Modes of Reading in the Elementary Classroom

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Modes of Reading in the Elementary Classroom

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The College at Brockport SUNY
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Abstract

This research study explores the impact of multiple text modes on student reading comprehension and literacy development in a 5th grade classroom. The research question was as follows: “How would different modes of text impact student reading comprehension?” Twenty 5th grade students took part in this study and four reading modes were explored: teacher read aloud, independent reading with a book, book on CD, and independent reading with a Nook.

Data were collected over a period of four weeks through observations, surveys, comprehension checks, summaries, tracks, and discussion. Results from the data showed that students had a positive response to read alouds. Secondly, conversation surrounding a text added to understanding. A third finding revealed comprehension was dependent on assessment type. Finally, reading identity was different for all students. These findings led to two conclusions: discussion enhances student understanding, and multiple text modes and assessments meet diverse learning styles. The research was strongly linked to Howard Gardner’s (1983) research on the multiple intelligences. The study also includes implications for students and teachers.

**Keywords:** assessment, comprehension, multiple intelligences, reading mode
Introduction

“Why is it important to understand what we read?” I asked my class of 5th graders one December morning. “It helps us to know things,” one student replied, while another student chimed in; “If I don’t understand a book that I’m reading, I probably won’t do well on the reading quiz.” These are the words of 5th grade students who are continually being assessed on their reading and listening comprehension. State mandates require our students to know how to read and listen across content areas as stated in the College and Career Anchor Standards of the Common Core (Logue, 2012). Evidence from national reading tests, however, show our students are ill prepared in comprehension (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015)

Topic and Research Problem

Comprehension, which has been defined as “the capacity for understanding fully” by Merriam-Webster Dictionary (“Comprehension,” 2015) is critical for meeting the needs of everyday life as well as being successful academically (Alharbi, 2015; Jones & Brown, 2011). In the late 1990’s, The National Reading Panel reviewed the research on how children learn to read and determined five key areas of instruction crucial for the reading classroom: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, guided oral reading, vocabulary, and comprehension (NAEP, 2015). Unfortunately, the most recent statistics published by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal our students struggle with reading comprehension. According to NAEP results, 36% of 4th graders and 34% of the nation’s 6th graders scored at or above the proficient achievement level in 2015 with proficient defined as “able to integrate and interpret texts and apply their understanding of the text to draw conclusions and make evaluations” (NAEP, 2015). The nation’s report card has identified the problem of poor comprehension among our students.
Since comprehension is essential for academic success, it is important that this problem be addressed.

The 21st century classroom has access to a variety of teaching tools to meet the literacy needs of all students, yet when considering the presentation of text, the reading mode is typically weighted towards traditional print-based text (Harris, 2011). Studies show that students may find other reading formats more engaging (Wright, Fugett, & Caputa, 2013) and students should be given opportunities to explore these formats. The problem of this study is that many classrooms do not acknowledge the different modes of reading and tend to rely heavily on printed text. A reading mode can be defined as any method or device that allows for reading or listening comprehension to take place. Alternate modes of reading such as electronic text, teacher read-aloud, and book on CD need to be explored. This study explores how the mode of reading impacts the way that students comprehend a text.

**Rationale**

Research shows that students are falling short in the area of comprehension (NAEP, 2015; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Educators are relying on traditional reading methods such as print-based text for accessing comprehension (Harris, 2011; Prensky, 2005), meanwhile, technology is booming (Kerr & Symons, 2006; Prensky, 2005; Wright et al., 2013). The Common Core encourages the implementation of technology in the classroom stating that, “Students [should] employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use” (Logue, 2012). The Common Core has shown the integration and understanding of technology and its impact on literacy to be crucial for college and career readiness. Given the permeation of technology throughout the Common Core, it is important to incorporate this technology into classroom instruction (Grimshaw,
Dungworth, McKnight, & Morris, 2007; Kerr & Symons, 2006; Wright et al., 2013). Moreover, students’ interest in the multimodal approach to learning with technology gives rationale to exploring it further (Harris, 2011; Jones & Brown, 2011; Wright et al., 2013).

Moreover, students’ interest in the multimodal approach to learning with technology gives rationale to exploring it further (Harris, 2011; Jones & Brown, 2011; Wright et al., 2013).

Previous research has examined digital print and traditional text, however the research has only compared reading comprehension within these two modes. Even with the integration of technology, the evidence shows that technology is not doing enough to improve comprehension (Grimshaw et al., 2007; Kerr & Symons, 2006; Wright et al., 2013). There is a need to explore technology because research shows students are interested in the multimodal approach, however research shows that even with technology, students are still falling short in the area of comprehension. We must find the right balance of instruction to engage students and ultimately increase comprehension.

This study is important because research has been conducted regarding reading comprehension and the impact on students’ literacy understanding, however no study has compared the four reading modes that this study will address: teacher read-aloud, independent reading from a printed-text, book on CD, and reading from a Nook. As a teacher, this study is important to me because it may give me insight as to what reading mode my students prefer and what mode best supports their comprehension. A continuous goal I have for my students is to help further understanding and foster a love for reading. This study is important as it helps me as I work toward this goal.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of multiple text modes on student reading comprehension and literacy development in a 5th grade classroom. Through the implementation of four different reading modes during a novel study, it was my goal to measure
how each mode impacted student reading comprehension. In addition, my intention was to observe student interactions with the text and gain a sense of which reading mode was preferred. As seen through Howard Gardner’s (1983) study of the multiple intelligences, students differ in the way that they learn. By exploring different modes of reading, more options for reading can be made available for students. With new reading modes available, depth of comprehension may increase. The following research serves as a means to advance my own teaching abilities, as well as give other teachers ideas for working with their own students.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this capstone project were as follows: How do different modes of text impact student reading comprehension? How do students comprehend when silently reading a digital text? What about when silently reading a printed text? Similarly, what is the impact of hearing the text read aloud versus reading silently as an individual? What if the text was a recording and no teacher was present in the front of the classroom to guide students’ understanding? Finally, how do students respond to the opportunity of having different reading modes available and what preferences exist? These were questions that were explored in the study that follows.
Literature Review

Introduction

In this study of reading modes, a few researchers have influenced the way I view reading in the elementary classroom. My study involved an exploration of research surrounding technology, student engagement, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and learning styles. This section of the paper outlines the literature relevant to the topic of modes of reading. I found four themes in the literature: technology, reading mode and comprehension, and matching learning style to instructional mode.

A Closer Look at Technology

Technology in the classroom. Technology has boomed in recent years (Kerr & Symons, 2006), yet while some educators have embraced the digital classroom, others appear to “still have one foot in the past” (Prensky, 2005, p. 9). Prensky (2005) has titled these educators “digital immigrants” due to their experience in the pre-digital age. What might come more easily to a student born into the digital world is very difficult for a “digital immigrant,” thus restricting educators’ desire to integrate technology into the classroom. Turbill and Murray (2006) believe current teachers view and are using technology as something to be used during free time or something to be awarded to students when all assignments have been finished.

The Horizon Report is an annual publication that identifies emerging technologies that may have an impact on education. According to the report, “Schools are still using materials developed to teach the students of decades ago, but today’s students are actually very different in the ways they think and work. Schools need to adapt to current student needs and identify new learning models that are engaging to younger generations” (New Media Consortium, 2006, p. 10). Larson (2008) believes teachers need to make the classroom, and education as a whole,
more approachable to today’s learners. The changing technologies need to be available and used in the classroom. Although some literacy teachers use technology in their day to day personal and professional lives, many are still hesitant to incorporate technology into the classroom (Larson, 2008). Educators should be taught how to integrate technology, including e-books, within the elementary classroom.

**Student engagement surrounding technology.** Children today are born into a generation adept at electronic use (Wright et al., 2013). Fluent in computers, the Internet, video games, and handheld devices, more than ever before, digital technology developments are present in our students’ lives. It seems our students’ brains are wired to operate electric devices (Wright et al., 2013). In fact, Mark Prensky (2005) has coined the term “digital natives” to refer to 21st century students who were born into the technology age (p. 9). Students’ access and knowledge of technology gives even more reason to have it in the classroom.

Student readers are engaged by the interactive features of technology (Harris, 2011; Jones & Brown, 2011; Wright et al., 2013). A study by Jones and Brown (Jones & Brown, 2011) measured reading engagement with twenty-two 3rd grade students. Each student read one traditional print text and two e-book titles. After reading, students completed a satisfaction survey. Findings showed no particular preference for reading texts in either mode, however students commented that they enjoyed the “pop-up definitions and pronunciations of words, automatic page turning, and the option of read-aloud narration” as well as the wide selection of texts available on the e-reader (p. 5). Similarly, Wright et al. (2013) found that students gave more attention to reading resources when digital text mode was being used. Participants gave preference to the iPad due to the interaction, use of resources, and options available for reading (i.e.: contrast screen, bookmark, etc.). Depending on the type of e-book, different features such
as word pronunciation and dictionary use, animations, narration, note-taking, and highlighting are at the students’ fingertips. The technology and interactive interface significantly enhances student engagement while screen reading.

**Reading Mode and Comprehension**

**Traditional text-print versus digital text.** Previous research has shown reading comprehension to be relatively unchanged when comparing traditional print and digital text. Wright et al. (2013) conducted a study that investigated print verses digital text with three second grade females. The focus of the study investigated whether the multimodal options offered through e-books (animation, highlighting, dictionary, thesaurus, word-pronunciation, etc.) impacted overall comprehension. Reading resources such as dictionary, thesaurus, and even asking the researcher were available to participants while reading the text on paper and access to digital resources were enabled on the iPad. Participants utilized the resources for the electronic format, but students did not make use of the resources when reading the paper text. Even with the available resources, findings showed that comprehension was the same between the print and digital text reading mode.

Similarly, Grimshaw et al. (2007) explored the impact of electronic and printed text presentation on student reading comprehension and recall with 132 participants in Great Britain. Excerpts from two different gender and age appropriate storybooks were selected for the study. Children were split into two groups for the two different storybooks and were asked to read a printed version, electronic version, or CD-ROM version with narration or without. Students worked independently in a quiet room at their school and then given a 15 question quiz which included multiple choice, retrieval and inference-type questions, and ‘find and copy’ questions (Grimshaw et al., 2007). Findings from the study showed the reading of the electronic version to
take a longer time (rate) than the printed version, however, like Wright et al. (2013), there was little difference in comprehension between the two reading modes.

Finally, Kerr and Symons (2006) studied computer presentation of text and traditional print format with two expository texts. Sixty 5th grade students were observed in individual settings and asked to read one traditional print text and another text on the computer. After reading, participants were given a distracter activity and then asked to recall (free and cued) whatever they could from the text. Participants took a seven question comprehension quiz as a second assessment. The findings showed that students recalled more when they read from a computer, but when time was considered, computer reading resulted in lower comprehension.

Numerous studies demonstrate that there is not a significant difference in comprehension for print and digital text presentation (Connell, Bayliss, & Farmer, 2012; Grimshaw et al., 2007; Jones & Brown, 2011; Kerr & Symons, 2006; Wright et al., 2013), however reading can be presented in alternate modes. The present study seeks to explore not only e-readers and traditional text, but also teacher read aloud and a book on CD.

**Listening versus silent reading.** Listening comprehension is another form of comprehension and an alternate reading mode available in the classroom. Increased motivation and improved listening skills are among multiple reasons classroom teachers use read-aloud practices in the classroom (Lennox, 2013). Reading aloud to students promotes active listening as well as vocabulary development and other literacy skills. Arial and Albright (2006) comment, “Listening to teachers read is a pleasurable activity for students and leads to more positive attitudes toward reading” (p. 70). Students enjoy the read-aloud experience and may be able to use the experience to further their reading engagement and comprehension.
Daniel and Woody (2010) conducted a study with 48 college students who listened to a podcast or read from traditional text as part of a course requirement. Participants were randomly assigned to read an article silently or listen to the article through podcast. After listening or silent reading the text, participants shared their interest in using the reading mode and took a multiple choice quiz to assess their comprehension. Although the enjoyment of the podcast was higher due to the podcast’s flexible usability, students’ understanding of the text was lower when listening on podcast than the students who read in the silent reading mode. The present study will explore the listening reading mode further by assessing student comprehension through teacher read aloud and a book on CD.

**Matching Learning Style to Instructional Mode**

According to Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, and Bjork (2008), the term *learning styles* refers to “the concept that individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them” (p. 105). The research on learning styles that has been uncovered in the last 25 years has brought increased attention to the fact that students learn differently in the classroom. What works for one student may not work for every student. Ertem (2013) believes accounting for students’ individual differences by exploring reading mode may help student comprehension and engagement related to literacy. Perhaps by engaging students through different senses and providing a variety of conditions, students will have more opportunities for learning.

Psychologist Howard Gardner (1983) coined the term “multiple intelligences.” Gardner believes students learn in different ways. There is the linguistic learner, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, naturalist, and bodily-kinesthetic. Finally, there are interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. By integrating these intelligences into the classroom, teachers can
increase the possibilities for student success. Many teachers engage these intelligences through the use of centers in the classroom, and reading is no different than any other subject. Multiple approaches to viewing text need to be explored by teachers so the right tool can be used with each student (Wright et al., 2013). All readers are different in how they take in literature and how they comprehend.

In a study of two 5th grade students, Ikpeze (2012) found increased technology available in the classroom brought about further engagement and participation in classroom activities. After observing classroom instruction and the students’ responses to the instruction, Ikpeze introduced activities that more closely matched her two participants’ interests. The traditional approach to education did not resonate with the students’ learning styles and technology was introduced. With technology a part of instruction and curriculum, the two students were more engaged. Moreover, Ikpeze (2012) says, “Children need to be given the opportunity to employ a variety of ways of knowing, telling, designing, making texts, and engaging in meaningful dialogue in relation to their preferred modes and dispositions for learning” (p. 20). Ikpeze’s findings give reason to adjust classroom instruction to meet the learning needs of all students.

On the other hand, Rogowsky, Calhoun and Tallal (2015) found little evidence that learning style had any impact on comprehension when working with college educated participants ages 25 – 40. Participants completed an online learning preference inventory to begin the study and then completed a listening and reading aptitude test. This classified the participants into two distinct learning styles: auditory learners or visual word learners. The auditory learners listened to an audiobook while the visual learners read the same passage as an e-text. A 48 question multiple choice test was given after the reading, however the results of the
study showed little difference between learning style preference (auditory or visual learner) and instructional method (audiobook or e-text).

**Summary**

Although research surrounding several different reading modes has been explored, the four modes included in this study have not been assessed together. The research has shown that one reading mode in isolation has not improved reading comprehension, but what if the reading modes were altered to meet all students’ learning styles and provide variation to the reading process? The previously stated research has provided background for the present study and given rationale that more research is needed.
Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how reading mode impacts student comprehension and literacy development. Through data collection and analysis, I explored students’ perceptions of reading mode and if there is a mode preference. This section of the paper outlines the methods I’ve used to conduct my research study.

Participants

Twenty students took part in this study: 13 females and 7 males. As suggested by Clark and Creswell (2015), the participants in this study were purposefully selected due to their proficiency in reading and their common experiences with the study’s central focus; comprehension and literacy development. The age range was from 10 to 11 years old. Participants were all from middle socioeconomic status families with English as the primary language spoken in the home. There were no expected risks to the participants in this study as the study took place within the current school curriculum and during normal school hours.

Setting

This qualitative study was conducted in a small private school located in western New York. The school includes a diverse student body whose acceptance into the classroom requires an application and interview with the administration. The study took place in a 5th grade classroom that includes student desks, a quiet reading nook with organized book boxes, a circular table for 1 on 1 instruction in the front of the room, and another table in the back for teacher-led small group lessons. A SMART Board on the front wall gives students an audio-visual learning experience. As a private Christian school, the school is not restricted by the New York Common Core State Standards (CCSS) thus various resources such as supplemental texts and worksheets are often used
in the 5th grade literacy curriculum. Although CCSS were observed in this study, fulfilling the standards were not the study’s sole purpose.

**Positionality**

I graduated from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2010 with a Bachelors of Arts in Elementary Education. After graduating I began my first teaching job in a 5th grade private school classroom in western New York. Following four years of teaching experience, I began my graduate education in Literacy Education B-12 at The College at Brockport, State University of New York. I currently work full time as a 5th grade teacher therefore I am the primary teacher as well as a participant-observer in this study. As an educator, I am passionate about guiding learners to strengthen their literacy skills as literacy is the foundation of learning (Ertem, 2013). My hope as a teacher is to inspire my students to be active participants in the world around them.

**Methods of Data Collection**

This qualitative study included a variety of methods for data collection to triangulate the data. Clark and Creswell (2015) explain a qualitative study as “research conducted to explore research problems by collecting text and image data that reflect participants’ views about the research problem” (Clark & Creswell, 2015). Similarly, the authors encourage triangulation as a way to corroborate the research. Shagoury and Power (2012) suggest observations, notes, surveys and assessments as methods of data collection during research. For this study, assessments were varied to bring validity to the research study and give students alternate ways to express their comprehension.

**Observational notes.** Shagoury and Power (2012) suggest observational notes to capture what is seen and heard “in the midst” of the research as well as “after the fact” (p. 121).
Throughout the study I kept an anecdotal note sheet to record daily observations of students’ interactions with the different modes of reading. I also kept observational notes during whole-group discussion. I hoped to record individual student responses surrounding reading mode preference, enjoyment, and overall experience. Similarly, notes were kept to evaluate student comprehension of text.

**Surveys.** Surveys were administered to the entire class after reading chapter eight of the text. I waited until halfway through the text to give the survey so students had the opportunity to interact with each of the four reading modes at least two times. Surveys were given anonymously and color-coded for students who did not participate in the study. The purpose of the survey was to find out about students’ reading enjoyment, mode preference, and future considerations such as reading mode for their next text.

**Comprehension checks.** A total of eight comprehension checks were given throughout the study; two for each reading mode. Checks were administered immediately following the specific reading mode to assess student comprehension of the chapter. Each comprehension check included four questions, all free response. Three literal questions assessed comprehension about the text and one inferential question asked students to think beyond the text in their response. Students worked independently at their seats or around the room to complete each check and were not allowed to look back at the text while completing the comprehension check. After finishing the book, students took a ten question Accelerated Reader (Renaissance Learning, 2015) comprehension quiz to assess comprehension of the entire book (See Appendix B).

**Summaries.** After reading chapters five, six, seven, and eight, students responded by writing a summary about the chapter’s main events, characters, and setting using complete sentences. All summaries were completed on a lined piece of paper in the classroom at the
students’ individual desks. Prior to the research study, students learned to use the “somebody wanted but so then” (SWBST) summary writing strategy. The strategy helped students identify who wanted something, what conflict arose, and how it was resolved. Students could use this strategy to write their summary or could write freely, however, students were told to consider the chapter title when writing. Summaries were assessed based on relevance and detail. Similar to the comprehension checks, students completed their summaries either in their seat or around the room and were not allowed to look back at the text while completing the assessment.

**Tracks and discussion.** Ariail and Albright (2006) believe, “Whole-class discussion can be a highly effective means of encouraging students’ response to literature… Students can benefit in numerous ways from the open exchange of ideas” (p. 82). Following this suggestion, five discussions took place after reading chapters thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen of the text. Additionally, each day before reading, the class would discuss what had happened in the chapter before to clarify main events, character development, and vocabulary. Students were given a one-page “tracks” paper while reading or listening. Tracks are evidences of a readers thinking first introduced by Harvey and Goudvis (2007) to “help the reader monitor comprehension and enhance understanding” (p. 28). Students learned to make tracks at the beginning of the school year to support outward thinking and were encouraged to write connections, questions, comments, inferences, or anything else that they might have been thinking while reading the text. With tracks in hand, students could bring his or her thoughts to our whole-class discussion. Discussion began with students talking in small groups with the intention of every student having the opportunity to share out. Discussion was then brought to the whole group and students were assessed based on involvement and depth of thinking.
Procedures

This study was conducted within the current classroom curriculum over a period of four weeks beginning February, 2016. The text chosen for the study was Lois Lowry’s (1989) *Number the Stars* due to its reading level appropriateness and the connection with the already established 5th grade curriculum.

Before beginning the *Number the Stars* text, the class spent approximately one week learning about the events leading up to the Holocaust, who Adolf Hitler was, and what actually happened between 1937 and 1945. The students learned vocabulary words associated with the Holocaust time period such as “Nazi,” “relocation,” and “occupation.” Vocabulary words and pictures filled the classroom’s Literacy Wall. In addition to vocabulary, the class spent time discussing the hardships of the Jewish people during the Holocaust, concentration camp conditions, and stories of hope. The students had a background of the historical context of *Number the Stars* before beginning the text.

**Reading modes.** The book was read, in its entirety, in the 5th grade classroom through multiple modes of reading. Beginning with teacher read aloud, chapters were read alternately by mode.

**Teacher read aloud.** Chapters one, five, nine, thirteen and seventeen were read by the teacher, out loud, to all students. Book in hand, I shared the chapter title with the students and then read the chapter out loud to the class. I did not pause in the reading, instead, I read the chapter straight through. Students did not have the text in front of them while being read to in effort to strictly assess listening comprehension. Students were encouraged to listen in a relaxed position in their seat. Many students choose to color as I read. As a result, in addition to my reading aloud, students heard marker caps opening and closing.
**Independent reading with book.** Chapters two, six, ten, and fourteen were read independently by students in the 5th grade classroom. Reading time was not recorded. Half of the students (i.e. even or odd classroom numbers) were arranged around the room to read in comfort per the usual classroom independent reading routine. Odd classroom numbers read chapter two and ten around the room, even numbered students read chapter six and fourteen around the room.

**Book on CD.** Chapters three, seven, eleven, and fifteen were read to students via book on CD. Students did not have the text in front of them for the reading but were invited to listen to the reading in a relaxed position at their seat, similar to teacher read aloud.

**Independent reading with nook.** Chapters four, eight, twelve, and sixteen were read independently using a Barnes and Noble Read-Only Nook. Due to a limited number of Nooks available in the school, students had “Nook Partners.” Partner One read around the room with the Nook first and upon finishing the chapter, reset the Nook to the appropriate chapter, returned to their desk, and passed the Nook to Partner Two to read around the room.

**Trustworthiness**

The reliability, credibility, and transferability of this study is validated through triangulation of data (Clark & Creswell, 2015). Observational notes, surveys, comprehension checks, summaries, tracks, and discussions were utilized. The data were based off of multiple sources and student perspectives to validate the research outcomes.
Data Analysis

The data were collected over a period of four weeks. I collected data through observational notes, surveys, comprehension checks, summaries, tracks, and discussions. Collecting from multiple data sources, or triangulating, helped validate my study. For data analysis, I read through my field notes multiple times to familiarize myself with the data and used constant comparative analysis as I went back and forth reading through the data, coding the data, and exploring the data again. Clark and Creswell (2015) define coding as “a procedure where a researcher identifies segments of text (or images), places a bracket around them or highlights them, and assigns a code that describes the meaning of the text segment” (p. 359). I used open coding, creating new codes and revising codes as I read through my research (Clark & Creswell, 2015). The coding process helped me to organize my thoughts while sorting through the data. As I read through my data, I cross referenced my notes to find similarities between the data and developed themes that attempted to answer my research questions (Clark & Creswell, 2015). The analysis process was rigorous and systematic. After thoroughly reading through my research, codes, and themes, four findings emerged.

Findings

The purpose of my study was to explore the impact of multiple text modes on student reading comprehension and literacy development in a 5th grade classroom. With this idea in mind, four findings emerged from the data: Students have a positive response to read alouds, conversation surrounding a text adds to understanding, comprehension is dependent on assessment type, and reading identity is different for all students.
Students Have a Positive Response to Read Alouds

Teacher read aloud was the first reading mode the students experienced. In addition to me reading the text aloud, students also heard the text read by CD four times throughout the study. Both modes assessed student listening comprehension as students were not permitted to read along in the text. In analyzing the data, I found students had a positive response to read alouds. Students engaged in the storyline whether the book was read aloud by the teacher or by CD. Similarly, the data revealed that students believe teacher read alouds assist in comprehension, but prefer the teacher reading the text more than hearing the chapter on CD.

Students engage in the storyline regardless of read aloud mode. Many students were engaged in the storyline when I read aloud or when the chapter was read on CD. One student, specifically, often expressed himself while I was reading. There was a part in the book where an important packet was left behind. Without the packet, the Jews would be discovered and caught by the Germans. After reading that the packet was left behind I heard, “Oh no!” and when the German soldiers came into the family’s home looking for Jews he added, “Dun, dun, dun!” Similarly, many chapters ended on a cliffhanger. After finishing chapter ten where the main character is attending a fake funeral, a minor character walks over to reveal what is in the coffin. The chapter ends with the main character seeing what’s inside, but the readers not yet knowing. Many students yelled, “Come on!” and “What?” showing students were engaged in the reading and wanted to know what would happen next in the story. Research shows engagement is among the benefits of read aloud practices in the elementary classroom (Ariail & Albright, 2006). Ariail and Albright’s (2006) study revealed that when students were read to, they interacted with the read aloud, engaged in discussion, and demonstrated higher level thinking. Regardless of the
type of read aloud, teacher or CD, my observations of student reactions to the reading shows students were engaged while listening and captivated by what they heard.

**Students prefer teacher read alouds more than CD read alouds.** Surveys were administered half-way through the study and showed students’ perceptions of why teachers read aloud to their students. Many of the students’ responses included teachers’ goal of “helping the students” (see Table 4.1). From the student perspective, teachers read aloud to their students so they can better understand the text in terms of vocabulary, plot, and theme development (Ariail & Albright, 2006). Students’ responses to the survey questions on read alouds showed students’ perceptions and overall positive response to read alouds.

**Table 4.1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Teachers Read Aloud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If the students were reading it and there were a lot of tricky words, they can stop and tell the students what it means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help with pronunciation of hard words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help the students read better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help the students get a better understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help the students read the book faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because they like the book and want to share it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help their students get AR [Accelerated Reader] points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help students get interested in other books/genres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.1.* Student responses to survey question, “Why do teachers read aloud to their students?” These survey results indicate the variety of student thoughts regarding why teachers use read alouds in the classroom. The results showed a positive response to read alouds.

While most students see read alouds as something to be done by the teacher, a text can also be relayed to the student through book on CD. Many students are familiar with this mode of text and may use it in the classroom occasionally. However, the surveys revealed that while students believe read alouds assist in understanding a text, most students did not find the CD as
engaging as listening to the text read by the teacher. Students had mostly positive comments regarding teacher read aloud (see Table 4.2), but mostly negative perceptions of the book on CD (see Table 4.3). As Ariail and Albright (2006) suggest, read alouds have the ability to cultivate a more positive outlook on reading. Findings, however, indicate that students do not enjoy the CD read aloud as much as hearing the text read by the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2</th>
<th>Read Aloud by the Teacher</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Soothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can picture images in my mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can put my head down and just listen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2. Student responses to survey question, “How do you feel when a book is being read to you by your teacher?” The results illustrated the students’ positive responses toward teacher read aloud.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3</th>
<th>Read Aloud by the Book on CD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distracted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Just another audio drama”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harder to take in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Voices are hard to understand</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hard to keep up with</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Relaxing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can learn to pronounce the words correctly</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.3. Student responses to survey question, “How do you feel when you listen to a book on CD?” The results illustrated the students’ mostly negative responses toward book on CD.*
Conversation Surrounding a Text Adds to Understanding

Our discussions before and after reading the chapters led to increased student comprehension. The study included eight comprehension checks and each check assessed students on their literal and inferential understanding. Often the inferential questions were difficult for students and sometimes even overlooked. When the text was read independently, students could have been confused with the content of the chapter. Chapter 6, specifically, stands out as a confusing chapter. In the chapter, Papa conversed with Uncle Henrik, a new character, on the phone. Their conversation included code words for Jewish friends because Germans may have been tapping into the phone lines. The main character, Annemarie, listened to her Papa talk on the phone, but didn’t understand the main idea of the phone call until the end of the chapter. After reading Chapter 6 independently, students wrote a summary of what they read (see Figure 4.1). Most students mentioned a phone call to Uncle Henrik in their summary, but did not explain the conversation or give any detail concerning the code words. The next day, the class discussed Chapter 6. I explained that the German Nazi’s had control over communications in many countries during World War II. Papa could not talk freely about the Jewish friends over the phone because someone may have been listening. A few chapters later, students completed an activity where they wrote a postcard to Papa from Annemarie’s perspective. Annemarie was staying at Uncle Henrik’s house. The students wrote in code because they clearly understood the power of the Germans (see Figure 4.2). This finding relates to Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) Social Development Theory as students made a cognitive connection during the classroom discussion or social interaction. Discussion was led by the teacher and most students participated in the discussion. Likewise, Allington and Johnston (2002) found discussion in the classroom promoted further thinking and active literacy. When students were engaged in discussion, students better
understood what they read. The classroom discussion in this study allowed the students to internalize the contents of the chapters and come to a fuller understanding.

Figure 4.1. Student summaries regarding the events of Chapter 6. Summaries lacked detail surrounding Papa’s phone call to Uncle Henrik, showing limited understanding before discussion.

Figure 4.2. The same students’ “Postcard to Papa” assessment completed after discussion. Students’ use of code words showed a clearer understanding of what happened in Chapter 6.
Similarly, in the Chapter 1 comprehension check students were asked, “Why isn’t Kirsti afraid of the soldiers?” This was an inferential question, which meant students had to understand what happened in the chapter and connect to their prior knowledge about younger siblings to answer the question. Many students stated what the text said implicitly, but didn’t grasp that Kirsti’s young age meant she had never experienced anything other than soldiers (see Figure 4.3). After the check, I re-read a quote from the text. “For Kirsti, the soldiers were simply part of the landscape, something that had always been there, on every corner, as unimportant as lampposts, throughout her remembered life” (Lowry, 1989, p. 5). Many students participated in the discussion surrounding this quote and knew what was meant by the question when the quote was discussed. Conversation surrounding the text added to understanding.

Figure 4.3. Chapter 1 comprehension check assessed inferential understanding after hearing the text read aloud by the teacher. Students did not understand the text completely until a main quotation was discussed.
Comprehension is Dependent on Assessment Type

Another finding revealed throughout my research was that comprehension is dependent on assessment type. Students were assessed after each chapter in one of three ways: comprehension check, summary, or discussion. In analyzing the data, I observed students’ comprehension varied with each assessment and some assessments gave greater opportunity to demonstrate comprehension. Similarly, the assessments revealed individuality in student understanding and the knowledge of an assessment seemed to impact the students’ desire to want to do well.

Variation in comprehension. Three different assessments were used throughout the study: comprehension checks, written summaries, and discussion. In analyzing the data, I noticed a variation in comprehension across the three assessments. Students’ responses in comprehension checks were simply an answer to the question, or sometimes, nothing was written at all (see Figure 4.4). Regardless of reading mode, the comprehension checks limited students from revealing all that was known about the chapter. Summaries, however, allowed students to give more detailed responses and more thoroughly demonstrate his or her comprehension of the chapter. Discussion was an open-ended assessment, even more so than the written summaries due to its inclusivity for questions, connections, and inferences. Discussions clearly articulated what students comprehended in the chapter, and what was still a question in students’ minds.
Individuality in student understanding. Individuality in student understanding was reflected in each assessment. In reviewing the summaries for accuracy and detail, I noticed students seemed to write about the events they remembered most. One character, Kirsti, was very memorable in the text due to her stubborn attitude and young age. In one comprehension check, students were asked what items were being rationed by the Germans. A common answer to the
question was “pink cupcakes” because Kirsti pleaded with her mother for the sweet treat. Although cupcakes weren’t being rationed per se, students remembered Kirsti’s comical character and thought it an appropriate answer to the question. Similarly, I noticed a few students’ summaries included exact phrases that were used in the text such as “Bang, bang, bang!” “Yanked the necklace off and clutched it in her hand” and “Printed on her palm” (see Figure 4.5). Students seemed to remember and wrote about the details they found unique, funny, and memorable, even though they didn’t always have to do with the chapter’s main idea. On the other hand, while students wrote about moments they enjoyed and remembered, the assessments also revealed what students didn’t understand (see Figure 4.1). Moreover, some students were very restricted and vague in the assessments. As the in-class discussions revealed, many students knew the chapter’s events in detail, but did not write about such ideas in their written summaries or comprehension checks. This finding is in correlation with Pashler et al. (2008) demonstrating that students differ in how they take in and understand information. The research shows, “People differ in the degree to which they have some fairly specific aptitudes for different kinds of thinking and for processing different types of information” (Pashler et al., 2008, p. 105). The assessments revealed students’ individuality in understanding the text.
Figure 4.5. Students’ summaries include exact phrases from the text showing individualized understanding and remembered detail.

**Awareness of assessments.** The awareness of an assessment seemed to impact the attention students gave to understanding the text. After reading Chapter 1 of the text, students were asked to complete a comprehension check and were not permitted to use the text. Similarly, after reading Chapter 2, students completed a second check. It was quickly realized that assessments would follow each chapter and close reading or listening would be necessary. During one of the first comprehension checks, one student asked, “Will this be graded?” to which I responded, “Just do your best!” Assessments were eventually given a grade to determine the depth of comprehension for each student, however, students were not aware of the grade. The awareness of the assessment may have impacted the attention students gave the text while listening and reading independently.
With the awareness of an assessment, some students were tempted to look back at the text in effort to perform their best on the assessment. During the independent reading, half of the class was permitted to read around the room in a more comfortable environment while the other half remained in their desks. As a result, some comprehension checks were completed with a book at the student’s side. After students read Chapter 6 independently with the book I observed one student looking back at the text. When I asked him why he was using the text, he replied, “Sometimes I have a hard time remembering who’s who.” The student wanted to use the book to look up names and relationships of characters and be sure that the information he was writing in his summary was accurate. Knowing that the student struggled with spelling and was working to improve, I did not tell him to put the book away. I saw him using the text two times after the initial conversation. Continuing my observations around the room, I saw another student staring blankly at her lined piece of paper. She had written “SWBST” down the side of her page as we had learned this summarizing strategy in class, but was struggling to fill in the blanks. The knowledge of an assessment after reading seemed to impact the students’ desire to want to do well.

**Reading Identity is Different for All Students**

Finally, my research on modes of reading revealed students’ reading identities. McCarthy and Moje (2002) pointed out the relationship between literacy and identity showing literacy practices can impact identities. Through the use of in-class activities and surveys, my research revealed students’ perceptions of a reader as well as their reading preferences.

**Students have closed perceptions of a reader.** Reading with a book was how this group of students identified a reader. To begin the study, I passed out a handout entitled “Draw a Reader” (see Figure 4.6). Students were asked to draw a reader in the open space and write about
what was drawn. No further instructions were given. Students spent 15 minutes working on their images and were invited to share their drawings after finishing. As I predicted, all students included a book in their drawings. Different reading locations such as the attic, a bedroom, and most commonly, a student’s desk were drawn. One student even made a distinction between a “real reader” and a “fake reader,” showing one student with a book on his or her head laughing, and another student cuddled up on a bean bag with a book. One of the books drawn on the page even had the student’s name as the author. The assessment showed the students’ “previous experiences with institutions such as schools, as well as the larger social and political frameworks in which they have operated, have shaped their classroom interactions” (McCarthey & Moje, 2002, p. 229). The inclusion of a book in each image led me to believe students’ perception of a reader was limited to a person using a book. In her description, one student wrote, “When I [think] of the word reader, I think of a person reading a book.” At the end of the study I conducted the same activity and again passed out “Draw a Reader” to each student. Realizing that we had just finished a 17-chapter text using each of the four text modes I assumed a few of the students would include a teacher reading, book on CD, or an e-reader in their drawing. My assumption was incorrect. All twenty students again drew a reader with a book in hand. This showed me that students had relatively closed perceptions of a reader. Although multiple text modes were encouraged in the classroom, the traditional print-based text was how these students identified a reader.
In the same way, student surveys revealed the students’ perceptions of a reader. Students were asked to write about what they thought of themselves as a reader. Many students reflected on speed and accuracy in reading, sharing that they “know all the words” or accomplish their reading goals each month. One student commented that she thought she was a good reader because she connected well with what she read and could remember what the story was about long after reading. On the other hand, some students mentioned their slow speed in reading saying that it took a long time to read and understanding the words was difficult. Students’ reflections in the survey revealed students’ perceptions of how a “good reader” should look.

**Students have different reading mode preferences.** Half way through the study, students were given an open-ended survey that revealed students’ reading preferences. Students had two experiences with each text mode and the Nook was the most recent text mode experienced when the survey was administered. In one question, students were asked which mode they “liked best.” Although there was no one clear “winner” in the data, when considering reading modes, students preferred independent reading over read aloud. Out of twenty students,
thirteen preferred independent reading with a book or the Nook while only six preferred read aloud by the teacher or CD. Only one student’s comment was inconclusive, commenting that she liked all of the modes equally. Similarly, the surveys revealed students’ preferences toward understanding. Students were asked, “Of these types of reading, which type helps you understand the book best?” Unlike the “liked best” question, the responses were relatively equal with ten students preferring independent reading (book or Nook) and nine students preferring read alouds (teacher or CD) for understanding. Again, one student was indecisive. This data is in alignment with Howard Gardner’s (1983) research on the multiple intelligences that human beings each learn in a different manner. Student surveys gave evidence toward students’ reading preferences.

One student, particularly, stood out to me in the study due to his refusal to read with the Nook. The *Number the Stars* unit was the first time this group of students used the Nook in the classroom. Drawing upon Prensky’s (2005) research regarding “digital immigrants,” I assumed many students would be familiar with e-readers. Similarly, Wright et al. (2013) claims students are engaged by the interactive features of technology. While introducing the Nooks to the students I heard, “I have one at home,” and “I know how to use it!” When reading, one student called me over to say, “I figured out how to highlight!” Generally, the students were excited to use the Nook and interested in the multimodal options such as highlighting and word look-up. Jones and Brown (2011) had a similar finding in their study of e-books in a 3rd grade classroom. One student, however, came up to me only 2 minutes into reading. The student felt strongly about not reading with the Nook because it gave him a headache. He even wrote his feelings in the survey (see Figure 4.7). Not wanting to interfere with the student’s learning, I allowed the student to read with a book each time the Nook mode was used. Interestingly enough, after reading Chapter 12 with a book instead of the Nook, the same student brought his
comprehension check to me and said, “I don’t know any of these.” Similarly, his summary written after Chapter 8 lacked detail and accuracy. Although his preference was reading with a book, there was no sign that his comprehension was higher with the preferred mode. Another student had the reverse preference noting on his survey that he enjoyed reading with the Nook because it didn’t give him headaches like books normally did (see Figure 4.7). This data is again in accordance with Howard Gardner’s (1983) theory of the multiple intelligences as well as Ikpeze’s (2012) belief that each child’s senses will be engaged in a different way. The reading preferences were different for each student.

![Figure 4.7](image.png)

*Figure 4.7. Student surveys asked how students felt reading using each of the four modes of text. One student felt strongly about not reading with the Nook while a second student preferred the Nook.*
Discussion

**Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of multiple text modes on student reading comprehension in a 5th grade classroom. My study of modes of reading in the elementary classroom led me to four findings. First, the data revealed students had a positive response to read alouds as seen through engagement in the read aloud and surveys. Secondly, I found when the text was discussed at length in the classroom, students’ thinking developed and students had a more complete understanding of the text. Third, comprehension is dependent on assessment type. The four assessments demonstrated students’ individuality in understanding the text. Finally, I found reading identity to be different for all students. These findings parallel with Gardner’s (1983) research showing that students’ different intelligences allow him or her to learn in different ways. My research on modes of reading in the elementary classroom revealed students’ individuality in literacy learning and comprehension of a text.

**Conclusions**

The research question that began this study was, “How do different modes of text impact student comprehension and literacy learning?” After four weeks of data collection and analysis, I feel this research question is still left to be answered. The data did not reveal one text mode’s impact on comprehension, however, I concluded that discussion enhances student understanding and multiple text modes and assessments meet diverse learning styles.

**Discussion enhances student understanding.** It was established throughout my research that discussion enhances student understanding. As shown in each assessment, students had a basic understanding of the main events in each chapter, but often left out details he or she did not fully understand. Summaries and comprehension checks showed details students enjoyed and
remembered. Students brought their thoughts, or tracks, to discussion with the whole class. Discussion allowed the students to glean understanding from one another, and also from the teacher. I analyzed the assessments before discussion and compared them with my observations during the classroom discussion. Students came to a fuller understanding of the text through other students’ thoughts and clarification from the teacher. Similarly, I compared assessments before discussion to assessments completed after discussion. Students’ summative assessments showed details that were not present in the formative assessment. Vygotsky (1978) also came to these conclusions when he said:

Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)... All the higher functions originate as actual relations between people. (p. 57)

Comprehension is a process that is supported by discussion. My findings and analysis led me to conclude that discussion enhances student understanding.

**Multiple text modes and assessments meet diverse learning styles.** Through my research, I found multiple text modes, as well as a variation in assessment, meet diverse learning styles. Per my research question, students had access to four different modes of reading in the study: teacher read aloud, independent reading with a book, book on CD, and independent reading with a Nook. Regardless of reading mode, comprehension seemed to differ for each student, revealing diverse learning styles. Similarly, student surveys showed students’ mode preferences regarding enjoyment and understanding. Student preferences were not the same. Tomlinson (2009) claims homogeneity in the classroom is rare and suggests differentiation of
instruction and assessment. Integrating multiple text modes and assessments in the classroom can help teachers meet diverse learning styles and enhance student success.

Implications

Drawing on prior research and my own conclusions from the study, I have identified several implications for student learning and teachers. These implications may benefit students’ understanding in the classroom as well as teachers’ experiences in working with students.

Implications for student learning. The research in this study directly involved elementary students and my conclusions reveal the impact various reading modes have on students’ literacy learning. First, students should pay attention to how he or she learns. Secondly, students should make every effort to engage in discussion and classroom activity to add to his or her literacy learning.

Students should pay attention to learning style. The students in this study expressed preference in terms of reading mode. My findings revealed students enjoyed independent reading more than teacher read aloud, however students’ preferences were evenly divided when asked which mode helped him or her learn best. This data is in alignment with Gardner’s (1983) research on the multiple intelligences and implies that students should experience multiple ways of learning in the classroom. More specifically, students need to experience multiple modes of reading to discover how he or she learns best. Students can benefit from having multiple reading modes available in the classroom.

Students should engage in literacy discussion and activities. The findings in this study revealed conversation surrounding a text added to understanding. Several students showed limited or partial understanding after reading the text independently, however when discussed in the classroom, students were able to give more detailed responses. Students should engage in
literacy discussion and activities in the classroom so a more thorough understanding of a text can be established.

**Implications for teachers.** Although this research study was limited to one teacher, many implications for other teachers are present.

**Implement variation to support learning styles.** Regarding student learning, it is important that teachers use variation in the classroom to help students identify learning preferences. This was seen in the study’s survey results and is supported by Gardner’s (1983) research. Similarly, assessments should be varied in the classroom to meet the needs for all students (Tomlinson, 2009). As seen in this study, however, comprehension is dependent on assessment type. Classroom discussion leaves room for open response while short answer and multiple choice assessments may restrict student comprehension. Teachers should engage students in a variety of assessment opportunities and when conducting assessments involving short response, teachers should be aware of each question’s wording.

**Incorporate discussion to support comprehension.** Teachers should involve classroom discussion in any way possible. It is clear through my conclusions that discussion adds to student understanding. Furthermore, NAEP (2015) results reveal the need for improved comprehension across the nation.

**Limitations**

This research study was limited by the number of students and time. Twenty 5th grade students participated in the study, however, findings could be impacted by a greater number of participants in a broader range of elementary classrooms. Similarly, the time for the research study was four weeks. By increasing the time for the study, the research could have yield more results.
Recommendations for Further Research

Throughout the study I asked several questions that could promote future research. First, “How does following along or drawing while listening impact comprehension?” My findings reveal students have a positive response to read alouds. The procedures from this research study did not allow students to follow along in the text as I read aloud, however, students were permitted to draw or color. The impact of this procedure was beyond the scope of this research study, but may be a focus for a future research study. Also, “How does assessment impact student motivation, identity, and engagement?” The research procedures in this study included a seventeen-chapter text with an assessment following each chapter. Perhaps the study findings could be impacted if chapters were bundled and an assessment were given every four chapters. Similarly, many students walked away from turning in an assessment with a downcast face. Students were concerned with grades associated with the assessments. A recommendation for further research is to investigate the impact of assessment on student motivation, identity, and engagement.

Closing

The introduction of multiple text modes in the elementary classroom opened my eyes to student preferences and necessary practices that should be incorporated into the classroom. Howard Gardner (1983) has said, “Anything that is worth teaching can be presented in many different ways. These multiple ways can make use of our multiple intelligences” (Lynch, 2012). Students’ intelligences lead to preferences concerning modes of reading and it is important that teachers implement these preferences into the elementary classroom so all students can benefit.
References


Appendix A

Number the Stars Comprehension Checks Questions by Chapter

Adapted from Miss Silva’s Reading Class; Kingwood Township School District

Chapter One: Why Are You Running?

Literal Questions

1. Why were Annemarie, Ellen, and Kirsti stopped by the soldiers?
2. What advice did Mrs. Rosen give the girls about behaving outside?
3. How did Annemarie show her dislike of the German soldiers occupying her country?

Inferential Question

1. Why isn’t Kirsti afraid of the soldiers?

Chapter Two: Who is the Man That Rides Past?

Literal Questions

1. What happened to Annemarie’s sister, Lise?
2. Who was King Christian X’s bodyguard?
3. Why does Peter visit the Johansen’s?

Inferential Question

1. Why didn’t the Danish army fight the Germans when they invaded Denmark?

Chapter Three: Where is Mrs. Hirsch?

Literal Questions

1. What did Annemarie realize about her friend Ellen after Peter’s visit?
2. How did Annemarie know the Hirsch’s were not gone on a holiday?

3. What are some things that were rationed or no longer available because of the war?

Inferential Question

1. What happened to Mrs. Hirsch?

Chapter Four: It Will Be a Long Night

Literal Questions

1. Why was Kirsti upset when she and her mother returned from shopping? What was Ellen’s solution to the problem?

2. What were the “booms and lights in the sky” on Kirsti’s birthday?

3. How did the Germans find out the names of the Danish Jews?

Inferential Question

1. Why would Annemarie and Ellen need to pretend that they are sisters?

Chapter Nine: Why Are You Lying?

Literal Questions

1. What did Annemarie learn about Aunt Birte?

2. What does Annemarie learn about bravery in her talk with Uncle Henrik?

3. Why did Ellen make a sharp cry when she went outside with Henrik?

Inferential Question

1. Why didn’t Annemarie tell Ellen the truth about Aunt Birte?
Chapter Ten: Let Us Open the Casket

**Literal Questions**

1. Why did the German soldiers come to Uncle Henrik’s house?
2. What was the first test of Annemarie’s bravery?
3. How did Mrs. Johansen stop the German soldiers from looking in the casket?

**Inferential Question**

1. Peter read a psalm from the Bible about “he who numbers the stars one by one…”
   What was the purpose of this psalm and how does it connect to the events in the book?

Chapter Eleven: Will We See You Again Soon, Peter?

**Literal Questions**

1. What was in the casket and why was it there?
2. What did Peter give the baby and why?
3. Where were the Rosens and the other strangers going?

**Inferential Question**

1. What was the purpose of Aunt Birte’s funeral?

Chapter Twelve: Where Was Mama?

**Literal Questions**

1. What promise did Ellen make to Annemarie?
2. What advice on walking the trail did Mrs. Johansen give the Rosens?
3. How did Annemarie pass the time while waiting for her mother?
Inferential Question

1. Explain the following thoughts of Annemarie, “It was harder for the ones who were waiting, Annemarie knew. Less dangerous, perhaps, but more fear.”
Appendix B

Accelerated Reader Whole Book Quiz Questions

**Number the Stars**

Mrs. Johansen and Mrs. Rosen were anxious when they learned that 

A. one of Ellen's teachers had been arrested for belonging to the Resistance

B. future lessons at school would be taught only in German

C. a threat had been made to bomb the girls' school the next day

D. the girls had been stopped on their way home from school by two soldiers

---

**Number the Stars**

What did the girls see when they went to Mrs. Hirsch's shop after school?

A. Soldiers were demanding money from people leaving the shop.

B. German officers wearing swastikas were setting fire to the shop.

C. The shelves were empty, and Mrs. Hirsch was in the back crying.

D. A sign was written in German, and a new padlock was on the door.
Number the Stars

The "fireworks" Kirsti saw on her birthday were caused by ---.

A. a fierce battle between the Germans and Danish forces along the coastline
B. the Germans firing their guns after King Christian fled to Sweden
C. an explosion in the main exhibition building at Tivoli Gardens
D. the Danes destroying their ships so the Germans could not use them

Number the Stars

What code did Papa use to tell Uncle Henrik that Ellen would be coming?

A. The "bundle of joy" would be arriving any day.
B. Mama would be bringing him a "carton of cigarettes."
C. A "prima ballerina" was going to perform in Gilleleje.
D. He had mailed out a pair of "green fish shoes."

Number the Stars

Why was Annemarie confused when Henrik said Great-aunt Birte had died?

A. She had never heard of Great-aunt Birte.
B. She thought Great-aunt Birte had died years ago.
C. Mama had told her that Great-aunt Birte was getting better.
D. She had just seen Great-aunt Birte the day before.
Number the Stars

Mama said that Great-aunt Birta's casket was closed because she had ---.

A. died of typhus and might still be able to spread germs
B. been badly burned in a German raid
C. passed away nearly a week earlier and probably smelled bad
D. been a very vain woman who wouldn't have wanted to be seen dead

Number the Stars

What did Peter do to baby Rachel that upset her mother?

A. He put her inside the empty casket.
B. He gave her a drug so she wouldn't wake up and cry.
C. He wrapped her in a dirty rag from the bottom of the boat.
D. He shaved her head to prevent her from being infested with lice.

Number the Stars

Why was Mama lying on the ground when Annemarie looked out the window?

A. She hoped to attract attention to herself and away from the Rosens.
B. She had tripped and broken her ankle while hurrying back to the girls.
C. She was exhausted from running to keep the dogs off her trail.
D. Henrik had gone to Sweden forever, and she was overcome by grief.
MODES OF READING

**Number the Stars**

What was in the important packet that Annemarie delivered to Henrik?

A. a set of false passports for the Rosens

B. a coded map showing the safe house where he was to take the "cigarettes"

C. a handkerchief treated with a powder that ruined dogs' sense of smell

D. Lise's baby picture with Ellen's birthdate written on it in black ink

**Number the Stars**

What did Mama and Papa say had caused Lise's death?

A. She was shot while escorting several Jews across the border.

B. She caught tuberculosis while tending survivors of a prisoner-of-war camp.

C. She died of grief after seeing her fiancé, Peter, executed.

D. She was run down by a military car while running from a Resistance meeting.
Appendix C

Student Reading Mode Survey and Interview Questions

1. How would you describe yourself as a reader?

2. Why do teachers read aloud to their students?

3. How do you feel when a book is being read to you by your teacher?

4. How do you feel when you listen to a book on CD?

5. How do you feel when you read on a Nook?

6. How do you feel when you read a regular printed book?

7. Of all these types of reading, which type do you like best? Why?

8. Of all these types of reading, which type helps you understand the book best? Why?

9. Do you have anything else you want to tell me?