

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND SPECIALISED
SECONDARY EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
UZBEKISTAN**

**FERGHANA STATE UNIVERSITY
FOREIGN LANGUAGES FACULTY
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This is submitted for

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE DIPLOMA
PAPER**

**Theme: "THE EFFECTS OF TEACHING TEXT
STRUCTURE ON THE READING AND WRITING
ABILITIES OF ESL/EFL LEARNERS"**

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Ferghana-2018

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Abstract

Reaching proficient levels of literacy is a universal goal for all students across the globe. This objective is especially challenging for English language learners particularly in the domain of writing and reading abilities. These skills have been identified as the most essential skills because the world has become so text - oriented. Due to this change, mainstream teachers as well as English language instructors, are in great demand of effective techniques to improve writing and reading skills of these particular students. In the light of this issue the research was carried out in order to determine the effects of teaching text structure on EFL learners' reading and writing abilities. Participants of the research were 18 volunteer English language learners of Hanna Language Center situated in Fergana city (aged 14-17 years, graders of schools 21-26 and Petroleum college). All EFL learners were the part of the same treatment group. The researcher instructed students on how to identify and comprehend the types of text structure. The instructions for the text structure occurred for a total of a seven week study. The researcher instructed students with modeling, guided practice and independent practice which are considered to be keys to increase learners' knowledge about text structure. Findings suggested considerable effect on the improvement of learners' reading and writing abilities when instructions on text structure are highlighted in the classroom.

CHARTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The status of English language in education system of Uzbekistan

Since the Republic of Uzbekistan was declared independent in 1991, the roles of languages used in the country started to change, shifting in dominance and significance in all spheres of Uzbek people's life. The Uzbek language acquired its position as the only official state language, while Russian was given the status of foreign language and lost its power as "Uzbek's second mother tongue" (Hasanova.D, 2010), however, preserving its importance on a communicational level and the function of lingua franca for ethnic minorities. English, in its turn, has been continuously increasing in importance and acquiring the status of the most preferred foreign language to be learned (Hasanova.D, 2007).

The Role of the English Language

The spread of English in Uzbekistan greatly differs from that of Russian, back at the beginning of XX th century, being marked mostly as a desirable rather than suppressive process (Hasanova.D, 2007). Uzbek people realize that English is significant in all regards when it comes to pursuing international education, attaining a good career and keeping up with the rapid pace of world changes. They greatly favor the English language, seeing it as the key to successful and prosperous life. Language specialist Rod Bolitho marks such strong interest in the language by two factors: the intention of studying and working abroad and idealization of The UK and US. These two reasons, in his opinion, are the strongest motivations for the Uzbek to learn it. Hasanova.D (2007) attributes the continuously increasing interest in the country in learning English to the international significance of the language.

Even though Hasanova.D (2007) mentioned the scarcity of sources informing the language situation in the country, there are language specialists who have

discussed this topic, sharing their empiric observations and experiences.¹ West (2013) characterizes English in Uzbekistan as a subject language, mostly acquired through educational training. Bolitho predicts that English can totally supplant Russian in several decades. Duff and Dickens (2005) in their work drew attention to English teaching and the language level in rural areas in opposition to urban parts of the country. Snow, Kamhi-Stein and Brinton (2006) looked into teacher preparation experiences in the country, illustrating a unique English-medium program preparing English language teachers –IELTE (Institute of English Language Teacher Education).²

The English language owns the status of foreign language in Uzbekistan (West,R & Sheykhmetova,E, 2016)³. However, the government wants to see the language become a second language, fluently used by society, especially the younger generation. This intention of the government can easily be observed in the decree of the president (see appendix), where the role of English is highly emphasized and both education and media are called for reformation and upgrading to serve the pervasiveness of English in the country. A number of language specialists (Dearden,J. 2014; West, 2013) highlight the importance of the presidential decree in the increase of attention to the English language in educational establishments, which is occurring in all stages of education.⁴

Projects and Government Reforms

¹ Hasanova, D. (2010). English as a trademark of modernity and elitism. *English Today*, 26(01), 3-8.

² West, R. (2013). PRESETT Curriculum Reform Project: External Evaluation Report. Tashkent: British Council.

³ West, R., & Sheykhmetova, E. (2016). *The State of English in Higher Education in Uzbekistan: A pilot study*. Tashkent: British Council

⁴ Dearden, J. (2014, January n.d.). English as a medium of instruction—a growing global phenomenon. Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484_emi_-_cover_option_3_final_web.pdf

Several large-scale projects in cooperation with British Council have been launched to achieve the purpose set by the government, including PRESETT focused on training pre-service teachers and EnSPIRE-U aimed at reforming English achieve the purpose set by the government, including PRESETT focused on training pre-service teachers and EnSPIRE-U aimed at reforming English teaching in Higher Educational Institutions with non-linguistic majors. (West,R. & Sheykhametova,E. 2016). The two projects have largely addressed the educational problems described by Duff and Dickens (2005) as well as Hasanova,D and Shadieva,T. (2008). Both in-service and pre-service teacher training has become the focus of the Ministry of Education in mitigating the historically formed limited approach to language teaching and communicative development. (Hasanova,D. 2007)

Continuous language training is another important consideration in the Decree (Appendix A1). According to it, instead of starting to learn a language from the 5th form (Hasanova,D.2007) children must now start learning English from the 1st form of the primary school, at the age of 6-7. The Decree indicated how the language must be taught in the first year and how it should continue further. It must be noted that English has been taught even at pre-school institutions, being the only foreign language taught at this age and level (Hasanova,D. 2007). Therefore, much attention has been paid to the development of appropriate programs and textbooks in order to meet the modern world criteria and standards of teaching English to young learners. Media started to broadcast TV shows, programs and films in English with Uzbek subtitles to serve as additional source for the people of all ages to learn the language and hasten the growth of English in society. The streets are filled with English text, including commercial advertisements, shop names, instructions, etc.

New Approaches in traditional curriculum

As has been mentioned above, the main concentration has become to change the language learning from the traditional Soviet approach of grammar-translation, which was a usual method of teaching English for many years, into a communicative

method, practiced worldwide. The Ministry of Education with the support of The British Council and Macmillan (Hasanova,D. 2007,) have been creating textbooks for all stages of education incorporating state-of-art methods and techniques. Different specially-organized material designing teams are regularly trained in order to provide educational institutions with up-to-date teaching materials in addition to worldly acclaimed best-seller textbooks.

In view of educational reforms and high demand for English together with International Hasanova, D. (2007a). Broadening the boundaries of the expanding circle: English in Uzbekistan. *World Englishes*, 26(3), 276-290.practices in different spheres, the idea of introduction of education with English of medium of instruction started to seem feasible to the government. At present, educational establishments with English as a medium of instruction have become the most preferred institutions to study at. To meet the demand for the desire of people to be educated in English, the number of such institutions has been increasing from year to year.

These reforms have undoubtedly been aimed at integration with the Western World and acquiring information access as well as ability to keep up with the pace of changes taking place in the world. Looking back, now it becomes clear that the Uzbek government started the process of bringing the National Language closer to English “to enter the world community” (Shoumarov,G. & Iriskulov,A. 2005)⁵ and communicate effectively and effortlessly on an international level (Hasanova,D.2010) when it decided to convert the Uzbek alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin in 1993 (the law on Latin script adoption).

⁵ Shoumarov, G., & Iriskulov, A. (2005). Globalisation and the Sociolinguistic Typology of Languages. In H. Coleman, J. Gulyamova & A. Thomas (Eds.), *National Development, Education and Language in Central Asia and Beyond* (pp. 134-141). Uzbekistan: British Council.

Previous Research

With increased pressures which have been increasing from year to year for students to achieve high levels of academic proficiency there has been a push in education policy toward a curriculum that requires to teach and learn foreign languages. So there are created favorable conditions for young people of Uzbekistan to study foreign languages perfectly, and younger generation is focused on teaching foreign languages. At the same time, a number of good and noble work is carried out to increase the potential of young people. This is an example of the Resolution of Cabinets of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No 610 on August 11, 2017 ``On measures to improve the quality of teaching foreign languages in educational institutions``. Moreover, in 2012 there was declared our first president Islom Karimov`s decree (Appendix A1) on further developing teaching foreign languages in Uzbekistan and apply foreign languages, especially English language, to our national curriculum widely. The aim of this decree is to prepare proficient personnel in Uzbekistan who can communicate in foreign languages freely and acquire media and technology news, of course, to be able to utilize this knowledge directly in process of country development. Furthermore, learning foreign languages helps our students to compete with their international peers world-wide and get connected with wider horizon.

Teaching EFL students text structures could be very helpful just not only during their school year but also while doing international exams like IELTS and CEFR. But, in spite of teaching English widely in Uzbekistan there has been no attention devoted to teach text structures. Because children are not adequately prepared to write and read as well as comprehend text structures and thus their reading scores decline. As pupils progress from primary class through high classes and beyond the amount of texts they will be expected to write and read as well as comprehend will increase. By sixth grade expository texts comprise more than 75% of reading in the classroom (Gill, 2009). This exposure to read or write such texts

would not be problematic if pupils were prepared for this type of reading and writing in their earlier stages of schooling. As, simply reading familiar texts or writing narrative texts in English will not prepare learners for real world. Currently, no text structures are taught in the classrooms of Uzbekistan.

There are no relevant or specific programs or theoretical conceptions how to teach text structures. In this sphere exists some handbooks which are not widely used in the process of teaching English.

Through historical overview, it is found that foreign researchers made considerable investigations identifying the effects of teaching text structures on writing and reading abilities of EFL learners.

Meyer and Melissa (2011) believe that the power of teaching learners structure strategy is that it enables them to:

- a) follow the logical structure of text to understand how an author organized and emphasized ideas;
- b) use processes parallel to these structures to increase their own learning and thinking (e.g., comparing, finding causal relationships, looking for solutions to block causes of problem); and
- c) use these structures to organize their own writing, such as written summaries, recalls, and essays.

According to Meyer, Young and Bartlett (1989) the use of text structures to understand how the important ideas of a text are inter-related increases readers' meaning making. Readers who use text structures can mentally examine how ideas in text are inter-related through the use of such relationships as sequence, causation, or problem and solution. These readers also may use external aids that

show the top-level structures of a text to reduce memory demands. These aids include templates, graphics, matrices, outlines, knowledge maps, or tree structures.

Over the last 50 years, Meyer (e.g., 1971, 1975) and her colleagues (e.g., Meyer & Rice, 1982; Meyer et al., 1989, 2010; Meyer & Poon, 2001; Meyer & Melissa, 2011) have studied text structures and readers' and writers' abilities to use them. Readers who use a 'structure strategy' seek to identify and use the authors' organization to organize their own understanding (Meyer, Brandt, and Bluth, 1980). The structure strategy facilitates comprehension by helping the reader to organize concepts based on the explicit or implied relationships that are communicated by the text. Signaling words (see Table 1) can cue text structures and assist readers and writers toward building coherent text representations. The key role of signaling words is in selection and encoding, particularly if readers have learned the structure strategy (e.g., Meyer & Poon, 2001).

Reading the texts for comprehending is vital for learners of all ages. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (U.S. Department of Education National Institute for Education Statistics, 2010) reported that 33% of 4th –grade students examined could not read at the basic level required to understand what they read. Comprehension of expository text is critical for academic success at school (National Educational Goals Panel, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

According to Common Core State Standards (2010), educators need to prepare their students to comprehend text structures, especially expository texts beginning in the elementary years of schooling. Despite its importance, in comparison to narrative texts, students receive less exposure to expository texts in early elementary school (e.g., Duke, 2009). This lack of exposure may place readers at a disadvantage because beginning 5th – grade students increasingly are

expected to learn from expository texts in language arts, science, and social studies (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Gill (2009) hypothesized that early exposure to the language of nonfiction can enhance children`s understanding. These types of text can prevent the difficulties many students will encounter in their later of schooling. The earlier in the elementary years students are taught how to write and read as well as comprehend expository texts, the more successful they will be in middle school and beyond. The research has also indicated that this is especially effective if the instruction is focused on each text structure separately and have learners work independently on array of examples. For this reasons, teachers need to explicitly instruct students in the area of text writing and reading both during reading comprehension lessons as well as content area instruction.

Research Questions

EFL learners are expected to be aware of different text structures and comprehend what kind of meaning is carried out in the text. In order to understand given information in the passage learners need to know how to work with different text structures. At the same time organizing their written texts learners need to follow text structure rules if they wish to be understood by the reader easily. The researcher of this study formulated questions surrounding the effects of teaching text structure on EFL learners` writing and reading abilities:

- Why to teach EFL learners the types of the text structure?
- Will teaching the text structures improve EFL learners` writing and reading abilities?
- How to teach EFL learners to identify and utilize the text structures?

CHAPTER TWO; LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Teaching text structure in Uzbek classrooms

Many EFL students in Uzbekistan are unaware of the structural organizations of texts, especially expository texts and face many difficulties comprehending what is written in the text or organizing their own writing. Considering the fact that most academic texts are expository texts in nature, teaching students expository text structure seems to be a necessity. They should be taught to recognize and use structural organization and recall. As a reading comprehension strategy, expository text structure awareness should be explicitly taught (Dymock, 2005). Grabe (2009) states that students need to know that texts are not collection of words and sentences but they have rhetorical structures that organize information in a way that serve writers' purposes and instructing text organizing features, students should be made aware that it is writers' goal and expectation that determine basic text organization. Instruction designed to teach text-structure strategies has been found to improve the reading comprehension of EFL learners (Vahidi, 2008; Zhengfang, 2006; Nanjoo &Marzban, 2012).

In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting like Iran (or Uzbek) where English has very little or no use in everyday day lives of EFL learners, English texts are main source of language input. Thus reading comprehension is the most important skill which is believed to have a central role in learning new information and in students' academic success. For this reason great emphasis is given to enhance learners' reading abilities (Iranmehr, Erfani, & Davari, 2011). However, despite the great attention given to reading skill, EFL learners entering university have problems comprehending English texts. Because, applying Grammar Translation method to teach reading comprehension with over emphasis on decoding and ignoring higher level processes involved in reading is regarded as one of the major source of learners'

poor reading comprehension. In school, most of the class time is spent explaining grammatical points and giving the meaning of individual words, and translating passages from English into Persian (or Uzbek) or vice versa. (Riazi, & Mosalanejad). As Shokrpour and Fotovation (2007) point out paying attention to single words, translation, and looking up all new words are regarded as inefficient reading strategies and take EFL readers' attention from higher order strategies. What learners can get help from is employing some more effective reading strategies which enable them to have global look at a text and use some textual features of texts to help them in comprehending a text. However, they are not acquired this ability in school and most of them face reading comprehension difficulties when they enter university. Scientists believe that lower- level processes are necessary components of L2 reading comprehension but reading is not a single factor process as Nassaji (2003; 261) states reading "... is a multivariate skill involving a complex combination and integration of a variety of cognitive, linguistic, and nonlinguistic skills". The complex nature of reading process then requires especially EFL/ ESL readers to be equipped with a range of strategies proven to help readers while reading.

Text organization exists in both narrative and expository structures. For instance, narrative texts include patterns of characters, events, goals, plots, and conclusions (e.g., Gunney, Gersten, Dimino, & Carnine, 1990; Idol, 1987). Specific structures within expository texts include main idea, antecedent and result, problem and solution, as well as compare and contrast text structures content such as science. As students progress through grade levels, they need to read expository texts are more often than narrative writing (Pugh, Pawan, & Antomarchi, 2000). Expository texts are more difficult to read than narrative texts (Saenz, Fuchs, 2002) because of high conceptual density, special terminology, multiple graphic ways of presenting information and structures that reflect the logic of the topic represented within the text (Pugh et al., 2000).

The English Language Arts Common Core State Standards have given

informational text an increasingly prominent place in classroom reading and writing instruction (CCSS, 2010). To build proficiency in reading informational text throughout a student's K-12 educational experiences, the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS) emphasize that students read and receive more literacy instruction using informational text. The recommendation is that K-12 students read and receive literacy instruction with a 50/50 proportion of information to narrative texts by grade 4 and a 70/30 proportion of information to narrative texts by grade 12. A major purpose for the CCSS is to prepare K-12 students to be college and career ready readers and writers. The increase in focus and attention on informational texts is due in large part to the fact that most adult reading and writing involves informational text (Smith, 2000). The craft and structure of information texts is a major category of study in the CCSS in which students are expected to learn how information texts are composed and organized. The study of information text organization and structure, sometimes referred to as close readings, has long been found to positively affect students' text comprehension and composition (Pearson & Duke, 2002; Williams, 2007). In their research on teaching text structures to improve reading comprehension, Meyer & Wijkumar (2007) showed that teaching text discourse patterns and structures through the use of model -texts and then applying these in children's writing helped them to simultaneously improve comprehension and writing composition. Read, Reutzel, and Fawson (2008) provided similar data demonstrating that using children's trade books as "text models" for teaching text structure to young children is an effective practice for increasing young students' reading comprehension of information texts. Additionally, the practice of reading books as models of writing has been shown to influence students acquisition of writing genres, discourse patterns, and text structures (Coker, 2007; Donovan & Smolkin, 2006; Meyer & Wijkumar, 2007).

Text structure, as described in the CCSS qualitative text complexity description, focuses upon text organization and text features to include conventional and unconventional text structures and the inclusion of simple, integrally related text features such as signal or clue words or phrases, headings, sub-headings, typography, paragraph structure, and graphic displays (CCSS, 2010).

Informational texts are organized around several conventionally accepted text structures: description, sequence, problem/solution, compare/contrast, and cause/effect (Meyer & Poon, 2001; Williams et al., 2007, 2009). Text structure is inherent in a text's purpose and organizational pattern reflecting the logical connections among ideas in the text (Williams et al., 2007). Text structures not only describe how a particular text is organized but also how other general rhetorical structures are organized as well as the cognitive entities found in the coherence representations of good readers (Kintsch & Kintsch, 2005; Meyer & Wijekumar, 2007). Although some students can deduce conventional text structures or organizational patterns, many students require intensive, explicit instruction in order to recognize and understand how to use these conventional informational text structures to improve their comprehension of informational texts (Pearson & Duke, 2002; Williams, et al., 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009). Williams (2007) asserts that "People sometimes argue that because only a small proportion of authentic text actually follow any single specific structure, there is little reason to spend much instructional time on text structure. It is true that for some children the reading experience attained over the first years of schooling will be sufficient for them to attain sensitivity to structure.

For many children, however, this is not enough early comprehension instruction is likely to be more effective if it includes specific instruction in text structure, including the use of texts that are well structured and prepared specifically for particular instructional purposes," pp. 201-202. Recently published Institute of Education Sciences (IES) "evidence-based" practice guides for

primary grade (K-3) educators have strongly recommended explicitly teaching conventional informational text structures as an important part of reading comprehension instruction (Shanahan et al., 2010). Past research has shown that knowledge of or a sensitivity to informational text structures enhances students' abilities to identify important ideas, construct accurate meaning, acquire new content knowledge, predict future events, summarize, and monitor comprehension of information texts (Hall & Sabey, 2005; Williams, et al., 2004, 2005, 2007).

For text structure instruction to be optimally effective in the early grades, teachers need to scaffold young students' text structure knowledge development by using well-structured exemplar texts. Many informational texts are poorly written, lack a clear structure, or switch frequently between structures (Kantor, Andersen, & Armbruster, 1983). Well-structured exemplar texts exhibit "simple, well-marked, and conventional structures" (CCSS, 2010, Appendix A, p. 5). This same panel suggests, "teachers use familiar ideas or topics when teaching students about the structure of informational text, and initially use texts that provide clear, easy-to-recognize examples of the structure" (Shanahan et al., 2010, p. 19). Such well-structured texts make use of signal or clue words and other text features to signal important organizational units and transitions for the reader. Graphics, photos, charts, and tables inserted into informational texts should clarify rather than confuse or distract from comprehension of the content. Using well-structured exemplars of informational text structures to provide text structure instruction helps young students more easily recognize text structures, thus allowing them to use this knowledge later on to comprehend less well-structured, complex information texts (Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, 2005; Williams, 2005; Williams et al., 2007; Williams, Stafford, Lauer, Hall, & Pollini, 2009). Although recent instructional research demonstrates the effectiveness of text structure and text feature instruction on primary grade students' reading comprehension as early as second grade (Hall, Sabey & McClellan, 2005; Reutzel, Smith & Fawson, 2005;

Williams, et al., Williams, et al., 2004, Williams, et al., 2005, Williams, et al., 2007, Williams, et al., 2009), many primary grade teachers admit to limited familiarity with the use of informational texts to teach text structures to young children (Hall & Sabey, 2007).

In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting like Iran (or Uzbek) where English has very little or no use in everyday day lives of EFL learners, English texts are main source of language input. Thus reading comprehension is the most important skill which is believed to have a central role in learning new information and in students` academic success. For this reason great emphasis is given to enhance learners` reading abilities (Iranmehr, Erfani, & Davari, 2011).

However, despite the great attention given to reading skill, EFL learners entering university have problems comprehending English texts. Because, applying Grammar Translation method to teach reading comprehension with over emphasis on decoding and ignoring higher level processes involved in reading is regarded as one of the major source of learners` poor reading comprehension. In school, most of the class time is spent explaining grammatical points and giving the meaning of individual words, and translating passages from English into Persian (or Uzbek) or vice versa. (Riazi, & Mosalanejad). As Shokrpour and Fotovation (2007) point out paying attention to single words, translation, and looking up all new words are regarded as inefficient reading strategies and take EFL readers` attention from higher order strategies. What learners can get help from is employing some more effective reading strategies which enable them to have global look at a text and use some textual features of texts to help them in comprehending a text. However, they are not acquired this ability in school and most of them face reading comprehension difficulties when they enter university. Scientists believe that lower- level processes are necessary components of L2 reading comprehension but reading is not a single factor process as Nassaji (2003; 261) states reading `... is a multivariate skill involving a complex combination and integration of a variety of cognitive, linguistic,

and nonlinguistic skills`. The complex nature of reading process then requires especially EFL/ ESL readers to be equipped with a range of strategies proven to help readers while reading.

Writing Information Text

Once students have had opportunities to consecutively read and analyze multiple models of the same text structure, they are ready to begin writing their own information text that incorporates this text structure. Most EFL teachers better follows these steps to teach their students to write a selected text structure. It`s better to begin the process with identifying an information topic to write about. Always it`s necessary to remember to teach the same text structure in writing that students have been closely reading in the previous parts of the lesson. The teachers use a graphic organizer to brainstorm and organize thoughts and ideas that represents the text structure that has been recently modeled and one that will be used to guide the writing of the same text structure. Students may need to do some research before they can begin recording information.

Model for students how to take the information recorded on the graphic organizer to write sentences or paragraphs about the topic, process, procedure, cycle, question or answer. *Could headings be used to group similar sentences into a paragraph(s)? What about a table of contents? What should be written first, next, last?* The teachers show students how to use the graphic organizer as a plan for organizing the information to be put into writing and show them how one part of the graphic organizer is the main idea, starting point, or question then show them how to write a sentence(s) that state the main idea, starting point, or question.

Next, they show them what comes next in the graphic organizer. The teachers` initial help to students see how to use signal words to organize their sentences or paragraphs. It`s necessary for teachers to remind students of the signal

words that are typically used with each of the modeled text structures and also include illustrations, graphs, charts, etc. as needed, to depict information in addition to the text of the sentences or paragraphs. Students need to read through the written text to make sure that the information about the topic has been shared accurately and that the information has been organized to follow the text structure that was intended to be practiced in their writing.

Closing Comments Researchers have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of helping students identify the text structures used by authors to organize, signal, and present information in text (Hall & Sabey, 2007). Then the teachers close reading for text structures provides a meaningful way to help students learn how to write authors write and organize their texts as models for writing their own information texts. With consecutive examples, modeling, and guided practice, even the youngest of students will be able to identify text structures in the books teachers and they read as well as using these text and text features to signal organization, structure, and pattern information shared in their own writing.

While teaching EFL students text structures it is urgently necessary to put emphasis on expository texts. From the beginning of their elementary schooling, students are exposed to both narrative and expository texts. Expository texts depict abstract logical relationships, represent a variety of text structures in one text, and contain technical terms and content that is usually unfamiliar to students (Williams, 2005; William et al., 2007; Wetsby et al ., 2010). Because of these characteristics, EFL learners have difficulty comprehending expository texts.

Recent research has indicated that instruction designed to teach students to recognize text structure improve comprehension, especially if the instructions focused on a single text structure (Williams, 2005). In fact, children are exposed to more expository texts than nonfiction throughout their schooling (Philbrick, 2009; Wetsby et al., 2010). However, children learners tend to exhibit better reading

comprehension for narrative than expository texts according to formal assessments (Best et al., 2008; Romero et al., 2005). According to Best et al., (2008), reading comprehension can be defined as the ability to obtain meaning from written text for some purpose. The fact that narrative text comprehension is better than expository text comprehension is alarming because students may be poorly prepared for secondary and post-secondary education in which expository texts play a large role than they do at the primary and middle school levels (Romero et al., 2005).

In this section, a number of researchers studied both narrative and expository text comprehension in order to better understand the influences on expository text comprehension. The first conducted by Romero et al., (2008) compared and contrasted children's reading of narrative and expository texts at both the local and global levels. The second study conducted by Best et al., (2008) explored the influences of reading decoding skills and world knowledge on students' comprehension of narrative and expository texts. The third by Kucer (2010) explored the impact of background knowledge and familiarity of text structure on writing and reading abilities of learners.

All three studies explored the factors that may influence narrative and expository text comprehension for elementary students. Romero et al. (2005) conducted a study to compare children's reading of narrative and expository texts using tasks that specifically address the issue of global versus local processing. The researchers defined local processing as reading at the level of phrases and sentences, whereas global processing requires readers to make meaning of the text as a whole. The researchers hypothesized that students' comprehension of narrative text would be better than their comprehension of expository text at both the local and global levels.

Furthermore, the researchers hypothesized that the organization of narrative text would allow it to be better understood than the expository text. There was not a control group for this study. Rather, researchers individually instructed all

students in the same manner. The dependent variables consisted of a prior knowledge check, a preference survey, think-along passage questions, and retellings of the passages. Two independent raters scored all data using rubrics on a 0-2 scale.

The sample consisted of 32 middle-class, Anglo-American fourth grade students at a public school in a small Midwestern city. There were equal numbers of male and female participants, and all students had at least a fourth grade level of reading as reported by their teachers. None of the participants were identified as having learning disabilities, and all students were monolingual English speakers. The researchers asked students about their prior knowledge and experience with the passage content before students began the tasks. Then, students were randomly assigned to read two texts. Each student read two books and completed all tasks during a single one-on-one session at the participant's school in a quiet room. The researchers created four texts (two narrative and two expository) with approximately the same number of words for the purpose of this study. All four texts featured nonfictional events regarding the protection of endangered mountain gorillas or rescuing ocean birds after oil spills. After reading each text, the participants completed two tasks, one that assessed their ability to comprehend the story at the local level and one at the global level. Local level comprehension was assessed with think-along passage questions, which required the children to answer two questions immediately after reading a page of the book for a total of 10 questions.

To assess global processing and comprehension, researchers directed students to retell the story once the students were finished. The passage questions required information to only be held in memory for the length of the page, whereas the retellings required information to be held in memory until the end of the story. Once the retellings concluded, participants were asked to compare the two books using five cognitive and five affective items in a Preference Survey

designed by the researchers. For example, students were asked which passage was more difficult, which book they liked more and which one was more interesting.

The results of the study, as indicated by the think-along passage answers and retelling results, show that students scored higher with retelling narrative texts than expository texts. Students performed similarly on both types of texts when the tasks required local levels of processing (answering two questions at the end of each page). However, the results indicated that their performance with narrative text was stronger when the task required a global level of processing (retelling).

According to the Preference Survey results, the researchers did not find evidence that students preferred narrative over expository texts. The results suggest that structural differences may have contributed to differences in students' reading performances. The authors concluded that the problems students encounter with expository text may not stem from lack of comprehension or interest, but rather from the less evident and useful structure of the text. Romero et al. (2005) ultimately concluded that students should be explicitly taught expository text structure in order to better understand expository text. Similar to Romero et al. (2005), Best et al. (2008) also researched both narrative and expository text comprehension at the primary level. Instead of examining local versus global comprehension, Best et al. (2008) explored the influences of reading decoding skills and world knowledge on third graders' comprehension of narrative and expository texts.

Based on recent research, the researchers hypothesized that children's comprehension of narrative text would be superior to their comprehension of expository text. The researchers also hypothesized that comprehension of both narrative and expository texts would be related to decoding skills and world knowledge. There was not a control group for this study. Rather, students were individually instructed in the same manner. The dependent variables were recall tasks and multiple-choice questions, and two tests from a standardized reading test.

The recall tasks and multiple choice questions were analyzed and coded by a trained graduate student and were given 0, 0.5, or 1 possible points.

The sample consisted of 61 third graders enrolled in two public schools in a large metropolitan school district. Girls formed 52% of the sample, and boys formed 48%. Fifty-seven of the children were African-American, 28% were White, 7% were biracial, and 3% were Asian-Pacific Islanders. Children in this sample demonstrated reading comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge that were average for their age based on two screening measures. These results verified that participating children displayed an age appropriate range of reading abilities and competencies. Testing was then completed within one-hour testing sessions four times a month for three months until all students had been individually tested.

To test their hypotheses, Best et al. (2008) developed a program in which students read a text, answered free and cued recall tasks and 12 multiple choice questions. The researchers carefully selected narrative and expository texts from a pool of texts obtained from basal readers and science textbooks. To begin the testing session, students read one text silently within a five minute period. Then, the text was removed from view. At this time, children were asked to recall main ideas and details from the passage without any directive questions from the researchers. This was known as free recall. Next, children were asked to respond to three questions to assess text comprehension that essentially covered the entire text. This was known as cued recall. Both free and cued recall responses were recorded on an audiotape and later transcribed. Following the recall tasks, students then vocalized their answers to twelve multiple-choice questions regarding the text. Each question and three answers were presented orally and visually by the researchers. Six questions were text-based and six questions were inferential, and the questions were asked in a random order. Once the students completed these

tasks with one text, the process was repeated in the same manner with the second text.

To obtain the results of the study, recall tasks were coded and specifically analyzed and ANOVAS were used to further analyze the results. The results of the study indicated that, across comprehension measures, children's scores were notably higher for the narrative text than for the expository text. The researchers determined that children's text comprehension was affected by text genre, narrative or expository. For both the narrative and expository texts, all comprehension measures, with the exception of the free recall, were significantly and moderately correlated with both world knowledge and decoding skills. Thus, the researchers determined that there was a strong positive correlation between world knowledge and decoding skills. This means that the better decoding skills and world knowledge a student has, the better they will comprehend a text.

Overall, Best et al. (2008) concluded that narrative texts are comprehended more successfully than expository texts and world knowledge and decoding skills have differential importance during text comprehension from different genres. Similar to the first two studies, Kucer (2010) also researched both narrative and expository text comprehension at the primary level. However, contrary to the studies by Romero et al. (2005) and Best et al. (2008), Kucer examined what retellings of narrative and expository texts indicate about a student's comprehension and if the comprehension matches the intended purpose of the author. Based on recent research in this area, Kucer hypothesized that reader background knowledge would facilitate comprehension of both expository and narrative texts. There was not a control group for this study. Rather, one group of students read a narrative text and one group of students read an expository text. Both groups were tested individually by a researcher. The dependent variables consisted of miscue analyses of the students' audio taped reading and an analysis of the retelling of the text. Each audio taped reading was analyzed and miscues were marked on a

typed copy of the text. Furthermore, researchers analyzed the content of the retelling to determine results.

The sample consisted of two groups of highly proficient fourth-grade readers from two middle class schools in the Pacific Northwest. Thirty-four fourth graders were randomly selected to read a narrative text. Of these students, 19 were female and 15 were male. Thirty-five fourth graders were randomly selected to read the expository text. Nineteen of these students were boys and 16 were girls. Most of the participants were reading one or more years above grade level. Before orally reading the expository text, students were asked by the researchers if they had any prior knowledge of the passage content. Most students indicated that they did have prior knowledge.

Researchers hypothesized that students were familiar with the narrative text topic, so they did not ask if students had prior knowledge before the oral reading began. To begin the study, students were instructed to read aloud their respective text as naturally as possible without assistance. Prior to the study, researchers encouraged students to use their best reading strategies. Students were told to read for meaning and they would be asked to give a retelling of the text without looking back upon completion of the reading. Students who read the narrative text individually read aloud the first chapter. Students who read the expository text individually read aloud the first three sections. If readers came to unknown words, assistance was not given on behalf of the researchers. Following the reading, readers retold all they could remember without looking back into the text. Also, the researchers asked probing questions based on what had been retold, along with requests for elaboration or clarification. A miscue analysis of the reading, including markings for substitutions, omissions, insertions, pauses, corrections, attempts to correct, abandonment of correct responses and repetitions was conducted. Also, researchers conducted an analysis of the retelling on the clause level. They determined if each clause was a match, substitution, addition,

summary, conflict, rearrangement or omission. Readings were first analyzed by one researcher, and then analyzed by a second researcher. Differences were resolved during a data analysis meeting. To obtain the results of the study, researchers used a t-test to statistically analyze the processing and the comprehension of the text. For processing behaviors, researchers analyzed mean percentages for clauses with no miscues, incorrect miscues, meaning maintaining clauses and words read per minute. For comprehension behaviors, researchers analyzed means or mean percentages for a retold clause, matching clauses, nature of non-matching clauses, and rearrangement of non-matching clauses.

Results indicated that expository readers were significantly more likely to substitute information, add non-matching information, or retell non-matching summaries. Also, comprehension of narrative text proved to be more accurate than the comprehension of the expository text. It was hypothesized that this may be due to a lack of familiarity of the expository text content and structure. Kucer also concluded that familiarity with a text type and background knowledge may have contributed to more accurate retellings (which matched the author's intended purpose) of narrative texts versus expository texts. Furthermore, the researcher concluded that the construction of information may vary for different types of text involving different types of content and text structure. Overall, Kucer suggests that teachers should help students develop background knowledge of a topic, especially expository texts, to enhance text comprehension.

The three studies in this section provided insight about both narrative and expository text comprehension and the influences on expository text comprehension at the elementary level. The first study by Romero et al. (2005) confirmed that the structure of expository texts can inhibit text comprehension, and expository texts are not comprehended as well as narrative texts. The second study by Best et al. (2008) confirmed that world knowledge and decoding skills can affect the comprehension of expository texts. The third study by Kucer (2010)

indicated that the lack of background knowledge and familiarity of text structure may affect the comprehension of expository texts. The researchers of all three studies confirmed that narrative texts are better comprehended than expository texts for a variety of reasons.

Furthermore, elementary students should be taught how to comprehend expository texts so that they are better prepared for middle school and beyond. Recent research suggests that this can transpire through reading strategy instruction using expository texts during content area classes. In the following section, the effectiveness of embedding the teaching of expository text structure instruction into the content areas is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

While doing this research I tried to answer the following questions:

- Why to teach EFL learners the types of the text structure?
- Will teaching the text structures improve EFL learners` writing and reading abilities?
- How to teach EFL learners to identify and utilize the text structures?

The study occurred within a different aged (14-17 years) EFL learners who have the same level of (intermediate) English language acquisition in a whole group setting. Eighteen students participated in the study from Hanna Language Center in Fergana city. Lessons occurred three times a week for 45 minutes. The study occurred for seven weeks and was divided into three sessions. For the first three weeks, I as the researcher instructed students how to identify and comprehend the compare/contrast expository text structure. For the second three weeks, the researcher instructed students how to identify and comprehend the cause/effect expository text structure. For the final one week I as the researcher instructed students how to write compositions applying cause/effect and compare/contrast text structure. I as the researcher chose several expository texts to use for my instructions. During week one of each three week session, I modeled how to identify the text structure and use a graphic organizer. During week two, I as the researcher led students in guided practice with a silent read of the text and a whole group lesson to complete the graphic organizer. And also during week two of each session, students independently read a passage and completed the graphic organizer. There was not a control group for this study. Rather, students were all part of the same treatment group and individually assessed. There were several dependent variables. Several components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-6 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011) were administered to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Components included written answers to the three concept questions, a prediction task, and eight comprehension questions. In addition, students read a

passage silently, and verbally retold the passage to the researcher. Other methods of assessment were Venn diagrams and t-charts. Students independently completed Venn diagrams and t-charts to demonstrate comprehension of compare/contrast text. As a final measure of assessment, students independently completed cause/effect graphic organizers to demonstrate knowledge of the cause/effect text structure. The next section discusses the sample of the study.

Description of Sample

Once as I designed the study, the sample was selected. Eighteen Hanna Language Center students in Fergana city participated in the study. The participants of this study included 10 boys and eight girls. All participants were Uzbek who were learning English as a foreign language. The range of learners' ages was different between 14-17 years old but they all have the same intermediate level. They all studied at different schools and colleges (schools 21-26, Petroleum college). Participants participated in the study as volunteers. The eighteen were chosen out of thirty-two other participants by checking their speaking skills.

Description of Procedure

At the beginning of the study, I administered a Level Two reading passage from the Qualitative Reading Inventory-6 (Appendix A 2 for lesson plan). The nonfiction passage, *Whales and Fish*, compared and contrasted whales and fish (see Appendix A). To assess prior knowledge, students answered three concept questions and completed a prediction based on the content of the concept questions before reading the passage (see Appendix B). Next, students silently read the *Whales and Fish* passage. Prior to this reading, I as the researcher instructed students to use their best reading strategies as they were not going to receive assistance with reading. I as the researcher also informed students that they would need to retell the story once they finished reading. After students read the passage,

they wrote answers for eight comprehension questions (see Appendix C). Both the concept questions and the comprehension questions were retyped verbatim by the researcher to allow adequate space for student responses. After students finished writing their responses to the questions, they were asked on an individual basis to retell as much of the passage as they could recall (see Appendix D). I prompted students to *Retell the passage as though you are telling it to someone who has never read it*. For the student identified with special needs, an assistant teacher read aloud the text and questions. Accommodations were not made for other students participating in the study. Concept questions, comprehension questions, and the retellings were collected, analyzed and scored by the researcher. After we administered the pretests, comprehension instruction began. Prior to the study, I created an anchor chart to assist students in understanding the compare/contrast text structure (see Appendix E). The chart included the definitions of compare and contrast, signal words, graphic organizer examples and questions for students to ask themselves when reading. This chart was subsequently read aloud by students before each lesson for the duration of two weeks. We obtained the three second grade texts in week one from the Read Works Homepage. In addition to reviewing the chart on day one, the students and I chorally read a fictional passage titled *My Brother and I* (see Appendix F). I chose this text because it was explicitly written in the compare/contrast format with signal words in italics. During the choral read, we prompted students to highlight signal words within the text (e.g. alike, different, both, same, etc.). Upon completion of the reading, I as the researcher and students completed a Venn diagram in the whole group setting (see Appendix G). I modeled how to compare and contrast the text using a Venn diagram and recorded answers on the easel white board for students to observe. Additional answers provided by students were subsequently recorded as well. Students documented their answers on an individual Venn Diagram. During the next two days, the lesson routines were very similar. On day two, the

researcher and students chorally read an expository text titled *Schools Long Ago* obtained from the Read Works Homepage (see Appendix H). I modeled how to locate signal words by using the anchor chart as a guide. The text was projected on the classroom Black Board for all students to view. As we modeled how to highlight signal words as well as differences and similarities between schools now and then, the students used their highlighters on a copy of the text as well. Following this activity, students answered five multiple choice questions with a partner (see Appendix I). Then, we reviewed the answers with the whole group, and changes, if any, were made by the students. Finally, a Venn diagram was completed as a whole group following the same procedure from day one. Students were directed to compare schools long ago, and the researcher recorded answers from volunteers on the white board. Similarly, students were then instructed to contrast schools from long ago and today, and answers from volunteers were recorded on the white board. On day three, a different expository text was used and additional comprehension questions were not completed in partnerships. I with students chorally read a text titled *Colonial Life versus Life Today* obtained from the Read Works homepage (see Appendix J). I modeled how to identify and highlight signal words and completed a Venn diagram in a whole group setting. Throughout the week, the student identified with special needs worked one on one with an assistant teacher. She read the text aloud to the student as this learner's reading level is below grade level. After an answer was discussed with verbal prompting, an assistant teacher wrote it down on a small white board for the student to copy as writing is difficult. At the conclusion of week one, all papers were collected by the researcher and analyzed. During week two, we introduced another expository text to the students titled *At Home: Long Ago and Today* (Brent, 2003). Also, I introduced another graphic organizer called a t-chart (see Appendix K). The t-chart was divided into two columns in which students recorded similarities in one column and differences in the other. Our goal by using a

second graphic organizer was to expose learners to another way to organize their comparisons. Before each of the three lessons during this week, we with students read the anchor chart to review elements of compare/contrast text structure. On day one, I read aloud the first chapter called *Where is Home?* It introduced the concept of the book, which compared and contrasted homes in the present day to homes long ago. After reading aloud, students independently read a copy of the next chapter called *The Living Room*. Once students finished reading, we modeled how to compare and contrast the living room from present day and long ago. I recorded one comparison on a large Venn diagram on the easel white board for all students to see. Then, I instructed students to independently record another comparison. I and an assistant teacher checked each students' answer for a correct response, and prompted incorrect responses with probing questions such as *Look back into the text and reread this part*. Next, volunteers shared their answers during a whole group discussion and we recorded several responses on the large Venn diagram. Students documented the new comparisons on their Venn diagrams. Finally, we collected student work and checked for three correct responses in each section of the Venn diagram. For the following two lessons of week two, a similar routine occurred. Students independently read a copy of the next two chapters called *The Bathroom and The Kitchen*. After reviewing the anchor chart, we demonstrated how to locate and record a comparison from the text on a large Venn diagram. I and an assistant teacher then instructed students to find a comparison independently and checked their answers. Following an independent response, the Venn diagram was completed as a whole group. Student work was collected, and each answer was worth one point each. Student work was scored from zero to six points. During this week, the same routine from week one occurred with an assistant teacher and the student with special needs. During week three, students read the next three chapters independently. The chapters were titled *Chores, Dinner, and Outside*. Before students read the chapters, I and students reviewed

the anchor chart to review elements of compare/contrast text. Then we instructed the students to read the chapters independently and search for similarities and differences between homes in present day and long ago. Finally, we instructed the students to record three sentences under each section of the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the aspects of home from present day and long ago. At the of week three, the researcher collected, analyzed and scored student work. Student work was scored from zero to six possible points. Once the three week session concluded, another three week session began. A similar instructional routine occurred between me and students during the three weeks; however, students learned how to identify and comprehend the cause/effect text structure instead. The texts chosen for the three weeks, with the exception for day one, were from the series called Easy Reader Biographies by Scholastic. I chose the texts because the content was appropriate for learners` level. Also, the reading levels of this text series ranged from levels I-K, which were second grade reading levels as identified. Prior to the study, I created an anchor chart to help students understand the cause/effect text structure (see Appendix L). The chart included the definitions of cause and effect, signal words, graphic organizers and questions for students to ask themselves when reading. This chart was subsequently read aloud by students before each lesson over the next three weeks. During week one, I modeled how to identify causes within a text. During week two, we guided students to identify causes and effects within a text in isolation. During week three, students independently practiced identifying and comprehending causes and effects simultaneously. In addition to reviewing the chart on day one, the students and researcher completed a cause/effect worksheet in a whole group setting. We obtained the worksheet titled *What Happened from the book Cause & Effect: Using Causes and Effect to Make Connections* (Warrick, 1999) (see Appendix M). We guided students on how to match the cause with the effect, and the worksheet was completed together in a whole group setting. On day two, I with an assistant

teacher and students chorally read aloud a text titled *George Washington* (Martin, 2007). Next, I modeled how to complete the first two boxes of the cause/effect graphic organizer (see Appendix N). The graphic organizer was projected onto the White Board and we recorded answers on it while students recorded answers on their worksheets. I read aloud the causes and modeled how to search the text and find the effects. Finally, students were prompted to think of the effect for the last cause listed on the page. Several sample answers were verbalized, and one answer was recorded on the graphic organizer for students to copy. The same routine occurred for the last lesson of this week, only a new text was used titled *Squanto* (Ghiglieri, 2007). The same graphic organizer was used as well, except that it was modified to fit the content of the story. At the conclusion of week one, we collected student work and scored it from zero to three points. During week two of this portion of the study, students began each lesson by reading the cause/effect anchor chart with the researcher. Next, we instructed students to silently read the first half of the book called *Abraham Lincoln* (Findley, 2007). Once students finished the reading, I modeled how to complete the first two boxes of the cause/effect graphic organizer. The graphic organizer was projected onto the White Board and we recorded answers while students recorded answers on their worksheets. We read aloud the causes and modeled how to look back into the text to find the effects. Finally, we prompted students to think of the effect for the last cause listed on the page. Students verbalized several answers, and one answer was recorded on the graphic organizer for students to copy. I with an assistant teacher checked each student answer for a correct response, and prompted incorrect responses with probing questions such as *Look back into the text and reread this part*. Next, volunteers shared their answers during a whole group discussion and I recorded several responses on the White Board graphic organizer. Students added responses to their own graphic organizer. Finally, student work was collected and checked for three completed causes. The next two lessons of this week were

conducted in the same manner. On day two, students read the second half of the text titled *Abraham Lincoln* (Findley, 2007). This time instead of the researcher modeling how to find the causes, we modeled how to find the effects. Answers were recorded on another graphic organizer. Finally, on day three, students read half of a text titled *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Sweeney, 2007). We reviewed how to find causes again with the students and they recorded answers on the graphic organizer. At the conclusion of week five, I collected and analyzed student work. Student work was scored from zero to three points. During the final week of the study, each lesson began in the same manner as the other lessons with reading the cause/effect anchor chart as a whole group. Students then read passages from two separate books. The books were divided into sections across the three days. On the first day, students read the first half of *Helen Keller* and finished the second half on day two (Ghiglieri, 2007). Students completed two separate graphic organizers. For the last day, students read the first half of *Harriet Tubman* (Findley, 2007). Students completed a final graphic organizer for this text. I instructed the students to read the selections and record either a cause or effect, depending on the empty box on the worksheet. At the conclusion of day three, we collected, analyzed and scored student work. Student work was scored from zero to three points.

To further enhance the comprehension of compare/contrast and cause/effect text structure, students completed homework for six weeks to support these skills. Students completed this homework once a week. I informed parents of the six assignments prior to the study. For the first three weeks, students read selections from a book titled *Reading Comprehension, Grade 2* (Teacher Created Resources, Inc., 2007). The first selection was titled *City or Suburb* (see Appendix O). The second selection was titled *Getting Around* (see Appendix P). The third selection was titled *Inventions: Then and Now* which was obtained from the Read Works Homepage (see Appendix Q). For the three assignments, students answered the

same prompts created by the researcher: Name two similarities between (the topic) and name two differences between (the topic). For assignment one, students identified two similarities and two differences between *Cities and Suburbs* (see Appendix R). For assignment two, students recorded two similarities and two differences between transportation long ago and today. Finally, for assignment three, students identified two similarities and two differences from inventions long ago and today. The same graphic organizer was used, except the content was modified to correspond to the text. For the second three weeks, students needed to find the cause or effect of the selections and record their answers. The selections were also from the book *Reading Comprehension, Grade 2* (Teacher Created Resources, Inc., 2007). The first selection was titled *Becoming Farmers* (see Appendix S). The First Thanksgiving was the title of the second selection (see Appendix T). The third selection was titled *Blind and Deaf* (see Appendix U). During the three weeks, students needed to find the cause or effect for three possible scenarios regarding each topic. For the first assignments, students needed to identify causes and effects surrounding farming (see Appendix V). Students needed to record causes and effects surrounding the Pilgrims and Native Americans for assignment two. For assignment three, students needed to identify causes and effects regarding Helen Keller's life.

After students completed each homework assignments, parents reviewed and initialed the paper. If a child did not complete the assignment, it was returned home for completion. One hundred percent of the children returned their homework each week. Homework was collected, analyzed and scored by the researcher. The compare/contrast homework was scored from zero to four points. The cause/effect homework was scored from zero to three points. I sent home corrected homework.

After six weeks text structure acquisition for reading comprehension was finished, students began writing compositions applying cause/effect and

compare/contrast text structures to improve their writing skills. That process took place one week including three lessons of 45-minutes. On day one I asked students to write two texts, the first is compare/contrast and the second one is cause/effect to check out their writing skills. I gave 40 minutes to complete two tasks (each 20 minutes). But I didn't supply any explanation how to write cause/effect and compare/contrast texts. Learners were supposed to complete their composition relying their background knowledge. At the end of the lesson all paper sheets were collected, analyzed and scored by the researcher. On day two I distributed sheets of paper with *Similarities and Differences chart* which compared and contrasted cats and dogs' *The Funny Things About Cats And Dogs*' (Appendix W). The first task students did was to find out the structure of the text which they were going to write, then fill the chart and finally, turn it into a full text themselves without my instructions. Students wrote a compare/contrast text using information given in a graphic organizer. Students were given twenty minutes to complete the task. When students finished the task, the researcher gave a copy of original text about cats and dogs to discuss it in a whole group setting and compare it with their own writing. At the end of the lesson all paper sheets were collected, analyzed and scored by the researcher. Student work was assessed from zero to three points. On day three the same tasks repeated again as it was on day two but this time I asked students to write a composition applying cause/effect text structure. Venn Diagram helped learners to fulfill this task (Appendix X). At the end of the lesson all sheets were collected, analyzed and scored by the researcher. Overall scores of the students on writing tasks of one week were collected and concluded.

Data Collection

We collected, analyzed and/or scored various student assessments and assignments throughout the duration of the study. First, I collected, analyzed and scored the QRI-6 concept questions, comprehension questions, retellings and their

writing. The written responses to the three concept questions were worth nine points total. Each question was worth one, two or three points each, depending on the amount of detail provided by the student. Based on the concept questions score, the passage was identified as familiar or unfamiliar for the student. If students scored five points or more, the text was considered familiar. Conversely, if the students scored four points or less, the text was considered unfamiliar. An example of a concept question was *How do whales breathe?*

Next, I scored students' predictions for zero, one or two ideas implicitly or explicitly stated in the text. Then, we scored the responses to eight comprehension questions regarding the passage's content. There were four explicit and four implicit questions for a total of eight possible points. I recorded the number of implicit questions correct as well as the number of explicit questions correct. An example of an implicit question was *What part of the whale is like our nose?* An example of an explicit question was *What part of the whales and fish are alike?* Based on the number of correct answers, the passage was marked as frustration, instructional or independent for the student. Finally, we recorded how many ideas each individual student was able to recall without prompting. At the conclusion of weeks one and four (the first week of each session), we collected and reviewed answers on the Venn diagram and the cause/effect graphic organizer. The activities were completed as a whole group, so we did not score the assignments. At the end of weeks two and five (the second week of each session), we collected and analyzed the assignments. I scored student work from zero to six points for the compare/contrast assignments, one point for each idea written on the Venn diagram. The cause/effect assignments were scored from zero to three points. Finally, during the independent assignments for weeks three and seven of the study, we collected, scored and analyzed the assignments. For week three, student work was scored from zero to six points, one for each correct answer in each section of the Venn Diagram. For week six, student work was scored from zero to

three points, one point for each cause or effect completed. In addition to scoring student assignments completed in class, we scored the homework. For the first three weeks, the assignments were scored from zero to four points, one point for each correct answer. For the last three weeks, the assignments were scored from zero to three points, one point for each correct answer.

In addition to recording the homework response scores, we recorded whether or not parents initialed each assignment. In the final week we instructed learners how to write specific text structures including compare/contrast and cause/effect. After the data was collected, analyzed and scored, we determined results of the data. We analyzed pretest and posttest results. Specific sets of data were graphed and analyzed. We determined the mean, median and mode of pre and post retellings, as well as and pre and post explicit and implicit answers based on the QRI-6 results. We also conducted paired, one tailed t-tests for these three test results as well. Furthermore, we determined the mean, median and mode the six independent assignments completed for the compare/contrast and cause/effect texts. Also, we checked learners` writing skills giving them additional tasks on two text structures.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of teaching text structures on reading and writing abilities of EFL learners. The goal of us was to teach learners how to identify, comprehend and write text structure, specifically compare/contrast and cause/effect. We hypothesized that teaching learners how to identify, comprehend and write the two text structures would enhance their reading and writing abilities. The data represented in this chapter reflects the pretest and posttest results of the study which occurred during seven weeks. The chapter also includes data from six independent assignments completed by students. Several components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory-6 were administered, scored and analyzed by the researcher. One component of the QRI-6 was the pre and posttest comprehension questions, both implicit and explicit. There were four explicit and four implicit questions scored from zero to eight. An example of an explicit question was *According to the passage, how are whales and fish different?* An example of an implicit question was *What is this passage mainly about?* A second component of the QRI-6 administered by the researcher was the pre and posttest oral retelling. Students were prompted to tell us what they recalled about the text. We recorded how many ideas each student was able to recall without prompting. In addition to scoring and analyzing components of the QRI-6, we scored and analyzed six assignments completed independently by students. During week three, students independently completed three Venn diagrams. Student work was scored from zero to six points, one for each correct answer in each section of the Venn diagram. For week seven, students independently completed four cause/effect graphic organizers. Student work was scored from zero to three points, one point for each cause or effect completed. The assignments completed in a whole group setting with the researcher and the students were not analyzed. Only independent

assignments were analyzed to determine student growth. The next section discusses the presentation of the data.

Presentation of Data

For the implicit and explicit pre and posttest comprehension question results, we determined the mean, median, mode and standard deviation. In addition to determining the mean, median, mode and standard deviation, I conducted a paired, one tailed t-test for the retelling and comprehension questions. Similarly, for the pre and posttest retellings, I with my assistant teacher determined the mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Results were calculated and organized into three separate bar graphs. Students were identified by a randomly assigned number. For the six independent student assignments completed during weeks three and seven, I determined the mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Unlike the retellings and comprehension results, we did not conduct a t-test. Students were also identified with their initials for these assignments. The next section discusses our analysis of the data collected.

Analysis of Data

Upon completion of the seven-week study, we calculated and reported the results of pre and posttest QRI-6 data. For the pretest explicit question results, we determined a mean of 1.83. The maximum mean score was four. The mode of the data was two, and the median score was two as well. The standard deviation was 1.20. For the posttest explicit results, the researcher determined a mean of 2.38 and a mode of three. The median score was three, and the standard deviation was 0.77 (see table 1).

Table 1

Explicit Pretest and Posttest Results

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Explicit Pretest Questions	1.83	2	2	1.20
Explicit Posttest Questions	2.39	3	3	1.78

Differences in students pre and post-test explicit comprehension questions are presented in:

Figure One.

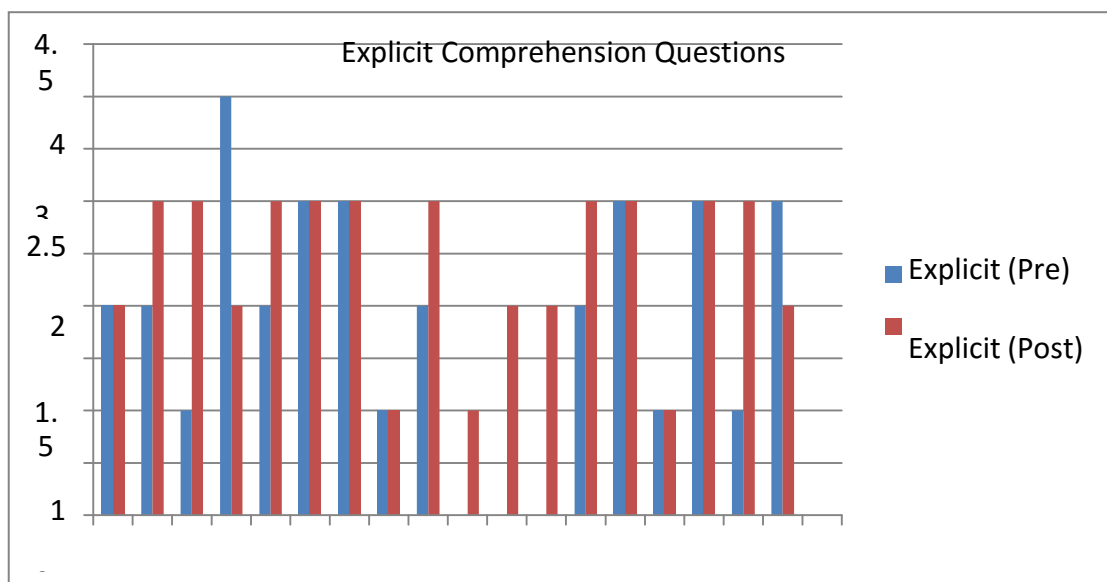


Figure 1. Explicit comprehension question results. This figure illustrates the pretest and posttest results of the QRI-6 explicit comprehension questions.

Post data results indicated an increase in mean from explicit pre and posttest responses. The mean increased from 1.83 to 2.38. For the pretest implicit question results, I determined a mean of 2.44 and a mode of two. There was a median score of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.98. For the posttest implicit results, we determined a mean of 2.5, a mode of three and a median of three as

well. The standard deviation was 1.04 (see Table 2). Similar to the explicit question results, we determined growth between implicit pretest responses to posttest responses. Post data results indicated a minimal increase in mean from 2.44 to 2.5, as well as an increase in mode from two to three. Also, there was an increase in the median score from 2.5 to three. The standard deviation of the pretest (0.98) and the standard deviation of the posttest (1.04) were similar (see Figure 2). Overall, I determined growth from the explicit pretest to the posttest. However, we did not observe growth from the implicit pretest to the posttest. In addition to calculating the mean, mode, median and standard deviation, the researcher conducted a paired, one-tailed t-test for each assessment. A paired, one-tailed t-test was conducted to compare overall scores from the pre and posttest responses. There was a statistically significant difference in scores for the explicit pretest responses ($M=1.83$, $SD=1.20$) and posttest responses ($M=2.39$, $SD=1.78$); $t(17)=0.02$, $p=0.05$. Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference in scores for the implicit pretest responses ($M=2.44$, $SD=0.98$) and posttest responses, ($M=2.5$, $SD=1.04$); $t(17)=0.43$, $p=0.05$. The results of both t-tests suggested that positive gains could be attributed to the comprehension instruction surrounding compare/contrast and cause/effect text structures. Specifically, using all of the data, the researcher concluded an overall effect of treatment for explicit question responses.

Table 2

Implicit Pretest and Posttest Results

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Implicit Pretest Questions	2.44	2.5	2	0.98
Implicit Posttest Questions	2.5	3	3	1.04

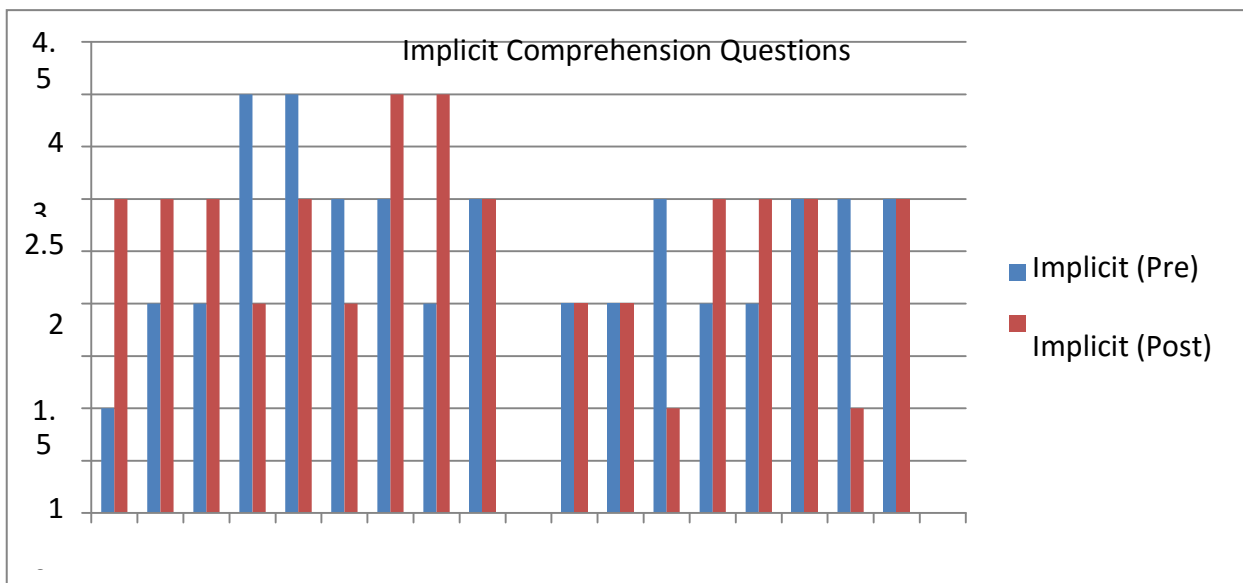


Figure 2. Implicit comprehension question results. This figure illustrates the pretest and posttest results of the QRI-6 implicit comprehension questions.

Once the results of the pre and posttest comprehension questions were determined, the researcher determined the effect of treatment for the retelling portion of the assessment (see Table 3). For the pretest retelling results, the researcher determined a mean of 15.87 and a mode of 20. The median score was 15, and the standard deviation was 6.50. For the posttest retelling results, the researcher calculated a mean of 18.11. The median was 19, and the mode was 19 as well. The standard deviation was 6.29. Overall, the researcher determined growth from retelling pretest to posttest responses (see Figure 3). Post data results indicated an increase in mean from 15.87 to 18.11. The median increased from 15 to 19; however, the mode decreased from 20 to 19. The standard deviations of 6.50 and 6.29 were similar. Overall, the researcher observed an effect of treatment surrounding compare/contrast and cause/effect text structure instruction. In addition to calculating the mean, mode, median and standard deviation, the researcher conducted a paired one-tailed t-test to compare scores from the pre and posttest responses. There was a statistically significant difference in the scores for the retelling pretest responses ($M=15.67$, $SD=6.50$) and for the retelling posttest

responses ($M=18.11$, $SD=6.29$); $t(17)=0.01$, $p=0.05$. The results of the t-test suggested that positive gains could be attributed to the comprehension instruction surrounding text structure. Overall, we concluded an effect of treatment.

Table 3

Retelling Assessment Results

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Retelling Pretest Responses	15.67	15	20	6.50
Retelling Posttest Responses	18.11	19	19	6.29

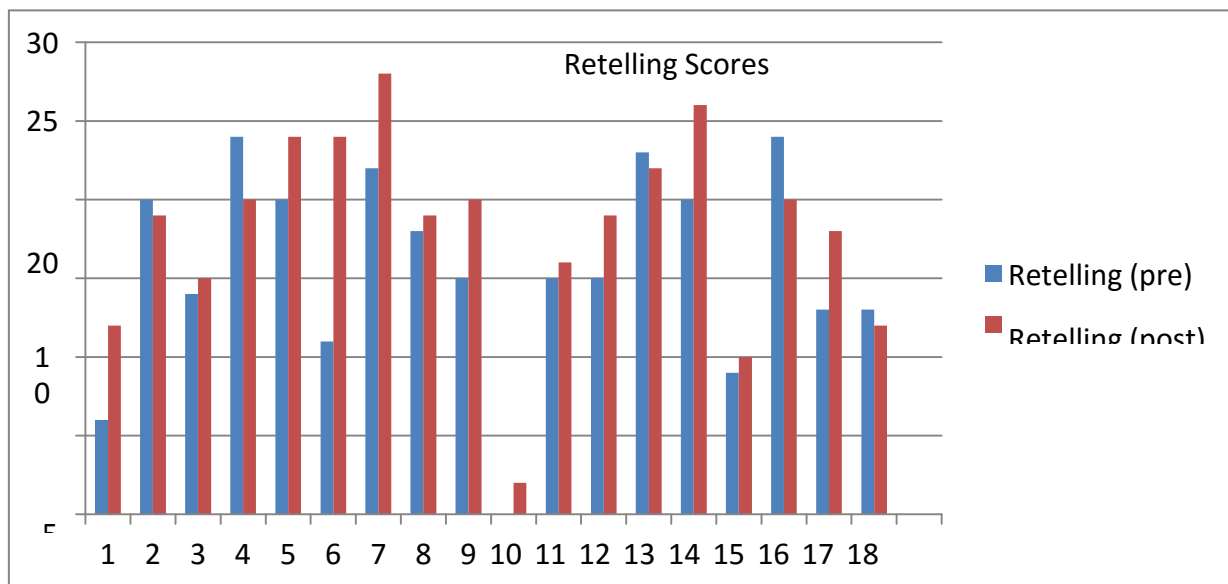


Figure 3. Results from the QRI-6 retelling assessment. This figure illustrates the pretest and posttest results of the QRI-6 retelling assessment.

In addition to determining results for the comprehension questions and retellings, the researcher determined results for six independent assignments (see Table 4). First, the researcher determined the results of the Venn diagrams used to

determine growth of students' compare/contrast text structure knowledge. The students completed three Venn diagrams scored from zero to six points during week three. For the first assignment of week three, results indicated a mean of 5.5. Both the mode and the median were calculated at six. The standard deviation was 0.79. For the second assignment, the mean was 5.28. The median and mode scores were both six. The standard deviation was 1.18. For the third assignment, the mean was 5.39. The median was 5.5 and the mode was six. The standard deviation was 0.70. An analysis of the three assignments indicates a decrease in mean from 5.5 to 5.28 from assignment one to assignment two; however, there was then an increase in mean from 5.28 to 5.39 from assignment two to assignment three. The median remained at six from test one to test two. However, the median decreased to five from test two to test three. The mode was calculated at six across all three tests. The standard deviation from week one scores was 0.79. The standard deviation from week two was 1.18, and the standard deviation from week three was 0.70. The results of the independent assignments suggested no significant difference in scores. The mean, median, mode and standard deviation were very similar for all three assignments (see Figure 4). Therefore, we did not conclude an effect of treatment regarding the three assignment scores.

Table 4

Independent Assignment Results, Week Three

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Assignment 1	5.5	6	6	0.79
Assignment 2	5.28	6	6	1.18
Assignment 3	5.39	5.5	6	0.70

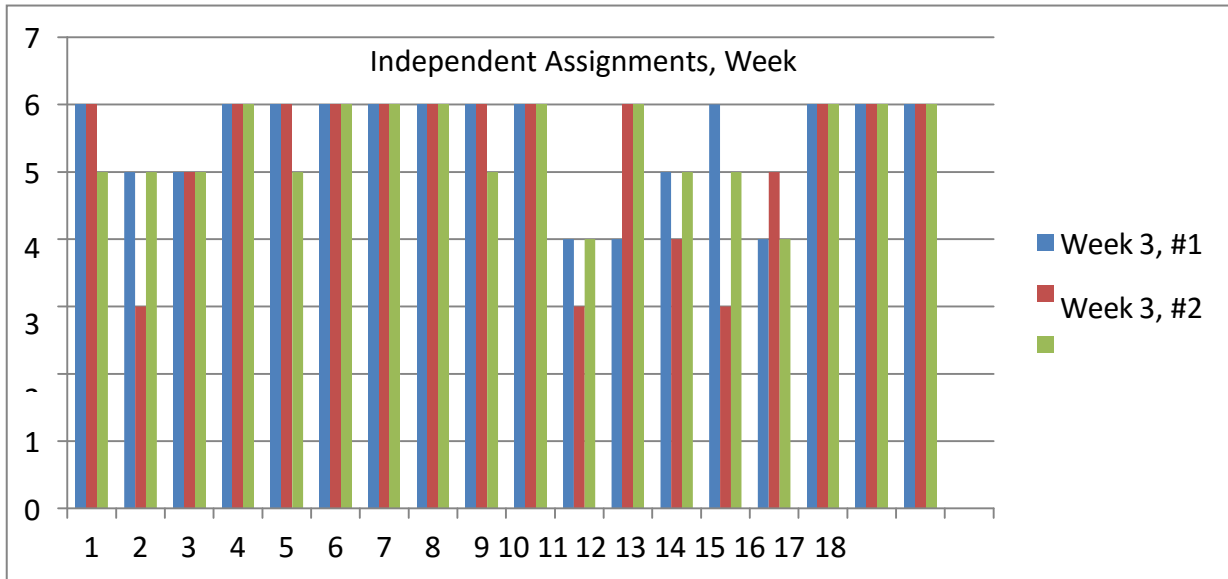


Figure 4. Results of independent assignments. This figure illustrates the results of the independent assignments demonstrating students’ knowledge of compare/contrast text structure.

In addition to determining the results of the Venn diagram responses, we separately determined the results of the cause/effect graphic organizer responses (see Table 5). The students completed three cause/effect graphic organizers scored from zero to three points during the final week of the study. For the first assignment of week six, the mean was 2.78 with a median of three. The mode was also three. The standard deviation was 0.43. For the second assignment, the mean was 2.33 with a median of 2.5. The mode was three with a standard deviation of 0.77. Finally, for week three, the mean was 2.56 with a median of three. The mode was three with a standard deviation of 0.62.

Table 5

Independent Assignment Results, Week Six

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Assignment 1	2.78	3	3	0.43
Assignment 2	2.33	2.5	3	0.77
Assignment 3	2.56	3	3	0.62

Results indicated a decrease in mean from 2.78 to 2.33 from assignment one to assignment two; however, there was then an increase in mean from 2.33 to 2.56 from assignment two to assignment three. The median decreased from three to 2.5 from assignment one to assignment two; however, the median increased from 2.5 to three from assignment two to assignment three. However, there was a decrease in mean from assignment one to assignment two, and another decrease in mean from assignment two to assignment three. The mode remained a score of three across all three assignments. The standard deviation from week one scores was 0.43. The standard deviation from week two was 0.77, and the standard deviation from week three was 0.62. The overall results did not suggest an overall effect of treatment and growth in knowledge of cause/effect text structure (see Figure 5).

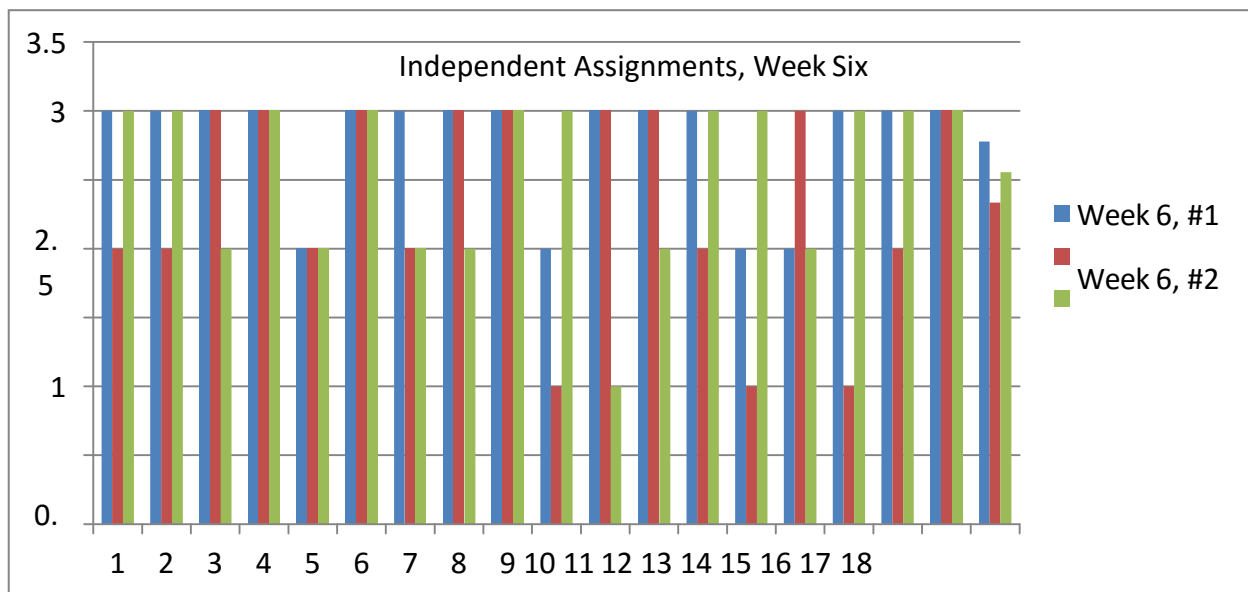


Figure 5. Results of week six independent assignments. This figure illustrates the independent assignment results from week six.

Upon completion of the seven-week study, we calculated and reported the results of pre and posttest writing assessment data. For the pretest writing results, we determined a mean of 1.51. The maximum mean score was three. The mode

of the data was two, and the median score was two as well. The standard deviation was 1.02. For the posttest writing results, we determined a mean of 2.23 and a mode of three. The median score was three, and the standard deviation was 1.56 (see table 6).

Table 6

Writing Pre and Posttest Results, Week Seven

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Writing Pretest Assessment	1.51	2	2	1.02
Writing Posttest Assessment	2.23	3	3	1.56

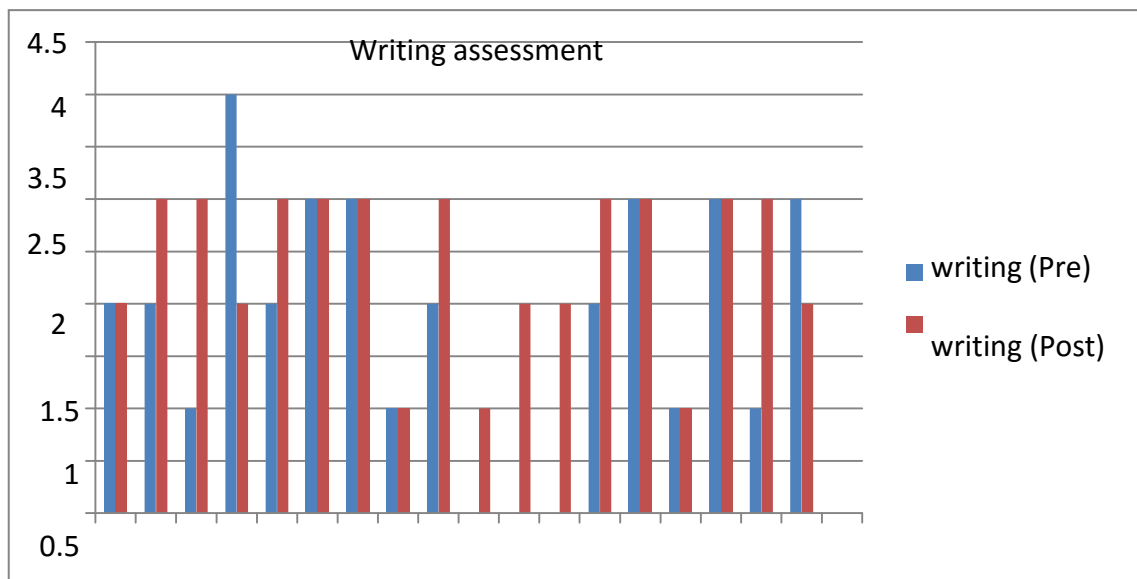


Figure 6. Writing assessment results. This figure illustrates the pretest and posttest results of writing tasks.

DISCUSSION

During a seven week study I was able to determine that teaching EFL learners the text structures benefits them tremendously. While teaching them I noticed how my students began discussing what have they had learned in a whole group setting. Day by day they got more engaged into teaching process as they learn more and more. As they were able to identify the types of text structures that they were doing reading tasks better. I was sure that the more EFL learners are taught various text structures the better they do with their writing and reading tasks.

However, I faced up to some problems as well. The first challenge appeared during my research was how to choose materials to teach text structures. It became a real problem when I discovered that no attention was devoted to teach text structures in Uzbekistan. I had to spent a lot of time searching for proper materials in different web sites. In the next step I selected materials taking into account my students` levels and their cultural affairs. Moreover, I couldn't find any proper handbooks or guidebooks to apply to teaching process which were created by our authors. Then I totally decided to utilize western teachers` methods to teach my students text structures. For example, the Common Core State Standards guided the development of the study. The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in a specific grade level. As a result, teachers use the standards as a guide for their teaching of Math and English Language Arts. According to the Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Informational Text (2010), students as young as kindergarten are expected to read and comprehend informational, or expository texts.

On the other hand, applying only authentic materials to my teaching process enhanced noticeably my students worl- outlook . They got introduced with different new information while doing reading tasks. Taking into consideration all

achievements reached my students in their writing and reading as well as in widening their horizon, I urgently would suggest to do further research to identify the effectiveness and importance of teaching text structures in our national education. After a seven week study I realized that text structures usefull and necessary not only to teach English language but also it`s required in the sphere of other subjects too, like chemistry, physics, history and so on. Because as my students mentioned these subject are more difficult for them as they require more reading comprehension. Some of them say that they can`t understand what is described or what information is given in the text untill they read it three or four times. These difficulties of students may lead to further problems in the next stages of their education. So, it only works for our benefit if we set text structure teaching in our curriculum. However, taking into consideration all research limitations and weaknesses, I hope my further research on effects of teaching text structures will be of high standards.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of teaching text structure on writing and reading abilities of EFL learners. Throughout a seven-week study, I taught learners how to identify and comprehend text structure, specifically compare/contrast and cause/effect. As a result of this instruction, I hypothesized that students' writing and reading abilities would improve. After various assessments were administered, I collected, scored and analyzed the results to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. Of the seven pretest and posttest assessments analyzed, the researcher determined growth from two assessments: the pretest to posttest responses of the explicit question responses and retellings. I observed noticeable growth from the pre and posttest implicit question responses including the seven independent assignments.

Connection to Common Core Standards

The Common Core State Standards guided the development of the study. The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in a specific grade level. As a result, teachers use the standards as a guide for their teaching of Math and English Language Arts. According to the Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Informational Text (2010), students as young as kindergarten are expected to read and comprehend informational, or expository, texts. Beginning in grade two, students are required to comprehend and write expository texts across the content areas of history, social studies, science as well as technical texts. Furthermore, beginning in second grade and continuing through high school, students are expected to compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. According to the Reading Standards for History/Social Studies from Grades 6-12 (2010), students are required to comprehend texts within the

grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently by the end of eighth grade. With the Common Core State Standards as a guide, I specifically designed the study. I taught EFL intermediate learners how to identify, comprehend and write two expository text structures, specifically compare/contrast and cause/effect. Furthermore, the instruction occurred during social studies instructional time.

Research based on the results of the study, I recommended several ideas for future research. First, the pre and post assessment QRI-6 explicit and implicit questions should be completed individually and orally by students rather than written. (As it was difficult for my students to speak, most of the time I asked them to write). This may be more time consuming before and after the study, but the results may be more accurate. Similarly, for the reading of the QRI-6 expository passage, *Whales and Fish*, students should read this aloud to the teacher. This task may also be time consuming for the researcher but it may lead to more accurate results. If these oral assessments are implemented, future researchers may want to extend the study from seven weeks to nine weeks to allow ample time to meet with each student. Another recommendation for future research is a larger, more diverse sample. The sample of this study included children of similar demographics, socioeconomic status and academic abilities. A future sample should include children with various academic levels in both reading and writing, demographics and/or socioeconomic status. Another recommendation would be for students to orally complete the graphic organizer with the researcher or a partner during week one of each three week session. Independently writing with a new graphic organizer can be a limitation for intermediate students. A final recommendation is to focus on one text structure and have a control group for the study. For example, two groups of students can receive reading comprehension instruction of social studies content written in the compare/contrast format. However, one group of students could be explicitly taught how to identify the text

structure, and the other group will not. The recommendations for future research may enhance the effectiveness of the study.

In conclusion, the seven-week study explored the effect of teaching text structure on intermediate level reading comprehension and writing composition. I instructed students on how to identify, comprehend and write text structure, specifically compare/contrast and cause/effect. Upon analyzing the assessment results, I concluded noticeable effect of treatment.

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<http://uza.uz/en/society/president-resolves-to->

APPENDICES

Appendix A 1

President resolves to improve foreign language learning system

12.12.2012

On December 10, 2012 President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed a decree “On measures to further improve foreign language learning system”.

It is noted that in the framework of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On education” and the National Program for Training in the country, a comprehensive foreign languages’ teaching system, aimed at creating harmoniously developed, highly educated, modern-thinking young generation, further integration of the country to the world community, has been created. During the years of independence, over 51.7 thousand teachers of foreign languages graduated from universities, English, German and French multimedia tutorials and textbooks for 5-9 grades of secondary schools, electronic resources for learning English in primary schools were created, more than 5000 secondary schools, professional colleges and academic lyceums were equipped with language laboratories.

However, analysis of the current system of organizing language learning shows that learning standards, curricula and textbooks do not fully meet the current requirements, particularly in the use of advanced information and media technologies. Education is mainly conducted in traditional methods. Further development of a continuum of foreign languages learning at all levels of education; improving skills of teachers and provision of modern teaching materials are required.

According to the decree, starting from 2013/2014 school year foreign languages, mainly English, gradually throughout the country will be taught from the first year of schooling in the form of lesson-games and speaking games, continuing to learning the alphabet, reading and spelling in the second year (grade).

Also it is envisaged that university modules, especially in technical and international areas, will be offered in English and other foreign languages at higher education institutions.

The State Testing Centre, along with other relevant agencies, is tasked with preparing draft proposals on introducing foreign languages testing to the entrance examinations for all higher educational institutions.

In order to increase teaching standards in distant rural areas, the higher educational institutions are allowed targeted admission of people living in distant areas to foreign language programs on the condition that they will oblige themselves to work in the acquired specialty at their residence area for at least 5 years after graduation. The decree also envisages 30% salary increase for foreign language teachers in rural areas, 15% increase for those in other areas.

The National Tele-radio Company, State Committee for communications, information and telecommunication technologies, Agency for Press and Information of the Republic of Uzbekistan are tasked to prepare and broadcast language-learning programs, significantly increase access to international educational resources via “Ziyonet” educational network, promote publication of foreign language textbooks, magazines and other materials.

The summary of the Decree has been taken from <http://uza.uz/en/society/president-resolves-to-develop-foreign-language-learning-system-11.12.2012-3147>

Appendix A 2

LESSON PLAN

Module: reading and writing skills

Topic: Whales and Fish

Level: intermediate (EFL learners)

Time: 45-min

Aim: to teach learners how to identify text structures (compare/contrast), to teach learners how to utilize target text structure while doing reading tasks and improve their reading comprehension

Materials: a piece of chalk, a whiteboard, a lot of copies of sheets *Whales and Fish*

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson EFL learners are supposed to become aware of text structures, specifically compare/contrast. At the beginning of the lesson learners are given full information about target text structure and then step by step the teacher goes into details about compare/contrast structure during a lesson.

Pre activities

Activity 1

Time: 10 min

In order to assess learners' prior knowledge, they are asked to answer three concept questions and complete a prediction based on the content of the concept questions before reading the passage *Whales and Fish*

Concept Questions for "Whales and Fish"

What is this passage mainly about?

According to the passage, how are whales and fish different?

According to the passage, name another way that whales and fish are different.

What part of the whale is like our nose?

Why does a baby whale stay with its mother for a year?

What part of the whales and fish are alike?

Where are fins found on fish and whales?

Why might a mother fish not know her baby?

During activities

Activity 2

Time: 30 min

Students silently read the *Whales and Fish* passage. Prior to this reading the teacher instructs to use their best reading strategies as they are not going to receive assistance with their reading. The teacher also informs students that they will need to retell the story once they finish reading. After students read the passage, they write answers for eight comprehension questions. When students finish writing their responses to the questions, they are asked on an individual basis to retell as much of the passage as they can recall. The teacher prompts learners to *Retell the passage as though you are telling it to someone who has never read it before.*

Whales and Fish

Whales and fish both live in the water, but they are different in many ways. Whales are large animals that live in the water. Even though whales live in the water, they must come to the top of the water to get air. When they come to the top of the water, whales breathe in air through a hole in the top of their heads. At the same time they blow out old air. Whales don't get air like fish. Fish take in air from the water.

Mother whales give birth to live whales. The baby whale must come to the top of the water right away for air. The baby drinks milk from its mother for about a year. Then it finds its own food. Fish have babies in a different way. Most mother fish lay eggs. The babies are born when the eggs hatch. Right after they are born, the baby fish must find their own food.

Whales and fish are alike in some ways too. Whales and fish have flippers on their sides. They also have fins on their tails. Flippers and fins help whales and fish swim. Fins move and push the water away.

Questions for ‘Whales and

Fish” What is this passage mainly about?

According to the passage, how are whales and fish different?

According to the passage, name another way that whales and fish are different.

What part of the whale is like our nose?

Why does a baby whale stay with its mother for a year?

What part of the whales and fish are alike?

Where are fins found on fish and whales?

Why might a mother fish not know her baby?

Post activities

Activity 3

Time: 5 min

The teacher presents an anchor chart which includes the definitions of compare and contrast text structure, signal words, graphic organizer examples and questions for students to ask themselves when reading. The teacher gives this chart as homework to remember and read aloud each lesson for the duration of three weeks.

COMPARE and **CONTRAST**

↓

find ways that 2 or more things are ALIKE

↓

find ways that 2 or more things are DIFFERENT

Signal Words

- Compare**
 - same as
 - alike
 - both
 - likewise
 - similar(ly)
 - not only, but also
 - also
- Contrast**
 - different
 - However
 - instead of
 - but
 - on the other hand
 - even though
 - although

Graphic organizers

- Venn diagram
- T-chart

Ask yourself:

- How are these things alike?
- How are these things different?

Appendix

The Funny Things about Cats and Dogs

Cats	Similarities	Dogs
Cleans themselves		Waits to be washed

The Funny Things about Cats and Dogs

1 A funny thing about cats and dogs is that they both came from the same ancestor. This animal lived 40 million years ago in caves. The animal is called Miacis. Many scientists think that the Miacis was a tree climber, and lived in a den or cave. Scientists believe that cats and dogs make good house pets because their relative, the Miacis, lived inside of a dwelling. 2 Unlike wild animals like the tiger and the wolf, cats and dogs can live around people. This may be why they are as popular as pets. Most of the time, cats and dogs will not harm children or adults. 3 Cats and dogs have other thing in common. They both can be trained to do tricks. They will also eat leftover food. The dog is often believed to be friendly. The cat is believed not to be as friendly as the dog. Cats can make good pets if they are allowed to do what they please. Dogs and cats both like to be petted. Dogs like to run, catch balls and sticks, and play. Cats are more settled and quiet. Many people think that cats enjoy playing with a ball or yarn or a rubber mouse.4 Many people also think that cats will look you in the eye and that dogs will turn away when you stare at them. Dogs are seen as humble and cats are seen as proud. Others believe that dogs depend on people for their care. Cats mainly take care of themselves.5 Another funny thing about cats and dogs is that most people think that they are enemies. Cartoons and some books show cats and dogs fighting each other. People who own both cats and dogs disagree with this belief. These two animals can be good friends.6 Yet another funny thing about cats and dogs is that even they are the most popular pets in America, most Americans don't know all the facts about them

Appendix A

Whales and Fish

Whales and fish both live in the water, but they are different in many ways. Whales are large animals that live in the water. Even though whales live in the water, they must come to the top of the water to get air. When they come to the top of the water, whales breathe in air through a hole in the top of their heads. At the same time they blow out old air. Whales don't get air like fish. Fish take in air from the water.

Mother whales give birth to live whales. The baby whale must come to the top of the water right away for air. The baby drinks milk from its mother for about a year. Then it finds its own food. Fish have babies in a different way. Most mother fish lay eggs. The babies are born when the eggs hatch. Right after they are born, the baby fish must find their own food.

Whales and fish are alike in some ways too. Whales and fish have flippers on their sides. They also have fins on their tails. Flippers and fins help whales and fish swim. Fins move and push the water away.

Appendix B

Name: _____ Date: _____

Concept Questions for "Whales and Fish"

What is this passage mainly about?

According to the passage, how are whales and fish different?

According to the passage, name another way that whales and fish are different.

What part of the whale is like our nose?

Why does a baby whale stay with its mother for a year?

What part of the whales and fish are alike?

Where are fins found on fish and whales?

Why might a mother fish not know her baby?

Number correct explicit:

Number correct implicit:

Total:

___Independent: 8 correct

___Instructional: 6-7 correct

Appendix C
Questions for “Whales and Fish”

What is this passage mainly about?

According to the passage, how are whales and fish different?

According to the passage, name another way that whales and fish are different.

What part of the whale is like our nose?

Why does a baby whale stay with its mother for a year?

What part of the whales and fish are alike?

Where are fins found on fish and whales?

Why might a mother fish not know her baby?

Number correct explicit:

Number correct implicit:

Total:

___Independent: 8correct

Instructional: 6-7 correct

COMPARE and CONTRAST

↓

find ways that 2 or more things are ALIKE


↓


find ways that 2 or more things are DIFFERENT

Signal Words

<u>Compare</u>	<u>Contrast</u>
• same as	• different
• alike	• However
• both	• instead of
• likewise	• but <small>• unlike</small>
• similar(ly)	• on the other hand
• not only, but also	• even though
• also	• although <small>• on the contrast</small>

Graphic organizers

Venn diagram 

T-chart 

Ask yourself:

- How are these things alike?
- How are these things different?

Appendix F

My Brother and I

Isn't it strange that two people from the *same* family can be *alike* and yet very different at the same time? Take me and my brother Jared for example. Sometimes my mom says we are *like* each other. Other times we are as different as night and day.

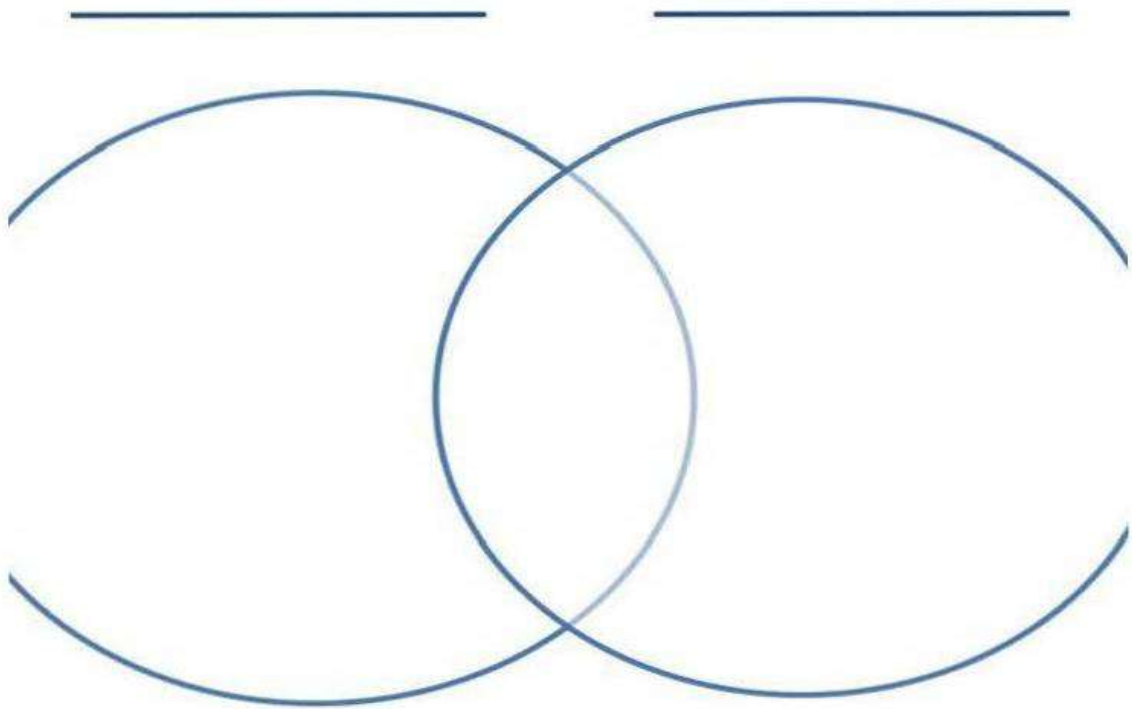
First of all, we are *alike* because we *resemble* one another.

We are *both* tall with skinny legs, long arms, and dark hair. My teacher always says, "You look just *like* your brother Jared." Also, we both play basketball. But, I'm actually better than he is. We *both* love ice cream for dessert, especially on Friday nights after pizza.

Not everything is the *same* about us though. One way we are different is that Jared loves to read. However, my favorite subject is math. This works out though, because we can help each other with our homework. Another way we are different is that Jared eats all his vegetables at dinner every night. On the other hand, I like to hide my peas and broccoli under my napkin. I always hope my mom doesn't notice. She always does.

I guess that's how families are. You are a little bit the *same* and a little bit different from one another. I do know one thing. Even when he drives me crazy, I still think Jared is the best brother in the world!

Venn Diagram



Appendix H

CONCEPTS OF COMPREHENSION: COMPARE AND CONTRAST 2ND GRADE UNIT

Reading Passage

School: How Has It Changed?

School has changed in some ways over time. Let's learn about those ways.

Schools did not always have computers. How is school today different from school many years ago?

School: Then and Now

School Buildings



Dynamic Graphics

Then: Many schoolhouses had only one classroom. Students of all ages learned together.



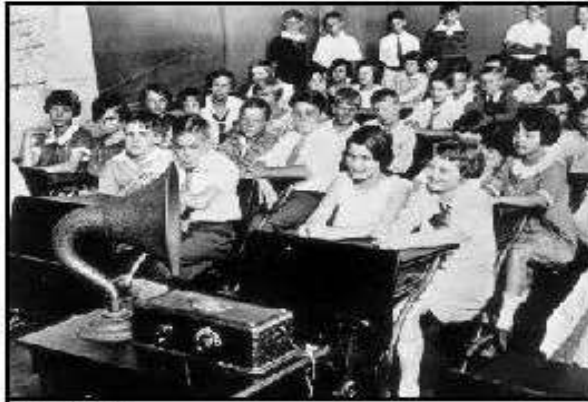
photos.com

Now: Most school buildings have many classrooms. Students in each class are about the same age.

ReadWorks.org

PROVEN TOOLS FOR TEACHING COMPREHENSION
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School Tools



Value/SuperStock

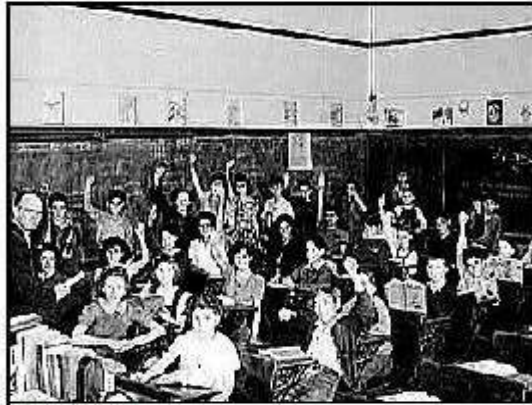
Then: Students listened carefully to a phonograph.
That is a machine that plays recordings.



photos.com

Now: Students use computers during lessons.
They wear headphones to listen and learn.

School Rules



Library of Congress

Then: Students raised their hands to answer questions. The teacher called on students to respond.



Fotostock/SuperStock

Now: Students still raise their hands to answer questions. That is one way school has not changed.

Appendix I

CONCEPTS OF COMPREHENSION: COMPARE AND CONTRAST 2nd GRADE UNIT

Question Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

“School: How Has It Changed?” Questions:

- _____ 1. How were schools in the past *different* from schools today?
 - a. In the past, students of many ages learned together.
 - b. Girls could wear skirts to school in the past.
 - c. Students raised their hands in the past.
 - d. Students used machines in the past.

- _____ 2. How were schools in the past the *same* as schools today?
 - a. In the past students of many ages learned together.
 - b. In the past pictures were only in black and white.
 - c. Students did not eat lunch in the past.
 - d. Students raised their hands in the past.

- _____ 3. One thing schools now have that schools in the past did not is
 - a. desks
 - b. students
 - c. computers
 - d. teachers

- _____ 4. The author included pictures of schools from the past
 - a. because he likes black and white photos.
 - b. to compare them to schools of today.
 - c. because the author went to school long ago.
 - d. to show the reader how much better schools were.

- _____ 5. What is a phonograph?

Appendix J

Colonial Life versus Life Today

People who lived during Colonial times had a very different life than we have today. For example, many of the city merchants were craftsmen, shoemakers, silversmiths, and blacksmiths. On the contrary, in cities today you can find large department stores, grocery stores, and even specialty stores, like music stores. Homes had windows that were covered in paper rather than the glass we use today. Also, the medicines that they had were unlike the modern kinds that we have today.

Not everything is different, however. In colonial times, people planted vegetable gardens behind their homes. Similarly, many families today plant their own gardens to grow fresh vegetables. Colonial families ate the same foods as we do today, like chicken, turkey, oatmeal, and fruits. Colonial children played games like hide-and-go-seek, hopscotch, and checkers. Likewise, children today also play these games.

Appendix K

Name: _____ Date: _____

--

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES


Appendix L

Reciclado 100% reciclado
Reciclado 100% reciclado
CONTIENE BLOQUE DE 30 HOJAS

CAUSE and EFFECT

Cause


Why did it happen?



It rained.

Effect

What happened.




I used my umbrella.

→
←

(the REASON something happened)

(the RESULT that happened)

Graphic Organizers



```
graph LR; Cause[Cause] --> Effect1[Effect]; Cause --> Effect2[Effect]; Cause --> Effect3[Effect];
```

Signal Words

- because
- if... then...
- therefore
- so that
- as a result
- in order to
- since
- nevertheless
- thus

Ask yourself:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What caused it to happen?

Appendix M



Name _____

What Happened?

Can you guess what happened? Match the cause to the effect by writing the correct letter on the line.

Cause

Effect

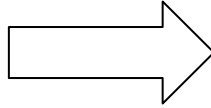
- ___ 1. Kate was all wet because...  a. I threw his ball.
- ___ 2. John made a face because... b. she was hot and thirsty.
- ___ 3. Joe's dad was mad because...  c. Joe forgot to put his bike away.
- ___ 4. My teacher smiled because... d. I am hungry.
- ___ 5. My dog Scruff ran because... e. she fell into the lake.
- ___ 6. Mike wanted Raquel on his team because...  f. his mom gave him ice cream.
- ___ 7. Keisha asked for a glass of water because... g. the juice tasted funny.
- ___ 8. Toby smiled because...  h. she can hit the ball a long way.
- ___ 9. Everyone ran to the porch because... i. we all did well in reading.
- ___ 10. I want some popcorn because...  j. it began to rain.

Appendix N

CAUSE

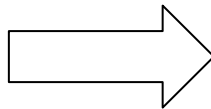
EFFECT

A war started because....



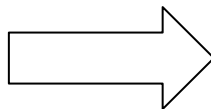
[Empty box for the effect of the war starting]

The soldiers cheered because...



[Empty box for the effect of soldiers cheering]

The army won the war
becuese....



[Empty box for the effect of the army winning the war]

Appendix O

Ready, Set, Learn!



City or Suburb?

Many people live in a city. Their homes are close together. Cities have businesses and factories, too. There are tall office buildings and lots of places to work. Often people who live in the suburbs have jobs in the city.

Suburbs are the areas around a city. They have lots of houses. These homes have more space between them. The yards are bigger. Suburbs have more space. So, big shopping malls are often found there.

City streets have sidewalks and streetlights. Some of the streets may be "one way." This means you can only drive in one direction. It is uncommon to find one-way streets in a suburb.

There are other differences, too. The people in the city can walk to many places. Children may walk to school. The people in the suburbs often must drive to get places. So, many children in a suburb ride school buses.



Appendix P

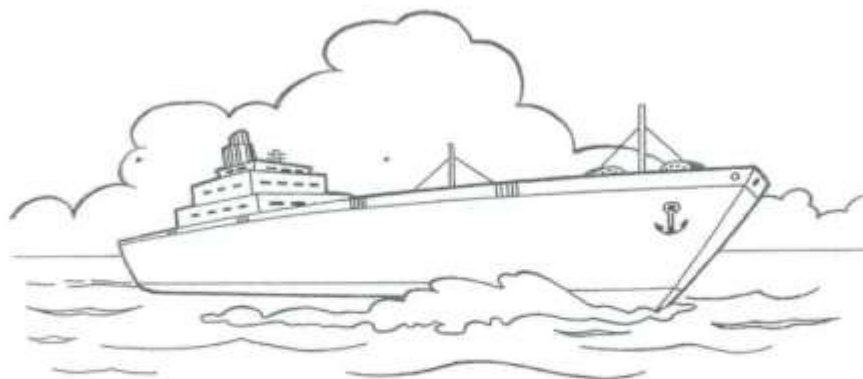


Getting Around

Long ago, people had to walk to get where they wanted to go. Then someone tamed horses. People could go farther than ever before. They could go faster, too. After a while, someone made a wagon for a horse to pull. Then people could move big, heavy things.

Today we have many ways to move people and things around. There are cars, boats, planes, and trains. There are big trucks. These are all forms of transportation.

How do you get bananas from South America? They are put on a big ship or plane. When they get to the U.S., they are unloaded. Then they are put on a train. At the train station, a truck picks them up. The truck takes the bananas to your store. That's how you can get foods from around the world!



Inventions: Then and Now

Inventions[†] solve problems and help make our lives easier. The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in 1903. The first flight traveled about half the length of a football field and lasted 12 seconds. Today's airplanes can travel long distances. Look at the ways that some inventions have changed over the years.

Discover how some inventions have changed over time.

Telephone



Then

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. The first phone had a trumpet-shaped part that was used to speak and to listen.



Now

Many people carry small cell phones. They have no wires, unlike earlier phones. Cell phones let people talk all over the world.

[†] Invention: something created for the first time.

Reading Passage

Calculator

Then

The first calculator was invented in Asia nearly 500 years ago. People moved beads on a wooden rack to help them count.



Now

Calculators come in many shapes and sizes. They can even be part of other inventions, including computers, watches, and cell phones.

Television

Then

Television became popular in the 1950s. The first TVs did not have a remote control. The screens showed pictures in black and white, and the sound was poor.

Now

Many modern TVs have flat screens. Some can be hung on a wall. Today's televisions have very clear, colored pictures, and excellent sound.

Appendix R

Name: _____ Date: _____

City or suburb?

Directions: Use the passage called “City or Suburb?” to answer the 4 questions below.

Name 2 ways in which a city and suburb are alike.

1. _____

2. _____

Name 2 ways in which a city and suburb are different.

3. _____

4. _____

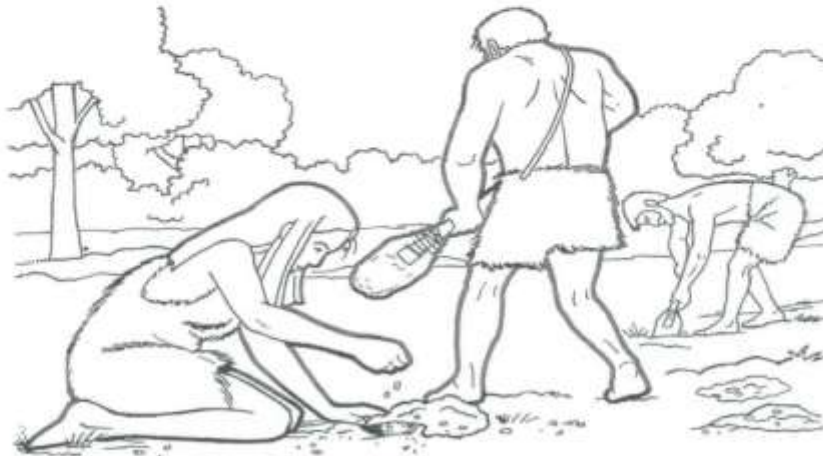
Parent Initials: _____



Becoming Farmers

Long, long ago people did not know how to grow food. So they looked for fruits and nuts. They hunted and ate animals. The animals moved around. So the people had to move around, too. At night they looked for a cave to stay in. When they couldn't find one, they often got cold and wet.

Then people found out that if they put seeds in the ground, plants would grow. Then they could eat the plants or their seeds. This let the people stay in one place. They made homes and grew **crops**. They stored up food, too. They lived longer.



Appendix T

The First Thanksgiving

In 1620 the Pilgrims left England. They wanted their own land. They sailed in a ship called the *Mayflower*. When they reached America, they named their new home Plymouth.

The first winter was hard. There wasn't much to eat. Half of the people died. In the spring, Native Americans found them. They gave the Pilgrims corn seeds. They told them where to fish and dig for clams.

By that fall the people had lots of food. They had a big **feast**. They asked the Native Americans to come. They ate for three days! It was the first Thanksgiving.





Blind and Deaf

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880. She was a happy baby. Then, Helen got sick. Helen got a fever. It hurt her ears. Helen became deaf. She could not hear.

Think about how you learn to talk. You listen. You learn to say what other people say. Helen could not hear. She could not listen. She could not learn to talk. The high fever also hurt Helen's eyes. Helen became blind. She could not see.

Helen was not happy. She became wild. She hit. She screamed. She threw things. She hurt people.



Helen's parents found a teacher. The teacher was named Annie Sullivan. Annie did not let Helen hit. She did not let her break or throw things. Annie taught Helen how to talk. Helen was deaf. She was blind. How could Annie teach her how to talk?

Annie made signs with her fingers. She used the signs to spell words. She made the signs in Helen's hand. At first, Helen did not know what the signs meant. Annie did not give up. She took Helen to a water pump. Annie pumped. Water came out. Helen felt the water. At the same time, Annie signed. She signed w-a-t-e-r. Then, Helen knew!

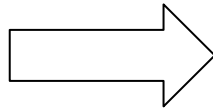
Appendix V

Below are 3 causes from the passage called "Becoming Farmers." Write down the effects.

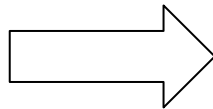
CAUSES

EFFECTS

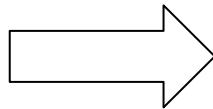
People moved around because..



If people put seeds in the ground, then....



If people didn't find a cave to stay in...



Appendix W

The Funny Things about Cats and Dogs

Cats	Similarities	Dogs
Cleans themselves		Waits to be washed

The Funny Things about Cats and Dogs

Appendix X

Venn Diagram

Venn Diagram

