COMMON CORE’S INFORMATIONAL TEXT REQUIREMENT
AND ITS EFFECT ON STUDENT READING CHOICES

A Thesis

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Department of Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

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Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine if student independent reading choices align with Common Core reading standards by examining book choices via independent reading logs. In fourth grade, Common Core standards require classroom teachers to begin to use 50% informational text as part of their English Language Arts program (2013).

Sources of Data

Data was collected from 44 fourth grade participants. Two anonymous surveys and weekly reading logs were collected over the course of five months.
Conclusions Reached

The conclusion reached by this study was that Common Core’s reading requirements did not change reading choices of students during independent reading time.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Dr. W. Tom Owens, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

Background

California Common Core Standards aim to prepare all students for college and career readiness. Although the aim is commendable, can we expect these results when there is a serious issue in reading that begins in 4th grade? According to an article on the American Federation of Teachers’ website, Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) provided data of the struggle children begin experiencing in reading when they are in the fourth grade. This study concluded that the “deceleration of scores on word meaning…ultimately affects children’s reading comprehension” (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, p. 14). Simply stated, if students cannot understand the vocabulary of a passage of text, then they cannot comprehend the meaning of the passage. When children struggle with understanding academic vocabulary, such as that found in informational text, will they begin to limit their choices of books to read in their free time? If they do, they may be avoiding literature that may better prepare them for college and career readiness. In college and career settings, advanced literacy skills are needed (Ivey, 2010). As children continue through school, their exposure to informational text in standardized testing can increase up to 80% (Braker-Walters, 2014). This increase in informational text demands that teachers begin exposing students to this genre earlier and begin preparing them to efficiently read this material.
In addition to learning how to decode and decipher vocabulary, students need to learn how to obtain the information they want from their books. Usually, informational text is not read from cover to cover, as is a narrative. Students need to understand text features such as headings, subheadings, graphs, tables of content, indices, and captions under pictures. Knowing how to use these features makes the process of reading informational text easier for students. In a narrative text, pictures highlight the story; but, in informational text, pictures often add another layer of complexity for students. Teachers should spend time introducing features of informational text to allow their students to access all the information needed to comprehend it. According to Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2003), teachers should model how to use these features (e.g., showing a class how to use an index to find a specific topic).

In order for students to become effective using all types of text, they must be exposed to more than narrative as early as possible. Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2003) argue informational text should be introduced in the early primary grades. They need to be introduced to the skills that will help them decipher academic vocabulary, graphs, charts, and data. As noted by Duke (2004), “Success in schooling, the workplace, and society depends on our ability to comprehend this material” (p. 40). Students should learn to understand all features of text in order to learn to read informational text. Informational text reading skills, when taught in a classroom, may open a world of literature that brings enjoyment to a student who may have previously ignored it (Walther, 2015). If students understand how to read informational text, they will have the ability to find knowledge on their own within a classroom or library.
Teachers can introduce informational text in many ways beyond the use of traditional science and social science textbooks. Common Core allows the classroom teacher to use narrative novels and informational text in cross-curriculum design. In the researcher’s classroom, she often introduces a novel’s setting, author’s biography, and background information using informational text. For example, when teaching the novel *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987), prior to reading the story, students work with informational text describing the environment in which the main character must survive the medical emergency that forces him to make a crucial decision, and the background of the author. These informational insights often lend themselves to becoming a lesson-within-a-lesson. Teachers can create a mini-lesson that is separate from, but relates to, the bigger subject they are presenting. Using *Hatchet*, students can spend a class reading about and researching the Cessna aircraft that the main character finds himself flying. This lesson becomes cross-curricular when students read about how aircraft work (science) and how small aircraft benefit different members of society (social studies). This exposure to informational text can help students “develop knowledge of the world” (Duke, 2009)

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not informational text reading could be increased in the 4th grade with the adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Data was then analyzed to measure if students had a significant change in book choice that would align with CCSS. Students were required to read for 30 minutes outside of school hours from Monday to Thursday. They then recorded the title
of the book, pages read, and completed a small summary of their reading in a reading log. Teachers checked the log each morning to verify that students recorded their nightly reading. In fourth grade, CCSS require classroom teachers to use 50% informational text as part of their English Language Arts program (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). If teachers present informational text alongside narrative, giving each genre equal time in the classroom, will students begin to change their outside reading choices? CCSS informational text reading standards aim to bring students to a “standards met” reading level. The California Department of Education rubric states that a student who has met the standards is a child who “has met the achievement standard and demonstrates the knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy needed for likely success in entry-level, credit-bearing college coursework after high school,” (Reporting Achievement Levels Descriptors, 2015).

**Significance of the problem**

In a study conducted by Simpson (1996) to monitor book choice by male and female students, it was found that male students more often chose informational text for independent reading while female students often chose narrative text. Simpson interviewed students about their book choices. She found that female students overwhelmingly chose narrative text over informational. In four weeks, males read 90% informational text while only 47% of female students read informational text. The remaining 10% and 53% respectively, read primarily narrative text. Simpson stated that
these reading choices put female students at a disadvantage because the ability to read and comprehend informational text was valued in real life (1996).

In 2010, California adopted Common Core Standards (California Department of Education, 2013, para 2). During the 2014-2015 school year, some public schools implemented a new English Language Arts curriculum while others had begun the process earlier. This study will investigate if presenting more informational text under the new Common Core will increase the amount of informational text that both male and female students read outside of school as measured by a reading log. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in 2013, California students scored lower than students in 41 other states (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The passages students read for these exams included narrative and informational texts (2013, par 4). In addition, according to the California Department of Education Website, grade lexiles, or the difficulty of a book, increased from a range of 645-845 to a range of 770-980. This increase in difficulty of text will force students to read text that is much more difficult at an earlier age in school. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which assesses student growth in reading and math every two years, California only increased its average score by one point between the 2011 and 2013 assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Based on the 2013 reading assessment results, California only has 27% of its students at or above proficient reading levels compared to the rest of the nation. California students also placed 47th when compared with the rest of the nation in reading ability. It is clear California’s students have significant reading problems.
Methodology

Data was collected and tallied via weekly reading logs submitted by the participants. Participants also submitted anonymous surveys to gather information about their reading choices, reading preferences, and familiarity with the words “informational” and “narrative”. The researcher distributed permission slips to parents/guardians of students during November parent/teacher conferences to enroll their children in the study (Appendix A). All students with parent permission participated in the study. Sixty-three permission slips were distributed; 45 were returned. As new students entered the classroom, they were not included in the study. The study group began with 45 fourth graders in two separate classrooms.

The study was quantitative, containing both survey and reading log data. The data were saved on a password-encoded laptop and in a locked classroom drawer. Students did not need to put names on documents, only a gender if they self-selected. The researcher avoided bias by having surveys and reading logs submitted anonymously and compiled as one set, not logged by teacher and room number.

This study was conducted at an elementary school in Northern California. Students were given a pre- and post-assessment to survey their reading preferences, and data were presented in a data table (Appendix B). Within the two classrooms, both teachers had a 43% English Language Learner population. Classroom One had a male to female ratio of 12 to 20, and Classroom Two had a male to female
ratio of 15 to 17. Classroom One had five students on Individual Education Plans, and Classroom Two had three.

Teachers participating in the study did not alter their methods of teaching while meeting the standards required by the California Common Core. They did not encourage reading one genre of text over the other. Teachers tried to not place value over one form of literature over another within the classroom. The benefits of reading both forms of text were discussed in class. Students were not given any specific instructions about reading outside of school other than a time requirement and a reading level that was specific to each student. At the end of their nightly reading, students used their reading log to write down the title of their book, a short summary of their reading, and the number of pages read. This form was known as their “independent reading log” (Appendix C). A numerical value was inserted for gender, and a letter of the alphabet indicated “Narrative”, “Informational”, or “No Reading Completed”.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

There were six limitations in this study. First, it is assumed that students would be filling out weekly surveys with complete honesty. Second, students might not turn in all homework. Third, several students within the classrooms had a history of having issues regarding homework. Fourth, the school site had a high mobility rate for students. Fifth, it was not possible to measure if reading informational text at home increases reading ability. A final limitation to this study was that the researcher could not control
reading logs in other classrooms, either if a teacher forgot to collect them or if they were not checking journals with as much rigor as in the researcher’s classroom.

The delimitations of this study included the researcher not conducting this study at several school sites. The researcher also could have included multiple grade-levels. The researcher also did not control the after-school reading habits of the students in their prior grades.

**Theoretical Basis for the Study**

The theoretical frameworks for this study drew upon existing research that supported student choice in education. By studying what material students are reading at home, when their choice of reading is not limited by teacher direction, this study can examine if students choose to read informational text. The philosopher and theory that shape the framework of this study are John Dewey and Critical Pedagogy.

John Dewey (1897) challenged the role of education in the lives of students. Rather than being passive in education, Dewey dared educators to engage in an active give and take of knowledge (Field, 2005), meaning that teachers understand that students come into the classroom not as blank slates, but as individuals with their own knowledge base and can even be experts about certain topics. In Dewey’s well-known work, “My Pedagogical Creed” (Dewey, 1897), he states:

I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living, and not a preparation for future living. I believe that school must represent present life – life as real and
vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground (p. 7).

When an adult is interested in a specific topic, they have several means to fulfill that interest. Students should have that same right in their own classroom. Education should represent an opportunity to discover what is currently of importance in a student’s life. Dewey also stated that changing interests were a sign of a child’s power growing and as a sign for an educator to begin to present more challenging material (1897, p. 15). Since informational text is not read the same way as narrative text, it can create a challenge to its reader. Reading for pleasure is not an activity that students engage in as a means to “succeed” in school. Reading outside of school, even if required as a type of homework, will usually be in topics which interest the students. To encourage students to read informational text, teachers must find content that simulates their curiosity.

The other theory driving this study is Critical Pedagogy. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970) encouraged the system of education to change from one in which the teacher held the knowledge power to a model that recognized students came with their own base of knowledge. Critical Pedagogy encourages teachers to view education as more than filling empty heads with the “correct” information. By allowing students to discover, research, and read about subjects in which they are interested, teachers can transform their classrooms. Students can see the value in the knowledge they have from their lives outside of school and can deepen that knowledge with encouragement from their classroom teachers. When teachers embrace Critical Pedagogy, they can encourage students to continue researching the topics they enjoy,
specifically using informational text. In order to destroy the “banking” system of education, one Freire describes as “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” according to the website freire.org (para 7), educators must be willing to connect with their students and discover what they are interested in learning. Using student interest to help develop a love of learning can reverse the roles in the classroom with the student becoming the expert. Knowledge of how to use informational text encourages students to explore their interests.

**Definitions**

*Common Core Standards:* Teaching standards adopted by California that give teachers a guideline for what they are required to teach at every grade level for language arts and mathematics.

*Critical Pedagogy:* a means to create an educational system that provides students with the tools to create and contribute to a just democracy (Stommel, 2014).

*Informational text:* defined by Duke (2004) as “text whose primary purpose is to convey information about the natural or social world” (p. 40).

*4th Grade Slump:* a time when reading scores decrease, primarily seen in disadvantaged children; a phrase popularized by Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin in 1990.

*Narrative:* “text (that) usually follows a structure referred to as story grammar” (Sanacore, 1991, p. 211); this grammar includes main characters, plot, and theme.
**Reading Logs:** A document that indicates the title of the book that students are reading and a small sentence summary of what they read.

**Organization of the Chapters**

Chapter One will introduce the problem that the study investigates. Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature, which is pertinent to the study. Chapter Three will cover the methods used in this study. All the results will be discussed in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five will discuss the conclusions that can be made from the data collected.

**Background of the Researcher**

The researcher obtained a Bachelor’s of Arts in Child Development from California State University, Sacramento, in 2005. Two years later, she obtained a teaching credential from the same university and she began her teaching career with a long-term substitute position in the Elk Grove Unified School district in a 6th grade classroom. Then, for six years, she taught in a single-school, school district in South Sutter County. Her classroom experience included 5th grade, 6th grade, and combination classes of 5th and 6th grade in a self-contained classroom. In 2014, she began teaching in a new district at a new grade level. The 2014-2015 school year was spent in a 4th grade classroom. Currently, she is teaching 1st grade.
Chapter Two

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

How to read informational text is a skill that must be taught before expecting students to comprehend it. This review of literature begins with the problem of the 4th grade slump, which occurs at a time when children begin to read less for pleasure. Literature then focuses on how this gap grows larger when students are grouped by gender. Finally, the literature shows why this slump can be detrimental beyond just one’s school experience. Female students begin to read even less informational for pleasure, and this can have a significant impact on their future because informational text reading is critical in every profession. Finally, the review examines why teachers need to supplement classroom materials and explicitly teach students how to read informational text.

The 4th Grade Slump

According to Duke (2001) many students have difficulty in comprehending informational text. This leads to a large proportion of the American public who struggle with informational text as adults. Informational text that adults come into contact with include how-to manuals, training manuals, and various forms of media. If adults struggle with comprehending these items, their lives can become limited. Adult struggles with reading should cause educators to focus on how this can be prevented.

With these facts in mind, the state of California adopted California Common Core Standards. These standards require California teachers to increase instructional content to 50% informational text and 50% narrative by 4th grade (California Department of
Education, 2013). By giving students the skills to read this genre of literature, students will hopefully be able to comprehend informational text. Common Core also requires students to use evidence from text when students state opinions about a variety of topics. When students can understand the meaning behind informational text, they can make stronger critical arguments.

Chall and Jacobs (2003) introduced the theory that student reading test scores began to decline overall in the fourth grade level. From the study, it was theorized that the “deceleration of scores on word meaning…ultimately affects children’s reading comprehension” (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, p. 14). The study created the phrase commonly used to describe the resistance to reading children begin to develop, “the 4th grade slump.” In the course of this study, the researchers followed 30 students from grades 2, 4, and 6. They found that students began with comparative reading and language skills in grade 2. Then, in the period between 4th and 7th grade, students began to struggle with more difficult word meaning, specifically academic language that was primarily used in more complex textbooks.

Kieffer, Vukovic, and Berry (2013) researched the connection with the developing brain and the 4th grade slump. Executive Functioning (EF) is the term that covers the “cognitive processes that facilitate planning, problem solving, and the initiation and maintenance of goal-directed behavior” (p. 333). This process also covers the developing working memory, subdominant response, and attention shifting behavior. Working memory helps students hold the initial blends of a word in their heads as they sound out the rest of the word, figure out the word meaning, and relate it to whatever was
previously read. This means that EF is involved in both the reading process and reading comprehension. Subdominant response is the ability to read a word while ignoring any distractions, such as word color. Attention shifting behavior is the function of the brain that allows a student to shift between tasks, such as reading for specific tasks at different times. For example, a teacher could ask a student at one moment to read for vocabulary and at another to read for the main idea. Within the study, the researchers pointed out that at the 4th grade level, students shifted from reading for individual word meaning, or decoding, to reading larger passages for comprehension. The study sought to connect the functions of the EF to reading comprehension. The study found that there was a correlation between these brain functions, and research also showed that there was a connection between inhibition control in kindergarten and stronger letter recognition. If students are not able to regulate attention, their reading functions will suffer for it.

Kazelskis et al. (2005) studied reading attitudes of 718 students ranging from fourth to sixth grade. They found that there was a fluctuation in reading attitudes of students. The researchers suggested that attitude towards reading could fluctuate both between grade levels and over short periods of time. If a student felt unsuccessful in an activity, this could lead to a feeling of defeat and could quickly change a positive attitude about reading. When attitudes can change swiftly due to a feeling of success or failure, students’ desire to continue reading can be negatively affected.

What can be done to decrease this slump? Duke (2001) theorizes that the increased requirement of informational text in 4th grade can lead to students resisting reading outside of school. Reading becomes work rather than pleasure. The problem
with students shutting down in 4th grade is the fact that this is when textbooks begin to change. Students no longer use primary textbooks but have ones that look more like a traditional textbook. Primary books have larger print and more pictures. If students begin to consider their textbooks as “hard” and something they struggle to understand, they will not see the value in the information it contains.

Kieffer, Vukovic, and Berry (2013) strongly suggested students learn how to self-regulate attention. This comes with teacher help in creating a classroom with limited distractions. Teaching students to self-regulate and using interventions focused on reading ability may help decrease the slump. As students learn to monitor their attention, their developing brains can focus on working memory and improving their overall reading ability.

Valencia and Buly (2004) sought to differentiate between struggling reading groups based on their 4th grade state testing scores. By grouping readers based on their reading abilities, the researchers came up with viable suggestions to help each type of reader. The researchers created six clusters they determined struggling readers fell into depending on additional testing beyond their state scoring. Within these clusters, the researchers were able to suggest specific interventions that might help readers find success. Several of these suggestions included explicit directions from teachers about reading strategies, including think-alouds, summarizing, and self-monitoring. For readers well-below the 4th grade reading level, the researchers suggested finding high interest material from reading passages at a student’s instructional level, even if that meant obtaining material from many different grade levels. Students can find success in
material that is high interest, and informational text may be the key to keeping interests piqued.

A study of a successful reading program in a Massachusetts school district evaluated how a community could be instrumental in helping students find success, and not a slump, in the fourth grade. Fuller and Traphagen (2013) studied the combined effort from family and the Springfield school district to make sure all readers were successful by fourth grade. On the school’s end, a move was made to improve early literacy. Students from pre-K to third grade were the primary focus to increase reading literacy. The district tracked, monitored, and used student data to create programs that were meaningful for student learning. There was also a familial and community component of the Springfield program. The district created programs to help parents support early reading within the first five years of a child’s life. There were also workshops and programs created to help parents understand the importance of reading with and to children. The community supported the district push for reading by creating opportunities for children to get free books from places like a pediatrician’s office. Families were also part of a program to emphasize the importance of students attending school on a regular basis and summer school when it was available. While results from Springfield’s ambitious program will not be available until 2016, when they hope to have 80% of their third graders at a proficient status, it can be expected to garner some useful data that may help ease the slump other school districts see in fourth grade.

The power of the “think alouds” as performed by teachers has been recommended time and time again in research as a way to counter-act this slump. For example, Klecker
(2005) completed a study of reading scores in the National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP). Within this study, Klecker discussed the value of teachers reading aloud to their students and stopping to explain how they comprehended and adjusted their thinking when confronted with new information. In order for educators to combat the 4th grade slump, they must consider all options, including teaching practices, family outreach, cross-grade level reading material, and differentiation based on student need.

**Gender and Reading**

American students’ struggle with informational text should also include a look at how female students use informational text. Many studies have shown that female students often make the conscious choice to skip reading informational text versus reading narrative text. Simpson (1996) studied a single classroom to investigate the reading practices of 30 students. She found that the teacher focused primarily on narrative text in her English Language Arts time. The classroom was primarily built on the reading and understanding of narrative text. Simpson decided to challenge students to read informational text by limiting reading choices during a book selection experiment. Female students were displeased when faced with only informational text as a choice and often selected “soft” topics such as animals instead of a wide variety of choices the male students selected. Simpson’s study is not without its problems. The study did not include any information about any teaching methods the classroom instructor might have used to teach students how to read informational texts. If students were unaware of how to read informational text, with features that are specific to the genre, they might have struggled in finding a purpose for reading. In addition, Simpson experimented with the
choices the students made by limiting book choices, but offered no instruction on how to use informational text. Students might have found them “boring” if they tried to read these books as they would a novel (i.e., cover to cover).

Cloer Jr. and Dalton (2001) discovered that female students’ attitudes towards academic reading began to decrease after 3rd grade. This is a decrease in reading that continues through adulthood for female students. This decrease in reading informational text could lead to fewer female students entering science and technology fields, which rely heavily on informational text. The researchers had 397 participants in their study. Using reading exams results, a sharp decrease in female student scores occurred between their 4th and 6th grade year. Mean scores dropped from 62.66 in 4th grade to 49.58 in 6th grade.

Summers (2013) also found that in adulthood the swing towards informational text still existed with approximately 13% of adult males choosing informational text compared with 7% of adult females. The study Summers conducted asked 58 adult males and females about their reading habits. Summers noted that publishing companies marketed specifically to female readers, and this practice continued to feed the stereotype that females to read primarily fiction in their adult lives. Summers found that adult males’ reading material, while typically magazines was focused on non-fiction.

The Need for Informational Text

Prior to the adoption of the Common Core, many school districts relied on basal reading programs. These readers did not provide the necessary amount of informational text students need to meet the 50/50 requirement of the Common Core according to
Braker-Walters (2014). In her 2014 study, she found that an average of only 31% of the material in fourth grade basal readers focused on informational text. Some texts had a percentage as low as 14. Braker-Walters states “most academic achievement depends, in part, on the ability to read and write informational text” (p. 1). In addition to influencing academic success, Braker-Walters stated “the percentage of informational text found in standardized tests can be as high as 70% to 80%” (p. 2). If a teacher relies on basal readers as their only curriculum to incorporate informational text into their classroom, they are set-up their students for failure. Braker-Walters approximated that 84% of public school teachers used basal readers as their primary text for English Language Arts, which meant a majority of students were getting a bare minimum of informational text during the course of a school year.

Ivey (2010) went a step further and stated that using single-text curriculum in a classroom gave the student an impression that there was only a small chunk of information that was worth knowing about non-fiction topics. Reading only a small amount of informational text did not allow a student to practice critical thinking skills. Ivey stated that reading across multiple genres and textbooks could lead to deeper understanding of topics for students. In addition to offering multiple text views of interesting topics, Ivey suggested using catchy titles and subjects to grab students’ interest and to encourage them to choose informational text.

Williamson, Fitzgerald and Stenner (2013) stated that college-text difficulty and workplace material difficulty had increased since 1962. They claimed that most real world material exceeded a 12th grade reading level. The authors stated that prior to the
adoption of Common Core, students left high school and entered college with a gap between the texts they used and the texts they were about to encounter. Their study focused on the trajectory of complexity for reading suggestions in Common Core State Standards. By increasing the complexity, keeping differentiation in mind, Common Core seeks to close that gap, but still falls a bit short of desired class reading lexile.

Duke (2001) studied the use of informational text in a first grade classroom. She found that classroom libraries in schools with a low socio-economical status (SES) had less than 2% of the text identified as informational. In high SES schools, the percentage was still dismally low. High SES classroom libraries had less than 4% of their books identified as informational. During this study, Duke also found that informational text was not often used during small group work, specifically during the time when students were trying to learn to read. In addition, even less time was given to informational text while instruction was taking place for English Language Learners. Duke (2004) argued for the use of informational text in an authentic way early in a student’s educational experience. She also argued that teaching methodologies for reading informational text was as important as exposing students to the text.

Including informational text in the classroom is just the beginning of the process for students and teachers. Students must be instructed on how to use a text that does not always require reading from cover to cover. Kern (2012) stated that one of the most important areas to teach is the process for synthesizing information. Her study suggested using “explicit instruction on synthesizing, interactive read alouds, and think-aloud mini-
lessons” (p. 72). Kern also suggested that capitalizing on student interest in real-world questions could create authentic, student-driven desire to learn.

Duke (2004) suggested having children in grades as early as first grade try a variety of methods and allow students to practice these in small groups. According to Duke, “research suggests that teaching even one comprehension strategy can lead to improved comprehension” (p. 42). Duke (2010) also stated that students who were using informational text in earlier grades would then show higher growth in comprehension. Part of motivating students to read informational text included allowing students to investigate topics in which they are interested. Allowing students to form questions based on their interests motivated them to investigate.

Ivey (2010) stated that people acquired knowledge with multiple uses of material. When a student used informational text to satisfy a curiosity, they had the chance to practice a skill that would help them create new knowledge. By providing students with authentic experiences using informational text teachers could prepare students to be ready to encounter much more difficult text as they moved through their elementary years and beyond.

To truly meet Common Core’s motto, “College and Career Readiness,” educators need to embrace informational text. And, in some cases, provide informational text to their students when the material districts adopt does not meet their needs. In order to truly prepare students for a future in a global society, teachers need to provide ample opportunity for authentic experience with this type of material.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Study design and data collection

The design of this study utilized two surveys. The first was a seven-question survey to assess the reading interests of students. The survey included five Likert-scale questions asking students’ about reading interests, and two multiple choice questions to assess students’ knowledge of the difference between “informational” and “narrative” text. Students did not identify themselves in any way, except to self-report gender. Surveys were collected as a group so as not to be identified as coming from Classroom One or Classroom Two.

After the initial survey in January, the researcher began to collect weekly reading logs from students in two separate 4th grade classrooms. The reading logs were part of a weekly classroom assignment that every student was required to complete even if they did not participate in the study. Students were required not only to report books they read each night for thirty minutes, but also to write a sentence to demonstrate their understanding of their nightly reading. The only identifying information on the log was a self-reported gender. The teachers collected the logs in order to make sure their students did the required work, but they did not report any individual student names.

During the last week in May, the reading interest survey was distributed again. This time the researcher checked to see if there was a marked difference in what students were interested in reading outside of the classroom. The same questions that were posted on the initial survey remained on the post-survey, including questions to assess students’
knowledge of the terms “informational” and “narrative”. The students once again did not identify themselves in any way other than gender.

**Research Questions**

The objective of this study is to determine if Common Core’s informational text requirements have an effect on student book choice for required after-school reading. The study also included gender to see if there was an increase in the selection of informational text for female students.

**Research Instrumentation**

On the student interest survey, students were asked about their preference for book choices outside of school and to rate their personal enjoyment of reading. Students were given a choice of 1, strongly disagree, to 4, strongly agree. Students were not provided with a “neutral” response. The survey also included two multiple-choice questions to test students’ knowledge of the meaning of each term. They were provided with four choices for each item (See Appendix D).

Students also completed weekly reading logs for Monday through Friday (See Appendix C). These reading logs provided space for students to write about their reading experiences Monday through Thursday. Students needed to write the title, a sentence that used a frame to guide them in writing complete sentences, and the amount of pages read. After the logs were collected, the researcher tallied each student’s reading choice. Books were described as “informational” or “narrative.” Any non-fiction book was labeled as “informational.” Fiction and poetry were labeled as “narrative.” The data was then further analyzed by student gender.
At the end of the study, students were again given the same survey they took earlier in the school year. The purpose of the survey was to assess if student choice and knowledge of informational text had changed after a full school year of the newly-implemented Common Core requirement of teaching 50% informational text and 50% narrative text.

Participants

Students who were included in this study were assigned to fourth grades in the Washington Unified School District at the East Garden Elementary (a pseudonym) school in West Sacramento, California. A total of 44 students began the study by completing weekly reading logs and two surveys. Students signed a Child Assent form, and their parents signed a Parental Consent form for permission to give the survey and collect weekly reading logs (Appendix A). Parents were given a letter describing the researcher’s objective in the study. Parents and students were aware that participation was not mandatory; however, as this is part of a normal classroom requirement, students would be expected to complete reading logs whether or not they participated in the study. All subjects were allowed the opportunity to designate their gender by filling out a blank gender box. Within the two classrooms, both teachers had a 43% English Language Learner population. Classroom One had a male to female ratio of 12 to 20 and Classroom Two had a male to female ratio of 15 to 17. Classroom One had five students on Individual Education Plans, and Classroom Two had three. The researcher was allowed access to these students at this school site because she is an employee of Washington Unified School District.
Setting

Washington Unified School District (WUSD) is located in West Sacramento, California, in Yolo County. WUSD consists of seven elementary schools, a charter school, a high school, an alternative high school, and adult education. The district serves 7,421 students (Washington Unified School District, 2015a).

East Garden Elementary is a Title 1 school in its third year of Program Improvement. It is located off West Capitol Avenue, the street that connects West Sacramento with Sacramento, once known as the historic Interstate 40. Four hundred, fifty-six students currently attend the school. Of the total enrollment number, 93% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Sixty-seven percent of its student population is Hispanic, and 55% are English Learners according to its 2013-2014 School Accountability Report Card (Washington Unified School District, 2015b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage of total enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: East Garden Elementary Students by Ethnicity
**Instrumentation**

The study began with a student reading interest survey. This survey was designed to both assess student interest and to verify if students understood the meaning of the term “informational text”. Students were asked to write only their gender on the top of the page. The survey was read aloud to the whole class with each child following along. Teachers did not give a definition for either of the terms on the survey. Students were asked to keep their answers to themselves just as they would on a test so that they would not influence each other’s decisions. However, in Classroom One, students sat in partner desks; while in Classroom Two students sat in groups from 5-7. While both teachers insisted that students report only their own answers, complete student honesty was on an honor system.

The reading logs that the students completed each day and submitted weekly were developed by the Scholastic Corporation (Stewart, 2014). Students indicated the title of the book they read, wrote a sentence that summarized their nightly reading, and indicated the amount of pages read. Because this assignment was completed after school, it could only be assumed that students were being honest in their responses. Teachers reviewed the logs to verify that students were actually reading the books they claimed to be. Teachers also reviewed weekly on-line comprehension exams to verify students were completing the books they claimed to be reading.

At the end of the school year, students once again took a reading interest survey. They were encouraged to answer honestly and were not asked to put their names on the survey. After a year of instruction requiring 50% informational text and 50% narrative,
the researcher wanted to determine if students increased their awareness of the definition of the term “informational text” and if they chose more informational text.

**Procedures**

Two separate classrooms were chosen; however, both classes received the same base instruction. Both teachers used identical plans, but taught each lesson in the manner they desired. Each classroom read a mixture of fictional novels, science, history, and Open Court Anthology selections. Informational text included biographies, pamphlets, classroom textbooks, and online resources. According to the adopted standards (CCCS) for 2014-2015, the classroom required 50% informational text and 50% narrative text. In these two classrooms, the average lesson from late November until late February included a week of narrative focus and then a two-week informational focus.

By late February, both teachers engaged the classes in reading novels that were supplemented with informational text. Students read *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (Dell, 1988) and *Hatchet* (Paulsen, 1987). Both teachers supplemented informational text with handouts and internet content. The information included facts about the animals found in both novels, the authors, the settings of both novels, and any factual information from which the novels were based. When students had finished with their readings, they were required to complete several writing assignments that included summaries, author biographies, and personal choice projects to illustrate their understanding of character development.

In addition, traditional subjects that rely heavily on informational text, such as social studies, included narrative supplements chosen by the teachers. During social
studies, both teachers read *By the Great Horn Spoon* (Fleischman, 1963), a narrative about a journey to California during the Gold Rush.

For the weekly reading log, teachers did not require students to read a specific type of book every week. The only requirement was that the books were on their reading level. The source of their individual reading levels came from testing that took place every six weeks via a Scholastic Reading website (About SRI, 2015). Teachers did not emphasize any specific genre for students to focus on weekly because the hypothesis of this study was that students would naturally gravitate to reading more informational text if they were exposed to more of it.

In class, teachers gave students access to the non-fiction leveled reading books that came with both the science and history programs. However, teachers in no way encouraged students to choose the readers. These books were alongside the non-fiction books in their classroom libraries. Teachers did not tell students that they needed to read a variety of books; the researcher was interested in student choice unaffected by teacher influence.

**Statistical Analysis**

The pre-survey was conducted January 5, 2015, prior to teachers focusing on the structure of informational text and how that text can complement narrative text. The post-survey was conducted on May 29, 2015, the final full week of school for students. The pre- and post-surveys were identical. The survey included non-parametrical data, such as student gender, which was self-selected by the individual. The survey contained a total of seven questions. Five of the questions were ordinal-based Likert scale
questions which asked about student interest in reading. The final two questions were multiple-choice to test the student’s understanding of the terms “narrative” and “ informational.” This data was considered non-parametrical. The gender of students and type of book qualifies as non-parametrical data because it is nominal, meaning it cannot “be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided” (Hoskin, 2014). A causal-comparative analysis was run to identify if gender and text preference correlated. A Chi-square was created to test if the observed data “distribution is expected if the variables are independent” (Ling, 2008).

The weekly reading log survey also included non-parametrical data. Narrative books were assigned the code “A,” informational texts were assigned the code “B,” and blank spaces were assigned a code of “C.” Male students were identified with a “1,” female students identified with a “2,” and students who did not respond to gender were marked with a “3.” A Mann Whitney-U statistical analysis was run to compare differences between the two independent groups. In this research, gender is the independent variable. Book choice is the dependent variable.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Forty-four fourth-grade students participated in a reading interest survey and submitted weekly reading logs. This chapter investigates the outcome of the data gained from these instruments.

Survey Results

The reading interest survey presented students with seven questions. Five questions used a Likert-scale to obtain reading opinions. The scores ranged from 1 “strongly disagree” to 4 “strongly agree.” There was no neutral score. The final two questions were multiple-choice to assess students’ knowledge of key terms (Appendix C). The Reading Interest Surveys were given in January and May. They contained the following frequencies for gender in the two classrooms participating in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>54.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Student Gender Pre and Post Survey Totals
Pre-Survey

Question 1: When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read narrative text.

The first question assessed students' interest in narrative text. This question set the baseline for students’ interest in narrative text. No male students reported a score of 1 (strongly disagree) to this question. Eleven male students scored this question with a 2 constituting 55%. Eight male students scored this question with a 3, or 44%. Finally, one male student reported a score of 4, or 5%.

Eight female students scored this same question with a 1, or 33.33% of the 24 students. Fourteen students chose response number 2, or 58.33% of the participants. Finally, six female students scored this question with a 3, or 25%. No female students reported a 4 as a response for this question.

Question 2: When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read informational text.

This question was to assess students’ interest in informational text. This question set the baseline for students’ interest in informational text. Five male students of the 20 students replying reported a score of 1 to this question, or a total of 25%. Eight male students scored this question with a 2, or 40%. Six male students scored this question with a 3, or 30%. Finally, one male student reported a score of 4, or 5%.
Three female students scored this same question with a 1, or 12.5%. Thirteen students chose response number 2, or 54.17% of the group. Seven female students scored this question with a 3, or 29.17%. Finally, one female student reported a 4 as an answer for this question, or 4.17% of the participants.

**Question 3: I enjoy reading non-fiction books the most.**

This question was created to check against the baseline set by question two assessing enjoyment of reading informational text. Four male students of the 20 students replying reported a score of 1 to this question, or a total of 20%. Four male students scored this question with a 2, or another 20%. Seven male students scored this question with a 3, or 35%. Finally, five male student reported a score of 4, or 25%.

Three female students scored this same question with a 1, or 12.5%. Twelve students chose response number 2, or 50% of the group. Five female students scored this question with a 3, or 20.83%. Finally, four female students reported a 4 as an answer for this question, or 16.67%.

**Question 4: I enjoy reading fiction books the most.**

This question was created to check against the baseline set by question one assessing enjoyment of reading narrative text. Six male students of the 20 students replying reported a score of 1 to this question, or a total of 30%. Ten male students scored this question with a 2, or another 50%. Two male students scored this question with a 3, or 10%. The final two male students reported a score of 4, another 10%.
Eight female students scored this same question with a 1, or 33.33%. Ten students chose response number 2, or 41.67% of the group. Four female students scored this question with a 3, or 16.67%. Finally, two female students reported a 4 as an answer for this item, or 8.33% of the total participants.

**Question 5: I enjoy reading.**

This question was created to measure student enjoyment of reading. Six male students of the 20 students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 30%. Seven male students of the 20 surveyed scored this question with a 2, or 35%. One male student scored this question with a 3, or 5%. One male student reported a score of 4, or 5%. Finally, one male student did not respond to this question.

Sixteen female students scored this same question with a 1, or 66.67%. Seven students chose response number 2, or 29.17% of the group. No female students scored this question with a 3. Finally, one female student reported a 4 as an answer for this question, or 4.17% of the participants.

**Question 6: Informational text is: 1) Non-Fiction, 2) Stories, 3) Fiction, 4) Realistic Fiction.**

This question was created to check the students understanding of the terms used. Four male students of the 20 students selected 1 Non-Fiction, or 20%. Nine male students of the students surveyed answered 2 Stories, 45%. Three male students answered with 3 Fiction, or 15%. Four male students chose the last response, 4 Realistic Fiction, or 20%. 
Four female students scored this same question with a 1, or 16.67%. Ten students chose response 2, or 41.67% of the group. Five female students selected 3, or 20.83%. Four students chose option 4, or 16.67%. Finally, one female student selected no response to this question.

**Question 7: Narrative text is: 1) Stories, 2) Science, 3) Math, 4) Social Studies.**

This question was created to check the students understanding of the terms used. Ten male students of the 20 students chose 1 Stories, or 50%. Six male students of the students surveyed answered 2 Science, 30%. One male student answered with 3 Math, or 5%. Three male students chose the last response, 4 Social Studies, or 15%.

Seventeen female students scored this same question with a 1, or 70.83%. Two students chose response 2, or 8.33% of the group. One female student selected 3, or 4.17%. Four students chose option 4, or 16.67%.

Findings from the initial reading interest survey showed that students began this study with a stronger understanding of what the term “narrative text” meant than “informational text.” Students did not select an academic definition for the term “informational.” It was also very apparent that students did not enjoy reading outside of school. Both groups of students in Classroom One and Two did not appear to find any type of reading as enjoyable. The majority of the students responded that they did not enjoy reading either informational text or narrative text. Findings from the initial survey indicated there was room for student growth in both understanding of terms and learning
to enjoy reading. Students began the study with a strong bias against reading for enjoyment.

The pre-survey was analyzed using SPSS. Using the Mann-Whitney U-test (Pallant, 2001), the responses show that there was no statistically significant difference, greater than 0.05 between gender and reading preference, prior to teachers including multiple sources of informational text cross-circularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>167.00</td>
<td>224.00</td>
<td>205.50</td>
<td>240.00</td>
<td>193.00</td>
<td>222.50</td>
<td>201.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>377.00</td>
<td>524.00</td>
<td>415.50</td>
<td>540.00</td>
<td>383.00</td>
<td>432.50</td>
<td>501.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.99</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.847</td>
<td>0.298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U Pre-Survey Results

Post-Survey

The data was analyzed using SPSS. The frequency of the results presented by gender was analyzed first. The Chi Square indicated there was no significant difference between male and female on pre or post survey results $\chi^2 (1, N=44) = 0.36$, $p = 0.55$.

From these results, there is no relationship between gender and reading preference after teachers included multiple sources of informational text cross-circularly.
| Question 1: When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read narrative text.

Five students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 25%. Six male students scored this question with a 2, or 33%. Eight male students scored this question with a 3, or 44%. Finally, four male students reported a score of 4, or 5%.

Six female students scored this same question with a 1, or 25%. Fourteen students chose response number 2, or 58.33%. Finally, four female students scored this question with a 3, or 16.67%. No female students reported a 4 as an answer for this question.

| Question 2: When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read informational text.

Five male students of the 20 students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 25%. Twelve male students scored this question with a 2, or 60%. Three male students... |
scored this question with a 3, or 15%. No male students chose a 4 as an answer to this question.

Five female students scored this same question with a 1, or 20.83%. Thirteen students chose response number 2, or 54.17%. Four female student scored this question with a 3, or 16.67%. One female student reported a 4 as an answer for this question, or 4.17%. Finally, one female student did not respond to this question.

**Question 3: I enjoy reading non-fiction books the most.**

This question was created to check for understanding of question two assessing students’ enjoyment of reading informational text. Four male students of the 20 students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 20%. Eleven male students scored this question with a 2, or 55%. Three male students scored this question with a 3, or 15%. Finally, two male students reported a score of 4, or 10%.

Eight female students scored this same question with a 1, or 33.33%. Six students chose response number 2, or 25%. Eight female students scored this question with a 3, or 33.33%. Finally, two female students reported a 4 as an answer for this question, or 8.33%.

**Question 4: I enjoy reading fiction books the most.**

This question was also created to check for understanding of question 1 - assessing enjoyment of reading narrative text. Nine male students of the 20 students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 45%. Six male students scored this question
with a 2, or 30%. Three male students scored this question with a 3, or 15%. The final two male student reported a score of 4, or 10%.

Ten female students scored this same question with a 1, or 41.67%. Nine students chose response number 2, or 37.5%. Three female students scored this question with a 3, or 12.5%. Finally, two female students reported a 4 as a response for this question, or 8.33%.

**Question 5: I enjoy reading.**

This question was created to measure students’ enjoyment of reading. Twelve male students of the 20 students reported a score of 1 to this question, or 60%. Six male students of the 20 surveyed scored this question with a 2, or 30%. One male student scored this question with a 3, or 5%. One male student reported a score of 4, or 5%.

Sixteen female students scored this same question with a 1, or 66.67%. Six students chose response number 2, or 25%. One female student scored this question with a 3, or 4.17%. Finally, one female student reported a 4 as a response for this question, or 4.17%.

**Question 6: Informational text is: 1) Non-Fiction, 2) Stories, 3) Fiction, 4) Realistic Fiction.**

Seven male students of the 20 students replying with 1 Non-Fiction, or 35%. Five male students answered 2 Stories, or 25%. Two male students answered with 3 Fiction, or 10%. Six male students chose the last response 4 Realistic Fiction, or 30%.
Fifteen female students scored this same question with 1, or 62.5%. Four students chose response 2, or 16.67%. One female student selected 3, or 4.17%. Four students chose option 4, or 16.67%.

**Question 7: Narrative text is: 1) Stories, 2) Science, 3) Math, 4) Social Studies.**

Thirteen male students of the 20 students replying with 1 Stories, or 65%. One male students answered 2 Science, or 5% of the class. One male students answered 3 Math, or 5%. Six male students chose the last response, 4 Social Studies, or 30%.

Nineteen female students scored this same question with 1, or 79.17%. Two students chose response 2, or 8.33%. No female students selected 3. Three students chose option 4, or 12.5%.

**Reading Logs**

Reading logs were collected weekly. The data were then disseminated into daily and monthly tallies. Narrative text was coded with a number 1, informational text was coded with a 2, and a student who gave no response was coded with a 3. Data were totaled and a table of frequencies was created. The hypothesis was that when teachers used the California Common Core State Standards (CCCSS) for English Language Arts, female students would choose more informational text for their outside reading choices than the males. Over the course of five months, female students read 805 narrative texts and 83 informational texts (Table 6). Male students read 838 narrative texts and 93 informational texts. Over the course of five months, informational text constituted 10.45% of all the recorded titles. For female students, the total of informational text read
was 83, which was 9.35%. Male students read a total of 93 informational books, which was 9.99% of their total 931 books. Finally, students who chose not to report gender read a total of 181 books, informational text represented 18.23% of their book choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Informational</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,791</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Student Book Choice Totals

Students overwhelmingly read narrative text during the course of the study. Students did not increase their reading of informational text outside of class. Male students read more informational text than female students over the course of the study. They also read more narrative text than female students overall.
Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there is a correlation between text choice, the California State Common Core Standards’ (CCCS) requirement for informational text, and gender. A total of 44 students took part in this study, all 4th grade students at East Garden Elementary School in West Sacramento. Both teachers taught, with fidelity, the requirement of the CCCS to increase informational text to 50% and decrease narrative text to 50%, a change from what students experienced in 3rd grade. In the prior grade, there was no stated requirement for use of narrative or informational text. Students took a reading interest survey in January and again in May. During the course of the study, daily reading logs were collected at the end of each week, and data were calculated to determine what type of books students read overall. The hypothesis of this study is that female students would increase their reading of informational text over the course of the school year because they are exposed to more of it in-class.

Conclusions

As the study began, the main question the researcher wanted to investigate was: “Does increasing student reading of information text in-class effect female student book selection for reading outside of school?” As the study progressed, and data were analyzed, the findings showed that an increase of informational text reading in-class does not correlate to an increase of informational text reading outside of school. This was true for both male and female students.
In January, 2015, thirty-three students responded to the questions assessing preference of reading narrative text with a “disagree.” Fifteen students agreed with this statement. When this study began, it was expected this number would be much higher for reading narrative. Prior to fourth grade, students used Open Court Reading Anthology, and the majority of the English Language Arts (ELA) instruction time was devoted to reading narrative text.

In the post survey, thirty-one students responded to this question with a “disagree.” Sixteen students agreed with this statement. There was little growth in this section. Students did not increase their enjoyment of reading narrative text even with their teachers’ supplementing of classroom material with narrative text.

As the study began, 29 students disagreed with the statement that they enjoy reading informational text. Fifteen students agreed with this statement. This was an expected result. Prior to their fourth-grade year, students did not use informational text as a major component of their English Language Arts program. It was expected for students to have very little working knowledge of the term or the genre.

At the end of the survey, much stronger results were expected than what occurred. Repeatedly, students stated in class that they enjoyed reading the informational readers that accompanied the social science program. Post-study, it was expected to see a large growth in enjoyment of reading of informational text. However, the results indicated
otherwise. Thirty-five students disagreed with this statement. More students disagreed
with this statement in May than they did in January. Eight students agreed with this
statement.

Pre and post survey: Reading Enjoyment

In the beginning of this study the researcher expected low results for this question.
Student reading log returns in the class began low, often resulting in students having to
make up reading logs during their recess as a consequence for not turning in homework.
In January, 36 students did not enjoy reading. Only three students agreed with this
statement. Beginning with this baseline, the hope was that reading enjoyment would
grow. In May, the results were worse than expected. Forty students disagreed with this
statement. Four students agreed with that statement. Trying to encourage students’ to
read was not received well by the class. It was utterly disappointing to see this result.
Very different results were expected than what were obtained. These were not the results
the researcher was looking for, it was hoped that by introducing students to new text
types in combination with a full novel students would find enjoyment in reading.

While pre and post surveys did not report statistical differences, the reading logs
did show there was a difference in reading choices between gender and book choice.
Overall, male students read more informational texts, eleven more over the five months
than female students. They also read more narrative texts, which totaled 838 books
compared with the female students who read 805. The male students were outnumbered
by the female students, so it can by assumed that some of the female students’ data falls
under the group of students who gave no response for their gender. This group of students read 148 narrative texts and 33 informational texts. The data suggests that what previous literature suggests, female students read less informational text than male students.

**Recommendations**

In future studies, a recommendation is for a larger sample for the study. In a Title One school, students often enroll and unenroll rapidly. By using two or three schools, a larger sample can be created, and student mobility would not be an issue that could change the outcome of a study. While the fourth grade class did not have a high mobility rate, many primary grades had rapid changes in student population that could influence how they felt about reading overall.

In addition, future researchers should include a parent night. Discussing with parents the requirements of the Common Core, and its informational text requirement, may encourage parents to talk with their children about book choices and be more conscious of how they are completing reading logs.

Many of the student reading logs received were often blank for many days during any given week, yet parents had signed them stating they reviewed their children’s’ reading logs. Having this information translated into Spanish as well would be helpful. Reading logs at East Garden were created only in English. If parents are relying on their children to translate, there is no guarantee that the children are being honest in what they report to their parents.
To increase student enjoyment of reading, teachers could also introduce a book recommendation program in their classrooms. Reading can be a social event for students. Simpson (1996) found that students enjoyed recommending books to one another, often focusing their discussions on character development. They also enjoyed finding and recommending series. Dedicating weekly time for students to discuss what they are reading and why they enjoy it may increase the overall reading enjoyment of the class. At East Garden, students did not often discuss what they were reading or why they enjoyed it. Students also received very little guidance on how to choose a book. Students would often look at the picture on the cover to decide if the book was something they wanted to read. Direct instruction on how to choose a book, how to abandon a book, and how to look for similar books based on enjoyment of past reading could also increase student enjoyment of reading.

Students did not grow in their understanding of the terms “informational” and “narrative” during the course of this study. Perhaps using a unit in which students create their own informational text would result in stronger understanding of the terms. By having students write their own informational text, and including those texts in the classroom library for future reference, students could take ownership of the meaning of these terms.

Finally, a recommendation is for teachers to include a silent reading period that challenges to students to read a variety of genres. By requiring students to read a variety of material in class, this could increase the choices the students make after school. Many students who participated in the study never changed the type of book they were reading.
While the researcher did not try to recommend books to avoid bias, there was also no requirement to read outside of 30 minutes a day.

It is imperative that students are introduced to informational text early in their educational careers. The California Common Core State Standards Framework stresses the importance of student familiarity with this type of text. Without the exposure to informational text, students will struggle in high school and become less likely to attend college. In a global society, a student needs to be able to access a variety of forms of text or risk severely limiting themselves in the job market.
Appendix A

Parent Consent/Child Assent

INFORMED CONSENT

Parent/Legal Guardian

Common Core and Student Reading Choice

Your child is invited to participate in a research study which will involve analyzing reading choices outside of school. My name is Deanna Trujillo-Chrisman, and I am a student at California State University, Sacramento, College of Education. Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he or she is in the 4th grade.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the affect of increasing informational text in a classroom setting as required by California Common Core State Standards. If you decide to allow your child to participate, I will use their reading logs for this study. His or her participation in this study will last the rest of the school year.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at 916-375-7720, or email dtrujillochrisman@wusd.k12.ca.us. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

Your child’s participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to allow him or her to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you are free to discontinue his or her participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to your child’s participation, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child’s participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep.

Signature                                            Date

________________________ __________________________
CONSENSUIMIENTO INFORMADO
padre/tutor legal
núcleo común y lectura a los estudiantes elegir

El niño es invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación que se analizarán opciones lectura fuera de la escuela. Mi nombre es Deanna Trujillo-Chrisman, y soy un estudiante en la Universidad Estatal de California, Sacramento, Facultad de Educación. Su hijo fue seleccionado como posible participante en este estudio debido a que él o ella está en el 4o grado.

El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar el efecto de aumentar texto informativo en el salón de clase como de las normas básicas del Estado común. Si decide permitir que su hijo a participar, así que voy a utilizar sus registros de lectura para este estudio. Su participación en este estudio durará el resto del año escolar.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de la investigación en cualquier momento, por favor llámeme al 916-375-7720, o por correo electrónico drujillochrisman@wusd.k12.ca.us. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos del niño como un participante en un proyecto de investigación, por favor llame a la Oficina de Investigaciones, Universidad del Estado de California, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, o por correo electrónico irb@csus.edu.

Toda la información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que se pueden identificar con su niño(a) permanecerá confidencial y será revelada solamente con su permiso. Los datos obtenidos se mantiene en un lugar seguro, bajo llave y ubicación serán destruidos después de un período de tres años una vez finalizado el estudio.

La participación del niño es totalmente voluntaria y su decisión si desea o no que él o ella puedan participar, no implican sanción o pérdida de beneficios a los que él o ella tiene derecho. Si usted decide que su niño puede participar, libre de suspender su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización ni pérdida de beneficios a los que él o ella tiene derecho.

Su firma abajo indica que usted ha leído y entendido la información proporcionada arriba, que aceptamos su participación del niño, que usted podrá retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y descontinuar su participación del niño en cualquier momento sin penalización ni pérdida de beneficios a los que él o ella tiene derecho, que recibirá una copia de este formulario, y que no renuncia a cualquier reclamo legal, derechos o acciones.

Se le ofrecerá una copia de este formulario firmado a conservar.

Signature                                            Date

________________________ ___________________________
CHILD ASSENT FORM
Common Core and Student Reading Choice

I am interested in finding out how Common Core affects your reading choices after school. I would like you to turn in your reading log and allow me to collect the type of book you are reading.

If you do want to try it, please sign your name on the line below. Your parent(s) have already told us that it is alright with them if you want to participate. Remember, you don't have to. Reading Logs will be due weekly regardless of participation.

Signed: __________________________

Date: ________________
# Appendix B

### Weekly Reading Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LEXILE</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>PARENT INITIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Pg. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Pg. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Pg. 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Pg. 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Pg. 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use a different frame each day to respond to your reading. Avoid using a frame more than once each week.**

1. Three things I learned are that _______ and _______.
2. An interesting description is on page ______. The author wrote, "______.
3. The best part of this section was _______ because _______.
4. I want to know more about _______ because _______.
5. I can relate to _______ (a character) because _______.
6. The setting is interesting because _______.
7. The part when _______ reminds me of _______.
8. I predict _______ will happen when _______.
9. I thought these pages were _______ (adjective) because _______.
10. (a character) surprised me when (he/she/it) _______.
11. Write an IF Statement: Identify (Title & Author) Verb (explains, describes). Finish your thought (main idea of the story).
Appendix C

Pre and Post Reading Interest Survey

When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read narrative text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I choose a book for reading outside of school, I prefer to read informational text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I enjoy reading non-fiction books the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I enjoy reading fiction books the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I enjoy reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informational text is

a) Non-fiction
b) Stories
c) Fiction
d) Realistic Fiction
Narrative text is

a) Stories
b) Science
c) Math
d) Social Studies
REFERENCES


