

Improving Kindergartener's Listening Comprehension through Story Grammar and

Retelling Instruction

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### Abstract

Previous research supports the findings that listening comprehension can be improved through story grammar and retelling instruction, and there is some evidence to support a connection to reading comprehension. This study focused on how to improve kindergartener's listening comprehension and hopefully improve later reading comprehension. It was the intent of the study to show that through story grammar instruction and practice retelling listening comprehension can improve. The participants were eight kindergarten students. The study lasted for six weeks and the treatment was applied to all students in the classroom however only the eight participants were formally evaluated. The eight participants were given a pre-test and a post-test comprised of an interview of retelling perception, and a retelling checklist. The results showed a notable improvement in the length, clarity, and scores of the students retelling.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	5
Chapter 2: Review of Literature.....	11
Chapter 3: Procedures .....	37
Chapter 4: Results.....	47
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	60
References.....	74
Appendix A.....	76
Appendix B.....	77
Appendix C.....	78
Appendix D.....	80
Appendix E.....	81
Appendix F.....	83

## Chapter One: Introduction

Reading instruction is a mystery that no one has truly solved, an on going debate that is sure to continue from now until the end of time. When I chose to research kindergarten comprehension of text, I believed that my treatment would have an impact on the students in my kindergarten classroom and beyond. Though I saw potential in my research I found myself lost in a sea of non-believers, individuals who chose not to see relevance in teaching reading comprehension to kindergarteners; the belief that at such a young age, word decoding and not comprehension was the critical factor. My teaching colleagues were doubtful that kindergarten students could develop sophisticated enough language to properly retell a story. This made me question the developmental appropriateness of this project. What if my students are simply too young to tackle the task I put before them? In addition to the skepticism of my peers, my professors doubted the outcome of a project that focused on comprehension at such a young age. A common understanding among educators is that the key to reading instruction in young children is phonological awareness and fluency. “Teach kindergarteners to retell?” said my mother, a first grade teacher of 20 years in Waukesha, Wisconsin, “Good luck! I can’t even get my first-graders to do that.” A feeling of hopelessness began to envelop this research idea. Yet my desire to know if my students could rise above the low expectations that surrounded them prevailed. What if popular notions are holding them back from reaching their potential? It seemed wholly possible, yet my fears remained. Then at a time when I decided to scrap the research and go in a different direction, I discovered the fascinating research of Morrow’s (1985, 1986). According to some scholars, this is “outdated” research, however this woman was cutting edge at the time and much of the

important retelling research of today was influenced by her work. Challenging questions did not deter Morrow, or standard practice or even the doubts of her peers; if she could examine this tough question so could I.

I was in my sixth year of teaching kindergarten in Oak Creek, Wisconsin when this research was conducted. For the last five of the six years, I have had the privilege to team teach with a truly gifted special education teacher. We teach in a full day kindergarten program with typically developing children and also children with special needs. All students participate equally in the classroom community. The special needs students are pulled from class a few times a week for special therapies such as speech, occupational therapy or physical therapy but on the whole they receive their instruction alongside their peers. Most of these students fully participate in the classroom routine and curriculum with modifications. The special education teacher and I developed the reading program for our classroom and it is ever changing based on research trends in education, needs of our students and the curriculum.

At the time of this research, we began a typical day with independent writing and then moved to large group reading instruction, preceded and followed by questioning and discussion. Finally, the last part of our language arts block was a series of centers that focused on different phonological areas connected to reading and writing. One of the small groups was dedicated to reading strategies and practice. My co-teacher and I shared responsibilities of remediation, re-teaching and support for struggling students. It has varied from year to year the number of strong readers we have had in our classroom but no matter how many were reading, I always felt that when students reached a reading level beyond early emergent, it was important for them to begin work on comprehension.

Once I started to take my master's course work, I realized that comprehension isn't just for the advanced kids. Everyone needs to be taught comprehension. In fact, it is my belief that the struggling readers probably need as much of a boost, if not more. Then I thought of the children in our classroom with autism. How were we going to teach them to comprehend? So often students with autism could decode with ease but ask them a question and the silence was deafening. It was often the same for English Language Learners in our classroom and even the students who had a speech and language diagnosis. I had asked myself the same question over and over again, "How can you develop a system for non-readers to focus on comprehension without the burdens of decoding?" Initially I had hit a road block, however after reading research by Morrow (1985,1986), assessing my students' strengths and weaknesses and reflecting on what's missing in our current reading instruction, I began to see a trend: story-grammar, listening comprehension and retellings. To my amazement, the answer fell into my lap. It was then that I knew my students needed explicit instruction in story-grammar that focused on comprehension of complex stories that could be taught and assessed using retellings, and I now had the fundamental direction for my project.

This research project examines the effects of story grammar and retelling instruction on listening comprehension of narrative text. The pivotal key to the project would be to provide a tool for students that would help them organize their ideas, remind them of important grammar elements and could be used for practicing retellings. With this in place, they may be able to successfully retell a story. Though listening comprehension and reading comprehension have inherent differences, it is impossible to deny a link between the two. Some might say that the attention needed to read and

comprehend is much more complicated than listening and comprehending. However, the action of retelling a story is going to be the same whether you read the story or whether it was read to you. Learning the story grammar and organization should help my students by allowing them to spend less attention deciphering the vocabulary and format of story grammar; therefore they will have more active memory dedicated to remembering parts of the story.

### Past Research

While preparing for this study, research emerged that supported a link between listening comprehension and reading comprehension (Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen, and Nurmi (2005); Diakidoy, Stylianou, Kakrefillidou and Papegeorgiou (2004). Research also showed that story grammar instruction would improve student's ability to comprehend narrative text (Davis (1994); Bui (1993); Hagan (2004). Finally, retelling has proven to not only be a valuable tool for assessing comprehension but also for reading comprehension instruction of both narrative and expository text (Gambrell and Kaskinen(1991); Moss(1993); Morrow (1985,1986). For me, the research pointed strongly to a marriage between these important comprehension strategies that has not yet been considered. Morrow's research (1986) concludes that by allowing students to practice retelling, their language ability as well as their vocabulary, will improve. In addition, retelling is one of the few activities that can be both an assessment and instructional technique. By using retellings within reading instruction, oral expression and comprehension will show improvement, however there is a code in narrative text that may need to be taught explicitly to students. Tori Boulineau, Cecil Fore III, Shanna Hagan-Burke and Mack D. Burke (2004) have proven that the explicit teaching of story-



grammar helps children with learning disabilities navigate the foreign language of text and retain the information needed for comprehension in the short and long term. Bui (1993) confirms that story grammar instruction is not only beneficial for struggling comprehenders, as it is useful for all students. Hoover and Gough (1990) have theorized that listening comprehension plays a major role in the success of young readers; their theory is expressed through their “simple view” of reading comprehension model. My research attempts to create instruction that supports the development of strong listening comprehension through story grammar instruction and retellings in order to aid in later reading comprehension for young children.

After concluding that I must have a multifaceted approach to comprehension and that my avenues of instruction would rely heavily on retelling and story-grammar instruction, I set out to design a story map (Appendix A) that would help the students remember what was important for retelling and to design a reasonable assessment of this treatment. As I have worked closely with speech therapists and the special education teachers in my classroom, I felt the best way to give children a tool was through pictures. We have often used pictures with non-verbal children to help facilitate communication. Using this as the basis, I designed a story map using pictures from the Picture Exchange Communication System otherwise known as PECS (Appendix A). PECS is a program that we use with many special education students in our classroom in a variety of contexts. The children with special needs benefit from visual input to aide understanding, as do many typically developing students. It was my belief that if PECS pictures could be used to get students to successfully follow directions, generate writing and improve social language, it could also have an impact on story grammar instruction and retelling

language. Having read Morrow (1986) and Irwin and Mitchell's work (1983) with retelling, I set out to design an assessment tool that would help gauge the success of the treatment used with the students. The question I finally set out to answer in my research was the following:

“Will explicit story-grammar instruction, retelling practice, and the use of a visual story map improve kindergarten students' listening comprehension of narrative texts?”

### Overview of Study

My study was conducted in an integrated kindergarten classroom of 19 students, in a suburban public school district in Wisconsin. Eight students were evaluated on their retelling ability before and after story grammar and retelling instruction was introduced to the class. I examined the effects of the instruction on the students' ability to comprehend texts that had been read to them. The timeline for this study was six weeks, beginning in the April of 2007 and ending in May of 2007. Prior to beginning instruction, I surveyed the students' general knowledge and I derived a baseline of the students' retelling ability using a retelling rubric. During the study, students received instruction in story grammar, modeling of retelling, and practice retelling five times a week. The students learned story grammar elements such as characters, setting, problem/goal, beginning and end. They also learned how to organize their thoughts in order to better equip themselves for the retelling and to determine what was important for a retelling. Almost daily the students either listened to or performed a retelling using a story map constructed by myself. After six weeks of instruction and practice, the participants were re-evaluated on their ability to retell narrative text.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

There is a lot of debate about whether children in kindergarten and first grade should be responsible for comprehension of books and stories. Research, detailed below, has shown that listening and reading comprehension are linked. There are methods to test comprehension even in the youngest school age children, but because many young students are not “reading”, these methods are often overlooked or discarded entirely. Much like assessing young children’s ability to comprehend, professionals also overlook the need to teach techniques for comprehension.

This chapter presents summaries of prior research focusing on strategies that have been beneficial in helping students learn how to comprehend texts. The action research reported in the following chapters draws on this prior research, applying the strategies suggested, improving text comprehension in young readers. Three primary areas of research are examined in this review: those that connect listening and reading comprehension, specific programs that use story-grammar instruction/ mapping and research that supports using retelling for instruction and assessment.

### Connection between Listening and Reading Comprehension

In this section, the studies discussed show how listening comprehension can be an indicator of later reading comprehension. Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen, and Nurmi (2005) studied students’ reading development in the first two years of schooling and how aspects of reading were affected by the pre-requisite skills in the areas of word reading, visual motor, concepts and listening comprehension. Diakidoy, Stylianou, Kakrefillidou and Papegeorgiou (2004) analyzed all the possible factors related to proficient reading performance in a study across grade levels. They found that success in listening

comprehension does correlate to reading comprehension success with the greatest correlation in Grade 2. In a study done by Aarnoutse, Von den Bos, and Brande-Gruwel(1998) researchers sought to determine the effects of listening comprehension interventions on children who were identified as struggling readers in second grade. These researchers wanted to see if helping students by improving listening comprehension would advance their reading comprehension and decoding. Janice M. Keenan, Rebecca S. Betjemann, Sally J. Wadsworth, John C. DeFries and Richard K. Olson (2006) conducted a study which sought to determine the influences of genetics and environment on reading comprehension.

In a longitudinal study conducted by Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen and Nurmi (2005) researchers administered a battery of tests throughout the first and second year of school to see what components of reading are the best predictors of word reading and reading comprehension. The authors predicted that the different components would have varying influences on word calling and reading comprehension at different times of the year. They also predicted that there would be no change in the rating of the readers' ability over that time; the strong readers in year one would continue to be the strong readers at the end of year two. Researchers collected data through a battery of tests that looked at letter knowledge, visual motor skills, listening comprehension, concept knowledge and pre-reading skills compared to test results from the standardized reading and comprehensions test for the specific grade level.

The participants were 114 students in six different classes from four primary schools in Finland. All the children in the study were native Finnish speakers. Because in Finland children begin school in the year they reach seven, participating children were on

average 7 years and 3 months at the beginning of the study. Most parents were well educated and working. Only 6% of the parents had no occupational education.

In this study children were given a battery of tests the first week of school and then four times each year. The tests given at the beginning of the year were tests related to the skills thought to indicate future reading success. Researchers tested the students' word reading ability and comprehension throughout the year. With the variety of test results, researchers could track which indicators seemed to have the most influence at any one time of the year. Researchers could see how the different prerequisite skills played a role in reading development. Testing was changed slightly as the children entered the second year because the reading tests required more comprehension and less word calling. Test scores were analyzed after each testing session and again at the end of the entire two years. To test the relationships among the pre-tests and reading performance a path modeling was used and various goodness of fit measures. Ultimately the researchers presented only the data that was statistically significant and had the best fit.

The researchers found interesting connections between pre-requisite reading skills and reading performance at each test period. They found letter naming was a valuable predictor of word calling only in the first term of school. Interestingly, concept knowledge was the strongest predictor of reading at the end of the second year of schooling. The only prerequisite reading skill that showed statistical significance at almost every phase of reading was listening comprehension. It had the most influence on the inferential comprehension measures and it predicted outcomes at every testing situation. The research did show that those children who began as good readers finished the two years as strong readers. Overall this study shows that though other pre-requisite

skills are important for reading, listening comprehension is the most influential on both comprehension and word reading success.

Diakidoy, Stylianou, Kakrefillidou and Papgeorgiou (2004) conducted a study comparing listening and reading comprehension of text at a variety of grade levels to see if there was a correlation to text comprehension. The students listened and read both narrative and expository text. This study examined the hypotheses that (a) the relationship between listening and reading comprehension becomes stronger after decoding mastery; (b) the difference between listening and reading decreases with increasing grade level; and (c) similar patterns of relationship and difference are obtained with narrative and expository texts. The dependant variables were teacher's rating score, students GPA and the result of the specific comprehension tests developed for each text made up of both literal and inferential sentence verification tasks.

The sample included 612 students enrolled in three elementary schools and two middle schools on the island of Cyprus. Overall there were 135 students in Grade 2, 151 students in Grade 4, 151 students in Grade 6, and 177 students in Grade 8. Students' reading success was evaluated by teachers on a rating scale from low to high in reading achievement. These scores had a strong correlation to the overall GPA of the students.

Before students were given text to read, a panel of experienced teachers discussed as many as forty different texts and narrowed down the texts for each grade level based on familiarity of subject and vocabulary, as well as overall text difficulty. Two expository and two narrative texts were chosen for each grade level to read. The texts were then re-written in a booklet form and audio taped. The study was completed in two 40-minute sessions scheduled from two to seven days apart. In each session, students read and

listened to one narrative and one expository text. This resulted in half the students listening to a particular text while the other half read the same text. After reading the text booklets were collected and the students completed the corresponding comprehension test questions.

After much analysis, researchers concluded that the correlation between listening and reading comprehension becomes stronger as readers mature. The researchers concluded that neither listening to nor reading a text impacts the comprehension any more or less than the other. Grade level however does impact the reliance on listening as a mode of text comprehension rather than reading. Improvement is shown in reading comprehension between Grades 2 and 4 and listening comprehension is improved between Grades 4 and 6. There was a greater reliance on listening comprehension in Grade 2 than in Grade 4 and a marked improvement in that comprehension in Grade 6. Researchers concluded that listening comprehension performance exceeded reading comprehension in the early elementary-school grades. They also found that comprehension in general was better with narrative text than expository across all grade levels but success in narrative comprehension was a predictor of later success in expository comprehension.

In a study conducted by Aarmoutse, Von den Bos, and Brande-Gruwel (1998) researchers identified children who were struggling in decoding, and reading comprehension. They then split these children into two categories; children who performed poorly in listening comprehension and those who scored average in listening comprehension. Then the authors provided a listening comprehension treatment that taught the children comprehension strategies such as clarifying, questioning,

summarizing and predicting. The authors predicted that poor readers or very poor decoders who were given instruction in comprehension strategies while listening to narrative texts would learn the strategies better and be able to apply them to reading comprehension tasks. Researchers collected data through a battery of tests that evaluated word reading skills, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, strategic listening and strategic reading.

The sample included 95 students enrolled in six special schools in the Netherlands. These schools specialize in working with children with severe reading problems. There were 53 boys and 42 girls between the ages of nine and ten. Selection criteria were based on scores on a standardized decoding and comprehension test. A score that was -1.5SD for the chronological age level in decoding, and a comprehension score of at least 1 year delay as compared to normal-reading counterparts qualified them for intervention. Student who were identified as struggling readers and also performed poorly in listening comprehension were divided into the treatment or non-treatment groups. Students who were identified as struggling readers and had no apparent trouble with listening comprehension were split into the treatment and non-treatment groups.

The intervention conducted was designed to teach reading comprehension strategies through direct instruction and reciprocal teaching as related to texts presented to the student verbally. Students who participated in the treatment received twenty lessons for 30 minutes each. The lessons focused on predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarizing over sixteen of the sessions with some overlap of instruction in the ninth, tenth, fifteenth and sixteenth lessons. In the last three lessons the students concentrated on integrating all three strategies when listening to the texts. Students in the



control group received regular classroom instruction in reading comprehension which did not focus explicitly on these reading comprehension strategies or provide stories to the students orally. Also these students were not allowed to work in small groups. An equal amount of instruction time was given to all students.

The results of this study indicated no real difference in the ability of proficient listeners or non-proficient listeners to learn using this teaching technique. It also showed that students who received the treatment did perform better in the Strategic Listening Test than the control group. More impressive however was the scores of the treatment group on the Strategic Reading Test as compared to the control group. This testing shows that despite the fact the students were taught through listening to stories and continued to have decoding problems they could still apply the learned strategies to a reading context. The finding also indicated that this program does not transfer to general reading and listening comprehension improvement as no significant gains from pre to post-test could be found for these areas.

In the scientific study developed by Janice M. Keenan, Rebecca S. Betjemann, Sally J. Wadsworth, John C. DeFries and Richard K. Olson (2006) researchers sought to determine whether genetic or environmental factors influenced word recognition, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. They also hoped to find correlations between both word recognition and listening comprehension on reading comprehension. The independent variables in this study were; genetics vs. environment. The dependant variables were a series of intelligence, reading, word recognition and listening tests.

The sample was made up of 70 identical twins, 61 same sex fraternal twins and 60 opposite sex fraternal twins from 27 different school districts across the state of Colorado. The participants' ages ranged from 8-17 and at least one of the twins had a school history of reading difficulties. A second normal-range control twin sample with no school history or reading difficulty in either twin was established for comparison. A total 133 of the 191 participants had a school history for reading difficulty.

Participants were tested in four 2-3 hour sessions on reading comprehension, listening comprehension, word recognition and general intelligence. Each measure was tested using a variety of tools. Reading comprehension was tested using a cloze technique, retelling, short answer, multiple choice and picture discrimination tests. Listening comprehension was testing through a cloze technique, retelling, and short answer comprehension questions. Word recognition was assessed using timed and non-timed word lists that increased in difficulty. General intelligence was assessed using either the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised (WISC-R; Wechsler, 1974) or the Wechsler Adult intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-R; Wechsler, 1981). All of the tests were standardized and the researchers used Cholsky's decomposition of genetic and environmental influences to evaluate the impact the results.

The researchers found after analyzing the data from all the testing in each group the there was a strong genetic correlation between word recognition. The previous finding was expected however the researchers also found a strong correlation between listening comprehension and reading comprehension independent of word recognition. There is no other research to date that corroborates this finding however it does match Hoover and Gough's (1990) "simple view" model of reading comprehension. Even more

impressive was that the genetic influences of word recognition and listening comprehensions together accounted for all the genetic influence on reading comprehension. Shared and Non-shared environmental factors did not have a strong correlation with any of the measures though the researchers point out that the sample was small and it might differ if the sample were larger. The researchers concluded there is a strong correlation between word recognition and listening comprehension and reading comprehension that stems from genetics.

This section discussed how listening comprehension relates to reading comprehension. In the first study, Lerkkanen et al. (2005) compared pre-requisite skills such as listening comprehension to reading success in the first two years of school. The researchers concluded that listening comprehension had the greatest impact on overall reading success and most notably reading comprehension. In the second study, Diakidoy et al. (2004) concluded that listening comprehension performance is higher in the lower elementary grades and has a great deal of impact on students overall comprehension of text. The third study by Aarmoutse, et al. (1998) found that listening to stories in order to teach reading strategies can improve students ability to apply those strategies to listening and reading comprehension.. Keenan's et al. (2006) study made a sound argument for listening comprehension as a strong genetic connection to reading comprehension. The next section discusses studies that highlight how using retelling as an assessment and instructional tool affects reading comprehension.

#### Retelling: Assessment and Instruction

In this section, the studies elaborate upon the effectiveness of retellings on reading instruction and child assessment. In the first two studies, Marrow (1985, 1986)

discusses how to successfully use retelling not only as an assessment of comprehension in young children, but also an instructional tool. In the next study, Gambrell and Kaskinen (1991) also disclose how retelling can be used for assessment as well as applied as a practice tool for improving comprehension. Geraldine Dennis and Eileen Walter (1991) conducted a study on the importance of repeated read-alouds on students' ability to comprehend the basis for success in reading was improvement in retelling. The final study in this section is from a paper presented at the Annual meeting of the National Reading council in 1993. The study by Barbara Moss (1993) evaluated the validity of using retelling with non-fiction texts across K-5 grade levels.

In Morrow's (1985) groundbreaking study on the use of story retelling to improve comprehension, she looks at the potential of using retelling as both a critical assessment tool in addition to being a teaching tool. The 1985 article from *The Elementary School Journal* describes two separate studies conducted by Morrow highlighting the importance of retelling in an educational environment. In the first study Morrow's goal was to determine what the impact of the retelling technique would be without instruction on kindergarten children's ability to answer comprehension questions. The independent variable was the overall comprehension of the children when exposed to two different educational models: retelling vs. picture drawing. The dependant variables were a set of story structure questions and a set of traditional comprehension questions.

The sample for this study was made up of 4 kindergarten classrooms with the average size of 15 in a public school district. The socio-economic levels of the children ranged from low to middle class. The students ranged in ability levels from low average

to above average in all classrooms. There were a total of 59 participants: 25 girls, 34 boys.

The students were randomly split into either the control or experimental group and then given a pre-test. The pre-test consisted of having both the control and experimental groups listen to a short story. There was a brief instructor lead discussion both before and after the story. After the story, the students in the control groups were asked to draw a picture about the story and the experimental group was asked to retell the story to an unbiased examiner. Approximately thirty minutes after the retelling, the students were asked comprehension questions by another set of examiners and a final set of examiners scored the answers to the questions. One week later the same protocol was followed but this time there were two different books with both groups. Each group had children listening to the same stories. .

The results of this study yield little significant evidence to support Morrow's theory that retelling improved comprehension. The only slightly significant difference in scores was between the control and experimental group's overall comprehension score. The lack of persuasive data lead Morrow to her next study, which explored how retelling could be taught.

Morrow (1986) kept much of the original experiment; however she incorporated some significantly different aspects to account for any confounding that may have occurred and to further test the validity of the theory. Morrow's (1986) second study allowed for eight separate treatments of retelling instruction and guidance with the children. While the independent variables stayed primarily the same, comprehension; with retelling instruction vs. not retelling instruction, the dependant variables were

broadened. The dependant variables were structural and traditional questioning, improved narratives and improved oral language.

The sample size was also significantly larger, as the original size may have been too small or too homogeneous to provide detailed results. The new study incorporated 17 kindergarten classrooms located in urban and suburban public school districts. The socio-economic levels of the children ranged from lower middle class to upper middle class and ability levels ranged from below average to above average. There were a total of 82 participants, boys and girls, 38 in the experimental group and 44 in the control group after adjustments for students who missed treatments. The study was done in the fall when the average age of the children was 5.2.

In Morrows (1985) follow up study, student teachers were all trained to administer the treatments to the children. The student teachers attended two training sessions to teach them the procedures for reading stories and guiding retellings. Research students (differing from the student teachers) administered the pre- and post-tests. Once student teachers were properly trained, the treatments were administered once a week for eight weeks on the experimental group with the story reading procedure the same as the control group. After reading, the control group was asked to draw a picture. The experimental group was asked to retell the story one-on-one to the student teacher using prompt sheets, provided by Morrow. After eight weeks, the students were given post-tests but this time researchers were looking for an increase in expressive language ability as well as story structure and comprehension.

The results from Morrow's (1986) follow up experiment were much more conclusive than the previous study. Results for the story dictation test found that the

experimental group did significantly better when retelling than the control group. The main areas of improvement were in setting and plot episodes. In the language assessment, students in the experimental group had a significant increase in the length of T-units, or complexity of language compared to the control group. Interesting anecdotal evidence showed that the kindergarten teachers saw a marked difference in students' confidence and interest in retelling stories and increased use of story telling during play.

The study conducted by Gambrell and Koskinen (1991) examined the effect of using retelling as an instructional tool with proficient and less-proficient readers in fourth grade. The goal of the study was to see if allowing students to practice retelling stories that they read silently would both broaden their retelling ability as well as strengthen their ability to answer explicit and implicit comprehension questions. The authors' first hypothesis was that by engaging in authentic retelling experiences readers would generate more complete and focused retellings. The secondary hypothesis was that more story structure elements would be included in the retellings. The tertiary hypothesis was that more developed retellings would result in increased ability to answer explicit and implicit questions about the prose. The independent variable was comprehension: with practice retelling or without practice retelling. The dependent variables were the free recall protocols and the cued recall tests, more specifically the number of significant story elements included in retelling and number of questions answered correctly.

The sample consisted of 48 fourth grade readers from four elementary schools in Maryland. Of the 48 total students participating, 24 scored in the 68th percentile or above on the California Achievement Test. The remaining 24 scored in the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile or below on the same test.

After being selected for this study the students began participating in the retelling practice. Each group of proficient and less than proficient readers silently read texts either at the fourth grade or the second grade reading level per session. After the reading they were instructed to retell the story and the researcher would record it for younger students to hear. The author intentionally did not instruct the children on how to retell but rather allowed them to organically form the retelling themselves. After each retelling the students were asked cued-recall questions. The researchers would then listen to the tapes and score them for each of the four sessions. Data were compared between the first and fourth session.

The authors found that by practicing retelling, students in both the proficient and less than proficient groups markedly improved in reading comprehension. In only four practice sessions the students significantly increased the number of propositions offered in the retelling. They included more important story elements like plot and theme into their retellings and they significantly improved their ability to answer questions about the story.

Geraldine Dennis and Eileen Walter (1991) conducted a study on the importance of repeated read-alouds on students' ability to comprehend. Comprehension was assessed using retellings. The purpose was to see if repeated readings would significantly improve story comprehension. Researchers hypothesized that the first grade subjects would significantly increase story comprehension after stories were repeated four times over four weeks. Improved story retelling would mark improvement.

The sample consisted of six children. There were equal numbers of boys and girls. These students were from one first grade classroom in a rural elementary school. The



student population came from a fairly constant middle to low socio-economic community. The six subjects were chosen from 19 total students based on age, lack of disability and English as their first language. It is significant to note that due to the small sample size, the results may not be representative to the entire population.

This study was done over many weeks with three phases in mind. The first stage was simply reading to the students weekly for six weeks prior to any assessment. This time was used for modeling retellings for students prior to assessment. The next phase included taped oral retellings after the first reading of a book. This first retelling was used as a baseline for comparison to future retellings. Finally, another book was read once a week over four weeks and oral retellings were taped after three of the retellings. There were three prompts used by the researcher to elicit as initial response, continued conversation and any added information.

The results of the retelling data showed interesting findings, though again, it may not be generalized due to the small sample size without further research. The students showed a much better retelling percentage having heard *Tillie and the Wall* four times rather than *Inch by Inch* only once. Further, some of the raw scores showed a dip in retelling performance from the first time the story was retold to the second time the story was retold. The second retelling of *Tillie and the Wall* happened two weeks after the initial retelling. Between the initial retelling and the third retelling the students only listened to the story instead of listening and retelling the story. It can be reasonably concluded that repeated reading and retelling improves comprehension, but a larger study would need to be conducted to determine to what level retellings have an effect.

Barbara Moss(1993) presented a paper to the National Reading Conference of the a research project that showed the validity of using retelling to assess children's comprehension of expository text. There were three objectives of this study. The first was to determine the degree to which children at a variety of abilities in K-5 classrooms are able to comprehend expository text. The second objective was to evaluate if and how retellings differ depending on the ability level of the student in a specific grade. The third was to determine what strategies for retelling were most frequently used for each grade level and ability. The dependent variables were their scored on the Irwin and Mitchell's 5- point scale for judging the richness of retellings as related to non-fiction text.

The subjects in total were 54 elementary students from Ohio public schools but only 18 students had finished the research at that time of the conference. The subjects evaluated at that time were 1 student at each grade level K-5, each given an ability level of low, medium and high based on standardized reading test results.

The project asked students to listen to non-fiction texts and read by trained per-service teachers and researchers. After listening to the book they were asked to draw a picture about the book and retell the book as if they were telling it to a friend who had never read the book before. The researchers and teachers explained to the students that they could use their picture, the book, or simply their own memory to assist in the retelling. The retellings were taped recorded and transcribed later and then evaluated using Irwin and Mitchell's 5 point scale.

The data at the time of the conference lead researcher Barbara Moss (1993) to see trends that suggest that average and high ability readers were able to competently retell non-fiction stories at their own grade level. Low Achieving reader however varied greatly

among grade levels. She also found that though low achieving students often were able to identify main ideas, sequence and summarize the details, they could not make connections to themselves and lacked inferring ability. Failure to make connections and infer is r what set the low achieving students apart from the rest of the students. This research also confirmed, with few exceptions, that more students reviewed the text to tell the story.

This section discussed how retelling is used not only to assess but also to develop listening and reading comprehension. In both of Morrow's (1985,1986) studies, students who practiced retelling as part of their reading instruction improved their language skills and more specifically the language needed to express understanding of a story. In the study conducted by Gambrell and Koskinen (1991) the researchers observed how students' retellings seemed to improve with a mere four practice sessions. Dennis and Walter (1991) used retelling as a means for assessing comprehension in first grade readers but they also found that the practice of retelling is in itself a good tool for improving comprehension. Moss's 1993 paper at the National Reading Council gave an interesting look at the link between retelling and non-fiction text. The next section presents a summary discussing ways story mapping can improve reading.

#### Story Grammar: Instruction and Mapping

In this section, the studies explored how students' comprehension was improved by the use of story-grammar mapping. In the study by Boulineau, Hagan-Burke, and Hagan (2004) the effectiveness of teaching story-grammar mapping vocabulary and concepts to children with learning disabilities is examined. Story-grammar and mapping instruction is challenged in the study by Bui (1993) where Bui looks at how linking story

grammar to personal experience can further benefit comprehension achievement. In the study by Davis (1994), the researcher studied the effects of two teacher directed pre-reading instructional procedures on literal and inferential reading comprehension. Davis's (1994) intention was to show the superiority of story mapping to directed reading activities as a pre-reading technique. Klecan-Aker and Gill (2005) conducted a case study with one student with a Pervasive Developmental Disorder in which they used a comprehension program that focused on Story Grammar instruction in order to improve the child's story telling ability.

The study conducted by Tori Boulineau, Cecil Fore III, Shanna Hagan-Burke and Mack D. Burke (2004) examined the effect of using explicit story-grammar mapping instruction to improve comprehension in third and fifth grade students with specific learning disabilities. The goal of the study was to see if through practice and directed instruction on using story-maps the students' comprehension would improve. The first main research question that was posed was: What are the effects of story-grammar mapping on the reading comprehension of students with specific learning disabilities? The second question was: Will the effects maintain after story-grammar mapping is discontinued? Will more story structure elements be included in the retelling? The researchers collected data through story maps that participants created independently at each session.

The sample consisted of 6 third and fifth graders with an SLD label from an elementary school of 750 students in rural Georgia. Five of the participants received support instruction in English, spelling, math, science, and/or social studies. One student received support for mild articulation weakness. None of the students took medication

during the study. To qualify for participation, the students had to meet the following criteria: (a) no previous exposure to story mapping; (b) receive pullout services in reading; (c) score poorly in word identification, and comprehension; and (d) have steady attendance.

After being selected for this study the students used some of the designated pull out reading time to be taught the story-grammar mapping and were given time to practice. Intervention was scheduled for the last half hour of their reading instruction time. The mapping was taught in small groups, and if two or more students missed a session the whole group repeated the session. Reading passages were taken from the primer and first-grade basal readers, and story maps were used for visual organization of the seven main areas: setting, character, problem, solution, outcome, reaction and theme. The teacher used a checklist to ensure the instruction was thorough and consistent with all the students. This study was designed using three phases. The baseline phase was for probing without intervention, the intervention phase focused on explicit instruction on story-grammar elements and modeling. The discontinuation phase ceased all instruction in story-grammar and focused on the post-reading comprehension without intervention. At each phase, data was being collected on the students' ability to fill out the story map independently. Data at each phase were compared and analyzed.

The authors found that, through explicit instruction of story grammar while mapping, the students all improved their comprehension from the baseline phase to the intervention phase and even through the discontinuation phase. Prior to instruction, their mean percentage correct was 31% with a range from 25% to 35%. During intervention, their mean percentage correct increased to 84% with a range from 67% to 96%. All

students maintained higher averages than the baseline during the discontinuation phase. However, most students had some minimal drop in scores from the intervention phase to the discontinuation phase. Overall, this descriptive article shows great potential for using story-grammar mapping as an instructional tool for students who struggle with comprehension.

The Study by Bui (1993) sought out to show how basic story-grammar instruction compared to story-grammar instruction that was integrated with students personal stories. The purpose of the research was to investigate the effects of the two approaches to story-grammar instruction on the reading comprehension of first-grade children with and without LD enrolled in general education settings. The independent variable was traditional story grammar instruction vs. story grammar instruction through personal connection. The dependent variables were a Retelling Checklist, Story Retention Quiz and a Story Grammar Checklist.

The sample consisted of 39 students from three different classrooms in the same elementary school in Kansas. The three classrooms selected for this study remained intact for treatment. Two of the classrooms were randomly selected to be part of the experimental group. One of the two selected classrooms volunteered to have their classroom be a comparison group the following year. The ability levels across classrooms were not equal. Children with learning disabilities did participate but also received pull out and may have miss some sessions due to pull out.

The intervention occurred everyday for 30 minutes for a six week period. The students received the same amount of instructional time across classrooms. In Group A the students learned to recall or reflect on a personal experience each week and then drew

a picture and wrote a sentence about that experience. Next they were taught the story-grammar element that paralleled that experience. Then they listened to stories and identified the story grammar element of the week. After listening to the story and identifying the story grammar elements, they wrote and drew pictures about the story grammar element independently. Finally they incorporated that story grammar element into a story map. Group B had similar instruction but there were no personal experiences for the students to draw from. The students were taught the grammar element, connected it to stories, wrote and drew about it and implemented it in a story map. Group C had no story grammar or mapping instruction. They were taught in a discussion format with teacher lead questions about opinions, predictions and conclusions.

Bui's (1993) data confirmed her belief that connecting personal experience to story-grammar instruction only served to improve comprehension on text in first grade students. The students in Group A significantly out performed Group B and C on both the retelling and the story-grammar tests. In the classrooms that used any sort of story grammar instruction all but two of the students' reading comprehension scores improved including most of the students with a reading specific learning disability. If the teacher did use story grammar instruction the students showed little to no improvement. There was no significant difference in the story retention scores.

The study conducted by Davis (1994) compared the two pre-reading strategies, directed reading activity and story mapping. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effects of a modified story map pre-reading procedure on third grade and fifth grade students' comprehension of stories. Essentially two experiments were done with the same independent and dependent variables. The independent variable was DRA pre-reading vs.

pre-reading with story maps. The dependent variables were literal and inferential comprehension that were assessed through a MAZE technique and written response.

The sample consisted of 180 students, 90 third grade readers and 90 fifth grade reader who were identified low, medium or high based on CTBS reading scores and distributed equally through out the sample. At each grade level, classrooms were assigned a treatment, which was baseline, DRA or story mapping.

After being assigned as a baseline, DRA or story mapping classroom, the teachers applied whatever procedures prescribed to that teaching technique. All teachers were prepared and trained before continuing with procedures. The baseline group was given the pre-reading portion of the story map and the same assessments but they did not read the story between the pre-reading and the assessment. The DRA group was given the pre-reading procedure that is most typically found in the basal readers for that particular grade level. The procedure included questioning to engage students' prior knowledge and get them interested in the story. The experimental group was given a pre-reading story map and the teacher had a pre-reading procedure to go through which included questioning in order to activate prior knowledge and motivate reading. After the pre-reading procedure the story map was available for the students to refer to throughout the silent reading time.

The author concluded that the use of story maps was significantly more affective as a pre-reading activity than DRA in third grade. Students scored 7% better on their literal questions and 14% better on the inferential questions when using the story maps. In fifth grade there was a significant difference between the answers to inferential questions of students using the maps than students using DRA but though there was a



difference in literal questions the difference was not significant. There was a significant difference between the baseline and both pre-reading strategies. Both pre-reading strategies yielded far superior answers to literal and inferential testing.

Klecan-Aker and Gill (2005) taught one student with Pervasive Developmental Disorder story grammar components and associated syntax through *The Expression Connection* (1991) in order to improve the child's ability to comprehend stories. *The Expression Connection* (1991) approach to teaching narrative had been thoroughly studied using children with and without disabilities but had not yet been used with a child with PDD. The researchers intended to determine the effectiveness of *The Expression Connection* (1991) as a tool to increase language organization and storytelling of children with PDD. The dependant variables were a standardized reading test, and the baseline measurements from *The Expression Connection* (1991).

The sample in this case study included one seven year old male student, diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) at age four. Pervasive Developmental Disorder is on the Autism spectrum and among some professionals it is considered high functioning autism. This particular child attended a public school in a first grade classroom.

The student was seen for two one-hour sessions per week for a period of 12 weeks. During the 12 week the student worked through the story levels set up in *The Expression Connection* (1991) curriculum which focused increasingly on story grammar areas as the levels increased. Five audiotapes were used to record the ten oral narratives that the students produced. The narratives were then transcribed, analyzed, and saved for data analysis.

After six weeks of treatment the researchers had ten narratives to assess and gather data from. The data showed that Child A improve his ability to retell. He moved from a level one story telling ability to a level three/four story telling ability. His phrasing and word per clauses improved tremendously. This child even had an overall improvement in reading comprehension on the standardized test given before and after the treatment. The student had a cluster score of 6.9 prior to the treatment. His cluster score for the post-test was 7.6. Overall he had a marked improvement in reading comprehension due to the intervention which features story grammar instruction to help with language organization.

This section explored the effectiveness of story grammar instruction and mapping as an instructional aide to comprehension. In the study, Boulineau, et al. (2004) showed that teaching story-grammar mapping, explicitly, helped students with learning disabilities comprehend and use story grammar better. Bui's (1993) study concluded the story-mapping can be even more effective when paired with personal connections. Davis (1994) found in his study that typically developing students at all levels benefited from the use of story grammar mapping as a pre-reading activity. Klecan-Aker and Gill (2005) did a case study that featured a language program developed to improve students' ability to tell stories. Through instruction of story grammar and organization the student was able to improve not only his story telling ability but also his overall reading comprehension.

### Summary

This chapter presented research summaries focusing on strategies beneficial to enhancing student comprehension. Three primary classifications of strategies were

examined: those that connect listening and reading comprehension, those that share specific programs that use story-grammar mapping, and research that supports using retelling as a teaching tool and assessment of comprehension. All of these areas of study can be applied to this research study and the improvement of students' ability to comprehend text. According to Lerkkanen et al. (2005) listening comprehension was a clear predictor of reading comprehension at least in the early stages of reading. Even Diakidoy et al. (2004), who had doubts about the importance of listening comprehension, found that students in second grade performed better on comprehension questions after listening to the text rather than reading it. Aarnoutse et al. (1998) found similar results when they studied the affects of comprehension intervention of listening comprehension and reading comprehension. Keenan et al. (2006) rounded out the research with some interesting data genetically linking listening comprehension and reading comprehension. Moss (1993) showed that retelling could be used affectively to assess even non-fiction reading and listening comprehension. Geraldine Dennis and Eileen Walter (1991) used retellings to prove the value of shared reading time. Morrow (1985,1986), Boulineau et al.(2004) and Gambrell and Kaskinen(1991) showed that retellings were both tools for improving comprehension but also effective authentic assessments of listening and reading comprehension. Bui (1993) showed how story grammar instruction can be further developed and useful for all students. Davis (1994) concluded that story-mapping instruction as a pre-reading activity was a useful tool in preparing students for reading and recalling what they read as well as drawing conclusions from what they read. Klecan-Aker and Gill (2005) showed that explicit instruction in story grammar can improve

reading comprehension in students with PDD. The action research presented in the following chapters reflects the finding of this research.

### Chapter 3: Procedures for this Research

Chapters one and two set the foundation for conducting the following research project. Giving students consistent practice with a visual tool and explicit teaching will allow them to organize and remember not only story structure but also the fundamentals of the story itself. The purpose of this study was to see if the explicit instruction and repeated use of story maps would improve students' retelling ability, giving them the ability to coherently and concisely express their comprehension.

Chapter three contains the information needed to understand the implementation of the treatment used to improve the aforementioned retellings in kindergarten students. The focus of this chapter will be in the following three areas: 1) sample population, 2) the procedures used, and 3) the collection of data.

#### Description of the Sample

The study's sample population consisted of eight students in an inclusion kindergarten classroom in Oak Creek Wisconsin. The enrollment for the school at the time of the study was approximately 300 students between kindergarten and fifth grade. The school is located in a suburban area of Milwaukee Wisconsin with a variety of socio-economic levels. The students were all chosen from the same classroom. The enrollment of the classroom was 19 students, 7 of which were designated as part of the early childhood program. The 12 remaining students had no special educational designation. The entire classroom was assigned two teachers and an aide in order to meet the needs of the students represented.

The eight students who were evaluated for this study were not in the early childhood program. The students used for the study consisted of four girls and four boys.

The majority of the students were Caucasian, American-born, children. There was one child who was of Pakistani decent and another of mixed African American and Caucasian decent. None of the students were receiving special services at the time the study was conducted. One child had been through the school's early child program and had recently been dismissed from all special education services including speech therapy.

The students being evaluated for the study were a variety of ages and abilities. Five of the students were six years old at the time of the study and three of the students were five years of age. Two students were identified as fluent readers prior to entering their kindergarten year. Fluency was determined by their ability to read at the first and second grade level. One of these advanced readers was five and one was six, one was a boy and one was a girl. There was a pair of average readers, low average readers, and struggling readers as defined by the district criteria for kindergarten readers. Each pair consisted of a boy and a girl.

Before the research study began, the students had little to no instruction in retelling and therefore no practice. Any reference to comprehension or story structure was taught through teacher led discussion of the stories. The students did large group reading with their teacher, preceded and followed by discussion four times a week. They typically read and re-read big books or content related books the teacher had chosen for that week. Students also participated in small homogenous group reading time, which included reading designated books at their level, strategy instruction, and discussion. The final reading instruction was a home reading program, which encouraged the children to read books at their level and discuss them with a parent, sibling or guardian. Suggested discussion question were sent home with the books.

When considering the best way to implement the treatment in this classroom with minimum interference, it was decided that the content within the reading time should be the only real change. “Discussion time” was therefore replaced with “Retelling instruction” and “Retelling practice”. The retelling instruction and practice would be applied to the entire classroom; however the eight sample students would be evaluated. Students remained in their large groups and small groups. They also continued to read with parents at home in order to maintain the value of such an action and to maintain a level of consistency to which students had become accustomed.

#### Procedures

During the six-week study, students learned and used a story grammar map to assist in retelling (Appendix A). Prior to the study, individual maps were created for each student to use during instruction and practice. A large version of the map was created for group time and modeling the retelling. Students would be introduced to all the elements of the map the first week, and then focus was given to a specific grammar element each week. Re-telling instruction would be a part of “Big Book” or large group time from 8:30-9:00 four days a week. Also each student would receive small group instruction once a week from 9:00-9:30. A schedule of teaching goals can be found in Appendix D.

Reading Block Schedule 4X per week

Times	Activity	Length of Activity
8:30-9:00	Read Aloud Grammar Instruction and Practice	30 minutes
9:00-9:30	Language Arts Centers Small Group Reading Retelling, 1 group a day.	30 minutes

Week 1:

All the students were read the Simon and Schuster book “*The Little Red Hen*”, and told they would be retelling the story later that afternoon. Any questions they had at the time were addressed prior to evaluation. The students knew there was an expectation of learning prior to listening to the story. After the story, the students got settled for rest time and were taken individually for testing. First they were asked three questions about their attitude or disposition toward storytelling. (Appendix B) Next the students were asked to tell the story they had heard previously, the best they could. (Appendix C) They were given the option of using the story map or not. All students retold the story the best they could. Only students who were to be evaluated were recorded and assessed. As the week went on, the story map was introduced. It was explained to them that throughout the next few weeks they were going to learn to retell stories and that these maps would help them remember important things in stories. The first day the oversized map was shown to them, and the name and function of each area was explained to them. The next day, the big board was brought out again and the vocabulary was reviewed, questions about the map were answered and the students were shown how a reader might use it. The left side of the board was used to organize the reader's thoughts and the right side provided cues to move the story along. On Friday, the co-teacher was asked to try and use the map, so we could discuss how readers may use them differently. Then students were given their own maps with which they attempted to retell the Big Book we had read all week, *Three Little Chicks*.

#### Week 2:

The story-grammar element reviewed in week two was Characters on the story map. The class generated a good definition for the word and then discussed past



Characters we really liked or disliked. Then students were instructed that when a reteller sees the picture of a person on the story-map, they are to think of Characters and that means the people or animals that are important in the story. Next the story “*Yes Ma’am*” was read to the students. The class then discussed how characters pertained to this story in particular and story retelling was modeled for the students using the story map. Each day the concept Characters was reviewed, the story was read and a teacher, student, parent or aide would do a retelling. Any questions that arose regarding the map, retelling or story grammar were addressed immediately. Frequently, the students asked questions about the rest of the map, as they were attempting to retell themselves. After one modeled retelling, the students were broken up into pairs for their own attempts at retelling. Students were split up randomly in a variety of ways; student choice, person next to you, teacher choice, and names on sticks. During small group time, the students read books first as a group, then in pairs and finally individually. After the third reading, students were put into partners and retold the story to each other. One pair was kept at the table for coaching and a more intimate discussion of the map and storytelling in general. Coaching included questions like: “What did you forget?”, “Are there any other problems in the story?” or comments: “I love the way you remembered all the parts!”, “You seem to struggle with the middle of the story, lets go back and look at the story.” This week the students only received coaching in small groups.

### Week 3:

The basic procedure from week two was repeated but this time we read the story “*Grandpa, Grandpa*” which has one rather clear Setting. The story-grammar element of Character was reviewed briefly and followed by a discussion of Setting. Retelling

continued to be modeled by the teaching staff, but more time was given to the students for retelling the stories since the retellings were getting longer and more detailed. As there were three educators in the classroom and often a parent, small group and one-on-one conferencing was possible several times a week. Sometimes during large group time the students were encouraged to give feedback to each other. The students were prompted to share what they liked about the way their friend told the story or how their friend could improve his or her storytelling. This was difficult in the beginning, as most students had not ever been asked to evaluate their peers. Giving students time to retell was easier during small group time because the books that many of the students read were so short and lacked difficult vocabulary, or multiple settings, character, goals or problems.

#### Week 4:

This week the story "*Hairy Bear*" was used to initiate a discussion of Problem and Goal, an area often struggled with on the story map. Problem and Goal tends to be a much more advanced concept for many children. Surprisingly the class had a very sophisticated discussion about how stories can carry many problems or goals. What might be a goal to one person may be problem to another. At this point most of the students were telling stories with much more confidence and really enjoyed their time to talk. Feedback was given without interrupting the flow of the students' retelling, unless a child was so stuck that they simply had nothing to say. Discussion time and retelling time was becoming more and more limited due to the depth and length of both the discussions and the retellings. Also in small group reading time one of the readings had to be dropped in order to allow time for good discussion and coaching. Instead of a paired reading, the

students did the retelling. This way they had more time to give each other feedback as well.

Week 5:

In week five “*Who Will be my Mother?*” was the text used during large group instruction. The focus of this week was developing a solid Beginning for students’ retellings. It was also important for them to know that the Next element on the map indicated an order in the story and constant need to look forward in the story. At this point the students had been using the mapping tool for three weeks and many students had already asked a lot of questions about the Next element on the map. The discussion was brief and the class went right into retelling. The coaching continued. The small group reading time was dedicated to a focus on non-fiction at this time, so students did an extra retelling of the “*Who Will be my Mother?*” before focusing on non-fiction. The students still did a paired narrative retelling, but instead of reading a new book they retold the book we were reading in large group that week.

Week 6:

A short discussion about the End of the story was held at the beginning of this week, but after six weeks of using the tool we thought all of the research students and most of the class had a good understanding of End. “The Red Rose” was the book chosen for instruction because it had a clear and distinct ending. This week students seemed to have enough time to retell and listen to their partners retell. No child’s retelling got cut off by time or skipped entirely. Instead of coaching this week, teaching staff sat back and listened to the students coach each other. The same was true for small group time. On Friday of this week, “*The Little Red Hen*” was re-read to the students just before rest

time. Only research students were taken for re-telling this session, due to limited time and an increase in the length of the stories told.

### Books and Story Grammar Elements Schedule

	Focus of Instruction	Title/Explanation
<b>Week 1: M-F</b>	<b>PRE-TEST</b> Overview of all story-grammar vocabulary  Review of elements and connection to the story map  Attempt first retellings using maps	<i>"Three Little Ducks"</i> -  Little Text so attention can be given to the story as a whole with our close attention to decoding strategies.  Has good examples of all the story elements represented in the story map.
<b>Week 2:</b>	<b>Characters:</b> Review story-grammar vocabulary on the map  Discuss Characters specifically  Practice retelling with map	<i>"Yes Ma'am"</i> -  Character that are both human and animal.  Many characters to choose from.  Characters are a big focus of the book.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Setting:</b> Review story-grammar vocabulary on the map  Discuss Setting specifically  Practice retelling with map	<i>"Grandpa, Grandpa"</i> - Setting stays constant and is very explicit in the text  Plays an active role in the story.
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Problem/Goal:</b> Review story-grammar vocabulary on the map  Discuss Problem and Goal specifically  Practice retelling with map	<i>"Hairy Bear"</i> - One big problem to focus on instead of several.  One big goal to focus on instead of several.  Clear resolution

<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Beginning/Next:</b> Review story-grammar vocabulary on the map  Discuss Beginning/Next specifically  Practice retelling with map	<i>“Who will be my mother?”</i> -  Clear action at the beginning.  A beginning that catches the attention and is not easily forgotten
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>End:</b> Review story-grammar vocabulary on the map  Discuss End specifically  Practice retelling with map  POST-TEST	<i>“The Red Rose”</i> -  An ending with purpose  An ending that is easily connected to children’s lives.

#### Collection of Data

Data was collected through a pre and post test of the students’ retelling ability. A retelling rubric modeled after the Morrow’s reading checklist (1985, 1986), and Irwin and Mitchell’s(1983) retelling rubric with the addition of text to self and text to text questions was used to evaluate the students' retellings. A copy of the form used and the two forms it was modeled after are in Appendix C. The students were also asked three survey questions regarding their retelling disposition prior to each testing session.(Appendix B)

All children evaluated using this rubric were taped directly before treatment began and six weeks later after treatment had concluded. Students’ retellings were evaluated on how well each story element was addressed in the context of their story. Students received scores for each story grammar element; scores ranged from 0 to 3 with 3 representing the most complete answer and 0 having none of the element represented. A score of 2 meant that most of the element was shared in the retelling and a 1 meant that some of the element had been addressed. For example in the case of setting, if a student did not

include a setting in their retelling they got 0 points. If they mentioned something like “at the house, or mill” they would get a 1. If they gave the big idea like “the farm” that would be a 2, and if they mentioned “the barn the mill and the house” they would get a 3. There were two extension questions at the end of the form which were asked orally by the teacher. These questions were also scored on a 3-point scale. This time the scale was Complete (3), Mostly Complete (2), Somewhat Complete (1) and Not Complete/No Answer (0). At the end of the form a total was calculated and a percentage was determined.

<b>Story- grammar</b>	All 3	Most 2	Some 1	None 0
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### Summary

The eight students evaluated for this study were taught story grammar elements, and how to organize and use those elements in order to retell a story and understand it. Over the six weeks of this study, all the students in the classroom were taught about Characters, Setting, Problem/Goals, Beginning, Next and End. They learned not only how to tell a story but how to help someone else tell a story. The students were challenged to improve the length, fluency and content of their stories this was done in hopes of better understanding and stronger connection to the stories they read and listened to.

## Chapter 4: Results

This study makes the argument for improving kindergarten students' listening comprehension through explicit story grammar and retelling instruction. This chapter includes a description of the collected data and the subsequent analysis of the data along with anecdotal observations by the researcher. The overall outcome of students retelling is addressed first followed by a break down of each important story grammar element taught and then assessed. The final section is dedicated to the student's' perceptions of storytelling based upon an interest survey (Appendix B). The researcher's observations and anecdotal notes accompany any discussion of the pre- and post assessment data. (Appendix E) Also three transcriptions of students' retellings pre-test and post test can be found in Appendix F.

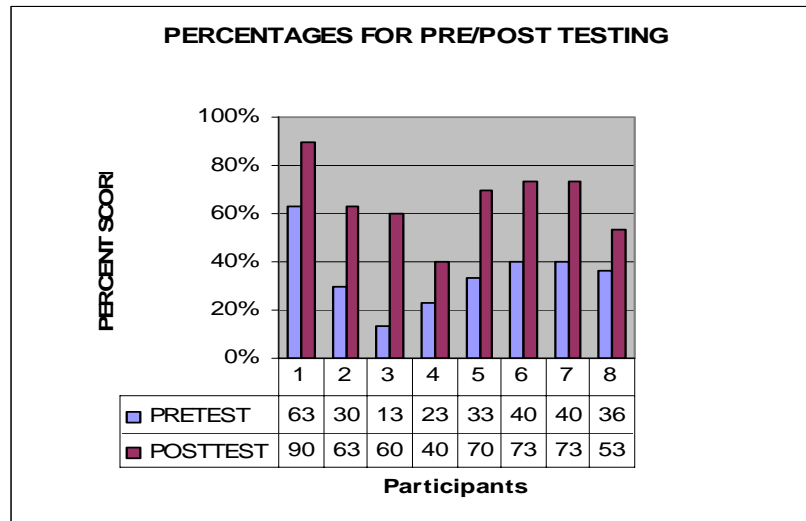
### Collection and Analysis

#### **Pre-test Listening Comprehension Scores to Post test Overall Scores.**

Eight students completed the pre-test (Appendix C) as described in chapter 3 on April 16th and completed the post test (Appendix C) using the same format as the pre-test six weeks later. The mean score for the pre-test was 35%, or 10.5 points out of 30. The mean score for the post-test was 65% or 19.5 points out of 30. There was an increase of 30% or 9 points from the pre-test to the post-test. None of the students' scores decreased or remained stagnant. Every student showed improvement. I noted that students often paused, looked for help and or needed coaxing to begin retelling during the pre-test, however most students entered the post testing situation with confidence and self-

assuredness as displayed through their eagerness to tell the story and lack of support seeking behaviors. The pre- and post test data is represented in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Whole class pre- and post test scores.

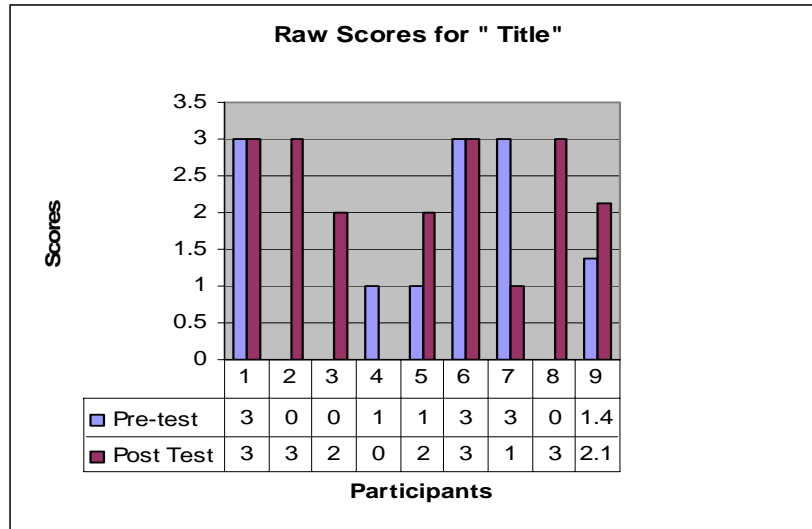


### Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Title

The story grammar element Title was not the primary focus of the retelling instruction in this intervention, however it was taught through modeling and practice. There was little formal discussion of the title and though the students were prompted to use it when retelling, it was the concept that was most overlooked.

Figure 4.2 Title



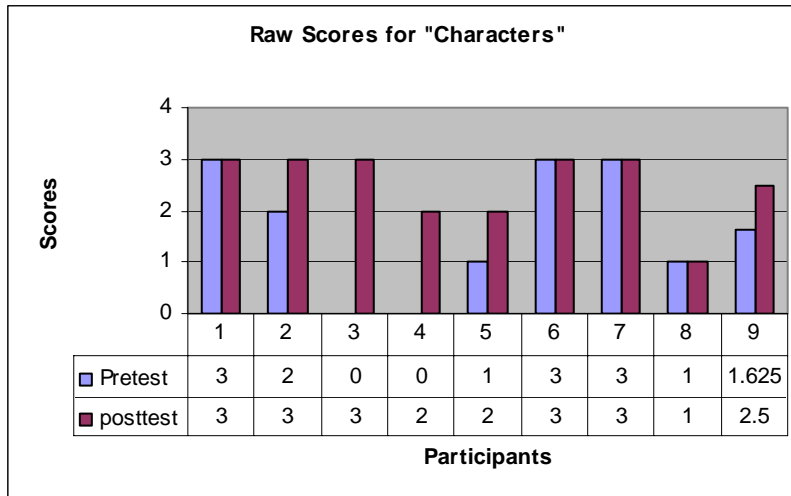


Half students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1.4 to 2.1 on a 3 point scale. Interestingly, two students out of eight did decrease their scored response from pre to post test. During retelling time each day, students seemed to need frequent reminders to share the title of the text before retelling. It is important to note that Title is the one section of the story map without a picture, which may account for a smaller increase in the mean score. Though we have not tested the correlation between having a picture associated with the title and not having one, it may justify the results to some end. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.2.

### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Characters**

Characters was the first element taught formally to the students. One week was spent on focused discussions accessing our background knowledge, applying that knowledge to the retelling task and reviewing new and old information. The students began asking questions about characters in their own writing and the writing of their peers.

Figure 4.3

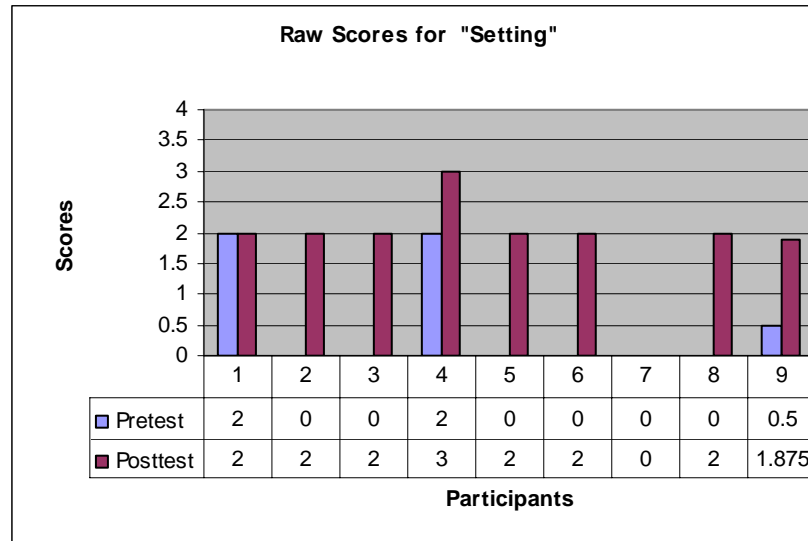


Half students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1.6 to 2.5 on a 3 point scale. Four of the students' scores stayed the same, however they had perfect scores to begin with. None of the scores decreased in the area of Characters. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.3.

#### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Setting**

Setting is the next story element taught formally to the students. We spent one week having focused discussions accessing our background knowledge, applying that knowledge to the retelling task and reviewing new and old information. Students embraced discussions of setting and many applied their new knowledge to discussions about their writing. During a critique of a peer's writing, one student asked "What was the setting of your story? It was hard to tell from your picture."

Figure 4.4

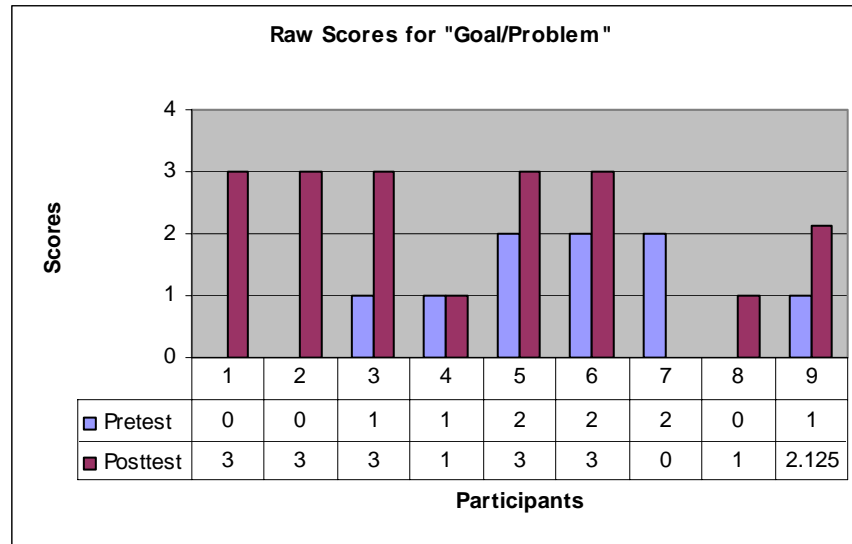


Almost all of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from .5 to 1.9 on a 3 point scale. All students but two improved the score in the area of Setting. No students decreased their score in the area of Setting. Setting was an area that the students showed the most improvement in the mean score. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.4.

#### **Pre-test to post test scores for story element Problem/Goal**

Problem and Goal was the next element taught to the students. In the discussions students and teachers often talked about the differences and sameness of Problems and Goal. The students often stated the same idea as either a problem or a goal. One student said the problem in the story being read that week was that "Mamma Bear heard robbers and she couldn't wake up Hairy Bear." Another student said the goal was to "Wake up Hairy Bear". Clearly waking up Hairy Bear was both a problem and a goal. Many students were in awe of this concept.

Figure 4.5

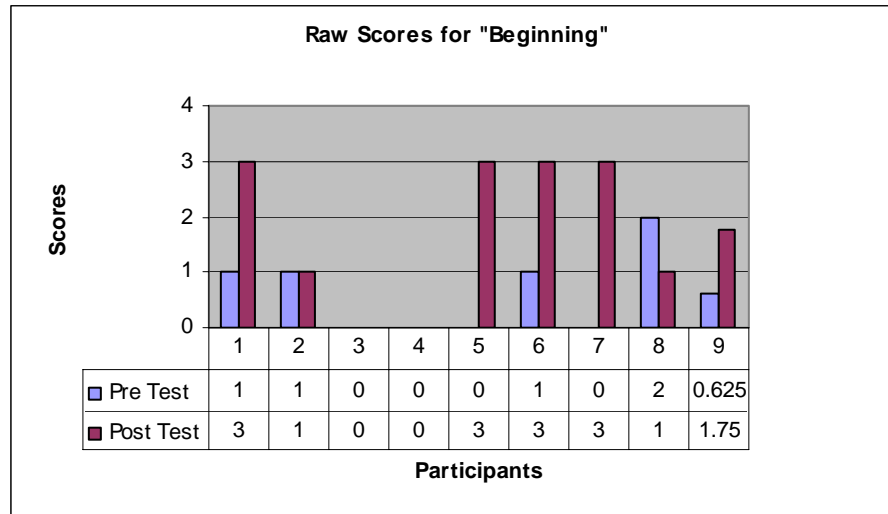


Almost all of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1 to 2.1 on a 3 point scale. All students but one improved the score in the area of Problem/Goal. The student who did not improve actually decreased the points of Problem/Goal. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.5.

### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Beginning**

Beginning was taught on the fourth week of retelling and though there were formal discussions with students, focus and time was given more on the action of retelling than the discussion of story elements. More time was spent applying knowledge to the retelling task than talking in-depth about the concept of Beginning. Many students were confused about when the beginning started and when it ended. For example, one student used the title as the beginning and then skipped right to the middle of the story without addressing any of the events at the beginning of the story.

Figure 4.6



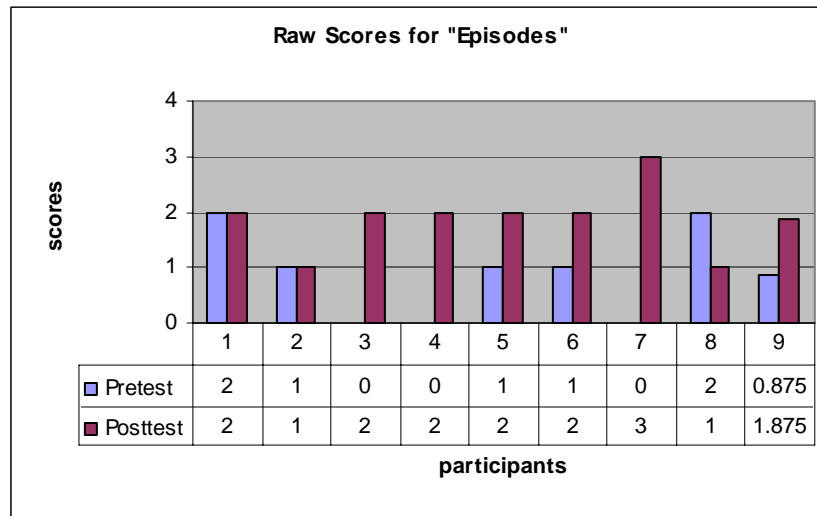
Many of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from .63 to 1.75 on a 3 point scale. Four out of the eight participants improved their scores. Three students made no change in their score from pre- to post test and another decreased their score by 1 point. This is an area that seems to have showed a lot of improvement if looking primarily at the mean scores. In reality, half of the students made no improvement or did worse than their first retelling. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.6.

### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Episodes**

There was no formal teaching of any story grammar element labeled Episodes on the assessment (Appendix C), however we did devote time to the concept of Next which is on the story map. "Next" was taught with the intention of getting them to tell the episodes of the story in order. "Next" was taught formally in combination with the story element "Beginning". The students naturally had questions regarding the part of the map labeled "Next" prior to the week of instruction because "Next" was such a prominent part of the retelling process and they had been retelling for many weeks by then. There was a lot of discussion about whether it made more sense to say "and then" rather than "next"

because this was more natural for some. Students struggled initially with the concept of next because they had to continue to focus on more of the story. Many had previously been summarizing or just telling one small part of the story when asked to retell.

Figure 4.7

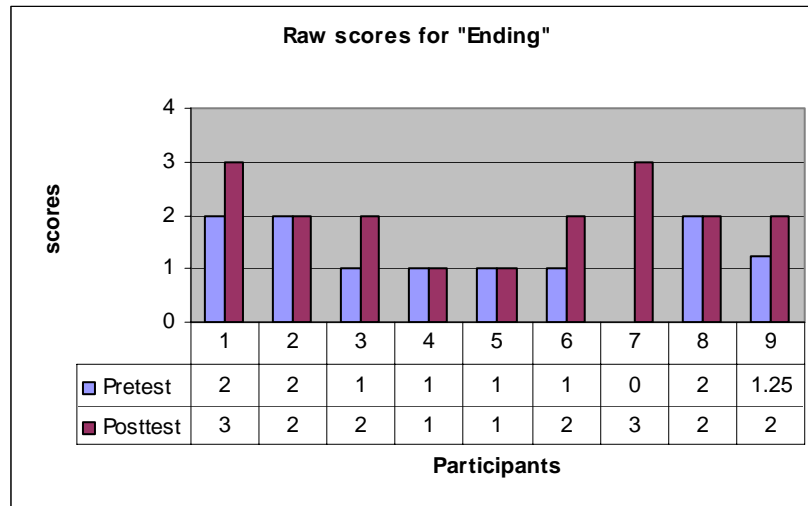


Most of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from .875 to 1.875 on a 3 point scale. Five out of the eight participants improved their scores. Two students made no change in their score from pre- to post test and another decreased their score by 1 point. Though the difference in the mean score is much higher in Beginning, more of the students improved from pre- to post test overall. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.7.

### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Story Element Ending**

End was taught much like Beginning and Next, with less discussion and more practice using the retelling sheet. The students were very eager to do the retellings and each retelling became longer so more time was needed. A thorough discussion and evaluation of this story grammar element was missing from instruction but "Ending" was formally introduced and addressed in conferencing.

Figure 4.8

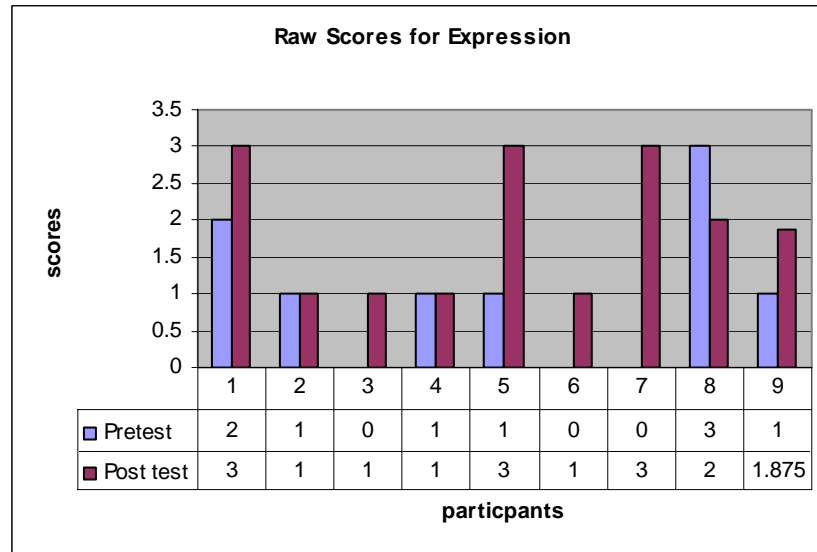


Some of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test. The average score increased from 1.25 to 2 on a 3 point scale. Four out of the eight participants improved their scores. Four of the students made no change in their score from pre- to post test. No students decreased their score for ending from pre- test to post test. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.8.

### **Pre-test to Post test Scores for Story Element Expression**

The assessment of expressive reading or retelling is difficult because so much of it can be subjective. The idea of being expressive while retelling was discussed with the students, modeled and encouraged through out the six weeks of instruction. Evaluation of the retelling was based on a positive change from the first retelling to the last retelling in the areas of fluency, meter, and characterization. Being expressive was often one of the things children knew they should do but hadn't figured out how.

Figure 4.9



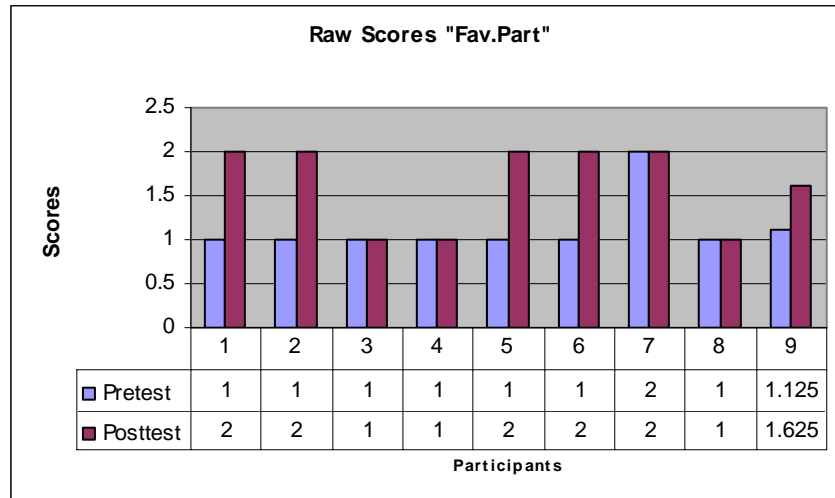
Many of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post-test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1 to 1.9 on a 3 point scale. 5 out of the eight participants improved their scores. Two students made no change in their score from pre- to post test and another decreased his or her score by 1 point. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.9.

#### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Extension Question “What was your favorite part?”**

The question “What is your favorite part of the story?” was included in the retelling assessment because it important for the researcher to know whether improvement in retelling can affect students' ability to answer comprehension questions related to the story. Students were familiar with this question because it was frequently asked during class discussions. It was not asked in the six weeks of retelling instruction. Evaluation of the answers was based on how connected the answer was to the story, and how complete it seemed to the researcher.

Figure 4.10



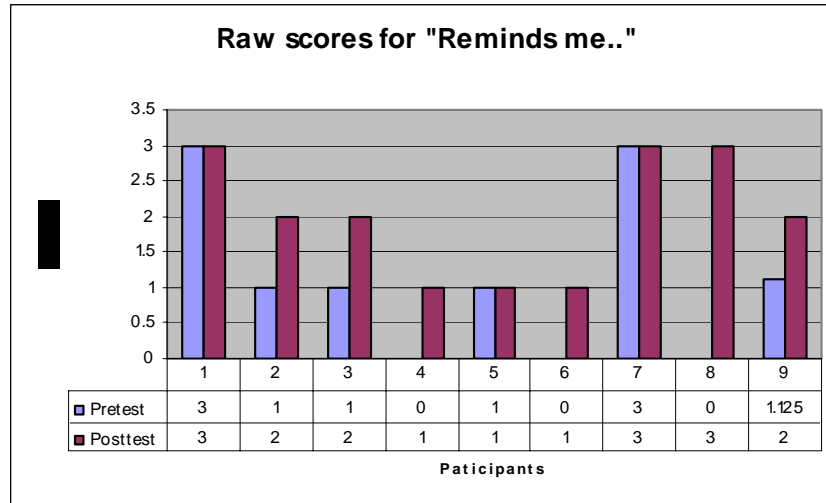


Some of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1.1 to 1.6 on a 3 point scale. Four out of the eight participants improved their scores. Four students made no change in their score from pre to post test. No student decreased his or her score from pre- test to post test. This is the only section that no students received a perfect score in either the pre- or post tests. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.10.

#### **Pre-test to Post Test Scores for Extension Question "Does this story remind you of..."**

The question "Does this story remind you of another story or something you have done?" is a higher level thinking question that is often used to determine how well a student can make connections, draw conclusions and truly comprehend a text. Participants had been asked this question prior to the six week retelling instruction. This question was not asked during the six week retelling instruction period. Answers to the questions were evaluated based on how connected the answers were to the story and how complete the answers seemed to be.

Figure 4.11



Many of the students' scores improved from pre-test to post test by at least 1 point. The average score increased from 1.1 to 2 on a 3 point scale. Five out of the eight participants improved their scores. Three students made no change in their score from pre- to post test. None of the students' scores decreased from pre- test to post test. The pre- to post test data is represented in figure 4.11.

### Summary of Interest Survey Answers

Before each retelling, the students were asked three questions related to their understanding and perceptions of storytelling as a concept; "Do you like storytelling?", "Are you a good storyteller?", and "What makes a good storyteller?". In the pre-test, it was anticipated that the students would know what storytelling was but not be confident or interested in participating in storytelling. On the contrary, it became quite clear that the students felt confident about doing storytelling but almost all of them had no real understanding of what storytelling was. A clearer picture of this phenomena can be found in Appendix F where students' responses have been color coded to represent the questions according to whether the response suggested a definition related to, reading, storytelling, writing or other.

The chart shows that very few children mentioned anything related to storytelling when first surveyed. A few of the students equated reading to storytelling and many of the students gave vague or totally unrelated answers. Some of the children simply had no response when asked “What makes a good storyteller?” In retrospect these question may have been too vague and broad for kindergarten students

The same questions were asked before the post-test and the students seemed to maintain the same enthusiasm and confidence they previously had for storytelling. The explanations for their answers were however different from the pre-test. Many more answers are actually related to storytelling, others related to reading and yet other related to writing. All of the students’ comments were longer, more complete and connected. Students, who had previously not answered the final question, could now generate an answer of some sort.

### Summary

Overall, the students’ scores improved between the pre- and post tests. Each story grammar concept, Characters, Setting, Goal/Problems, Title, Beginning, Episodes, End showed an average increase in scores of approximately one point. In the areas of expression, connections to self/story and opinions the students also improved their scores. Interestingly their perception of what the definition of storytelling is also changed during the 6 weeks of instruction. This chapter presented the data and described what happened during the intervention sessions. The following, and last chapter, will analyze the results and discuss the strengths and limitations of the case study.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

The purpose of Chapter five is to review the existing research as well as evaluate the effects of story grammar instruction and retelling on kindergarten students' listening comprehension. Connections between the existing research and the study will be further analyzed. Conclusions will be drawn regarding the data presented in chapter four. Finally the overall strengths and limitations of this study will be addressed in order to make recommendations for future research.

#### Connections to Existing Research

Though it is impossible to find just one indicator of future reading comprehension skill levels in children as young as five, there is substantial research to suggest that *listening* comprehension can be one indicator of the future success in *reading* comprehension. Lerkken, Rasku-puttonon, and Numi (2005) as well as Diakidoy, Stylianou, Kakrefillidou and Papegeorgiou (2005) conducted studies to look at significant factors in the reading success of young children. In both studies, listening comprehension and reading comprehension were highly correlated. My hope with this study is that by improving kindergarteners' listening comprehension, their later reading comprehension will be stronger. As I do not have the resources to do a longitudinal study nor do I possess a crystal ball, it is difficult to say whether or not the students will have success in reading comprehension beyond the timeline of this study – that is to say whether or not the results will remain with time. Although if we follow the logic of Lerkken, Rasku-puttonon, and Numi (2005) as well as Diakidoy, Stylianou, Kakrefillidou and Papegeorgiou (2005) it is reasonable to say that the results indicate success in reading comprehension in the future. More formal study of the effects of improved listening

comprehension on reading comprehension would be needed to further substantiate this claim.

Aarnoutse, Von den Bos, and Brand-Gruwel (1998) conducted one study that looked specifically at providing a treatment to struggling readers through improving listening comprehension. The study set out to answer questions about whether reciprocal teaching treatments using books read aloud would have different effects on the reading success of students designated as poor or not-poor listeners. The results of the treatment showed that reciprocal teaching helped students despite their designation as a strong or weak listener. The researchers also found that improved strategic listening comprehension was distinctly connected to improved strategic reading comprehension. This article has a strong association to my own research in that, like Aarnoutse, Von den Bos, and Brand-Gruwel (1998), the treatment applied is intended to teach comprehension and understanding through listening to stories instead of reading them, and the results found that this application did improve students' strategic reading comprehension.

Morrow's 1985 and 1986 studies on retelling in kindergarten have had the strongest impact on my research. Morrow (1985,1986) set out to prove the validity of retelling, not only as a tool for assessing comprehension, but also as a tool for teaching comprehension. Because her first study yielded weak and mixed results, she went back to the research and made changes necessary for stronger results. She showed that improved retelling could help children answer comprehension questions, improve their overall narratives and increase oral language ability. The results from my own study are much like those of Morrow's in 1985 because retelling instruction improved story comprehension in both cases however there were many factors that confounded the

results of the study. Despite all of the questions her initial research raised, she could still see the impact the retelling had on the students. Much like Morrow, I can see that retelling has impacted the listening comprehension of the eight students who participated in my study and the rest of my classroom who received the treatment as well. The crux of Morrow's study was that practice in retelling would yield better retellers and therefore better story comprehenders; this is essentially the crux of my study.

The final link to the research is through the studies by Tori Boulineau, Cecil Fore III, Shanna Hagan-Burke, Mack D. Burke (2004) and Davis (1994) for two very separate reasons. Tori Boulineau, Cecil Fore III, Shanna Hagan-Burke and Mack D. Burke (2004) studied the affects of explicit story grammar mapping instruction on third and fifth grade students with learning disabilities. The researchers found that by teaching the grammar elements explicitly the students had more success applying the mapping tool to the stories. This study is the reason my study takes time to explicitly teach the story map (Appendix A) to the students and also the different grammar elements included in it.

Davis's study focused on the mapping element of the instruction. The study compared the use of story mapping before and during reading to pre-reading techniques found in most basal readers. In his research Davis found that the story-mapping improved the students' ability to answer inferential and literal questions from texts. Davis's research begs the question what if the story-mapping was used through out the reading process instead of just as a pre-reading tool. My research attempts to answer that question by allowing the students to use the tool in the discussion before reading, as well as during the reading, after the story is read, and during retelling. Davis also tested students'

comprehension through literal and inferential questioning which helped to reinforce my inclusions of questioning within my own assessment tool.

### Explanation of Results

The analysis of data from this study is divided into three sections. The first section will address the perceptions of the students about story telling. The second section will detail the results of the pre-and post test retelling scores, breaking down the success of students at different story grammar elements. The third section will discuss the answers to the opinion and connection questions asked after the students' retellings.

#### Section One- Perceptions of Kindergarten Students

It is important to begin a discussion of the results with a look at the students' perceptions for storytelling before and after treatment. During testing participants were asked if they liked storytelling, if they were good at storytelling, and what make someone a good storyteller. A chart of the results can be found in Appendix C. It was my assumption that the students understood what storytelling was so they would have no problem giving their opinions on these questions. The results from the pre-test indicated that my assumption was incorrect as many of the students answered the questions by using examples of activities other than storytelling, or they simply had no explanation at all. With a closer analysis of the responses from participants, it becomes clear that the students are often referring to the reading when trying to make sense of the concept of storytelling. It is important students know that reading and storytelling are related because reading a story can lead to telling a story, but interesting that very few students really know what it means to tell a story. Many questions arose from these three questions; "Why had the students used reading to explain the attributes of a good

storyteller?”, “ Why didn’t they know what storytelling was?”, and finally “Would the six weeks of instruction have any impact on their perceptions about what storytelling is?”

The post-test data answered some of these questions but also presented new problems and questions to ponder. In looking at the remarks by the students on the post-test, it is fair to say that their perceptions changed. All of the students had some change in the content of their answer from pre-test to post-test. Two students had no explanations for what a good storyteller was previous to the instruction, but after the instruction the students’ answers all related to storytelling. It is reasonable to say that the students had a better understanding of what storytelling was after the treatment. Though some of the students’ answers related to storytelling, other responses used writing as an explanation for storytelling. One student who did relate her answers to storytelling and reading in the pre-test now explained her answers with examples related to writing. This change in perception raised even more questions in my mind; “Why would she use writing?”, “What are the fundamental differences between storytelling and writing?” and “Why did the students who could read mention writing in the post-test and the students who were not strong readers focus more on storytelling?” It is possible that this child’s response is an anomaly, but it is also possible that when children are creating a definition for something they go through several possibilities before they land on the best fit. What I can ultimately conclude is that big ideas like, reading, writing, and retelling take time to understand but students’ perceptions of these ideas can be affected by instruction. It is important to remember that I cannot assume my students understand huge concepts and I need to provide opportunities for my students to clarify their understanding.



## Section Two- Pre- and Post Test Retelling Results

There were dramatic gains from the pre-test to the post-test in the children's overall ability to retell a story. The mean score for the pre-test was 35%, or 10.5 points out of 30. The mean score for the post-test was 65% or 19.5 points out of 30. There was an increase of 30% or 9 points from the pre-test to the post-test. Clearly, The story grammar retelling instruction had some affect on the students' ability to retell stories and improve their listening comprehension. It is not reasonable to conclude that this intervention would have the same affect on all students or that it was the intervention alone that accounted for the dramatic change in results. When each element is assessed more closely it is easier to tell which story grammar elements were affected most. I personally observed a lot of students requesting more time to retell and laughing and giggling at the stories they told which made me feel that they attempted retelling with more confidence. I also heard their stories grow in length and complexity throughout the weeks of instruction. Many of my students changed from summarizers to retellers in six weeks and learned a lot of story grammar vocabulary.

Though every story grammar element showed improvement in the mean score, closer analysis shows just how meaningful some of the scores are. The story grammar element of Title has the lowest overall increase in score from 1.4 to 2.1 points. It is possible to say that the treatment had some impact on this score but due to that fact that two out of eight of the participants' scores actually decreased, it is difficult to say how much the instruction helped students remember to use the title when retelling a story. It is possible the four students who improved their scores did so because of the treatment, but the evidence is not strong. Only 50% of the sample showed any improvement in recall of

the title, which is not a very good spread across the sample. The data makes me wonder; “Was it the lack of formal instruction, poor coaching or lack of a picture that caused fewer students to improve?” Title is the one element that at very little formal discussion, no picture indicator on the story map and was often ignored when coaching children in their retellings.

The story grammar element of Ending had a similarly small gain in overall mean score at 1.25 to 2 points. In this element though, none of the students’ scores decreased. All of the students either maintained or improved their scores. There were fewer dramatic changes in scores and it is possible that the four students who improved their scores did so because of the story grammar instruction and retelling. Again, only half of the students showed any improvement and I would like to see more students affected to help prove the success of the treatment. While listening to students retell throughout the weeks of instruction, I kept asking myself “What would be a good way to teach the idea of ending, or how can I get them to distinguish the ending better.”

One of the story grammar elements that seem to have made drastic positive gains is Beginning. Beginning improved from .625 to 1.75 point in the mean score. However this is a case where zero really changes the averaging of these numbers. If you look closely, three out of the seven participants made no change in their very low scores of 0. Also one participant’s score decreased by one point. Again, only half of the sample showed improvement in this story grammar element. So, though the mean score shows over a point increase from pre- to post testing that isn’t really reflective of how the sample did. Beginning was yet again an area that I felt I needed to better explain and find ways to help my students distinguish beginning from the other episodes. My notes say

“Beginning too hard? or inadequate teaching?” I am my toughest critic and worked diligently to try and make this research an honest reflection of my students’ ability. Though the previous elements showed mixed results and little consistency across the sample the following examples story grammar knowledge surprised even me.

The story grammar element of Characters was evaluated and the mean score improved from 1.65 to 2.5; however three of the students were already proficient in this area. None of the children decreased in points and the four children whose scores improved, reached proficiency. Overall, in the area of Characters there were many students who included most of the characters in their stories. It is likely that the treatment had some impact on the students improved scores. We did spend a lot of time in large and small group discussions of characters and it seems the students had the most background knowledge in regard to this element. I asked myself why it seemed the students had such an easy time with this element “Is it that the students understood the vocabulary but needed to have a context and reminder to put it in the story, or is it the amount of discussion we were having about characters?” I wondered if I took the discussion away and just focused on the story map would Characters still improve as much.

Setting was clearly the area of story grammar that the students improved most over the six week period. The mean score change by almost a point and a half (1.4) and six out of eight students showed improvement. Seven out of eight students could tell you most if not all of the Setting. It is likely that some part of the treatment helped to raise the students’ scores. When evaluating Setting I did not include time, but I was looking for the students to mention many of the important places the story took place. The answer of

“farm” did not include the miller or the house, so I scored the students with most instead of all. What makes this score so impressive to me is that five of the eight participants scored 0 in the pre-test but in the post-test scored 2. This is a big leap to make. I wrote nothing notable about setting during instruction but it seems that like Characters it is an element that is either just forgotten, but deeply understood, or benefited from the amount of large and small group discussion we had about it.

The data for Goal and Problem showed a mean improvement of 1.1 points. Six out of the eight participants showed improvement. Five out of the eight students attained proficiency by the end of the six week treatment. It is highly probable that the treatment had an impact on the increase in scores. What astounds me about this story grammar element is that I was fearful it would be a concept the students would have a difficult time grasping. Unlike Characters and Setting we had not questioned the children a lot about Problem/Goal prior to the six week treatment. We spent an ample amount of time discussing Goal and Problem in large and small groups throughout the six weeks and their understanding of the concept deeply impressed me. I wrote “I think they actually know what to look for...They see the bigger picture.” I believe the improvement in this area really helped the students answer question and draw conclusion after the retelling.

Next/ Episodes is another area in which the results show a lot of improvement. Next is the part of the story map that helped the students moved into different episodes in the retellings, but the result is an improvement in the number of Episodes found in the retelling. The overall mean score improved by exactly one point, but what impressed me most was that many of the students went from scoring 0 to scoring a 2 or a 3. Overall, six out of the eight participants recalled most or all of the episodes. That is a fundamental

improvement because if students can remember many of the events in a story, they will be better equipped to answer question about the events and draw conclusions. My comments on “Next” during instruction were “It works, how can I get more detail... It works though! They are trying to remember more.” I truly believe that this improvement in ability to recall episodes is the reason students improved in answering questions about the story as well.

### Section Three: Evaluation of the Expression, Opinion and Connection Making

The previous seven elements were explicitly taught to the students and were the primary focus of the six weeks of instruction. It was the goal of the research to see if the students could improve their listening comprehension through explicit story grammar instruction and retelling practice. Clearly, the treatment had some impact on the areas that were explicitly taught, however it is also important to look at the areas of retelling and comprehension that may be byproducts of this type of instruction, in order to see if listening comprehension was improved. That is why the following section details the aspects of expression, opinion and connections.

The students were evaluated on their ability to retell the story with expression, which is a somewhat subject evaluation but none the less recognized as important in both reading and retelling. The students’ mean scores in this area improved by less than one point. Normally this would be considered relatively weak, but on the contrary it is significant because more than half of the students improved their score. This is the type of evaluation that is difficult to make objectively and is dependant on the evaluator’s notions of expression. While this data may not seem significant in and of itself, the very

fact of its insignificance drove me to ponder further questions and dig deeper. I asked myself, “Why did one student do worse instead of better on the post test?”, “What are the qualities of a story told with expression?” It is very difficult to conclude whether or not the treatment had an impact on the expressiveness due to the subjectivity related to Expression, but it was positive to see change because I am forced to ask why.

The students were asked to share what part of the story they like best and explain to the researcher why they made the decision they did. There was very little change in the mean score for this response; however half of the children gave more complete answers than in the pre-test including connections to how it made them feel or details about what made it their favorite. These students had previously been able to identify the part they liked, but either gave no explanation as to why or their explanation was not satisfactory because it lacked depth. It is important to note that none of the students gave a complete answer which would have included a detailed explanation of why they liked a particular episode. It is difficult to say whether the treatment had an influence on the students’ ability to answer this opinion question; however it is safe to comment that it did not negatively affect the students’ ability to answer opinion questions. I remember reflecting on this question in the pre-test and post-test and wondering if my expectations for the answers were too high. Again, assessing the completeness of an answer can be subjective. I wanted to include the data because it made me ask myself, “What are you really looking for in this answer?”, “Is your expectation too high?”, or “Do the students need better instruction in order to answer this question?” Ultimately, for me the students answers needed to get to the “why” and thoroughly convince me that they had a reason for picking that part. I also looked for the students to answer the question with out probing from the

teacher and in a fairly complex set of sentences. My standards were rather high and give a good basis for why none of my students scored proficient.

The students were also asked to answer a question about what the story reminded them of. This question is a higher level thinking question designed to determine if students can make connections. The mean score improved less than one point, but five out of the eight students improved their score. The two students that did not show improvement were already proficient at making connections by scoring a 3 on the pre-test. This outcome was rather unexpected because this sort of questioning was not typically presented to the students and required them to really think deeply. It made me wonder about what in the retelling would help the students answer this question? It seems that an improved ability to remember the episodes in a story and truly identify the problem or goal might allow the students to look for similar episodes/problems in their life or other stories.

### Strengths

This research study is based on relevant research and reasoning. Reading comprehension continues to be an area of study that needs attentions and by using Hoover and Gough's simple model of reading, the research is strengthened by a philosophical basis. Further, the treatment was multi-faceted and it seemed to be a perfect marriage between two popular forms of instruction story grammar mapping and retelling. Combining these two important instruction techniques allowed the students to learn both how to retell and what the story grammar was. The story map that the students used was one of the most important tools developed in this research, because it could be used by the students to remind them of the important story elements, help organize their thoughts

and give them independence when retelling. Tori Boulineau, Cecil Fore III, Shanna Hagan-Burke and Mack D. Burke (2004) and Morrow(1985,1986) have research that supports the use of these techniques separately, but I believe that if they worked together they might come up with a tool like the one used in this research. By giving the students a generic map and the same story to retell, they were able to teach each other through, modeling, listening and coaching. This map also allowed the teacher to work with students at their level, which made differentiation easier. If one student needed to focus on setting, the teacher could spend a lot of time in that area and less time on the other story grammar areas. Another strength of this study is that the treatment was used with a wide variety of reading abilities and seemed to positively affect all of the students in some way.

### Limitations

One limitation of the study was the inconsistency of the teaching related to each story grammar element. Standardization of the story element instruction in relation to the discussion and time given to retelling would have substantially strengthened this portion of the study. The number of students used in this study was a limitation because it is much easier to draw broader conclusions with a larger sample. Though research indicates that there is a link between listening comprehension and reading comprehension (Hoover and Gough, 1991 & Keenan et al., 2006), it would have benefited this research to have followed the students to first grade and see if any of their retelling ability was maintained as more of the students began to read. The students easily used the story map but there was some question about whether the format should have been flipped so that the students did the retelling first and then recalled the Setting, Characters, Problem/Goal. It



is possible that for some children having to address those story grammar areas first might have halted their natural ability to tell a story. The last limitation of the study was in the assessments used. It would have benefited this study to have several people listen to the retellings and score them due to the subjectivity of some of the areas in the rubric. This would add to the validity of the outcomes and decrease any bias.

#### Recommendations for future research

It is important that future research is done in the areas of listening comprehension, story mapping and retelling. I think a longitudinal study that follows students who receive consistent retelling and story grammar instruction in kindergarten and first grade would be very telling. Since a large focus of school reform is early intervention, it is important to continue to look at the listening comprehension part of Hoover and Gough's model (1990). We need to find ways to teach comprehension early on in a student's educational journey, because we do a disservice by ignoring comprehension until third grade. If someone were to do a study using the retelling tool developed in this study, I would suggest they teach each element in a standardized fashion. Future research combining story grammar and retelling should also use more types of assessments and several assessors in order to validate findings and assure unbiased evaluation of the students' retellings. Later this year I will be conducting less rigorous research with my students using this retelling story map and similar instruction. I hope to follow this group of students into first grade and track their reading comprehension, so that I can validate my assumptions and research claims that listening comprehension and reading comprehension are linked.

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Appendix A- Story Map- See Attached document.

Appendix B-Survey of Perceptions

**Student Self Assessment**

**1. Do you like telling stories?**

**Why/Why not**

**2. Are you a good storyteller?**

**Why/ Why not**

**3. What makes a good storyteller?**

## Appendix C-Assessment

**Irwin and Mitchell's 5-Point Retelling Scale:**

**5-**Student includes all main ideas and supporting details; sequences properly; infers beyond the text; relates text to own life; understands text organization; summarizes; gives opinion and justifies it; MAY ask additional questions; very cohesive and complete retelling.

**4-**Student includes most main ideas and supporting details; sequences properly; relates text to own life; understands text organization; summarizes; gives opinion and justifies it; cohesive and complete retelling.

**3-**Student includes some main ideas and details; sequences most material; understands text organization; gives opinion; fairly complete retelling.

**2-** Student includes a few main ideas and details; some difficulty sequencing; may give irrelevant information; gives opinion; incomplete retelling.

**1-**Student gives details only; poor sequencing; irrelevant information; very incomplete retelling.

**Morrow's 10-point retelling scale.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Story \_\_\_\_\_

General Directions: Credit "gist" as well as obvious recall, counting boy girl or dog for instance as well as Nicholas, Mei Sue or Shags. Credit plurals (friends, for instance) as two.

Setting:

- a. Begins story with an introduction
- b. Names main character
- c. Number of other characters named
- d. Actual number of other characters
- e. Score for "other characters (c/d)
- f. Includes statement about time or place

Theme:

- a. refers to main characters primary goal or problem to be solved

Plot Episodes:

- a. Number of episodes recalled
- b. Number of episodes in story
- c. Score for "plot episodes"

Sequence:

Retells story in structural order: setting, theme, plot, episodes, resolution. (Score 2 for proper, 1 for partial, 0 for no sequence evident.

Highest score possible 10 Child's score \_\_\_\_\_

\*Checks can be used instead of numbers to get a general sense of elements children include and progress over time. A quantitative analysis as shown above is optional.

Retellings can be evaluated for interpretive and critical comments.

### Story Retelling Checklist

Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of the Story \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ w/map

**Title** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Beginning** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Setting** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Characters** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Episodes recalled** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Goal or Problem** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Told Story with Expression** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

**Ending** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **most** **some** **none**

What was your favorite part? \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Answer	Mostly Complete	Somewhat Complete	Not Complete/No Answer
<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**Did the story remind you of another story you have read/heard or something you have done?**

Complete Answer	Mostly Complete	Somewhat Complete	Not Complete/No Answer
<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**\*All 3 points, most 2 points, some 1 point, none 0 points.**

**Total score out of a possible 30 points \_\_\_\_\_ . Child's score \_\_\_\_\_**

## Appendix D-Schedule

**Procedural and Data Collection Schedule**

- This schedule is estimation. Changes may be made due to student schedules and time allocated.

**PRE-Instruction week**

Day 1: Self-assessment questions asked

Read the Little Red Hen

Record pre-test retellings

Day 2-3: Show kids the story map and model using it.

Day 4: Encourage a few students to try using it in a large group.

Make the map available for free reading time.

**Instruction Weeks****WEEK 1**

M-F Introduce **Characters** on the story map

Use story maps to retell large group stories, highlight characters

Use story maps to retell small group stories, highlight characters

**WEEK 2**

M-F Introduce **Setting** on the story map

Use story maps to retell large group stories, highlight setting

Use story maps to retell small group stories, highlight setting

**WEEK 3**

M-F Introduce **Problem/Goal** on story map

Use story maps to retell large group stories, highlight Problem/Goal

Use story maps to retell small group stories, highlight Problem/Goal

**WEEK 4**

M-F Introduce **Beginning/ NEXT** on story map

Use story maps to retell large group stories, highlight Beginning/Next

Use story maps to retell small group stories, highlight Beginning/ Next

**WEEK 5**

M-F Introduce **End/NEXT** on story map

Use story maps to retell large group stories, highlight End/Next

Use story maps to retell small group stories, highlight End/Next

Ask Self-assessment

Read Little Red Hen again

Record post-test retellings

Please note that just because there is more emphasis given to a certain story grammar element that does not mean that the other elements are not talked about or used. The tool is to be used in its entirety but by focusing on one element we can ensure to grammar has been overlooked.



## Appendix E- Research Notes

Pre-test notes- Kids don't know what storytelling is. Why do they connect it to reading?  
They all seemed to just say yes because they thought that it was what I wanted to hear. I did have one child who said no. I'm surprised how many kids just summarized for a retelling although they have never been taught to retell so why should they know what to do? I wonder if the questions at the end are too hard. What am I looking for in the Expression of the story?

April 16- First week, Kids a little confused. Excited but unsure.

April- 25- We had an easy time  
Connecting characters to our discussion. Most students could identify at least some of the character and could think of more with prompting. This seems easy?  
Do I need all this discussion?

May 2- no real change in children's retelling, questioning or answering related to story Comprehension.  
Not seeing vocabulary being used in class.  
Setting was something our students struggled to identify. A lot of discussion in small group and large group seemed to help.

May 8-

Vocab being used when describing writing  
Retelling seem to be longer, no time for discussion  
Kids are happy to try retelling and demand more time  
Some of the best decoders need prodding to retell because they want a story to read  
Setting is beginning to set in, but still need to help Beginning and ending the story.  
Problem and Goal- I think they actually get it!!!!

May 10

Children are beginning, to use Beginning and Ending vocabulary when asking about personal stories  
They seem comfortable with the retelling  
Frequently ask about characters, setting and next  
Awesome discussion about Problem and Goal! The kids made great connections and some showed a deeper understanding.  
Students with special needs seem to be using vocabulary more but it may be used inappropriately.

May 16

Running out of time for retelling

Kids with special needs hitting a wall, they are not progressing

Kids identified that there were sometimes many problems in a story

Prefer large group discussion to small group

It works, how can I get more detail... It works though! They are trying to remember more...

Hmm is this too hard?

What is Next? How many do I do?

Need to spend more time actually using the tool and retelling. Only half the class is getting a chance to retell.

How can I teach this better?

May 22

Have secure understanding of Characters I think

Continue to ask for clarification of NEXT.

Am seeing this being applied to their writing especially Setting?

Let the ball drop on discussion this week and basically spent time modeling and retelling

How can I teach Ending better?

Getting tired of it a little. May need a break

Post-test-

Kids came in ready to retell

They all used the tool

Many more had a better definition of retelling

Some used writing to explain retelling. Why writing? Are they the same?

This took a lot longer and there were many more stories rather than summaries

Expression is tricky to evaluate. What am I looking for?

Same with favorite part, what would a good answer sound like?

Appendix F- 3 Transcription of students-One struggling reteller, one average reteller and one strong reteller.

Transcription of Tape: Student 120  
Survey one/Retelling one (April)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**120: No**

**T: No, Why not?**

**120: Because sometimes there long and hard to remember**

**T: Hard to remember?**

**120: I only like telling my friend or mother stories if they are quick.**

**T: Yeah, Are you a good storyteller?**

**120: Yes**

**T: What makes you a good storyteller?**

**120: My sister tells me.**

**T: Your sister tells you that you're a good storyteller?**

**120: Yeah**

**T: What makes a good storyteller? What do they do?**

**120: At the end they tickle somebody so**

**T: At the end they tickle huh? Okay**

T: You're going to pretend like you're telling your little sister the story we read before rest time. You can use this( story map) if you want. Okay?

120: (Nods) First he keeps telling his friends that he's going to like umm... he bakes the thing. If they wanna do something with him ummm.... A couple times and then they keep saying no and then when finally they said you can use it and he says no.

T: That's the story? Is there anything else?

120: No... He keeps telling them if you wanna like help me do something and then umm.. they keep saying not and I don't know.

T: What was your favorite part of the story?

120: When he was riding the bike. (long pause)

T: Why?

120: I don't know.

T: Did that story remind you of any other story you might have heard or something you've done?

120: Um ....It reminds me of the three little pigs because the fox keeps being something and the keeps being something. They're both animals.

T: Is anything else you want to share about the story? (Shake head)

Student 120

Survey two/Retelling two (May)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**120: No**

**T: No, Why not?**

**120: Because its long and you have to sit there. (Teacher laughs)... Its boring.**

**T: Are you a good storyteller?**

**120: My sister says yes**

**T: What makes a good storyteller?**

**120: Um you have to like , you have to like speak loud and think before you say stuff and that's all.**

**T: That's good**

T: Okay, Now you're going to tell me the story we read before rest time.

120: (Picks up the story map in front of her) The title was the red hen. The characters were the cat, the pig, the duck and the hen. And um it took place where they make a dough and um at the house and um by the market and that's all. And um the problem was that the dog, the cat and the pig wouldn't help the hen and then she felt bad and then the goal was to make it all by herself. Then the beginning was she said who will help me make the umm with the umm cut the wheat and then they said um they said not me me all them said not me and then she said fine I'll do it all by myself. And she did and then she asked um who wants to help me do the um go to that market and um make it into dough and they all said no again and they said fine I'll do it all by myself and then she came back and then she said who will let me um do the make the dough and then they all said no again and then she said who will make it with me in the oven and they all said no again and then finally it was made and the said and she said who will help me eat this delicious bread and um they all said yes and then she said well no because they didn't help her do anything like cut the wheat and um take it to the market and um make the dough and um cook it so then she ate it all by herself and they had to stare out the window and watch her. That's the end.

T: Wow! What was your favorite part of the story?

120: Um.. when they had to watch her out the window.

T: Why?

120: I don't know

T: Did the story remind you of any other stories you've read or heard or something you've done?

120: Um...Yeah me um an NAME OF SISTER. SISTER SAID....No and I said Yeah and she said no and I said yeah.

T: Were you fighting?

120: Yeah

T: Anything else?

120: No

Transcription of Tape: Student 70  
Survey one/ Retelling one. (April)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**70: Yes**

**T: What do you like about telling stories?**

**70: They have animals in them uhhh they might have my favorite animals in them?**

**T: Are you a good story teller?**

**70: uh yeah**

**T: Yeah, what makes you a good storyteller?**

**70: I uh help with the words I know.**

**T: Is there anything else a storyteller needs to do a good job?**

**70: To do a good job hmmm .....hmmm.**

**T. Thinking?**

**70: (pause)**

**T: You don't know.**

**70: (Shake head)**

T: Pretend you were going to go home and tell your sister the story we heard before rest time, You can use this if you want to. Okay?

70: Okay

Teacher: What would you do?

70: Uh tell them the story?

T: Okay go ahead

70: Once upon a time there was a little red hen. And and animals and some other animals, a dog, a cat, a goose, and and a dog. The little red hen found a grain of seed. She said (in hen voice) "Look there's a seed. Who will help me plant it?" "Not I" said the cat "Not I" said the Dog "Not I" said the pig. "Then I will have to do it myself" said the chicken "Who will help me...hmm who will help me uh.. who will.. give it to the millar? "Not I" said the cat. "Not I" said the dog "Not I" said the mouse. "Then I'll have to do it myself." Said the chicken and she did. "Who will help me bake this and turn this to dough?" "Not I" said the cat "Not I" said the dog "Not I said the mouse."Not I and Not I" said the Goose. "Then I'll have to do it myself" said the chicken and she did. Who will help me bake.. bake this.. this dough?" "Not I" said the cat "Not I" said the dog "Not I" said the goose. "Then I'll have to do it myself" said the chicken and and she did. "Who will help me eat this bread?" "I will"said the cat. "I will"said the dog. "I will" said the mouse. "I will" said the goose. "No you won't" said the little red hen. "You didn't help me with the dough. You didn't help me deliver it to the millar. You didn't help me find it. So she ate it. (This story was told with wonderful expression)

T: Wow! Now what was your favorite part of the story.

70: Well...hmmm...uh...hmmm.. When she's delivering to the millar.

T: Why?

70: I like the bike.

T: hmmm.. Did the story remind you of any other stories you've read or something you've done?

70: Nooo? (pause) Nope

T: No?

70: Nope

Transcription of Tape: Student 70

Survey two/ Retelling two. (May)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**70: Mmm yeah because I want to remind people that uh telling stories is fun!**

**Teacher: alright, are you a good story teller?**

**70: Yeah**

**Teacher: What makes you good storyteller?**

**70: By listening to the stories**

**T: How do you know if someone is a good storyteller.**

**70: Well, Ya have to listen to the words. Ya have to remember all the parts of the story. And you have to uh have to mmmmm(pause) and you have to mmmmm uh think, THINK.**

T: Remember when you told me this story awhile ago. I want you do tell me the story we read before rest again. Okay?

70: Okay (Pause)

T: Whenever you're ready...

70: (Picks up the story map) Ahhh the title is called The Little Red Hen. The characters were the dog, the pig and the mouse. The setting was on a farm. The problem was her friends didn't help the little red hen and the goal was was that the little red hen ate the bread. The befinning was the little red hen said look look I found a grain of wheat. Who will help me ahh mmmm who would help me turn this wheat to flour? Not I said the duck, Not I said the pig Not I said the mouse. Then I will take this to the millar by myself Next The little red hen said who would help me turn this in turn this into dough? Not I said the pig, not I said the duck Not I said the mouse. Then I will do it myself. Next the little red hen said who would help me take thi to the milla? Not I said the Duck, not I said the Pig Not ...I...said the mousssse. Then I will do it myself. When the wheat was ground into dough she said, she asked for help again Who would.... Who would uhhhh turn it ... who would turn this into dough? Not I said the pig, Not I said the cat Not I said the mouse and she did. And finally the little red hen, the smell of the dough filled the aaaiirrr, Who would help me eat this this BROWN bread? I will said the mouse, I will said the dog I will said the cat. Not you WON'T the little read hen said. You didn't help me take the wheat to the millar, you didn't help me turn this wheat into dough so I will eat this all by myself. Next time you would have some. "If we help you?" that's the end.

T: Okay, huh What was your favorite part?

70: The End?

T: How come?

70: They said if we help you

T: Oh, Was that in your story or in the real story.

70: Well I saw it on Barney...

T: Oh did this story remind you of another story you read or heard? Tell me more about Barney.

70: Well, there was this red one where baby bop tried brown...Bread. Where Baby Bop tried Peanut Butter and Jelly on BROWN BREAD and Stella told a story.

T: And what was the story?

70: It was about the little red hen.

T: Why did this story remind you of that story?

70: Because uhh all the parts in it that it has in the story.

120: Okay Thanks buddy.



Transcription of Tape: Student 90  
Survey one/Retelling one (April)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**90: Yes, I like when the chicken eats them.**

**Teacher: Are you a good storyteller? Are you good at telling stories?**

**90: yea sometimes ...only easy ones**

**T: what makes you a good storyteller?**

**T: What do good storytellers have to have?**

**90: um They have to say the book... all of it**

T: Remember when you told me this story awhile ago. I want you do tell me the story we read before rest again. You can use this is your want. Okay?

90: Uh huh

T: Alright

90: yea

(Long Pause)

90: Um umm

T: Pretend your going to go tell grandma about this story we read.

90: Yea um One...Little... umHem!

T: Mmmhmm, Okay?

90: Story by.. I forgot!!!!

T: It's a story that's told over and over so the authors unkown. We don't know.

90: Umm

T: Tell me the parts of the story

90: The pig and the cat and some people they um wouldn't make it with her.

T: Okay, What else?

90: And at the end uhh uhh the the she said you can't eat it because you didn't help me.

T: Anything else?

90: No?

T: That's the whole story?

90: no....

T: No what else?

90: Who will help me... I forgot...um ... put it in the mill.

T: Mmm

90: Who will plant it with me?

T: mhmmm

90: Who will grind it with me?

T: Mhmmm

90: Who will eat it with me? (high pitched voice) who who who?

T: Yes(giggle)

90: (giggle) Who will umm who will... who will..I forgot!

T: What was your favorite part of the story?

90: Um Where the chicken eats it

T: Why?

90:

T: Did the story remind you of anything you have done before or some other story you've read?

90: Um yeah, the I was playing with a truck and I make some dirt in my rocketship. It also reminds me of cartoon network because Courage sees a monster that's a duck.

T: Ohhh Thank you sir!

Transcription of Tape: Student 90

Survey two/Retelling two (May)

**Teacher: Do you like telling stories?**

**90: Yes**

**Teacher: Why?**

**90: because in one of my stories REx the minnow, ummm he made a hole that was too little for the shark, he made a catch the same color came out.**

**Teacher: so you have a favorite story?**

**90: yeah**

**Teacher: Are you a good storyteller?**

**90: mhmm(nodding)**

**T: what makes you a good storyteller?**

**90: because umm one time all by myself when my dad was in the shower I read a Rex the minnow book up in my room.**

**T: What do good storytellers have to have?**

**90: They have a cool voice.**

**T: Okay, and you can start telling me the story we read before rest when ever you want.**

90: The Red Hen. And the Cat and the chicken and... the pig. What's the other one, I forgot.

T: I can't tell you but you can guess.

90: Uhhh Can't. (Pause) I forgot.

T: Remind me of the characters you already said.

90: Cat, the... chicken...the pig and the little read hen.

T: Okay.. Keep Going

90: And the setting was outside at the barn. And the problem was that the animals wouldn't help her make it and then she ate the bread all by herself. And the goal was to make the um bread for her babies. And uh The Red Hen. The little Read Hen said Do you plant it with me? (In very distinct voices) Not I said the ? Not I said the Pig, Not I said the cat. (Very Loud) Then I'll make it by myself! Next....It happened that she said Do you help me cut it. And she said and the pig said (Voices return) Not I said the Pig, not I said the cat And she did. (Loud Voice returns) Then I'll make it by myself! Next page was... then she said who will help me bring it to the mill to cut it. (Return of Voices) Not IIII said the pig, Not IIII said the cat. I'LL DO IT BY MYSELF!!!! And she did. And Next she said will you help me make the dough. (Voices return) Not I said the pig Not I said the Cat NOT! Noo .... I'LL BAKE IT BY MYSELF. And next what happened she

ate the bread by herself and then (Voices) I will said the pig, I will said the cat. I'll do it by myself because you didn't help me make it!

T: Is that it?

90: (Nods)

T: Oh you did a great job. Two more questions for you. What was your favorite part of the story?

90: When the Chicken ate the bread because it was funny.

T: Did the story remind you of any other book you've read or heard or something you've done?

90: yeah, When I was doing the chicken game.

T: What's the chicken game?

90: You sit on the egg with no hands and you crack it and get it out and make a ball in the dough.

T: Hmmm Okay.