pre-arranged pairs to each other. Before beginning the readings students were given two or three questions that could be answered after the reading was completed. Following the reading paired students constructed answers. Answers were discussed with the whole class. The reading and the answers to the questions benefitted from the joint insights and understandings gained both in the small, paired discussions and the whole group discussions. This study found both ELL and students who were not ELL were furthered from the use of these techniques.

Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Faller (2010) designed an 18 week unit in academic vocabulary. Through this research they showed that the academic vocabulary must be taught directly. For this study they used words specifically chosen from *Coxhead's Academic Vocabulary List*. During the study they observed 476 students in English Language Arts classes conducted in several middle schools. Kelley et al. (2010) designed the lessons that the teachers taught. Each lesson included the word morphology, a section where students shared with a partner, information about the academic vocabulary, reading an engaging age appropriate magazine article, and in each lesson there was a component of student writing after the reading. The researchers found “vocabulary instruction resulted in greater gains on standardized and research developed measures of vocabulary, word learning, and reading comprehension” (Kelley, 2010, p.7).

In the study by Wissinger and De la Paz (2016) of the 151 eighth graders in History Social Science classrooms, the researchers specifically examined the question “whether explicitly teaching argumentation schemes could help students engage in more sophisticated historical reasoning and compose historical arguments” (p. 45). They found that students in the study were able to show “significantly more sophisticated levels of substantiation” (p.53). The students in the study groups grappled more with the evidence than those in the comparison groups. The comparison groups tended to accept information in the primary and secondary source documents rather than debate or question that information. Further, Wissinger and De la Paz (2016) reported that “students who participated in the disciplinary discussions (of critical questions) learned more content than the students whose discussion emphasized a general understanding of the sources” (p. 54-55). These findings support the use of class discussion of primary and secondary sources, the use of a written

component in historical discipline instruction, and emphasize domain specific thinking in teaching students to read informational text in History-Social Science classrooms. In the statement of conclusion in Vaughn, et al. (2009) “students’ improvement on the comprehension measure was statistically significant” (p. 320) expressed the results of the study that showed students using vocabulary instruction, words used in historical context, and in a clarifying sentence that was relevant to the student’s own experience, strategic use of video clips, contributing answers in paired and class discussions, and creating written answers were gaining reading comprehension skills in the area of reading of informational text. Further, the scores on the comprehension assessment of the treatment group were higher after the completion of the study. In the area of vocabulary the students in the treatment group had a better grasp on the content area vocabulary than those in the comparison group. However, the authors stated, there is still room for improvement in the paired discussion groups and with the comparison group teacher’s techniques as they worked with the students in pairs and groups for discussion.

Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary

In the Vaughn, Martinez, Linan-Thompson, and Reutebuch (2009) study they utilized the following instructional techniques with 6th and 7th grade social studies students:

- a) overview and vocabulary instruction, b) the use of brief videos and purposeful discussion to build concepts, c) the use of graphic organizers and other writing activities to build comprehension and vocabulary through writing, and d) structure paired grouping. (p. 305)

The question that drove their investigation was “how does a multicomponent instructional routine developed to enhance effective outcomes for ELLs and provided by classroom social studies teachers influence students’ outcomes in vocabulary and

comprehension?” (p. 302). Vaughn et al. (2009) conducted the study twice, once in the 2006 – 2007 school year and again in the 2007 – 2008 school year. Their purpose in conducting it twice was “to determine replicability” (p. 303) of their data. Vaughn et al. (2009) in their findings stated “that the ELLs who participated in the intervention condition in either study benefited from the instruction they received. They outperformed the ELLs in the comparison group on the researcher-developed vocabulary and comprehension measures” (p. 318). In Vaughn et al. (2008), they reported that both the targeted group (ELLs) and their classmates benefit from the intervention. Vaughn and her colleagues concluded that if both groups benefitted from an intervention that gives a teacher who has ELL and non-ELL students in the same classroom strong motivation to use those strategies. The intervention outlined in Vaughn, Martinez, Linan-Thompson, and Reutebuch (2009) included in one class period; vocabulary work, whole class and partner discussions, a short video clip, reading assignments completed either with the teacher reading aloud to the class or paired peers reading to each other, and an individually written graphic organizer or a written exercise at the end of the class period. The vocabulary strategies presented in the intervention study can be seen in greater depth in the study conducted by Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Faller (2010) which found “vocabulary instruction resulted in greater gains on standardized and research developed measures of vocabulary, word learning, and reading comprehension” (p. 7). The need for direct instruction for academic vocabulary is stressed in Crosson and Lesaux (2010) as well, with the findings directing that students need more vocabulary support as they begin reading expository text in their content area classes.

The Kelley et al., (2010) study shows the results of adding academic vocabulary instruction into a teacher’s instructional practice in a systemic and organized way. The

vocabulary instruction focused on a small group of words, usually eight or nine words for each instructional unit. Just as in Vaughn et al. (2009), in Kelley et al. (2010) the words selected were connected to explanations that use examples familiar to the students. At the beginning of each unit in Kelley et al. (2010) students were taught the morphology of each word, using the instructional method of concentrating on word parts and showing the patterns in unfamiliar words. The instructional methods utilized in the Kelley et al. (2010) study were methods such as posting the words on a word wall in the classroom, using card games and board games to practice the words, and using technology to practice the words. Kelley et al. (2010) stated that students need to hear and practice the words with the words incorporated into collaborative learning activities within the classroom. For example, students were asked to write paragraphs at the end of each week using the five words that they had learned in their reading. In this study each instructional unit lasted two weeks to provide ample time for students to practice and learn the vocabulary words.

To increase the use of academic vocabulary, Larson, Dixon, and Townsend (2013) discussed the methods of instruction used in their social science classrooms that specifically applied active techniques with young adolescents. Word walls, entrance and exit slips, morphology practices, word sorts and a vocabulary journal were parts of their action research. Their use of the word wall concept led them to display the words using Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) method of tiers in their classroom. All the terms were displayed on a bulletin board in categories on the “tier” principle. Behind tier one were basic everyday words, such as sight words as defined by Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky (2012) “words readers recognize instantly” (p. 513). Tier two was general academic words and tier three was content specific words. Larson et al. (2013) engaged their students in using

the word wall by instructing them to use the words on an exit slip in the following manner “write down one new thing you learned today and use at least two of our word wall words in your response” (p. 18). Or as an entry slip “here are two questions we’ll be answering today – which word wall words do you think will be most important in today’s lesson? Why?” (p. 18). These vocabulary teaching strategies helped to focus the attention of middle school students on the importance of vocabulary.

Direct Instruction of Reading (Teaching Comprehension Skills)

In discussing their action research, Larson et al. (2013) disclosed their use of an interactive notebook. Student compiled vocabulary journals applying Fisher and Frey’s (2008) sequence of “introduce, define, discuss, and apply” (p. 67). For each unit, in the student notebook, there was a vocabulary section that included word sorts, student friendly definitions, and visual representations of the terms discussed in the unit. Using these active methods the goal was to make their students more responsible for their own learning Larson, et al. (2013). As you will see in the teacher interviews in Chapter 4, B. R. used this notebook strategy and student friendly definitions with her students.

Miller and Veatch (2011) state that comprehension monitoring can take many forms to get to the central question the reader must ask of a text “Does it make sense?” (p.86). One technique illustrated by Miller and Veatch (2011) is “comprehension monitoring strategy guide”(p. 89). In this technique a teacher creates seven to 10 false statements that can be verified using the assigned reading. Students are handed these false statements printed on paper before they were asked to read the text, with two or three lines below each statement to write the corrected statements upon. As the students read the text they would write the corrected statement in a complete sentence, directly under the false statement on the

lines provided. This comprehension monitoring technique forces a student to be mindful of the text as they read.

The Importance of Prior Knowledge

Daniels and Zemelman (2004) present pre-reading techniques that include brainstorming, clustering, (K-W-L charts) and anticipation guides. In the research Ogle (1986) presented K-W-L and added an extra section that is called “section 2”. In this section students begin to categorize the information they have listed in the “L” section or “what I have learned”. Ogle added the categories to connect to the questions that students had when they wrote in their “W” section or “what do I want to learn” section. In the “W” section these pieces of information then can be organized into categories. For example, if the topic was the French and Indian War and the first question in the “W” section was “why did the war start?” Then everything under “L” that answered that question would be labeled with the letter “a”. Students would move onto the next question and label everything that answered that question with a “b”. As an example, a question such as, “How did the war start?” would have everything that answered that question labeled with the letter “b”. And so on until everything in the “W” column was labeled with a letter and organized into a category. In a later article, by Ogle and Carr (1987), further developed a technique that includes mapping; that allows students to organize from the categories to an organizational map using the categories that have been created and then writing the categories into a summary. This is a more developed look at the K-W-L technique than is sometimes presented in other research.

While vocabulary study and the technique of K-W-L are excellent methods of instruction for connecting prior knowledge to the reading that a student is about to do, there are other methods of instruction to connect students to what is about to be read. Daniels and

Zemelman (2004) suggested the imagination should be engaged before reading and Willingham (2015) stressed the imagination as important in bringing books and reading selections to life. Before engaging students in reading a textbook selection, these writers proposed reading a section of a diary or biography aloud to students. The section should be written in the historical period the students are about to read in the textbook selection. Or, to further engage students Willingham (2015) suggested having students role play a dialogue from an historical novel about the specific historical period covered in the textbook selection. These authors believe that giving a student a visual image of an historical period helps that student paint a visual image of the event and the people living in that historical period. The events and the people in the textbook selection enter the readers' minds before they dive into the descriptions of the event that take place far away from students' time and place.

Furthermore, the use of primary story books that include illustrations of the time period the students are about to study, allow time, place, dress, modes of transportation, furniture, and details of a time period to be brought to life prior to reading from a textbook selection. Goudvis and Harvey (March, 2012) advocated the use of picture books to create a content rich curriculum that engages students in the fascinating questions of history. These authors argue this as part of their construct to teach "historical literacy." Van Sledright (2012) defined historically literate as:

Developing a sophisticated understanding of historical time, agency, and causality by asking significant questions, assessing author's perspectives, evaluating evidence across multiple sources, making judgements within the confines of the context in question, and determining the reliability of different accounts on the same event. (p.29)

This process of understanding would be aided by the illustrations and prominent characters in a picture book. And abstractions in the more difficult text would be explained by the picture book illustrations.

As teachers we use the terms prior knowledge, background knowledge and framing interchangeable with our students. Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky (2012) use the term background knowledge and defined it as “what students already know, through learning and experience, about a topic or about a kind of text” (p. 507). Kelly Gallagher (2009) spoke of prior knowledge as knowledge capital, he states “having strong reading skills (is) not enough for the students who (come) to the page with a knowledge deficit about the topic” (p.38). In order for students to understand a new topic, a new historical period, or a new text, teachers must connect the student’s experiences with those of the topic being introduced. Daniels and Zemelman (2004) stated that the concept of prior knowledge is connected to a conceptualization identified by cognitive researchers called “schema.” They define “schema” as “a web that stores and connects all information in your mind related to a given topic” (p. 26). Prior to reading, it is this awareness of information already known that we are trying to activate in the brains of students in order to lead them to comprehension of the information that they will be reading. Methods of instruction such as reading picture books aloud to students in a History-Social Science classroom to help activate prior knowledge of concepts such as justice, civil rights, or equity can be well served by the illustrations in a picture book.

Villano (2005) presented a list of picture book authors and book titles to use in introducing intellectual concepts in a social studies, language arts, science, and mathematics classroom. She used this method to help her students comprehend the idea or concept before introducing them to the textbook material. She chose this method of instruction to assist her below average readers to grasp the concept that is central to their understanding of the unit of instruction and to create background knowledge on subjects her students may know nothing

about. This idea that students might not be ready for a concept is reinforced by Tyree, Fiore, and Cook (1994) who asserted that textbooks are not designed for the average classroom reader, but for the above average reader. Further, they submit that the reading research that has been done has not been taken into consideration by publishers of textbooks. In the teacher interviews this concept of story as a method of introducing concepts in United States History is presented by R. N. in his lessons with students to get them to practice and tell the story of America in an abridged story format.

A text box or bag activity can be used to build the connection between the students and the text. Miller and Veatch (2011) described this as similar to a pre-vocabulary technique in which a teacher chooses a realia object based on the time period or concept they wish to illustrate. In preparation to use this technique a teacher decides on which concepts are important to present to students and can be represented by the object. The object is hidden as students come into the classroom and is placed on a table after the bell rings for students to see. Students are asked to predict how the object and the text are connected. Pulling the object out of hiding can be repeated with other objects until all the concepts the teacher wishes to present are represented. Fuhler, Farris, and Nelson (2006) presented a similar technique for use with an artifact. The artifact could be a letter, a diary entry, an object from the era to which the text refers, such as a Civil War cap or cavalry saddle. Fuhler et al. (2006) supplied a set of questions that students would ask as the object is placed on their table. Students working in small groups would seek the connection to the text. This technique allows for more interaction between the students and there can be more than one artifact in the classroom. In fact, each student group could have an artifact. In both techniques this

connection of the artifact or object to the text allows students to remember the information provided by the text more easily.

Reading in the Classroom

Being able to identify the text structure and the approaches to text organization are skills students need to be familiar with, Meyer, Brandt, and Bluth (1980) “encourage readers to look for the author’s organization in a text in order to increase their retention” of the material that they are reading. (p. 73) They concluded that the skill of analyzing the text structure in which informational or expository text is presented, needs to be taught explicitly to students in their middle school years. Several researchers reported that ability to identify the type of text structure must be taught directly to students. Knowing, understanding, and being able to recognize each variety of text structure in informational or expository text is part of reading comprehension. (Meyer et al., 1980; Akhondi, Malayeri & Samad, 2011; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). Text structure types include problem/solution, comparison, antecedent/consequent, description and sequence, cause and effect, cause and effect, and sequential structures.

Methods of instruction such as “survey strategy guide” detailed by Miller and Veatch (2011) and “chapter review” presented by Kate Kinsella (2008), illustrate methods that ask a teacher to preview the text structure and text features with students before having them read the text. As researchers Miller and Veatch (2011) viewed this as a critical step in helping students understand and comprehend the text they are expected to read. Such items as headings, subheadings, pictures, diagrams maps, highlighted or italicized words, and illustrations are noted or listed on paper with page numbers included, plus some brief information about each item is noted in writing (p. 61- 62). Kinsella (December 2008). Miller

and Veatch (2011) recommended the technique of taking a “book walk” through the chapter or textbook sections to be read in order to familiarize students with the structure and the features of the text.

The interaction between cooperative learning and the individual student during reading can best be handled by the technique of reciprocal teaching, a reading opportunity that depends on the interaction of a group of students and the text. Reciprocal teaching depends on a set of four strategies and was first introduced by Palincsar and Brown (1984) and is cited in Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky (2012). Cooper et al. (2012) defined reciprocal teaching as “an interactive process in which the teacher and students take turns modeling four strategies after reading a meaningful chunk of text – predict, question, clarify, and summarize” are the four strategies (p. 148). The process can be initiated by placing students in groups of four, of mixed reading ability. One student offers a prediction for one section of the text, based on headings, maps, subheadings, charts, diagrams, or illustrations that are appear in the text. Clarification is the next step and all the students read the text together or silently. One student helps clarify any questions the others have about the text. This usually results in a group discussion. The questioner or all students in the group ask questions of the text, they can be “right there,” “think and search” “author and you” or “on your own” questions. The group attempts to answer the questions adding their own knowledge as they formulate answers. Then, they summarize the text discussing the main idea(s) and adding necessary details. The summarizer writes the answers that have been discussed, so that the final discussion of the text has a written response (Miller and Veatch, 2011, p. 93). This method worked well for both students who read at or above grade level and those who read below grade level or who are ELLs (English Language Learners).

Disciplinary Discussion/Guiding Questions

Wissinger and De La Paz (2016) argued that “students who participated in the disciplinary discussions (built around the critical questions) learned more content than students whose discussion emphasized a general understanding of the sources” (p. 54 – 55). Wissinger and De La Paz (2016) studied 6th and 7th graders in social studies classes by placing them in two random groups. Both groups were given instruction in content area knowledge, while students in the experimental group were taught a peer pairing discussion technique to use after reading informational text. The intervention included two types of whole class discussion. One was used after reading informational text; a second was used after peer pairing. A critical or essential question preceded these discussions and the same question or questions were used with all reading material throughout the unit of instruction. For example, the critical questions were introduced to students during a unit on President Jackson’s decision to remove the Cherokee Indians from their lands. The questions were: a) Is the author an expert on the historical topic? b) Is he a reliable source? c) Is what the author is stating based on sound evidence? Is it a first hand or a second hand account? d) What are the good/positive consequences in following through with the decision? e) What are the bad/negative consequences? The experimental group focused on the critical questions while the comparison group held discussions of their answers to the more traditional questions, such as who, what happened, where, when, and why.

For the experimental group this discussion of the critical questions was followed by instruction in the augmentative schemes that would lead to students writing an essay to answer the critical or essential question or questions. The study found that students in the experimental group “grappled more with the evidence presented” (p. 53) in the informational

text, while students in the comparison group, “tended to accept information in the primary and secondary source documents” (p. 53) as it stated.

As the class moved into the whole group discussion trouble spots in the class’ understanding of the informational text or the historical events being studied began to show and were responded to by the teacher to help provide a clear understanding of the concept in the minds of the students before moving on to writing or summarizing.

The class discussion is sometimes omitted for lack of time in a class period and actually the class discussion as part of classroom practice needs to be stressed. In the conclusion of their article on interactive comprehension instruction Lapp, Fisher, and Grant (2008) state “we need to scaffold the experiences students have with text so they develop repertoires and habits for reading them. To do so requires significant teacher modeling as well as extensive class discussions” (p. 382). A discussion after a classroom reading assignment or an assigned home reading needs to occur in order for students to master the material, clarify their questions, solidify the material in their minds, and allow for the intelligent scaffolding to follow. Methods of instruction that include classroom discussions are often left out or eliminated from a teacher’s lesson plan to save time or to allow for writing. Both the group discussion and the written statement are needed to create understanding which must occur for learning to be solidified in the student’s mind. After and during classroom reading assignments students need opportunities to discuss what they have read, this collaboration of understanding is highlighted in Kelly Gallagher’s (2004) writings as he quotes Barnes and Todd (1995) “Small groups of students, working together, can advance learning in ways not available when a teacher talks to an entire class” (p.1) (As cited in Gallagher, 2004, p. 114). Working in think-pair-share groups of two, students can begin

the conversation concerning what they have read; this can then continue in groups of four students, building on this, the whole class begins to share ideas with each other as a whole group. The teacher becomes the facilitator to the whole class discussion, stepping back or moving into the discussion to direct student exchanges based on the needs of the class at the time.

The pairs or small groups can be guided by a series of questions that the teacher provides. For example, in History-Social Science class this can occur when highlighting the points of discord behind two different primary sources or between a secondary text and a primary source. Students need to understand that the conversations that historians engage in during their research have much in common with the student's questions, and discussions in the classroom.

Writing About What Has Been Read

A change in the methods of instruction occurs when the students interact directly with the text. Miller and Veatch (2011) affirmed that graphic organizers are visual representations of informational text that help students organize ideas from the text.(p. 63) In their research, Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek, and Wei (2004) found that while using graphic organizers during reading all grade levels are positively affected when reading informational text, including students with learning disabilities. The organizers can be in the form of semantic, cognitive maps with mnemonics, cognitive maps without a mnemonic, or framed outliners.

Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) describe other types of graphic organizers. For example, descriptive pattern organizers that show something about a specific person, thing or event, while a time sequence pattern graphic organizer displays one event

after another in chronological order, or the process/cause-effect pattern organizer can be used to show an outcome or product from a sequence of events.

Miller and Veatch (2011) describe the main idea/detail, the simple Venn diagram, and outcome graphic organizers. While Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky (2012) define graphic organizer as “any visual representation that organizes information, such as a story map or semantic map: can be used when activating prior knowledge before reading or when reviewing or summarizing information after reading” (p. 509). Each author presents individual variations on graphic organizers. Each visual representation of text allows students to pull the ideas or concepts out of the text and use a visual medium to present those ideas in their own manner.

As another choice to visually represent the main ideas, vocabulary or imbedded concepts in informational text, students can be taught to use Cornell or double entry notes. These notes contain three areas; the key word or key concept section on the left one-third of the page, the notes taking section on the right side of the page and summary section on the last five lines of the page. This system appears in Miller and Veatch (2011) while Daniels and Zemelman (2004) illustrate a double-entry journal style of notetaking. (p. 188 – 199) Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Murphy (2012) include t-charts and double entry journals in their discussions of notetaking (p. 110 – 118). All of these methods allow students to take more responsibility for learning comprehension strategies and can be used as a method of instruction to gradually transfer the skills of notetaking from the teacher to the students.

SQ3R is a comprehension tool that can be used prior to reading or during reading, Daniels and Zemelman (2004) credit this technique to Francis Robinson (1941) they see it as a technique that allows students to comprehend a whole chapter of material “if you really

want to remember big textbook chapters, you cannot simply read straight through them like a novel you need to attack the text in a whole different way” (p. 162). SQ3R is that method and the stages are Survey, Questions, Read, Recite, and Review. The process is defined both in Daniels and Zemelman (2004) and in Miller and Veatch (2011) as surveying the text or chapter by reading the headings and subheadings, and looking at the pictures, maps, charts, diagrams, and illustrations. Then, creating questions from the headings and subheadings, or using the questions provided, this step will provide the reader with a focus for reading. Next, the reader reads to answer the questions they have created. Following that step, the reader recites the key words or concepts that appeared in their answers to the questions, and he or she does this for each section or subsection of the text. Finally, the reader reviews his or her notes, including reading the written questions, tries to recite answers and does this step within 24 hours of having taken the notes that make up the answers. Miller and Veatch (2011) suggest that this can be done in conjunction with a divided sheet of paper with the questions on the left and the answers on the right. Furthermore, they note the students can create a bookmark with the steps on it and then use that when reading their textbook.

There are other reading comprehension techniques that include questions and answers. Question Answer Review (QAR) is another technique. The advantage of QAR is that students make a connection between their prior knowledge and the textbook information they are reading. According to Miller and Veatch (2011) “The purpose of QAR is to teach students how to identify the different types of questions so they can effectively answer them” (p. 84 – 85). This technique teaches students to identify questions and then answer the questions; there are three categories of identification for questions in this method. There is the “right there” question, in which the answer appears directly in the text; next, there is a

“think and search” question that requires the reader to search both their prior knowledge and the textbook they are reading. The third type of question is expressed as either “author or you” or “on your own”. As confirmed by Miller and Veatch (2011) each of these questions has a different goal; in “author and you” the reader is expected to “make an inference based on prior knowledge and details from the text” (p. 84). Further they stated “on your own” “answers can be crafted without even reading the text” (p. 84). These three methods of instruction allow the reader to make a connection to the text and interact with it, in searching for answers to questions that are provided or questions that occur to the reader.

Besides the more formal essay, Daniels and Zemelman (2004) suggest that written statements can take the form of a “ticket-out-the-door, an “exit slip” (p. 124) or a complete summary of the main ideas from the discussion. In the “ticket-out-the-door” students are asked to write a summary of the main points of the class discussion, they are allowed to start from their own contributions to the class discussion and add the discussion points made by others. Students would need at least seven minutes to complete this assignment at the end of class discussion. Using the “exit slip” techniques, students will need 2 -3 minutes at the end of a class discussion to write a response on a 3 x 5 card. These questions need to be kept simple because of the time constraint; teachers might ask questions such as, Daniels and Zemelman (2004) propose writing the answer to “one thing I have learned and one question I still have” (p. 124) on the 3 x5 card to be handed to the teacher as the student exits the class. If the teacher chooses to request complete written summary from the students it maybe their “ticket-out-the-door” or “admit” to the next class period. For the “admit” to class the next day, it has been suggested that the teacher give students a few minutes at the end of class to

write down a few main points before leaving class. These few minutes will make it easier for students to write the summary that afternoon or evening.

Summarizing

Summarizing is a common reading instruction activity. For example, a summary at the end of a set of Cornell notes, and Palincsar and Brown (1984) utilize summarizing for the group in reciprocal teaching. Daniels and Zemelman (2004) use it in their “ticket-out-the-door” or “exit slip” (p. 124) writing assignments. Tompkins (2014) writes comprehension “is the goal of reading” (p. 253) and Miller and Veatch (2011) note that creating a summary of what is read requires a student to demonstrate that they understand the main idea, the details, and the voice of the author of the piece of text they have just read. Summarizing reinforces comprehension by requiring that students write down what they believe the author’s main idea or main points were and in writing it down students make it permanent. This enables the students to respond with their own understanding of the material, and allows the teacher to respond and correct, if necessary, any misconceptions on the part of the students. It also allows for peer responses and continued discussion of the written concepts.

Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, and Kurita (1989) discussed summaries at length; reporting on nine different summaries in their research on comprehension and memory. One of the research studies they reported on was by Armbruster, Anderson, and Ostertag (1987) who in their study of fifth grade students, taught the students to summarize problem and solution texts that the students read in their social studies classes. The students were taught to use a three box approach: one box for the problem, with an arrow leading from that box to another box in which students placed information on the actions taken to solve the problem, with an arrow leading from that box to a third box where the results from

each action taken to solve the problem were placed. Pressley et al. (1989) reported from Armbruster et al. (1987) that there was “some evidence that summarization training improves students’ written responses to essay questions about the text.” (Abstract)

In another research study, this time by Baumann (1984), who worked with sixth graders a symbol was used to demonstrate the idea from text. The main idea was symbolized as an overarching umbrella with the details hanging from each of the spines of the umbrella. This method of instruction allowed students to construct paragraphs to summarize an extended reading. Pressley et al. (1989) concluded his research by saying that the long- term benefits of summary techniques were as yet unknown, but they were promising. Based on the use of these techniques in later studies Pressley, et al. (1989) appears to have found additional support for the usefulness of summarization.

Summary

The methods of instruction, strategies and teaching techniques included here should be thoughtfully utilized before a reading assignment, during a reading assignment, and after completing the reading assignment. The use of these methods of instruction in middle school History- Social Science classrooms should insure that students comprehend what they have read in informational text and help them understand correct historical concepts.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of Investigation

The purpose of this study was to interview eighth grade teachers who taught United States history in a rural county in Northern California and to discover through the interview process what strategies and methods of instruction they used to teach the reading of expository or information text to their students. The interviews were conducted as teachers were making the transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with the introduction of the *English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects*. This time period included the state's introduction of the new *Draft 2014 – 2016 History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*. In this state curriculum framework, inquiry and literacy play a larger role in the History-Social Science classroom than in the past.

Each teacher was interviewed using the questions that appear in Appendix A. The questions were designed to discover how they taught expository or informational reading in their History-Social Science classroom. Furthermore, through the examination of their student's scores on California Standards Test (CST) taken from 2010 – 2013, and the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) taken in 2015, this researcher examined how successful reading instruction methods have been for their students. The interviews were electronically recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. The

interviews were then read and re-read using methods described in Merriam (2009), Bogdan and Biklen (2007), and Creswell (2007) to extract findings to form a case study.

Population/Interviewees

This researcher was able to interview four eighth grade History-Social Science teachers and one eighth grade English Language Arts teacher who team taught with one of the History-Social Science teachers. All of the teachers work in a rural Northern California county in small school districts. Their school districts were chosen because they were similar to the school district the researcher had worked in and they were willing to participate in the study. Each of teachers is represented by a pseudonym. Descriptions of the individuals appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Research Sample

Pseudonym	Years of Teaching Experience	Gender
M. O.	8	male
R. N.	28	male
B.R.	14	female
Z. J.	19	male
E. J.	11	male

Treatment

Participants were interviewed in a one on one interview, except for the two teachers who team taught asked to be interviewed together. The interviews lasted 30 – 45 minutes and were audio recorded and later transcribed by this researcher. The participants were given an opportunity to review and verify their statements. The recorded interviews were destroyed once the transcripts were completed.

Data Collection and Analysis

The procedures that were followed during this study were focused around getting in touch with the teachers and planning an interview time for each teacher. To accomplish that goal the Superintendent of Education for the county was contacted by e-mail and this researcher requested permission to approach the eighth grade teachers of History-Social Science in his county to ask if they would be willing to be interviewed for this study. Once permission was obtained, the principals of each small school were approached by e-mail to ask permission to contact their teachers to participate in the research. Finally, when permission to approach the teachers was granted, an e-mail was sent directly to them. Teachers were contacted individually by e-mail and asked to participate in the research study by allowing the researcher to interview them at their school site. This was verified with a phone call to the individual teacher and an interview time was arranged. One teacher did not respond to the e-mail.

The interviews were conducted between March and December, 2015 at each of the individual teacher's school sites. The interviewees received a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed into a

written form by the researcher. Each teacher received a copy of his or her interview by e-mail.

Using the teachers answers to the questions, grouping concepts were discovered using recognizable reading and United States history curriculum terms. Those reading terms and United States history terms were: vocabulary, storytelling, primary documents, Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Gettysburg Address, prior knowledge, read, reading, reading comprehension, learning, teaching, and thinking. As this was a case study, comparing and collating the answers to the questions was done using the “find” feature in “Windows 10”. Identifying the strategies and methods of instruction used by the teachers was completed using the method of reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. Then, these methods of instruction and strategies were compared with the research literature.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the literacy practices of history teachers, and better understand the strategies and methods of instruction they used to teach their students to read informational text while they are teaching them the content area subject matter of United States history. The interviews that this researcher conducted with each teacher covered their classroom practice only. In the results presented in this chapter teachers are identified with pseudonyms.

Each of these teachers is in a unique teaching setting that places them in a position to work very directly with their students, in some cases for a longer period of time than one school year. These teachers oversee more of their students' educational day and control more of the educational experiences that their students receive than would be possible in the average secondary or middle school eighth grade classroom setting.

The M. O. teaches in a school that includes grades Kindergarten – 8th grade and has total school population of 105 students, (California Department of Education, 2015b) he teaches mathematics, algebra, English language arts, life science and physical science, world history and geography: medieval and early modern times and United States history: growth and conflict, health, physical education, music and art to students in grades seventh and eighth. According to CDE, in 2015, 65.7% of his students are in the Free and Reduced Price

Meal program (FRPM) (Ed-Source, CDE, 2015), this means over two-thirds of his students live in poverty.

R. N. teaches in a school that includes Kindergarten through 8th grade and has a total school population of 457 students (Data Quest, CDE, 2015) of which 55.8% receive assistance via FRPM (Ed-Data, CDE, 2015). He teaches all of the History-Social Science classes for grades 6th – 8th, which means he teaches world history and geography: Ancient civilizations, world history and geography: Medieval and early modern times, and United States history and geography: growth and conflict. He has two class periods a day of each subject.

B.A. teaches in a school whose total school population is 145 (CDE, 2015) in grades Kindergarten – 8th of which 42.1% (Ed Data, CDE, 2015) of the school population receive assistance from the FRPM program. At this time, she teaches all the 8th grade subjects, yet in the past she has taught all of the History-Social science classes in grades 5 – 8, that includes in 5th grade United States history and geography: Making a new nation, in 6th grade world history and geography: Ancient civilizations, in 7th grade world history and geography: medieval and early modern times, and in 8th grade United States history and geography: growth and conflict. Her present classroom assignment includes all the subjects taught to 8th grade students at her school site.

Z. J. and E. J. team teach 7th and 8th graders English language arts, 7th grade world history and geography: medieval and early modern times and 8th grade United States history and geography: growth and conflict. Their school population is 477(CDE, 2015) and this includes grades Kindergarten – 8th grade of which 29.8% (Ed –Data, CDE, 2015) of their students receive assistance from the FRPM program. Together they use a common computer

lab that is located just between their classrooms. They reported that their district had provided them with an in-service training in the technique of “close reading” before they started the 2015 – 2016 school year.

Who is being taught and who is doing the teaching are important concepts to consider in reading the case study data that has been compiled. Table 2 provides a chart of the ethnic breakdown and school population of each individual school is identified by teacher pseudonyms.

Table 2

School Enrollment by Ethnicity, 2014 - 2015

School/Teacher	M. O.	R. N.	B. R.	E. J. and Z. J.
Hispanic or Latino any race	44	90	25	106
American Indian or Alaska native, not Hispanic	2	4	0	3
Asian, not Hispanic	14	1	21	33
Pacific Islander, not Hispanic	0	0	0	0
Filipino, not Hispanic	1	0	0	0
African-American, not Hispanic	0	0	0	3
White, not Hispanic	36	304	99	292
Two or more races, not Hispanic	8	57	0	34
Not reported	0	1	0	6
Totals	105	457	145	477

Source: California Department of Education. (2015b). DataQuest. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/dataquest.asp>

In the methods recommended by Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2007) the transcripts of the interviews were read and re-read to obtain an understanding of strategies and instructional methods these teachers were using in their United States history classrooms to teach informational reading skills to their students. Further the transcriptions were then analyzed using the “find” feature on Microsoft Word. The words used to examine the transcripts were; vocabulary, storytelling, primary documents, Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Gettysburg Address, prior knowledge, read, reading, reading comprehension, learning, teaching, and thinking. These academic words were used or highlighted because they came up more than once in a word search of the transcripts.

In the vocabulary that these teachers used to describe the instructional methods and strategies they employed in their classrooms certain words were utilized with greater frequency. Certain phrases or means of expression were referenced more often in response to this interviewer’s questions. Even if the teachers did not use the precise words or phrases that are used in the research literature while answering the interviewer’s questions their use of an instructional method and/or strategy in their classroom became clear.

Results and Discussion

In each course of history in the grades 5th through 12th certain primary documents fall under the time framework that is assigned by the state History-Social Science standards. In the 2016 California History-Social Science Framework the following primary documents are included in the 8th grade course of study. The primary documents are:

- Declaration of Independence,
- the Articles of Confederation,
- the Constitution,

- the *Federalist Papers*,
- the Bill of Rights,
- Washington's Farewell Address,
- Jefferson's 1801 Inaugural Address,
- John Q. Adams's Fourth of July 1821 Address,
- Missouri Compromise,
- Lincoln's *The House Divided* speech (1858)
- *Gettysburg Address*,
- Emancipation Proclamation,
- Lincoln's Inaugural Addresses in 1861 and 1865

(2014 – 2016 Draft History- Social Science, Chapter 12 Grade Eight United States History: Growth and Conflict, p. 319 -372) These primary documents originated in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Each teacher discussed their use of primary source documents in their classroom. All the teachers reported that they did not have their students read primary documents alone. Teachers in this study had students read the documents together in class. Either the teacher read them aloud or chose a student to read a section aloud.

Presentation of the Findings

Each teacher introduced primary documents to their classes in chronological order, and discussed them in their interview in that fashion. During the teacher interviews each teacher mentioned all the primary documents they taught, the two primary documents

that they all taught in common were the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.

B. R. discussed her method of reading the Constitution with her students:

So part of it we are reading aloud together and explaining it and part of it I am just telling them a story because they can't read it this year. When it comes to the Constitution itself, they're going to take a Constitution, our school has everybody take a Constitution Test in February, still and in the past we have read it paragraph by paragraph and kind of dissected it. (Personal interview, November 12, 2015)

In the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) it is recommended that what the students read for school assignments be split into two categories with a percentage assigned to each, for 8th grade that is 45% literary and 55% informational text. This means that in all the reading a student does in 8th grade, 55% of it should be from informational text sources. This designation of a percentage of reading to come from informational text sources is a change from the 2005 History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools. The reading of primary documents and History-Social Science textbooks falls under the informational percentage.

Academic Vocabulary

The teaching of informational reading in these History-Social Science classrooms follows the model of Daniels & Zemelman (2004). There are instructional methods and strategies that are used before reading, during reading, and after reading informational text. One of the strategies used before reading is to assess the student's vocabulary knowledge in the area to be studied. Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2012) confirm that students need to be familiar with specialized vocabulary, text structure, and signal words as they begin to read content area informational text. In all cases the teachers interviewed stated that at the beginning for a new unit of instruction they started with vocabulary.

In the M. O.s' classroom the students "capture vocabulary in their Cornell notes." He tried "to use the vocabulary, not just know it, (and) use the right vocabulary. And both academic and (pause) subject." Further he stated "we spend a lot of time on vocabulary", recapping his point with "academic vocabulary, can't understand directions, if you can't speak academic vocabulary." "Academic vocabulary (is) important to unlock the rest of their education" (Personal interview, March 26, 2015).

In the interview conversation with R. N., he stated "I might help them with some vocabulary, I might explain what things mean if it were complicated." He continued by saying he did not "start out with a lot of vocabulary" (Personal interview, October 23, 2015). In contrast, B. R. used a classroom notebook to capture vocabulary declaring that

So we have vocabulary, we have people, we have things, ... so then when they get to a test I allow them to, I don't let them use the book, but I allow them to use this, (pointing to a student notebook, she had pulled out from a student desk as a sample of her practice) ...promotes good study habits when they get to high school." As an example of her practice she explained what she showed students "I just turn to Chapter Six, as you read the paragraph here, they have bold headings and have words in yellow. Most, not all of these vocabulary words are in yellow as I read the chapters, so what I don't want them to do is (she reads aloud from the textbook)" Nationalism is a feeling of pride in the nation." ...I don't want to copy out of here. (She points to the textbook) I want you (referring as if to her students) to put it in your own words. What does this mean?" She expanded on her statement. "I really think if you know the vocabulary ahead of time that really helps." She detailed her example "read it aloud – you hear it. You can see it if you follow along and you can hear it out loud and then if you boil it down into easier language. That's really all I do. (Personal interview, November 13, 2015)

Z. J. expressed another method of working with his students and the text vocabulary:

A lot of times we will take notes with the documentation itself and I can ask probing questions. Spur on, make sure they (the students) understand the vocabulary and they are able to comprehend what they are reading." He continues with his explanation "with diaries, Civil War diaries go around and each one read a little bit then we will ask questions about (pause) I will have the students read it. The vocabulary is not nearly as tough" (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

When asked about the beginning of a unit, Z. J. returned to his point on vocabulary. “For me, we will go over vocabulary – I just printed off a sheet - the key people, their gonna have to know, Revolutionary War individuals they are going to know, that had a role in it, events that took place, battles (pause) things like that and just your general things they need to know”(Personal interview, December 9, 2015). To help students understand the vocabulary and utilize it, Z. J. explained the ways he addressed those issues. “Just some graphic organizers. If there is vocabulary I expect them to know I will take notes with them. If they are reading it, I will make sure it’s on one of the questions, on their worksheets that goes with the questions” (Personal interview, December 9, 2015). He reflected on his answer and added “kids are really bad when it comes to vocabulary. So we just did this today.

Preamble definition... here’s all the vocabulary words from the preamble, so they had to know what *domestic tranquility* is. And it get to *ordain* and I guess in one class about 90% of them (the students) put “to officially select a priest for the priesthood. Woe, let’s go over context right now, so let’s go back. Does this make sense?, that whole procedure. (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

E. J. illustrated his vocabulary practice with a technique of instruction.

They do definitions, they do research on the words and parts of speech, and sometimes etymology of the word as well. And then, we also before each Unit, or each story or informational or non-fictional piece there are between five and eight vocabulary words. And we look at those and jot those down. (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

In his practice of vocabulary work he illustrates an instructional method “they have those (vocabulary words) in a running, a running total in their binder in a separate section for vocabulary. And then, we do vocabulary out of the novels” (Personal interview, December 9, 2015). This presentation and capture of vocabulary helps students to increase their individual vocabularies.

Storytelling

R. N. is the only teacher who spoke of storytelling. He has his students memorize a story line that includes the major events in United States History and tell it to each other. He describes it this way “I do more storytelling and creative assignments to get them to connect things.

The one for U. S. history is there was an Indian, who finds a compass and a turkey, a fully cooked turkey and puts the , he finds some fireworks and puts the fireworks in the turkey, the turkey explodes, the turkey rains down on the head of George Washington who is riding on his white horse, he gets off the horse because the horse is starting to expand, as it eats this turkey it starts to expand, he trips over a gold nugget and he picks up the gold nugget and takes it to a chain store where he says “How much will you give me for this gold nugget?” and the owner says “I will give you one Lincoln penny” . Takes the Lincoln penny and puts it in one of those movie machine, one of those nickelodeon movie machines and he starts turning the crank and a lightbulb comes on and the movie plays and he sees people dancing around on a white ship all dressed in gold with a Teddy bear and the ship is traveling, it’s a battle ship and it was traveling around the world.

And I tell that story to the kids once and I tell it much slower, and I tell it with walking around the room as I do it and then I have them try to tell me the whole story back from beginning to end and they can do it. It is basically the history of the United States from the beginning to the end, pre-Columbian America to - ah, Teddy Roosevelt and the U. S. becoming a World Power. (Personal interview, October 23, 2015)

This method of instruction was presented to his students after he learned it at a workshop presented at California State University, Chico.

The issue of prior knowledge and the need to show connection is best expressed by the M. O., who stated that he used the movie “Robin Hood” to present background information for his 7th grade unit on Medieval History (Personal interview, March 26, 2015). And from B. R., whose students were in India and Mexico two years before 8th grade, this caused her to believe “sometimes there is not a whole lot of prior knowledge to draw from. Sometimes English is limited, sometimes past understanding of American culture, let alone American history is limited. (Personal interview, November 12, 2015)

In the research literature, Moss (2005) made a case for effective use of pre-reading discussions, reciprocal teaching, and questioning the author as instructional methods that increase a student's prior knowledge before reading the textbook. While Ogle (1986) presented a specific prior knowledge instructional technique or method that she claimed develops an active reading of expository text. The instructional technique is K- W- L. In K-W-L, the K stands for "What do you know", the W stands for "What you want to know?", and the L stands for "What have you learned." K-W-L and its connection to prior knowledge are well represented in Z. J.'s classroom. He confirmed "a lot of times I'll put that out there I've done a in the past. I've done a K-W-L chart. What we know, what questions do we have, I've done that for a couple of years." (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

Prior Knowledge

Prior knowledge or constructing prior knowledge is necessary in the study of history in general and of United States history in particular due to the fact that students may not have been to historic sites that are connected to the early history of this country such sites as Washington, D. C., Williamsburg, or Mount Vernon. The students may not have seen the State Capitol in Sacramento, Sutter's Fort, or the Old Town area on the river front in Sacramento. This means that pictures, maps, documents, illustrations, CD programs, the Internet, and realia are all part of the portrait that a history teacher uses to paint an accurate vision of the past. Connecting the past to the present and both to the individual student is a daily part of what a history teacher attempts to do in their classroom. Each of the teachers interviewed used instructional methods that endeavored to tap into what their students already knew. Before Rick Needle began his unit on the Constitution he would give the following homework assignment.

I will have them make a personal Constitution, a set of five rules for themselves to help them be happy and successful. And I connect that with self-government, so this is what the United States is trying to do, we are trying to govern ourselves...but as individuals we have to try to do that too. (Personal interview, October 23, 2015)

Keeping the historical connection is a daily pursuit for United States history teachers.

Another instructional method that can be used to connect students to prior knowledge is “Think-Pair-Share.” In the case of teacher E. J., he chose to tap into his students’ prior knowledge by the use of the technique “Think-Pair-Share.” Schoenbach, Greenleaf & Murphy (2012) discuss the use of this technique to allow partner discussions in the classroom and to enhance whole class discussions. In Mr. Jensen’s class he describes the process he uses:

I pose a lot of questions, but we use a lot of pair-share, so they understand. So they can bounce the question off each other so they can generate some prior knowledge within themselves and that will help them a bit. Some of them, maybe their partner may have prior knowledge and the other one, the other partner has not. And so that’s a good way to start generating that conversation just between students. (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

His teaching partner, Z. J., uses a daily question to generate background knowledge with his students; “a lot of times we will review, I have a daily question, each day when they come in there are questions on the board. So if there is background knowledge I want to review” (Personal interview, December 9, 2015).

These instructional methods help the individual teacher to shape their students’ thinking on a particular historical event before beginning a unit of instruction. Each of the teachers had a variety of instructional methods or strategies for teaching the actual reading of text. For M. O. it was important to have his students learn with an Advancement Via Individual Determination (A.V.I.D.) reading method he had been taught in his last A.V.I.D. Summer Institute (July, 2014) . “In all subjects I like to do individual reading. I use, I like to

use A.V.I.D. has a pre-reading, use your pre-read, read, re-read ... I like to try to get them to read (text) three times. (Then), discuss what we've read immediately after reading it"

(Personal interview, March 23, 2015). He uses another A.V.I.D. instructional method as students read in class, "they'll do a reading that involves Cornell notes. I'm teaching them how to take Cornell notes." In his class he begins the discussion with partners:

Is, ah, go through it as a class, everyone reads a certain amount then they look with their partner. And then discuss what we just read, that section we just read. Pull up the main points. Then, I'll call on a group to share. In a perfect world it would cause a class discussion. So we discuss what we read immediately after reading it" (Personal interview, March 26, 2015).

At other times M. O. said "...it is just an in class read other times we will read it aloud in class." To further explain the Cornell note taking that he uses in conjunction with reading he explained, "I will have them do written Cornell notes where they summarize, as we go through (the reading) and then I'll follow up with a lecture and see if their notes hit the points that I say" (Personal interview, March 23, 2015).

B.R. combines this instructional method with her student notebook. Going further, B.R. outlined her instructional method:

As we are reading and we come to one of these people (she held in her hand the unit list of people, things, and vocabulary), you have a spiral notebook next to you so you want to stop with your spiral notebook when we get to one of these people then I want them to write down, so we talk about Cornell notes, how to take information, kind (of) bullet points that on a test we can find (it) if are asking a question about (she opens a student notebook) say "indentured servants--this says "they were white people who volunteered to be slaves so they could go to North America," that's what she wrote. So we have vocabulary, we have people, we have things. (Personal interview, November 13, 2015)

These methods of play creation and reading, plus a student maintained vocabulary notebook that includes student generated definitions are examples of strategies that help students to understand historical text.

E. J. feels that fluency should play a role in the student reading that is done aloud in his in classroom. His instructional method for this process is:

For the specially, the document – I will read it first. I will read it out loud first to demonstrate the fluency and the pace of which it should be read so they (the students) can understand... In a non-fiction piece I will read that first. Then we will go back and I will them, assign students... I will assign two lines per student. And then, so they can understand the pacing as well so they will be able to learn to read... the correct way but also they will hear it first from me as I demonstrate it. The non-fiction piece we will stop it, we have them read. I'll have them read I will correct if I need to I will correct if they mispronounce a word and have them repeat the word after that, reinforce the proper way to say it. In some cases if it is an ELD student I will have the entire class then repeat it, so there is no feeling of uncomfortable anything to that. (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

The methods of instruction presented by each of these three teachers allow their students to better understand the text, the vocabulary used within the text, and fluency with which a text needs to be presented.

Informational reading skills taught in a classroom during a content area lesson push a teacher to use instructional methods that show students how to pull apart text for themselves and how to extract the information they need to understand the historical information from the text. These instructional methods must be part of the strategies planned by the teacher before the unit of lessons begins. In each teacher's classroom certain instructional methods are utilized with each unit. Newspaper articles for weekly current events, study guides for a unit of instruction, big or essential unit questions are all part of the teaching and learning that cycle or recycle in these classes. E. J., B. R., and Z. J. exemplify these practices in their classrooms.

McTighe and Wiggins (2013) consider that certain questions are essential to learning, they describe it in this way “a question can be considered essential when it helps

students make sense of seemingly isolated facts and skills important but abstract ideas and strategies” (p. 6) In E. J.’s instructional methods he uses the big question.

[In my lessons] they introduce a big question at the beginning of the unit. And then they use that big question – For example, the 7th graders had or the 8th graders question was “why do we read, what do you read?” And the answer is obviously, entertainment, information, and understanding. So, throughout those three different, sub units that are in that unit if they will talk about if they will give examples of; how to read, what you are reading for fun, how you are reading for information, you are reading for understanding and it will try to tie in all three of those elements. (Personal interview, December 9, 2015)

This instructional method is part of his curriculum and allows him to help his students make connections between their lives and the material they are reading. B. R. makes connections to her student’s lives using examples from current events:

Today, right now 15 people want to be the Republican candidate and ever so five want to be the Democrat candidate. How is that different? Are they going to choose...I, I try to always tie it into what’s going on now. I introduce a chapter, especially with this group that can’t read, I try to tell a story or get them tied into, just like I was talking to you. I would do something like that at first, and got them tied into information so that when we were dealing with the writing which is difficult for them to read with this group. They actually kind of have a background idea.Of what’s going on. (Personal interview, November 13, 2015)

This connection technique allowed background or prior knowledge to be connected to historical events of the past, such as the cycle of Presidential elections and the 2016 Presidential primary and the election the students saw evolving in real time.

Each of the teachers have a difficulty ahead – the choosing of their next textbook. They all teach from textbooks that will not be aligned with the CCSS or the new State of California History-Social Science Framework. Table 3 shows the last year textbooks were adopted by the school districts in this study, the title of each textbook, and the publisher each school is using.

Table 3

History-Social Science Textbook Used by Each Study Teacher

Teacher	Adoption year	Publisher	Title of the Textbook
M. O.	2007	Holt/Rinehart/Winston	United States History: Independence to 1914
R. N.	2009	Glencoe – McGraw Hill	Discover Our American Past: the American Journey to World War I
B. R.	2006 - 2007	Glencoe-McGraw Hill	Discover Our American Past: The American Journey to World War I
Z. J.	2006	Glencoe-McGraw Hill	Discover Our American Past: American Journey to World War I
E. J.	2002	Glencoe- McGraw Hill, grades 6 - 8	California Treasurers

Source: California Department of Education. (2015c). DataQuest. School Accountability Report. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/dataquest.asp>

The difficulty of using a textbook that is not in aligned with the current subject area framework or standards is that the textbook may be organized by the previous standards or framework, displaying those standards on each page or unit section of the textbook. Students can become confused by the information provide in the textbook and wonder if it is incorrect or outdated.

Furthermore, the teacher can see problems with their textbooks that may have been there since the book was adopted by the district. B.R. expressed her concerns about the quality of the material in the book she is presently required to use.

The book they used before that this is the book *A More Perfect Union*. This book (holding it up) I like some of the Civil War information better in this book (indicating *A More Perfect Union*) better than that book, so sometimes I refer back you know it's like my... and I like the geography stuff in here better too." So I have used both, so but technically this is the book (Personal interview, November 13, 2015).

In William Gray's monograph of the Annual Conference on Reading held at the University of Chicago in 1946, the theme of the conference was reading in the content areas. One of the author/ presenters recommended that teachers use several sources in classroom to give students experience with reading different types of social studies text. Taba (1946) writes "In social studies, therefore, we have not one competence but a series of competences which must be developed, each depending on the nature of the material and on the nature of the problem concerning which material is read." (p. 135) B.R. is an example of this model being followed today.

However, sometimes the textbooks fail at a great level or at a level that is of more concern to a teacher. M. O. suggests that when he chooses the textbook that will work with the CCSS he will have different considerations. "Looking through it, it is very biased. And the one thing I talk to the students about is that - these textbooks are remarkably, markedly different than the textbooks I read when I was a student" (Personal interview, March 23, 2015). He continues to explain his position "they force women into it, they force minorities into it. Um - At the expense of probably someone from the majority that had a greater contribution, but out of a trying to be perceived as politically correct or admirable or fair" (Personal interview, March 23, 2015).

Z. J. knows that his textbook does not fit with the standards and expresses his understanding and concern with that problem:

Looking at this one (he is holding the book in his hands) we use *American Journey*, which is a Glencoe book. It is somewhat outdated; it's ten years old, we adopted it in 2005. So it is no longer as up to date with the standards or even approaching the standards that they are looking for the California State Standards so it's the old California series" (Personal interview, December 9, 2015).

Yet, Z.J. sees that there are pieces of this text that hold information that is easy for his student to understand.

Things I liked about it, visually appealing, had quite a few graphs, maps, pictures, documents that the kids could if a student would take it, it would not be too intimidating both for and EL Learners and the other thing I liked about it, it did have a lot of support materials and a computer component which – we have a computer lab available E. J. and I, which we use quite a bit for reading acquisition and comprehension and things like that (Personal interview, December 9, 2015).

R. N. places his concerns on his original selection of the textbook. He sees a problem with being the only teacher consulted on which text to use.

And ah, I was probably looking for a lot of just (pause) it must have been a lot of surface stuff. I did not go as in depth as I should have (pause) Because after I started using the book I started finding a lot of problems with it I did not like but you know it was sort of user friendly visually, it was appealing, it had a lot of help (Personal interview, October 23, 2015).

He also stated that the supplementary material that came with the publisher's material had some benefit for his students. "One of the things I know I liked they have a video program that came with it. Where you play a video and also a (pause) it is called "mind jarring" video quizzes. I use a lot and it is really engaging for the kids" (Personal interview, October 23, 2015).

Each of these teachers of eighth grade History-Social Science presented their best ideas for reading connected models of instruction. B. R. used her plays written to the reading

level of her students and to get across an understanding of the historical concepts within her unit of instruction or to give her students an understanding of the political figures of a particular time period in American history. Or, the M. O. was showing the same movie at the beginning of an instructional unit as at the end of it and the class discussion assisted his students later as they read in their textbook about the same events or time period. The model of storytelling that R. N. provided for his students so that they would remember the major events of United States history helped them relate events from the story to the unit of instruction they were involved in. The full body simulation (students are playing the role of soldiers in the battle, they are each assigned a role and like an actor remain true to the role throughout the simulation) of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 3rd, 1863, that Z. J. and E. J. do each year with their combined classes to connect their students to the reading they have done on the Civil War. Each of these teachers are trying to connect United States history with the models of instruction that best serve to teach the content area reading their students need to accomplish during the school year.

Standardized Testing

Using the strategies and methods of instruction presented above these 8th grade United States history teachers assisted their students in understanding informational text. In an effort to look at the potential effect of the instructional strategies and methods the scores of 8th grade students on the California Standards Test (CST) and the newer California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) aligned with the Common Core State Standards were examined. The scores of students who had direct contact with the teachers in this study over multiple years were included.

Scores analyzed were the CST scores in History-Social Science from 2010 – 2013 and the CAASPP scores in English Language Arts/Literacy 2014 – 2016. The CST results show specific history performance directly related to teaching practices in eighth grade History-Social Science. As a History-Social Science test has yet to be developed under California's new testing protocol, this researcher chose to study the results from the CAASPP English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment scores for 2014 – 2016, as a measure of teacher consistency in reading instruction.

In examining the CAASPP scores in English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment for the school years 2014 – 2015 and 2015 – 2016, one other consideration needs to be noted, the M. O.'s first year of teaching at his school was 2014 – 2015. That means that the results from the CST History-Social Science test from 2010 – 2013 could not be related to his teaching.

The CST History-Social Science test was designed to test a student's knowledge of historical facts. At the eighth grade level the test covered three years and three courses of study: Grade Six: world history and geography: Ancient civilizations; Grade Seven: world history and geography: Medieval and early modern times and Grade Eight: United States history and geography: growth and conflict. Students were asked to answer 75 multiple choice questions to demonstrate their knowledge of these three historically periods. The scores on this test are presented for the teachers interviewed in this study for the years 2010 – 2013 (see Table 4). In the year 2013 - 2014 the California State Board of Education stopped using this test.

With the move to CCSS and the creation of the summative assessment CAASPP to measure the student's abilities in the area of English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA)

Table 4

Three Years of CST History-Social Science Test Scores by School

School/Teacher		2011	2012	2013
State Scores	% Proficient or above	50	52	52
	Students tested	461,831	458,443	455,960
M. O.	% Proficient and above	48	*	63
	Students tested	9	10	11
B. R.	% Proficient and above	*	73	34
	Students tested	9	11	18
E. J. and Z. J.	% Proficient and above	78	68	69
	Students tested	48	53	61
R. N.	% Proficient and above	67	68	47
	Students tested	80	54	62

Note. *Insufficient number of students tested to generate results

Source: California Department of Education. (2013a). DataQuest. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/dataquest.asp>

changed the focus of the summative assessment to assessing student's literacy skills, inquiry skills, reasoning abilities, and their ability to express themselves in writing in response to a question or prompt. The majority of the skills tested are not in the area of English Language Arts literary criticism, but in the use of primary documents and informational sources to create a persuasive response or essay. Students are expected to understand the use of technology and demonstrate that knowledge by using a computer to take the CAASPP.

Evaluating the strategies and methods of instruction used by the interviewed teachers required looking back at prior testing (see Table 5). The resulting CST History- Social Science test scores show a difference in results between these teachers. The chosen methods of instruction in History-Social science classes appear to be most successful and consistent for Z. J. and E. J., the United States history and English Language Arts teachers, who shared

Table 5

CAASPP English/Language Arts Test Scores by School; Percent of Eighth Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards

School / Teacher		2015	2016
State	% Proficient or above	45	48
	Students tested	455,494	452,784
M. O.	% Proficient and above	59	75
	Students tested	12	12
B. R.	% Proficient and above	61	36
	Students tested	24	11
E. J. and Z. J.	% Proficient and above	56	67
	Students tested	61	56
R. N.	% Proficient and above	47	70
	Students tested	54	54

Source: California Department of Education. (2015c) (2016d). DataQuest. School accountability report. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/dataquest.asp>

their eighth grade students and team taught. As indicated by these scores, their team teaching which included common strategies and methods of instruction have clearly helped their students succeed on the CAASPP in the area of English Language Arts/ Literacy Assessment. These scores demonstrate a great improvement and achievement for the students in E. J. and Z. J.'s shared 8th grade class in the area of English Language Arts/Literacy skills assessed.

B.R. had predicted during the interview that the students present in her classroom in the school year 2015 – 2016 would not do as well as her students the previous year. Based on the data presented here her predictions were correct. Of the 10 students enrolled in her

class in 2015 – 2016 “half were in school in India and Mexico two years before” (Personal interview, November 12, 2015).

When looking at the scores on the 2014 – 2015 CAASPP English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment testing in the M. O.’s classroom, he was able to maintain the level of student achievement from 2012 – 2013 CST History-Social Science test to the CAASPP English Language Arts / Literacy Assessment in 2014 – 2015. The resulting scores would allow him to move forward with confidence in his methods of instruction toward the goal of more of his students achieving at the “standards met” level on future assessments.

R. N. scores declined over the three years studied. However, with the introduction of the CAASPP English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment in 2014 – 2015, he returned to his previous results. According to his answers to the interview questions nothing specifically changed from 2010 – 2011 to 2014 – 2015, more extensive questioning might be necessary to ascertain what strategies or methods of instruction R. N. had changed during that time period, if any.

Also, it should be noted, without the CST - History /Social Science test more teachers at a school site may be concentrating their instructional efforts on the content and skills tested by the CAASPP English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment. These test results can be ascribed to both the History-Social Science teacher and the ELA teacher at each grade level.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Common Core State Standards (2010) amplifies the importance of teaching of reading expository or informational texts in the History-Social Science classroom. Each discipline must increase the amount of emphasis these disciplines place on reading and literacy in their individual content area. This researcher believes that we need to know what 8th grade United States history teachers are teaching their students now, concerning the reading of informational or expository text, before we can ask them to change and increase the emphasis on these skills. And we need to know what the research literature says are the best strategies and methods of instruction to teach these informational reading skills to our students. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are changing the attitudes toward and direction of informational reading in the 8th grade History-Social science classroom. The change will involve more instruction in the skills necessary to read informational or expository historical text and involve teaching students how to independently read those texts.

Shananhan & Shananhan (2008) argued that “the idea that enhanced early teaching practices will continue to provide literacy advantages without continued enhanced teaching effects- the so called vaccination – conception of teaching – does not appear to hold” (p. 43) Furthermore,

early interventions are supposed to operate like a vaccination, preventing all future learning problems, no matter what their source or severity. It appears, however, that early interventions, no matter how successful, are more similar to insulin therapy. That is, substantial treatment effects are apparent right away, but these gains can be maintained only through additional intervention and support. (Shananhan & Barr, 1995, p. 982)

In conclusion, without additional attention to the teaching of reading in individual disciplines such as science, social science, and mathematics in secondary education, students will not automatically learn to read informational or expository text at the more advanced level necessary for success in school, college, and careers.

Specifically, this study is concerned with eighth grade teachers who teach United States history and the informational reading skills they were teaching their students as they began the transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which places a greater emphasis on the teaching of discipline specific reading skills while students are learning the content of a specific discipline rather than generalized informational reading skills.

I conducted qualitative research because it lends itself to telling a story in a person's own words. In this case, it allowed a small sample of teachers' voices to stand in for a multitude of others. It is a purposeful observational interview of how teachers describe what they are doing in their classrooms to help their students "see" history as a lively science of recording actions, observations, and the thoughts of those who lived before the historical time of the students. A limitation of this study is, it is self-reporting, the teachers are reporting on their own classroom practices. Yet, like all evidence collected first hand it must be supported by assessment. The intense distinction of the interview process both reveals and hides classroom practices of individuals. We, who are asking for this change to more of an emphasis on reading instruction at the secondary classroom level, must lead. We need to lead teachers to the answers that the research literature provides and allow them to utilize those

strategies and methods of instruction that work best with their personal teaching style, in their teaching community, at their school site, in their classrooms, and with their students.

We do not know how much change is necessary in classroom reading practice unless we ask what reading skills are being taught now and listen to the answers.

Recommendations from the Research Literature

This section summarizes teaching strategies for reading in content area of History-Social Science that have research evidence to support them.

Prior Knowledge

The methods of instruction used with students as they read the text of primary documents, textbooks, or secondary source material fall into categories that are differentiated by time of use within a unit of instruction. Prior knowledge or background knowledge needs to be activated at the beginning of a reading or as the reading is introduced. This can be done by a class discussion, viewing a realia historical object, a K – W – L discussion with notes and questions or an anticipation guide. The realia object could be a novel written about the historical period or written in the historical period and read aloud to students or a picture book presentation of a historical period or concept, again read aloud to students. A short video clip showing the historical period that would include clothing, transportation, buildings, and way of speaking at that time in history would help students as they visualize that historical period as they prepare to read informational text about the period. These beginning connections would work together to connect the concepts and elements of the reading, to the students' experience.

Vocabulary

Introducing eight or nine words at the beginning of an instructional unit that will appear in the reading and may not be part of the student's regular vocabulary, will help the student start to make a connection to the historical reading. Further, to increase students' use of new vocabulary in writing paragraphs, summaries, and essays about history they are learning it helps to place these words on a word wall, or bulletin board. A vocabulary journal in which the student writes definitions for these vocabulary words in their own words or records a classroom agreed upon definition can also help students develop academic vocabulary. They can keep the vocabulary journal for each unit of instruction read. Building on this historical vocabulary allows students to develop a better understanding of each historical era as they read historical materials.

Text Structure

Strategies and methods of instruction offered during the reading of informational or expository text should include an introduction to text structure. Text structure is more than the headings, subheadings, maps, pictures, diagrams, graphs, and illustrations that appear in history textbooks. It also includes the way the writers have chosen to write the text. A student needs to be taught to recognize cause/effect, persuasive, compare/contrast, and sequential and descriptive text as they read. Beyond that students need to learn how each type of structure should be read and comprehended.

Written Connections to Reading

While reading a student needs to comprehend what they read, many strategies can be used to assist the students in this process. Some of these strategies require student to deconstruct the text. Graphic organizers, Venn diagrams, SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read,

Recite, Review) a divided sheet of paper with questions on the left and student created answers on the right, QAR (Question, Answer, Review), t-graph or chart, double entry journals, and Think-Pair-Share all require students to write down or speak about parts of the text in a particular manner after having read it. This disassembling of text helps students to comprehend the meaning of the informational reading and with most strategies gives them a written record of their understanding at the time they read the text.

Reciprocal Teaching

A longer piece of comprehension monitoring would be “reciprocal reading or teaching.” In this method of instruction a small group of four to five students reads a piece of informational text together. Together, they use the skills of prediction, questioning, clarification and summarization to understand a particular text. This particular method is utilized by the whole class working together on a number of occasions with different pieces of informational text before the class is broken up into small groups of 4 – 5 students to work as a group alone. As a part of this method one student can be assigned the role of visualizer whose work it is to draw pictures, graphs, or symbols of the meaning of the text as the students in the group understand it. This method of instruction allows students over time, say an entire school year, to become proficient at the method and each student in a group would have time to play each role within the group.

Comprehension

Teachers can monitor comprehension in a less structured way by presenting students with 10 false statements about a reading and allowing them to correct the statements while they read the text. This can be accomplished with a simple sheet with the false statements written out and a few lines below each of the statements to write the correction in

a complete sentence. Again, this gives the student a written copy of their understanding of the reading at the time they read it. Thereby allowing them to see and have documentation of changes in their understanding of the historical event.

Discussion

After reading a particular passage in an informational text and deconstructing it using a method or strategy a class discussion could begin to reinforce the main ideas of the reading. This discussion can begin with a partner discussion where the essential question for the lesson or for the unit can be the topic of a partner discussion that then enlarges into a whole class discussion. In partners this might look like a “Think-Pair-Share”, which then turns outward toward the whole class sharing their answers, point of view or evidence from the reading.

Additional Writing Strategies

Writing as a strategy allows students to write what they think or understand at different times in the unit of instruction. This can come in the form of entry and exit slips; these usually answer a question or address a general statement such as “One thing I learned today.” A paragraph written in the form of a summary created at the end of a set of Cornell notes taken on a textbook reading, or a summary of a class discussion that is held after a reading has been digested by a class of students are ways for students to capture their understanding of material that has been read. Also, a written summary using five words from a word wall can help to demonstrate comprehension on the part of a student. The phrase “you know what you think (or understand) when you write it down” applies most profoundly to students in a content- area classroom.

Conclusions

With the emphasis on informational or expository reading that is requisite with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) there will need to be a redirection in the teaching of content in a History-Social science classroom. The methods of instruction utilized in discipline specific classrooms such as History-Social Science will need to include not only content instruction and demonstrated knowledge, but informational reading instruction as well. Lessons will need to be planned and designed so that students learn both History – Social Science content and informational reading skills. Informational or expository reading skills will need to be methodically planned for, directly taught, and nurtured within the discipline of history to enable students to read well independently.

Rural teachers will need extra assistance because they are the only person at their grade level or in their department at a school site. They will need time as well as an opportunity to meet with other teachers at similarly configured school sites or grade levels to share how to blend the teaching of reading within the discipline of history. Distance is a factor in the ability of teachers to come together and utilize the knowledge of others in their field to support the changes they may need to make in their instructional practices.

Another factor is how long ago the teachers interviewed were in their teaching credential program. All the teachers interviewed for this case study earned a California teaching credential nine or more years ago. Nine years ago the teaching of informational or expository reading in a content area classroom was not a high level concern, A primary educational concern was the teaching the content so that students could perform well on the standards based assessments that were associated with “No Child Left Behind”. All of the teachers interviewed received their teaching credentials prior to 2007. In the summer of

2007, *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Course* was published and began to affect the teaching credential program at CSU, Chico. At that time, the teachers in this study were not in teacher preparation programs that were starting to modify single subject reading courses. These factors of distance and continuing education will need to be addressed in order to change the instructional practices of individual teachers of 8th grade United States history in small rural districts in Northern California.

It is clear from the teacher interviews that teaching the skills necessary to successfully read informational text will need to increase. Each of the teachers in the study is attempting to grapple with the issues of adolescent literacy in their own classroom. Rather, professional learning for teachers needs to be based on assessed student needs and planned, implemented, and delivered in a more coordinated fashion for groups of teachers.

Recommendations

As a result of this study I have 5 recommendations:

1. The establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at each school site or within a county Office of Education to support teachers of History –Social science as they begin to prepare themselves to change their methods of instruction.

As far back as Vacca (1981) and Dishner, Bean, and Readence (1981) researchers have been advocating for a professional learning community that would allow for systemic change in the methods of instruction that content area teachers use in their content area classrooms to teach reading while teaching their content material. We have an opportunity now to do this on a large scale, to implement these professional learning communities across the United States as we implement Common Core State Standards. There is recognition that “all teachers are teachers of reading” (Gray, 1946 p.3) and need to be, so that adolescents are

college and career ready as they graduate from high school and move into the world beyond secondary education. This opportunity should be nurtured and expanded so that all teachers, including teachers of eighth grade United States history, gain expertise in teaching their students informational reading skills.

In rural settings, such as where the teachers in this case study teach, there will need to be a greater outreach. Secondary history teachers may need to come together at a central location or use a shared communication technology to work together to change their teaching practices. Molly Ness (November 2007) states that a way to accomplish this goal is “provide explicit professional development opportunities that show the instructional value of literacy integration” (p.230) This may include time off from teaching assignments and hiring substitute teachers during the school year to enable teachers to come together with their ideas, classroom research, and results from changing their methods of instruction. Content area knowledge and instruction in reading skills needs to blend together in lessons that allow students to become more advanced readers of the informational text of history.

2. Support from county superintendents, district superintendents, and school principals will be needed for additional teacher professional learning.

Superintendents at both the county and district levels and individual school site administrators will need to support these changes in the methods of instruction and strategies used by content area teachers and especially teachers of history. This will mean additional monies for training and ongoing funding for professional learning communities, for materials, and for technology in content area classrooms. Without this long term financial support the ability for history teachers to change their strategies and methods of instruction will be short lived and piece meal. This support will need to be on a minimum of a three year

cycle in order to allow the secondary content area teachers to make the changes to their curriculum and instruction permanent; as opposed to a temporary change made after a three day district wide in-service training for only one technique, say “close reading”.

County Superintendents of Education will need to support the rural superintendents in their counties by encouraging them to receive additional training at their regional California State University (CSU) site. This training could be provided through the same initiative process that brought *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Course* (2007) into existence at the university level. Included with the teacher professional learning would be the professional learning for administrators that increases knowledge of what a blended focus of both teaching historical content and teaching reading in a content area classroom looks like, along with methods to assess the teachers using these new models of instruction.

3. Materials need to be purchased and maintained specifically for History-Social Science classrooms that speak to the unique instructional needs of the history classroom, when teachers are blending the teaching of reading and content knowledge within their curriculum.

Material support would go beyond the next textbook purchase. It would include multiple sets of reading material at different reading levels, both above and below grade level, covering the same historical events and time period as required by the 2016 California History-Social Science Framework. In single rural classroom students often have reading levels that are four grade levels below or above the class grade level. This situation is best addressed with materials at multiple reading levels. Primary documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Emancipation Proclamation would be in

their original form with supplementary materials for teachers to use to help students achieve a better understanding of these documents. While journals, diaries, poetry, diagrams, maps, illustrations, and picture books can be presented in their original forms, simplified versions make them accessible to all the students in a classroom. A single textbook with enough supplementary materials that are all at grade level reading levels will not be enough to meet the challenge or opportunity being presented by Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Sam Wineburg and the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) have created lessons for six different time periods in United States history that utilize varied reading levels within a unit of instruction, so that teachers can assign readings appropriate to the reading level of the individual student. SHEG has also designed a methodology for teachers to use to change the reading level of documents by simplifying the number of words read or the particular passages read within individual primary documents.

Computer technology can be made available to history teachers to allow students to have greater access to primary documents, such as those on the Library of Congress web site. For example, computer software with additions that allows a student to alight on a word within the document, and have the word explained with a computer voice over and an illustration or illustrative diagram. This technology must be close at hand, in the classroom, not away in a computer lab where it must be signed up for weeks in advance, but on the desk within reach of an individual student on a daily basis.

4. “Head Start” for middle school adolescents where their lack of reading skills are addressed before they enter high school.

Snow, Tabors, Porche, and Harris (2007) suggest such a plan, they recommend that the services for students who do not read at grade level come from many directions. She claims

that a student who struggles with reading in middle school may have insurmountable obstacles working against him or her such as, “poverty, racism, poor teaching, lack of parental academic success, and weak motivation.”(p. 132) The health and human services that are offered to “Head Start” families may be helpful to the families of struggling middle schoolers as well. Snow et al., (2007) further points out that early success in reading is not a precursor to success in reading comprehension in fourth grade and beyond. Snow et al., (2007) refers to this as the “inoculation theory – the default assumption that success in early literacy acquisition will automatically lead to adequate reading comprehension and the capacity to learn through reading.” (p. 132)

Following Dr. Snow’s recommendations would lead to a constant checking in, by teachers and administrators during a student’s middle school years, if the student begins to fail assessments, then a re-assessment of school services for that student would take place. Checking in would not just be to offer school services such as after school programs, but it would include advisory services for parents to help them access county health and human services. Advising could extend to social services offered by individual counties for students and their families especially aimed at schools that show a significant number of students failing state assessments.

These recommendations would assist teachers, administrators, and parents as the public schools to make the transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

5. The California State University system should undertake an outreach to all the History-Social science teacher credential holders in the geographic area of the campus to update those teachers with the latest research and practices for teaching informational reading in a secondary setting.

The CSU system created the *Principles and Resources: Enhancing CSU Single Subject Reading Courses* (2006) and had it guide the construction of reading course work at each campus to include the teaching of reading methods and strategies to single subject credential candidates. The next outreach should be to teachers who hold single subject History-Social Science credentials issued before 2006. These teachers need to know and understand how to teach reading as they are teaching content in their History-Social Science classrooms. Offering summer institutes and inviting area teachers for professional learning on up-to-date content area reading instruction would be one solution to better disseminating practices for teaching informational reading skills to previously credentialed teachers.

Implications for Future Research

The following are recommendations for research that should be conducted to further our understanding of the needs of middle school classroom teachers of History-Social Science:

- Further research should be conducted into the blending of History – Social Science content instruction and the reading of informational text at the middle school level
- Follow up research should be conducted with these five 8th grade United States history teachers in three years to ascertain what changes they were able to make in their teaching practice based on the requirement of Common Core State Standards(CCSS)
- A longitudinal study should be conducted to determine whether the changes required in teaching informational text at the middle school level by Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have improved the independent reading skills of middle schoolers in History-Social Science classrooms

As the 2016 California History- Social Science Framework is implemented in secondary school districts across Northern California a survey should be created and sent to District and County Superintendents with questions concerning how they will implement the Framework and what professional learning and assistance they will offer to their veteran teachers to assist them in implementing the new Framework's requirements concerning the teaching of reading in a History-Social Science classroom.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Questions that were asked of the teachers who were interviewed:

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
2. At what institution did you earn your bachelor's degree? Your teaching credential?
3. How many separate sections of 8th grade United States history, do you teach?
4. What are one or two main reasons this social science text was chosen over others? Which social studies text are you using?
5. What primary documents do you read and study with your students?
6. What reading strategies or techniques do you use with your students to help them read primary documents?
7. How do you begin a Unit of instruction? Say, your unit on the Constitution. Is this a typical unit starting pattern for you or do the techniques you apply change?
8. What techniques do you use to activate prior knowledge?
9. How do you do a chapter or textbook preview?
10. What vocabulary practices do you use with each unit of instruction?
11. If you are going to read from the textbook during the class period, how do you do it?
12. Do you use "Language/Process-Assisted Historical Thinking", it is sometimes called "functional grammar" as a technique to teach students how to read an informational text? (Here, I have an example)
13. Is there anything else about the reading instruction practices that you employ that we have not touched on that will help me better understand how you support students in reading social science materials more effectively?
14. Do you have any questions for me about any aspect of the research I am conducting?

ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF STRATEGIES AND MODELS OF INSTRUCTION USED
IN TEACHING INFORMATIONAL READING IN 8TH GRADE
HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOMS IN RURAL
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: WITH
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

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This study identifies effective strategies for teaching informational text reading to middle school students in History-Social Science classrooms. Previous research indicated that many middle school students exhibit difficulties in reading informational and expository text. The study then investigated the reading education challenges encountered and strategies employed by five middle school teachers in a rural county in Northern California while teaching History-Social Science content. Data was collected through teacher interviews. A keyword coding system was developed from reading education and History-Social Science sources to analyze the interview transcripts. Results show that although teachers were successfully using certain strategies, techniques, and models of instruction for teaching

middle school to read informational text, as indicated by their students' scores on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, there is still a need for increasing utilization of effective strategies, techniques, and models of instruction. Recommendations are made for rural teachers professional learning to address the need.