Using Audiobooks to Promote Comprehension of Cause-Effect Relationships in Social Studies Texts

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Using Audiobooks to Promote Reading Comprehension of Cause/Effect Relationships in Social Studies Texts

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Teaching reading to adolescents poses many challenges, especially if they are English learners (ELs). Comprehension issues, motivation, and engagement make reading difficult for ELs. When I first moved from teaching elementary to teaching high school, I was amazed at how my students enjoyed read alouds in class and would stay engaged when I read literature to them, possibly because the focus was on comprehension instead of decoding. Eventually, I moved from read alouds to audio books, and my students enjoyed reading along to the audio book version. I could see that my students were more engaged in the literature, but I didn’t know if the use of the scaffold was helping them develop reading comprehension skills, or if it could be applied to expository texts. While reading literature is an important part of high school, one of the most important skills students need to develop is reading non-fiction. From what I have observed, non-fiction texts, or expository texts as they will be referred to in this paper, are especially difficult for EL students.

The related challenge for ELs in high school is how quickly they need to be accessing the content in their mainstream classes. In order for EL learners to be successful in the mainstream, they will need to be able to comprehend expository texts. The social studies curriculum in particular often requires large amounts of reading and writing, which can be very difficult for students unfamiliar with the content (Short, 1993). While the lack of prior knowledge for many of the ELs poses problems in the
social studies classroom, text structure itself makes comprehension difficult. The structure of expository texts can be confusing, and students often have a hard time understanding for example how the author is illustrating key ideas (Ciardiello, 2012). Expository texts contain many patterns of organization, and one of those key patterns in social studies texts is cause-effect. The cause-effect pattern informs the reader of the relationship between the causes and the effects of certain events. Reading a text based on cause-effect organization requires the reader to move from basic comprehension, to understanding and even inference to connect the relationships in the cause-effect pattern (Hayes, 1989). The teacher must provide the appropriate strategies, including scaffolds, that help the students access the academic content necessary for them to be successful in the class. This chapter introduces several of the key issues related to expository text structure, focusing primarily on the cause-effect patterns and the difficulties those patterns pose for ELs’ comprehension. Additionally, the use of audiobooks as a scaffold for promoting comprehension of cause-effect structures in expository texts will be investigated.

Expository Texts

When students first learn to read, they read mostly narrative stories. The text structure follows a similar pattern: a character is introduced, a conflict is presented, there are a series of events, and a climax (Hayes, 1989). Once students are exposed to expository texts, this familiar structure changes; in the new structure, students often
struggle to find the connections within the presented information, seeing the text as a list of facts instead of a series of main ideas and supporting details (Ciardiello, 2012). There are patterns that are common in expository texts, however, and understanding these patterns help teachers and students access the content better. Expository texts are often written with chronological structures, i.e. first this event happened, followed by another event. Within the chronological structure, cause-effect relationships might appear, which can cause confusion. Cause-effect organization requires a higher level of thinking and academic language control for effective comprehension than just decoding the text. Students need to use the information presented in the text, while inferring meaning on their own to comprehend the cause-effect relationships (Hayes, 1989). Applying the skills necessary is challenging for second language learners, who often are still developing literacy skills needed to comprehend academic English while being expected to learn the content (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Research done on the effect of teaching the text structure to struggling readers and ELs has shown that in order for students to be successful in their mainstream classes, given the language demands, a balanced approach of explicit teaching of structures along with content must be found. Creating scaffolds to help students access the content while teaching specific vocabulary and language needed to recognize patterns, such as cause-effect (Piccolo, 1987; Short, 1993).
Audiobooks

I have used audiobooks as a scaffold and have felt that it was successful in helping students access literature. As the students read a piece of literature, they listened along to the audiobook. As Wolfson (2008) has shown, students are more engaged with the texts when listening along to the audiobook. Over the years I have also observed that students are more engaged in reading while listening to the audiobook of the text. Audiobooks that I have used in the past have been commercially produced audiobooks, read by a reader and listened to with the class reading along in a hard copy of the text. For the purpose of this study, I will refer to all audio recorded material as audiobooks.

The use of audiobooks as a tool to help struggling readers is not a new concept. Much of the application and research has been focused on elementary students, but it is becoming more common to use these strategies in the upper grades and college as well. Hett (2012) claims that one of the benefits of using audiobooks as a scaffold is that they allow students to move beyond decoding and focus on the content. According to Wolfson (2008), audiobooks are effective in promoting comprehension because the same skills necessary to reading comprehension can be applied to listening comprehension. When audiobooks are used, students are interacting with the content through another medium, and since comprehension is the ability to process and understand the text, audiobooks promote comprehension. Listening while reading (LWR) is a strategy which students
listen to the same text they are reading silently (Winn, Skinner, Oliver, Hale, & Ziegler, 2006).

**Background and Role of the Researcher**

As a high school ESL teacher, the challenge I face is preparing my students to be successful in the mainstream while they are learning social and academic English. Seven years ago, I had the opportunity to help revise the ESL program at my school. The model of holding kids in sheltered ESL classrooms was replaced with a more integrated model. My colleague and I created a program that relied heavily on collaboration with mainstream teachers. Our ESL classes focus on teaching academic language through content that is closely related to their mainstream classes. In addition, my colleague and I co-teach with mainstream teachers in several areas where we knew our students would struggle, specifically social studies and science. This program model has been successful; we have a high graduation rate, and our students are able to be involved in content classes early in their language development. However, the challenges that our ELs face are growing. There is pressure for them to comprehend content early on, while at the same time progressing in their language development. One of the classes that I teach is a level three class. This class is usually made up of students who have arrived to the country within the last two years, or students who have been in the country longer, but struggle in reading and writing when transitioning from middle school to high school. The class ranges in English proficiency but the pressure on intermediate levels of
proficiency is high. They are able to read, but the demands of the classes they are required to take are above their comprehension level. They are not newcomers, so the expectations placed upon them are often higher from their mainstream teachers. For the majority of the students at this level, their oral language abilities are higher than their reading and writing comprehension. They receive pullout ESL services, but the majority of their classes are content area classes.

For the purpose of this study, I conducted research with the level three class. Since most of the class consisted of high school freshmen and sophomores, the class was designed to pre-teach many of concepts they will later come across in their history classes. I teach thematic units on the Holocaust and the civil rights movement, which include non-fiction resources. In this study I used the civil rights unit to introduce the strategy of LWR with expository texts. The class was given expository texts, and asked to identify the cause-effect relationship of several events. Several of the readings were done without the scaffold, followed by an assessment. Then several of the readings were done with the audio recording while they read, again followed by assessments. I recorded the audiobook myself, using an iPad application and then played the audiobook over my classroom speakers. The assessments were analyzed to determine if students are able to comprehend the content better using the scaffold. I am biased in that I believe that audiobooks are an effective way to engage students in reading and I have observed benefits of using them in the classroom. I wanted to find out if the use of audiobooks
promotes reading comprehension when using expository texts compared to silent reading without the support.

Guiding Question

With the amount of expository reading required of high school students, especially in the social studies curriculum, I wanted to find ways to help ELs. As technology becomes more integrated into our teaching practices, the use of audiobooks could be a way for teachers to differentiate and create modifications for the ELs in their classes. The comprehension of cause-effect relationships in texts is a challenging, but necessary part of expository texts. I wanted to find out: does concurrent use of an audiobook promote reading comprehension of cause-effect relationships in expository texts in comparison to reading without one?

Summary

Given the challenges that ELs face when reading expository texts, I want to find out if audiobooks can be a scaffold to help them access the content. In my experience, students who are at an intermediate level of English proficiency struggle in social studies classes because of the demands of the content, especially expository text structures. In this study the use of audiobooks as a scaffold for comprehending cause-effect relationships in expository texts will be investigated.
Chapter Overview

In Chapter One I introduced my research by establishing the purpose, significance and need for the study. The context of the study was briefly introduced as were the role, assumptions and biases of the researcher. The background of the researcher was provided. In Chapter Two I provide a review of the literature relevant to expository texts, specifically cause-effect relationships and the challenges ELs have with these types of texts. Included will be sections on scaffolding and academic language. Additionally, Chapter Two will include reviews of research on the use of audiobooks in the classroom and research on how audiobooks promote reading comprehension. Chapter Three includes a description of the research design and the methodology that guides this study. Chapter Four presents the results of this study. In Chapter Five I reflect on the findings. I also discuss the limitations of the study, implications for further research and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is determine if audiobooks are effective in promoting ELs’ comprehension of cause-effect relationships in social studies texts. In a secondary setting, the academic language demands are often above the proficiency of the language learners. Students struggle to understand the content because they lack the academic language necessary to identify important information. What makes the task more complicated for many of them is difficulty with some of the common structures in expository texts used in social studies classes. This study used audiobooks as a scaffold for students to read expository text. This chapter is an overview of the research on common structures of expository texts, the acquisition of skills necessary for understanding social studies content, and the challenges expository texts present for English learners. Finally, the chapter will review research on the use of audiobooks in the classroom as a tool for helping students with reading comprehension. Specifically research on the strategy of listening while reading (LWR) as a reading comprehension strategy for English learners will be reviewed.

Academic Language

The language of the school differs from the social language that students usually acquire first. Academic language is a complex concept that encompasses not only content-specific vocabulary, but discourse patterns, sentence structures, and common
word selection. Genres and text structures, complex compound sentences, and word order are all components of academic language (Gottleib & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). As Schleppegrell (2013) contends, the academic language in expository texts is problematic for ELs as the text differs from the conversational language with which students are more familiar. Students need to be able to understand not only the sequence of events, but be able to interpret the author’s meaning. Without a command of the necessary academic language, these texts can be difficult to comprehend.

Expository Texts

While narrative texts are the genre students first learn to read, expository texts become more common in their schooling as the rigor increases. Narrative texts are often structured with a problem, a series of events and a climax. Expository texts on the other hand do not follow this pattern. The texts used in late elementary school through high school to teach science and social studies are expository texts, whose purpose is to inform; as a result, they are written in a way that often differs from narrative texts. According to Piccolo (1987), expository texts are generally written with one of the following patterns: descriptive, enumerative, sequential, cause-effect, comparison/contrast and problem/solution. These patterns can contain signal words and predictable sequencing. For example, in a enumerative pattern, a topic sentence states the main idea and subsequent text lists the points that support it (Piccolo, 1987). Information is presented in a variety of patterns; however, not all of the patterns in expository texts
follow the same sequence or are as clearly defined as in a narrative text. Understanding the structure of expository texts can help teachers identify strategies to increase student comprehension of these texts.

The Structure of Expository Texts

Expository texts share similar structures, and while not all texts contain all of the features, they share many in common. Text structure describes how the information is organized in expository writing. Multiple structures are integrated and varied throughout expository writing, but there are a few dominant structures that occur often in these texts (Ciaridiello, 2002). According to Hayes (1989), the three main structures found in expository texts are chronological order of events, cause-effect, and enumeration. These structures might occur in a sentence, a paragraph or a section containing several paragraphs. Horowitz (1985) contends that expository texts generally have five structures which can be broken down as time order, listing, compare-contrast, problem-solution, and cause-effect. Sections can contain more than one text structure: take, for example, the following from *We Shall Overcome: The History of the Civil Rights Movement*:

In the early 1950s, blacks and whites were kept separate, especially in the South. Seventeen states had laws requiring separate but equal schools for blacks and whites. Almost always, separate schools meant unequal schools. (Finlayson, 2003, pg. 23).
Looking at the structures according to Piccolo (1987), this sample would be an example of enumerative (a main topic followed by a list of examples to support the topic sentence) structure. Later in the same paragraph, however, the pattern changes.

The school board spent $179 per year on each white student, compared to $43 for each black student. The schools for black students were little more than shacks. Teachers were woefully underpaid. Consequently, at the urging of the NAACP, twenty parents signed a petition suing the school district. (Finlayson, 2003, pg. 23-24)

The text pattern shifted to the cause-effect pattern. Students need to now understand that the information provided earlier were causes leading to the effect, which was a lawsuit. While the topic of the lawsuit was not presented at the beginning of the paragraph signaling it was a cause-effect pattern, the word “consequently” signals to the reader that there was an effect from the previous stated information. Hennings (1993) explains how, in order to understand historical texts, students need to understand how historians look at history when they write. According to Hennings, historians write about history in the following manner:

These ways of knowing history are a) organizing events and people in a meaningful time frame, (b) organizing events and people in a meaningful space frame, (c) interpreting by hypothesizing cause-effect and by generalizing about the ultimate meaning of events and lives, (d) interpreting by comparing similar or
different events or people and (e) cross-examining the accuracy and validity of purported facts. (1993, p. 363)

In thinking about how historians view and write about history, students’ understanding of the text becomes a difficult task. The common structures found in expository texts allow for instruction that identifies these structures and can help learners understand them better. However, the complexity of the texts can be difficult for all readers, especially second language learners.

**Cause-Effect.** An important role of expository texts used in social studies is to explain how historical events are related to one another. The reader is presented with events, and the relationship between the causes and effects of these events is explained, such as the causes that led to a war (Gilbertson, 2012). As a result, a dominant pattern in social studies expository texts is cause-effect patterns. Ciardiello (2002) points out that the cause-effect pattern follows a sequence of reasoning and explanation. It shows how events (the causes) are related to each other, culminating in another event (the effect). The causal chain of events is the main idea of the text pattern. For example, the following example from *We Shall Overcome: The History of the Civil Rights Movement* presents the cause in the topic sentence, followed by a series of explanations that relate to the main idea.

Laws segregating blacks forced them into separate seating on buses and trains,
separate schools, and even separate neighborhoods…. In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court heard a case called *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Homer Plessy, a black man, sued a railroad company with segregated seating. His side argued that the Fourteenth Amendment made segregation illegal. But the court ruled that separate accommodations for blacks were legal as long as they were equal.

(Finlayson, 2003, pg. 19)

The cause-effect pattern however varies, and the information is not always presented in the same sequence. In some texts, the cause-effect patterns are presented in a way that the direct impact of the events is clearly defined. In other patterns, the events happen simultaneously to illustrate how isolated events might have impacted each other (Ciardiello, 2002).

There were several reasons for the colonists’ victory in the Revolutionary War. The colonists fought for their liberty on their own soil. The British, on the other hand, had to fight 3,000 miles away. The colonial forces were also fortunate to have the superior military leadership of General George Washington. This fighting effort also received the military and financial support of several of Britain’s European enemies. (Ciardiello, 2002, pg. 33).

The culminating event was the victory in the Revolutionary War. The events that contributed to that success happen simultaneously and are isolated from one another, yet lead to the final effect (Ciardiello, 2002). The reader needs to be able to understand the
context of the material, the language, and use some inference to understand the cause-effect relationship. ELs often have to make connections between the text and prior events that may or may not explicitly be presented in the text. As students read they must connect the cause-effect relationships to hypothesize the overall meaning (Hennings, 1993). Students might need to understand different timelines and historical periods in order to understand the causes that led to a specific event (Gilbertson, 2012). These demands on the reader can be especially overwhelming for ELs. There are different linguistic markers present in expository texts; however, in social studies textbooks markers indicating cause are often not clear. As Achugar and Schleppegrell explain in their study of the construction of cause in textbooks, these markers are not often explicit. They contend that “the language used to construct causal relations can be implicit and difficult to understand” (p. 314, 2005). There are instances when conjunctions such as because or so are used to indicate the causal relationship. Nouns like effect or cause or even verbs such as make or lead to are indicators to the reader that it is a the cause-effect pattern (Achugar & Schleppegrell, 2005). The cause-effect pattern, an important pattern presented in expository texts, is challenging for second language learners.
The Challenges for ELs with Expository Texts

One of the challenges that secondary EL students face is the difficult texts they are required to read in their content area classes. Most often, their reading level is well below that of their mainstream peers. As a result, they are expected to use reading comprehension skills that are beyond their reading proficiency level to understand the material (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Social studies is a content area that often requires a lot of reading of expository texts. The information presented in these texts is often presented in a way that is different than the narrative nature of texts that students first learn to read with (Hayes, 1989). As Short (1993) points out, the scope of social studies from elementary through secondary is difficult for ELs because the context of a lesson might be based on previous information students are assumed to know. Other times, students might have prior knowledge that they are unable to connect to the content because expository texts can often be decontextualized, making it hard for students to use prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension.

Textbooks are written on the assumption that students have prior knowledge of the content and share similar cultural experiences (Brown, 2007). Texts might include references to the American Civil War when discussing the American Civil Rights movement (Finlayson, 2003). History textbooks and other primary sources have complex information in a paragraph, often with different grammatical features. For example switching tense between present and past within the same paragraph. (Brown, 2007; de
Oliveria, 2012). Ciardiello (2012) suggests that students struggle to understand the patterns the author presents and connect the ideas throughout the text. It can be very challenging for English language learners who may lack the ability to decode words, connect ideas and events, and interpret meaning. Adolescents in general have a hard time understanding how information is presented in expository texts, which makes the task for non-native readers even more difficult.

Scaffolding

Providing ELs with a support to assist them with comprehension is referred to as scaffolding. The Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, developed a concept called zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD relates to the gap between a child’s development level and the level of potential development (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001). A similar theory was later developed by the linguist Steven Krashen, whose comprehensible input theory contends that students need to be able to receive instruction with information they can comprehend in order to progress in their language learning (Krashen, 1982). In order for students to be engaged in cognitively appropriate and challenging materials, scaffold must be used to assist students in completing the task (Gibbons, 2002). Scaffolding can relate to visual aids, modified texts, graphic organizers, audio or video support, and other assistance given to help with comprehension of the material. Research has shown that classrooms where a high level of support is provided through scaffolds, ELs successfully achieved at higher levels (Gibbons, 2002).
**Audiobooks**

ELs’ success in their content area classes is dependent on a number of factors. Since many ELs are placed in content area classes that are above their language proficiency level, it is imperative that they are provided with scaffolds such as graphic organizers or adapted texts to help them. One scaffolding strategy that has been shown to be effective to help struggling readers is the use of audiobooks in the classroom (Beers, 1998; Rasinski, 1990; Shany and Biemiller, 1995; Wolfson, 2008; Woodall, 2010). The use of audiobooks is commonly found in elementary classrooms. Teachers often have a listening station where students can listen to audiobooks individually or in groups (Wolfson, 2008). The first exposure for many students to literature is through being read to. Listening to literature at a young age develops children’s understanding of story structure and vocabulary, and builds knowledge about the topic that can later be used to help learn new information (Casbergue & Harris, 1996). Having literature read to them also allows students to focus on the content and not be concerned with decoding (Casbergue & Harris, 1996; Wolfson, 2008). Audiobooks can provide students with another avenue to experience the text and, as pointed out by Chen (2004), they can comprehend text beyond their reading level. While the benefits of being read to or listening to audiobooks are recognized in the primary levels, their use in middle and secondary schools is less prevalent. However, Chen (2004) asserts that the benefits are the same, and audiobooks can provide struggling readers and ELs with an appropriate
tool. Older students who are reluctant to read or struggle with reading grade level material find audiobooks a useful scaffold (Beers, 1998). A school program in California used audiobooks with ELs as a way for them to comprehend grade level literature. The program found that students were engaged in the literature and able to comprehend text above their reading proficiency level (Goldsmith, 2002).

**Listening While Reading.** There is a difference between listening to audiobooks for enjoyment or comprehension without a text and the strategy known as Listening While Reading (LWR), in which students read along with a text that they listen to simultaneously. Rasinski (1990) conducted research on the LWR method as a means to improve reading fluency among students, comparing the methods of repeated reading and LWR. Twenty third grade students were broken into two groups, one group performing a repeated reading (RR) of the passage and the other group listening to the text being read to them by the instructor while they read along (LWR). His findings were consistent with previous research into these methods, that these techniques were “effective in promoting reading fluency and general proficiency in reading” (p. 149). He found that both methods promoted fluency; furthermore, he contends that LWR can be an effective way of modeling fluency.
Rasinski (1990) asserts the following:

In addition, listening-while-reading activities affirm the active role of the teacher in instruction and add considerable importance to the notion of modeling fluent reading within the context of reading instruction…students’ first reading attempts in a new text in repeated reading are often slow and halting, whereas the versions heard in the listening-while-reading approach are fast paced and fluent. (p. 149).

Reading fluency is connected to reading comprehension; research done by Winn, Skinner, Oliver, Hale and Ziegler (2006) compared the LWR and repeated reading (RR) methods to improve fluency among adult learners in an Adult Basic Education program. For the LWR method, the participants were asked to read along silently with a text as it was read aloud by the experimenter. Their findings concluded that the LWR and RR methods do enhance reading fluency. However, they point out that even though fluency does have an impact on reading comprehension, it is not a direct measure of comprehension (Winn et al. 2006). There is a connection between the LWR method and reading fluency because of the language exposure provided by listening to a fluent speaker. However, comprehension has not been as widely researched. One study done on Puerto Rican college students by Woodall (2010) looked into the not only the fluency gains from LWR, but also the comprehension. Woodall found that “the experimental group outscored the control group on all 8 quizzes” (p. 193). Woodall contends that students were able to focus more of their processing capacity to comprehension, and less
on decoding. He believes that this was also closely connected to their fluency. Since the audiobook aided their reading fluency, Woodall contends that they are more engaged, thus increasing comprehension. However, Woodall suggests further research is needed to determine the effects of simultaneous listening and reading on reading comprehension. The above evidence suggests that LWR is an effective method for increasing fluency and comprehension amongst ELs.

The Gap

As the research I’ve presented in this chapter indicates, ELs face many challenges with the expectations of their social studies classes. Students are expected to learn complex information through difficult texts, while often times lacking the background knowledge of their native peers. Expository texts can be dense with information such as dates, timelines, assumed prior knowledge or background knowledge and academic language demands. Additionally, complicated text structures also are common. The structures of expository texts commonly contain integrated patterns, which include descriptive, enumerative, sequential, cause-effect, comparison/contrast and problem/solution patterns. Multiple patterns can occur within a paragraph, which, without clearly defined markers, can be confusing. Audiobooks are a scaffolding tool that can help students understand the content and navigate the complicated texts. They are resources often in primary grades; however, in the secondary setting, this scaffolding tool is not utilized as much. In the research I have reviewed, I have not found the use of
audiobooks, specifically the LWR method, described as a scaffolding tool for secondary ELs. Furthermore, my focus is not on students’ fluency gains, it is on their ability to use the tool to promote comprehension of expository texts. Additionally, I am curious to find out if there is a correlation between the amount of years a student has been in the country, and the effectiveness of using the audiobook. Understanding cause-effect relationships of historical events is critical to students’ success in social studies classrooms. For the intermediate EL student, I want to find out if adding the scaffolding tool of LWR helps students comprehend the cause-effect relationship to be successful social studies students.

Research Question

This study’s goal is to find out whether the use of audiobooks while reading can promote comprehension of cause-effect relationships in social studies expository texts. It was conducted with a level three intermediate ESL class in a high school. I wanted to find out if there is a difference in comprehension between the texts that are read without the audiobook scaffold, and those with the audiobook scaffold. Specifically, does the concurrent use of an audiobook promote reading comprehension of cause-effect relationships in expository texts in comparison to reading without one?

Summary

This chapter presented information on expository texts and why they are difficult for ESL students to comprehend. The features of expository texts were discussed, as well as how common academic structures in these texts can be potential problems for students
in understanding complex information. The students’ lack of prior knowledge and their
difficulty in understanding implicit information and integrating multiple patterns of text
structures can make reading expository challenging for ELs. The use of audiobooks as a
scaffold for ELs was discussed, and the strategy known as LWR was explained. Research
into the effectiveness of this method for promoting fluency among ELs was discussed.
The lack of research about how LWR can aid in comprehension was presented as the gap
was researched. In Chapter Three I will describe the research I conducted with my level
three class at the high school where I teach. Chapter Three discusses the methods I
utilized for the research, the research paradigm and the materials I used.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study proposed to explore the use of audiobooks and their effectiveness in promoting English learners’ reading comprehension of cause-effect relationships in social studies expository texts. I wanted to find out how using the scaffolding tool of LWR promotes comprehension. Specifically, does the concurrent use of an audiobook promote reading comprehension of cause-effect relationships in expository texts in comparison to reading without one?

In order to find the answers to these questions I conducted research using comprehension assessments following the reading of a text with and without the LWR scaffolding tool.

Overview of the Chapter

First, the rationale and description of the research design are explained. A description of the quantitative paradigm is explained as well. Second, the data collection and protocols are explained. Third, a description of the setting generalizations and of the participants, and the context of the study are presented. Finally, an explanation of the data analysis procedures and the ethics of the study will be presented.

Quantitative Research Paradigm

This study will use the quantitative research paradigm, in which the researcher starts out with a question that is very specific (McKay, 2006). The purpose of research is
to provide answers to the question posed; in quantitative research the answers are derived from the numerical data. Quantitative research is looking to generalize or test a hypothesis, with the data being statistical in nature (McKay, 2006). In my study, I was looking at answering a specific question, the effectiveness of audiobooks as a scaffolding tool. I was looking to gather data to answer my question, and that is best gathered through quantitative methods. In order to collect data, I used two types of data sources to collect numerical or statistical information. Using a survey, the students identified their countries of origin and number of years they have been in the country. The second set of data I collected involved the assessments that the students completed following their reading of the text. According to McKay (2006), the researcher in the quantitative paradigm has a great deal of control over the variables. I chose the text we used, wrote the assessment tools and used the results from those assessments as numerical data.

Participants

The study was conducted in a level three class that I taught. There were nine participants in the study, whose ages ranged from 14-19. The students were placed in the class because they have a composite score between 1.9-3.3 on the ACCESS test. Seven of the students are Latino, from Mexico, Guatemala, and born in the United States. One student is from China and one student is from Ghana. The majority of the students in the class have been in the United States for three or less years; several have been in the country longer, and one was born in the United States. The class was a mixture of grades:
five are high school freshman, one is a sophomore, and three are juniors. Some of the students have been in my classes previously but the majority had not had me as a teacher before. The names of the students presented throughout the paper are pseudonyms.

**Demographic Information**

**Table 1 Student Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Years in the Country</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian *</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina *</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Have Individual Education Plans, and receive Special Education Services

**Location/Setting**

The study was conducted in an inner ring suburb outside of a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. The high school has approximately 1400 students; of those students, 85 are receiving ESL services. The current program model, consisting of collaboration
classes and sheltered ESL language classes, has been around for seven years. The community has a relatively large Mexican population, which consists of both recent immigrants as well as second and third generation citizens. In recent years, a number of Central Americans from Honduras and El Salvador have immigrated into the community. There is also a smaller, but present, Asian community; with students from China, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

Data Collection Technique 1: Comprehension Assessment Cloze Test

The students had been presented with background information about the civil rights movement for several weeks leading up to the reading. This information was presented through videos and presentations. Then, the students silently read a portion of the text, then were assessed using a matching cloze assessment (Appendices A-D). This type of assessment involves students reading a piece of text where words have been removed. A group of possible answers are provided to place into the blank, matching them to the appropriate space. This particular assessment tool is beneficial in measuring comprehension for several reasons. One of the rationale for using matching cloze tests is that the skills required in cloze tests are more representative of the skills that lead to comprehension compared to other kinds of reading comprehension tests (Baldauf & Probst, 1979, 1981). In a study of secondary students in both Australia and Papua New Guinea, Baldauf, Dawson, Prior and Probst (1980) found that a matching cloze “is an objective, reliable, valid, and easily constructed type of test for measuring reading
comprehension skills” (p. 435). Cloze assessments are an appropriate and widely used as a form of assessing reading comprehension (Ahangari, Ghorbani, & Hassanzadeh, 2015). Cloze assessments allow for the assessment of the students’ comprehension of specific structures by selecting parts of the text to highlight. Since I was interested in their comprehension of cause-effect relationships, I decided that a matching cloze activity would better facilitate gathering data on comprehension of cause-effect relationships than another method.

Data Collection Technique 2: Demographic Information

Students were given a chart to fill out to collect data on their country of origin, and years they have lived in the United States. (See Appendix E ). As a result of my research, I was also intrigued to know if there would be any correlation between the time the students have been in the country and their success using the audiobook.

Procedure

Participants

All nine students in the level three class participated in the study. The class was chosen because it is the class with a broad range of language abilities. As an intermediate level, there were students who were stronger readers than others, with many different levels of comprehension represented. Two students in the class have Individual Education Plans, and received support, specifically in reading. The range of ages and grades also provided the research with a broader range of students with varying experiences in the
mainstream social studies classes. During the three days the research was conducted, the students read and completed the assessments independently.

**Materials**

Students were given the text books. On the days when students were given the audiobook recording, they listened to the recording over the classroom speaker while they read. The students were given the comprehension assessment after they finished reading the text. The text book the students used was called *The Civil Rights Movement in America*. The textbook was a text book that was written with a lexile level of 1080. There are bolded words, and there are a glossary of terms and timelines in the back of the book. Students were made aware of the bolded words and the glossary, the terms in the book were not previewed before reading however. The audiobook was recorded by the instructor, as there was no audiobook recording of the text book available from the publisher.

**Schedule**

In the course of the research, students were doing a unit on the American civil rights movement. They had already been given some background information, a presentation, and watched several documentaries. Following the background information, the students read from the selected text, *The Civil Rights Movement in America* (Landau, 2003). Students were assigned a section of the text, usually around eight pages. On day one students were asked to read the text without the use of the audiobook, I will refer to
this as text only day. On text only day, students read silently and independently, and were
given a matching cloze assessment upon completion of reading the section; they were not
able to refer to the text when filling out the assessment. This procedure took students
anywhere from 20-35 minutes. This same activity was repeated the next day. On the third
day, students listened as a whole class to the audiobook while reading along. I refer to
this as audiobook day. On audiobook day, students again read independently, but they
were listening to the audiobook as they read the text. Again, they filled out the cloze
activity upon completion of the reading (see Appendix C). The texts all came from the
same book, with different sections used as the text only section and the audiobook
recorded section.

Data Analysis

For each reading comprehension assessment, the cloze activities were scored and
charted for each student. There were four assessments in all, two with the text only and
two with the audiobook. Each cloze activity consisted of eight blanks, with possible
responses numbered in a box at the bottom of the assessment. Students filled in the blank
with the number related to the answer they believed was correct. After each class, I
scored each assessment. The students were given a score correct out of a possible eight
correct answers. The scores were then recorded onto a chart for each assessment. Each
assessment had a corresponding chart, indicating a correct or incorrect answer for each
question (see Appendix E). An additional chart was also used to indicate the number
correct each student scored on a specific assessment (see Appendix F).

Verification of Data

By utilizing the same textbook for all four of the comprehension tests, the
assessments maintain the same level of difficulty. The readings used were sequential
sections of the book, thus maintaining the same level of difficulty as well. Furthermore,
by having the assessment done in each mode, it should provide me with a greater amount
of data to compare.

Ethics

This study took the following procedures to ensure that the research was done
ethically and protected the rights of the subjects involved:

1. research objectives were shared with informants;
2. written permission was obtained through a consent letter that was sent home
   and returned by the students;
3. human subjects review process approved by Hamline University and the
   institution where the study was conducted;
4. students were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity,
5. data collected by the researcher was protected. Only the researcher viewed the
data, all assessments results were kept by the researcher on a password
protected computer and google account, and all paper copies were kept by the researcher and destroyed a year after completion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my research paradigm and how I designed my research. The quantitative research paradigm was discussed, and the rationale for it being the most appropriate paradigm for this research project. I discussed my methods for collecting demographic information and I discussed the assessment tool I used, the matching cloze tool, to assess the comprehension of the text students read. I presented information on the setting and participants in the research, and the procedures that were employed to conduct the research. Finally, the way the data was analyzed and the ethical considerations were discussed. Chapter Four will present the findings of the research project and an analysis of the data.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This study took place in an intermediate pull out ESL class. There were nine participants in the study, whose language proficiency levels, ethnic backgrounds, and time in the country varied. Over the course of three days, the students were given sections of text from the book *The Civil Rights Movement in America* (Landau, 2003). Students were given a portion of the text to read independently, then were assessed upon completion of the reading using a cloze assessment. The process was repeated the following day. On the third day, students were given the portion of the text, but listened to an audio recording of the text while they read along silently. They were given a similar cloze assessment upon completion. The same process was repeated once again with the audiobook after all the students had completed the assessment. Through the collection of these data, I sought to find the answer to the following question: Does the concurrent use of an audiobook promote reading comprehension of cause-effect relationships in expository texts in comparison to reading without one?

This chapter will look at the data collected at the completion of the research. First, the results of cloze assessments following the silent reading of the text, without the audiobook scaffold are presented. Next, the results following the cloze assessments completed with the audiobook scaffold are presented. Additionally, there will be a table with the average scores without the use of the scaffold and the use of the scaffold. Finally,
demographic information related to the number of years the students have been in the country and their scores for all four of the assessments will be presented.

Results

Table 2 *Test Scores by Student Without Audiobook (WOAB)*

**Assessment is out of 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Test 1 (WOAB)</th>
<th>Test 2 (WOAB)</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The average scores for the two tests without the audiobook varies from one to seven. In several cases scores decreased, while others minimally increased or stayed the same. More than half the students’ scores were below two, with three of the students averaging four.
**Table 3 Test Scores by Student With Audiobook (AB)**

**Assessment is out of 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Test 3 (AB)</th>
<th>Test 4 (AB)</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)*

The average scores of the two assessments following the reading with the audiobook varies from one to eight. Six of the students averaged scores of four and above.
Table 4 *Average of Tests 1 and 2 (WOAB) and Average of Tests 3 and 4 (AB)*

**Assessment is out of 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>WOAB Average</th>
<th>AB Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina*</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)*

Comparing the averages between the assessments following the reading without the audiobook and the averages using the audiobook, six of the nine students’ averages increased with the use of the audiobook.
Table 5 *Years in Country*

**Assessment is out of 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years in the Country</th>
<th>Test 1</th>
<th>Test 2</th>
<th>Test 3 (AB)</th>
<th>Test 4 (AB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian*</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina*</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)*

The results based on the number of years students have been in the country show no consistent pattern between the number of years and the students’ scores.

**General Results**

Looking at the data from the reading only without the scaffold to the reading with the scaffold, scores increase among the majority of the students. Comparing the data collected of the average scores without the scaffold of the audiobook to the data collected of the average scores with the use of the audiobook, scores increase among the majority of the students. On the fourth reading, there was a dip amongst many of the students.
Several students showed no increase between the first two trials during which no scaffold was used. Between these first two trials, several students showed small increases, and one student's score decreased between tests one and two. Once the audiobook scaffold was used, eight of the nine students’ scores increased between assessments two, without audiobook (WAB) and three (the first reading with the audiobook provided). When comparing trials three and four (both with audiobook use), six students’ scores decreased, one increased by two points, and two stayed with the same score. However, for 89% of the students in the study, their scores with the audiobook are higher than their scores without this scaffold.

Results Related to Demographics: Years in the Country

Looking at the data through the demographic data of years in the country, some patterns emerge. The two students who have been in the country for three years, made gains of three points between assessments two and three. Of the two students who have only been in the country for two years, one made a six point improvement, and the other student’s score decreased by one point. The two students who have been in the country for four years both improved by two points, the student who has been in the country for ten years made a five point improvement, while the student who was born in the United States made a two point improvement. This increase only reflects the difference between the second and third assessments. The fourth assessment resulted in five students’ scores decreasing, and four students’ scores improved or stayed the same. This will be explained
further in chapter five. However, all students scored higher with the use of the audiobook than without its use.

Discussion

Overall, scores increased between the assessment without the use of the audiobook scaffold, and the assessment that used the audiobook scaffold. There was a decrease for some students between assessments three and four that will be further explored in Chapter Five. While I was looking for trends to emerge with common cause-effect word patterns used in the assessments, those results were inconclusive. However, the demographic information related to the number of years the students have been in the country did show some patterns that will be explored in Chapter Five.

In this chapter I presented the results of my data collection. In Chapter Five I will discuss my major findings, their implications, and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this research project I attempted to answer the question: Can the use of audiobooks promote reading comprehension of cause-effect in social studies expository texts? This chapter will discuss the following topics: 1) discussion of findings, 2), limitations, 3) implications for teachers/administrators/stakeholders and 4) suggestions for further research.

Findings

Based on the results of the study, the use of audiobooks increased comprehension for the majority of the students in the class. Looking at the scores from the first assessment to the second assessment without the use of the audiobook, several students’ scores increased. This could be attributed to familiarity with the format, or a better understanding of that particular section of the text. Of the rest of the participants, two students made no gains, and two students’ scores decreased. Several factors could have contributed to the scores staying the same or decreasing. It’s possible that the section was more difficult for those particular students, they might not have read with as much attention to detail as they did the first day, or they just didn’t understand the questions on the cloze assessment. See Figure 1 below.
Based on the results from the first assessment using the audiobook and the previous assessment without the use of the audiobook, there was an increase in the
majority of the students’ scores on the assessments (see Figure 2). This indicates that their comprehension of the cause-effect relationships was benefited from the use of the audiobook. Consistent with the assertion of Wolfson (2008), ELs were able to comprehend more difficult texts with the use of audiobooks. In several students, there was a growth of over 50% in their scores from the reading without the audiobook to the reading using the audiobook. Several of the students are not as strong readers, in particular Juan, Brian and Crisitna. All three of these students showed a growth of over 60% from assessment two to assessment three. The use of the audiobook might have allowed them to focus less on decoding, and more on the content, which was then reflected in their assessment scores (Casbergue & Harris, 1996; Wolfson, 2008). For the stronger readers in the group, Henry and Marco, the scores either changed moderately or stayed the same; (50% for Henry, 0% for Marco). However the use of the audiobook did not appear to have a negative affect on either student’s ability to comprehend the material.

Furthermore, looking at the average scores of the assessments following the silent reading without the audiobook, in comparison to the average score of the assessments following the audiobook use, the majority of the students’ scores increased. See Figure 3 below. Studies have indicated that content acquisition increased in students with access to recorded materials compared to those without (Chen, 2004). The results of this research
indicate comprehension of the cause-effect relationships increased with the use of the recorded materials. See Table 6 below.

*Figure 3* Differential Between Average Scores of Tests Without Audiobook (WOAB) and Averages with Audiobook (AB)
Table 6  *Growth between Assessments 2 and 3*

Using the formula for change: \((\text{Later score} - \text{Previous Score}) \times 100 = \% \text{ of change} \over \text{Later Score}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Test 2 (WOAB)</th>
<th>Test 3 (AB)</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronaldo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0 %</td>
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**Findings based on Number of Years in the Country**

Students who have been in the country longer than two years all showed growth between assessments two and three. All nine of the participants have higher listening scores based on the WIDA assessment than their reading comprehension scores. Looking at the results, the students who have been in the country for over two years have listening comprehension that is more proficient than their reading scores, therefore the audiobook version of the text allows them to comprehend in their stronger modality. By using the
audiobook, students were able to focus on the content, without being as dependent on the decoding (Chen, 2004; Woodall, 2010). Lowering the affective filter and allowing the students to listen to the audiobook while reading along possibly gave the students more confidence in their ability to comprehend the text (Wolfson, 2008). See Figure 4 below.

*Figure 4* Number of Years in the Country and Average Scores Between Tests Without Audiobook and With Audiobook
Limitations

This study took place at the end of the school year, the second to last week of school. Finals were the following week, and students were completing large projects or had large tests coming the next week. Something that might have impacted the study was the short time frame of the study. The study took place over the course of three days. The first two days, the majority of the students took an average of 35 minutes to complete the reading and the comprehension assessment. During the audiobook portion of the study, the students completed the reading and the assessment in around 15 minutes. The recording was played twice, while the students read along. As a result of the short time frame, the students and I decided to continue on with the fourth section and assessment with the audiobook the same class period. Additionally, one of the students was going to be leaving for vacation the next day, which also prompted me to combine the audiobook assessments into one class period. The results of the second test with the audiobook, showed a decline in some scores that could be contributed to the activities being done in quick succession. It’s also possible that at the end of three days of the same activity, students had grown weary of the topic and process.

Implications

The research projected demonstrated that when looking for cause-effect relationships in expository texts, students performed better with the audiobook. This was
a relatively easy modification that could easily be implemented in a class where students are expected to read independently. ELs could access the audiobook recording using their own devices, or could be pulled out into a small group and listen to the recording on a teacher’s device. Teachers who have groups of ELs in their classroom could use this modification to help differentiate their instruction. The recording of the text took me between five and ten minutes to record. This was done on my iPad and could be easily shared with the students to listen to individually. Many districts are moving towards integrating technology through Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs and requiring students to have a personal device in school. The use of audiobooks is another way to integrate technology and can provide students with another tool to help with their comprehension of expository texts.

Further Research

There are several questions that arose during the course of the research that I would want to explore further. One question is if the audiobook would work with a variety of assessments? Further research could be conducted to explore similar growth if students were asked to summarize or analyze the cause-effect relationships in the text. Another area of research would be to gather data regarding students’ perceptions of the use of the audiobook as a scaffold. Student attitudes towards the audiobook were not formally recorded in a survey, but based on conversations, most students felt more comfortable reading with the use of the audiobook. This could be explored this further in
a formal survey. Furthermore research could be conducted to investigate if the assessments themselves were also recorded and students listened along while they filled out the cloze activity, would that show an increase in their comprehension?

Conclusion

There is a lot of pressure for ELs to move towards comprehension of complex written material in order to be successful in the mainstream. ESL teachers and content area teachers are faced with the challenge of making content comprehensible, but at the same time maintaining the expected rigor. My study suggests the use of audiobooks is a tool that teachers can use to help students comprehend expository texts that is challenging for them. With the greater emphasis on technology use in schools, audiobooks fit easily into instruction. Content teachers need to be finding ways to differentiate their instruction for ELs and struggling readers. Audiobooks can be created easily, and they result in better comprehension of expository texts. What I have learned from this study will allow me to not only improve my own instruction but hopefully help content teachers with a support to improve the learning of their students.
Appendix A: Cloze Assessment 1
Directions: Use the phrases in the box at the bottom of the reading to fill in the blanks to show the cause-effect relationship of the events from the text.

Many African Americans fought in World War 2. In 1945, an all black group of soldiers were among the first to arrive and free the prisoners at the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. The soldiers saw the awful things racism led to in the Holocaust. As a result, the African-American soldiers

____________________________________________when they returned home. Two years later, in 1949, Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play major league baseball. Robinson became a powerful symbol because people could see that the______________________________.

Africans in America

When the first colonists arrived in Jamestown, they brought slaves with them to work. Tobacco and other crops became a big part of the economy, which led to______________________________. Slaves in the United States were almost all African slaves, and as a result many white people saw themselves

____________________________________________.
Life after the Civil War

After the Civil War, several amendments to the constitution changed the lives of African Americans. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment gave freed slaves legal rights, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave them the right to vote. These amendments were ratified so African Americans _________________. However, that was not the reality. Many white people in the South did not like the idea of African Americans being treated equally. This led to “Jim Crow” laws, which created _________________.

As a result _________________. A group called the Ku Klux Klan and other groups would intimidate, or scare African Americans. Sometimes these groups would harm or even kill African Americans. As a result, _________________.

were less willing to accept racism

segregation

African Americans were not treated equally

slavery becoming legalized

whites and blacks could not mix with each other in public places

would be treated equally

superior to black Africans.

relationship between whites and blacks was changing
Appendix B: Cloze Assessment 2
Separate but not Equal

The legal system in the South was not fair to black people. There were a lot of violent crimes against black people where white people weren’t punished. In 1896 a US Supreme court case called *Plessy vs. Ferguson* ruled that segregation was not against the Constitution. As a result, it was ____________________________ as long as there were equal services and facilities. Laws in the South were created to segregate the races. This lead to _____________________________. Even though they were separate, they were usually not equal, and the black facilities were much worse.

The Great Migration

Segregation created unequal facilities and services in the South. As a result, between 1910 and 1930, a million African Americans moved North. Even though segregation wasn’t the law in the North, many white people still felt superior to blacks. They did not want them in their neighborhoods so _____________________________.

African Americans in the Military
Many African Americans joined the military and fought in World War 1 & 2. When they returned home after the war, they still faced segregation and discrimination. After World War 2, many soldiers and their friends and family did not want to be treated so badly after fighting for their country. This led to,_____________________________________________________. One group, the NAACP, was formed to fight for civil rights in the legal system. As a result_____________________________________________________________.

Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas

Topeka, Kansas had segregated schools, like most of the schools in the South. As a result,___________________________________________________________________

So,_____________________________________________________________. The NAACP said that these laws were not fair to black children, and they were not equal. The Supreme Court ruled that the law was not legal. This led to,________________________________________. Many white people were very upset about the decision.
separate hospitals, schools, swimming pools, theaters and even drinking fountains

groups fighting against the system

they challenged the laws that segregated schools

legal to have races separated

the NAACP sued the school district in court

they refused to let an African American girl go to an all-white school

segregation being illegal in public schools
Appendix C: Cloze Assessment 3
The Death of Emmett Till

In 1955 a young black man named Emmett Till from Chicago, visited his family in Mississippi. Some people said that Emmett whistled at a young white woman. A few nights later, Emmett was kidnapped, beaten, shot and put into a river. Two men murdered Emmett and were caught, and it was important news around the world. The all-white jury found the men not guilty. They confessed in a magazine to the murder after the trial. As a result, ________________________________________________________.

Rosa Parks and The Montgomery Bus Boycott

Montgomery, Alabama had a law that segregated busses. White people could sit in the front, but black people had to sit in the back of the bus. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man. Due to this, ______________._

As a result of Rosa being arrested, ___________________________________________.

People organized, sharing rides and using taxis to help people get to work. Martin Luther King Jr, came to help be a leader. Because the boycott continued, 

________________________________________. In November, 1956, almost a year later, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on busses was not legal. As a result,_____________________________________________________.

Directions: Use the phrases in the box at the bottom of the reading to fill in the blanks to show the cause-effect relationship of the events from the text.
The Little Rock Nine

In 1957, in Little Rock, Arkansas, an all-white high school was forced to have nine black students go to their school. The Governor of Arkansas did not want them to attend, so,

As a result, ___________________________________________________________. Things were not easy that year for the students, who were called names, kicked and hit. Because they were brave, ______________________________.

• the President sent the US Army to protect the students.
• she was arrested
• black leaders organized a bus boycott
• the white community became violent, bombing King’s house
• they helped school integration in the South
• he had the National Guard keep the students out
• in December, 1956 the bus boycott ended and the black people no longer had to sit in the back
• black, and white people became very upset and wanted to fight for civil rights
Appendix D: Cloze Assessment 4
Directions: Use the phrases in the box at the bottom of the reading to fill in the blanks to show the cause-effect relationship of the events from the text.

The Sit-Ins
On February 1, 1960 four African-American students sat down at Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They were not served food, but they didn’t leave their seats. They were not arrested, as a result, ____________________________________________________________________________.

___________. They were not discouraged even though none were served, so, after that sixty-three students joined them! The idea of sit-ins and nonviolent protests spread.

Therefore, ____________________________________________________________________________.

______________. Eventually the sit-ins worked, and Woolworth’s desegregated its lunch counter in 1960. As a result, ____________________________________________________________________________.

Freedom Riders

The interstate transportation, or bus company, was supposed to be integrated by 1961. But in the South, they ignored the ruling of the Supreme Court. As a result, ____________________________________________________________________________.

______________. Many people were upset with the Freedom Riders. So,
The violence towards the protesters was so bad that one freedom rider was paralyzed and many ended up in the hospital.

Montgomery, Alabama.

The Freedom Riders didn’t give up protesting all summer. As a result,

The Freedom Riders continued to be non-violent. Because of all they went through

As a result, the National Guard had to be called in to protect protesters the next day twenty-nine more African-American students joined them many were beaten and more than 350 were arrested there were fifty four sit-ins at lunch counters in five cities in nine Southern States , in 1961 the attorney general, outlawed segregation on interstate bus travel sit-ins also led to changes at segregated libraries, museums and parks. a group of young black and white decided to ride together through the South on the busses. they attacked the busses and the riders.
Appendix E: Reading Selection 1

(Landau, 2003, 3-7)
In 1946, a black World War II veteran was traveling by bus home to North Carolina. At a rest stop, the bus driver thought the passenger took too long to return to the bus, so he called the police. The soldier, whose three years in the U.S. Army during World War II included 15 months of active combat duty, was then severely beaten by the police and left blind.

This was not unusual punishment for a “mistake” made by an African American at this time in the United States. In fact, some people would have even said he got off lightly. Though slavery had long since been abolished, following the Union’s victory in the Civil War, African Americans still had a long, bloody journey ahead to secure equal rights.
White domination of African Americans had long been maintained by both law and violent practice, calling for the occasional example to be made of the black man, woman, or child who “stepped out of line.” This ensured that the rest of their community would “know their place” as second-class citizens.

However, events were inspiring new challenges to such injustices. On April 11, 1945, for example, an all-black regiment of American soldiers was among the first to arrive at Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany and liberate its survivors from the Nazis. Though they were fighting in Europe to free the victims of the brutally racist Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler, the armed forces in which these soldiers served were still segregated. Having

African Americans who served their country in the military in World War II were made to do so in segregated units. The men in this photograph were members of the famous Tuskegee Airmen, as black Americans trained as military pilots at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama became known.
A whipping post was just one of the tools plantation owners in the South used to maintain the system of slavery on which their wealth and prestige depended.

witnessed firsthand the grotesque consequences of organized racism in Europe, where the Nazis had murdered 6 million Jews, many of these young African-American men were less willing to accept injustice when they returned home.

Two years later in 1947, Jackie Robinson integrated the national pastime when, as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers, he became the first African American to play major league baseball. Robinson became a highly visible symbol of the way that the relationship between whites and blacks in American society was changing.

AFRICANS IN AMERICA

In 1619, the first African slaves arrived at the Virginia colony of Jamestown, brought in chains to work the colony's tobacco crop. Over the years, as tobacco and other crops became vital for the economy of the colonies, the institution of slavery was legalized.

Although slavery existed throughout the New World, only in what was to become the United States were all slaves Africans, and almost all Africans slaves. This certainly encouraged the belief, among white Americans, that black Africans were inferior to them. The idea of white supremacy grew stronger as white slave owners sought to justify enslavement and to train the ideal slave to become absolutely dependent on

THREE-FIFTHS OF A PERSON

After the Revolutionary War, delegates from the northern and southern states argued about how to count slaves into a state's population. The larger a state's population, the more seats in Congress it could have. Black slaves made up a huge part of the population in southern states but were not allowed to vote. Finally, a compromise was spelled out in Section 2 of Article 1 in the U.S. Constitution of 1787: slaves would count as "three-fifths" of a person for purposes of taxation and representation.

The stocks exacerbating the back of this former slave, who was photographed during the Civil War, are the scars left by whippings administered by his white owner. Segregation. One slavery, was maintained by the threat and use of violence by whites against blacks.

him. Africans were made to forget and even despise the history and culture of their ancestors, while European armed conquests in Africa and elsewhere were cited as proof that whites were superior.
Appendix F: Reading Selection 2

(Landau, 2003, 8-13)
SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

The South's legal system left blacks without justice or protection. Violent crimes by whites against blacks almost always went unpunished. In 1896, in the case known as *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation was not against the Constitution. The Court held that the races could be legally separated so long as both received equal services and facilities. The ruling became known as the "separate but equal" doctrine. In the years ahead, southern whites continuously relied on it to justify segregation. Laws in every Southern state made certain that schools, hospitals, churches, playgrounds, graveyards, swimming pools, restaurants, and drinking fountains remained segregated.

The facilities blacks and whites used were separate, but they were rarely equal. From schools to hospitals, black (or "colored" in the language of the time) facilities were usually inferior.
THE GREAT MIGRATION

Hoping for a change, between 1910 and 1930, over a million blacks headed north. (Between 1940 and 1970, four million more Southern blacks went north.) However, many Northern whites also felt superior to African Americans. They did not want blacks living in their neighborhoods or attending school with their children. For the most part, African Americans lived in poor housing in the worst sections of Northern cities. These rundown, high crime areas became known as ghettos. Although segregation was not the law in the North, in effect, blacks and whites often lived segregated lives. A famous African-American author, Claude Brown, who wrote about the children of the great migration, wrote that blacks who had moved to the North from the South often ended up feeling like they had gone “from the frying pan into the fire.”

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MILITARY

More than 350,000 African Americans served the United States in the armed forces during World War I (1914–1918). More than one million African Americans served in World War II (1939–1945). Despite this undeniable proof of their patriotism, these veterans returned home to segregation and other forms of discrimination. But in the aftermath of World War II, they and their friends and loved ones were less willing to accept such treatment.
The following day twenty-nine more African-American students joined them. None were served, but the protesters were not discouraged. Sixty-three students came on the third day of the sit-in.

Before long, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC; usually pronounced as “snick”) was formed to help organize and direct such protests. Like the SCLC, SNCC believed in the idea of nonviolence. SNCC and other groups held sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in other cities and states. Soon there were fifty-four sit-ins in five cities in nine Southern states.

Victory did not come easily. In some places, stores closed their lunch counters. In others, they removed the chairs or stools. Then, the young protesters stood. They took shifts doing so until closing time. During many sit-ins, the protesters faced taunts and violence. Nevertheless, they responded nonviolently.

In time, the sit-ins worked. The Woolworth’s in Greensboro desegregated its lunch counter by July 1960. Sit-ins also led to changes at segregated libraries, museums, and parks.

**Freedom Riders**

By 1961, interstate transportation should have been completely integrated. A civil rights group known as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had successfully argued this issue before the U.S. Supreme Court as early as 1946. Yet the desegregation ruling had been ignored throughout the South.

Freedom riders depart Washington, D.C., in 1961 on the first leg of their journey to desegregate interstate travel in the South. The hopefulness and good cheer visible in the young people here would be met by hatred and violence as the buses traveled further south.

In the summer of 1961, a group of mostly young blacks and whites planned to ride together by bus through the South from Washington, D.C., to New Orleans, Louisiana, which was about a two-week trip. They planned to sit together on the bus in integrated groups. The African Americans planned to use the “whites-only” waiting rooms
before boarding the bus. Many also wrote letters to their families that were to be delivered if they didn’t return.

When a bus stopped in Anniston, Alabama, a mob of about 200 whites stoned the bus and slashed its tires. When the bus left, the mob followed in cars. When the tires went flat, forcing the bus to the side of the road, a firebomb was thrown inside. As the freedom riders poured out from the flames and the smoke, they were attacked with baseball bats, rocks, pipes, and bottles.

Another group of freedom riders was attacked in Birmingham, Alabama. There they were beaten with sticks and clubs or thrown to the ground and kicked when they got off the bus. One freedom rider was left paralyzed. The mob violence continued when a third bus of freedom riders reached Montgomery, Alabama. Many freedom riders had to be hospitalized. When Martin Luther King, Jr., flew to Montgomery to lead a rally of support, the church where the rally was held was surrounded and menaced by an armed white mob. The National Guard had to be sent in to protect the protestors.

The freedom rides and demonstrations of support continued all summer. Many demonstrators were beaten; more than 350 were arrested for “disturbing the peace” and held in jail all summer. Some of the riders were even imprisoned on death row in Mississippi’s notorious Parchman prison farm. The riders never reached New Orleans. Yet their nonviolent courage earned them victory anyway. In September 1961, at the direction of Robert Kennedy, the attorney general of the United States, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued an order outlawing segregation in interstate bus travel.
Groups and individuals challenged the system. One of the first and most important challenges came from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization founded in 1909. For decades, the NAACP had used the legal system to challenge discrimination. By the 1950s, it was focusing on segregation in public schools.

**Brown v. The Board of Education**

1954 brought a stunning victory for the NAACP, for African Americans, and for all Americans interested in freedom and equality. That year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. The NAACP had sued the Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas, after it refused to allow an African-American girl to attend an all-white public school.

The legal strategy was devised by a group of African-American lawyers from the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. The group's leader was a brilliant young attorney from Maryland named Thurgood Marshall. Marshall argued that segregated schools harmed African-American students by making them feel that they were not as good as whites. Marshall stressed that this affected their ability to learn. Marshall's most important point was that there could never be any such thing as “separate but equal.” Separation automatically meant unequal.

Marshall's arguments convinced the Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision on May 17, 1954, the Court stated, “We conclude that in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

The *Brown* ruling made segregation illegal in public schools nationwide. Yet it was just another first step in the African-American fight for equality. Unfortunately, the Court had not required public schools to desegregate by a specific date, nor directed them as to how they should achieve desegregation. Also, the ruling applied only to public schools, although it was easy to foresee that it might soon be extended to other public facilities.

Many whites resisted the ruling. It sparked a huge backlash in parts of the South. Many southerners referred to the date of the ruling as “Black Monday.” White violence against blacks increased. A new kind of hate group, known as the White Citizens’ Council (WCC), was formed, first in Greenwood, Mississippi, and then throughout the South. The WCC focused on holding back blacks economically. “The purpose,” one WCC member said, “is to make it difficult, if not impossible, for any Negro who advocates desegregation to find a job, get credit, or renew a mortgage.”
Appendix G: Reading Selection 3

(Landau, 2003, 14-18)
THE DEATH OF EMMETT TILL

In August 1955, Emmett Till, an outgoing, black youth from the northern city of Chicago, Illinois, was visiting relatives in Money, a small town in the Mississippi Delta. One evening, Emmett allegedly whistled at a young white woman who worked in a general store.

A few nights later, Emmett was kidnapped at gunpoint from the home of his great-uncle, Moses Wright, and brutally beaten, shot, and then dumped into a river with a cotton gin fan tied around his neck with barbed wire. The murderers were the husband of the woman in the store and her brother-in-law. When Till was pulled from the

This was the last photograph taken of 14-year-old Emmett Till when he was alive. "If there was a group there, Emmett was in front," a friend remembered. "And he was the lively one. He was the one that everybody kind of looked to. Natural born leader."
Till's murder and the verdict inspired many Americans, black and white, into action for civil rights. His mother, Mamie Till, remained an activist until her death in 2003. Speaking at a rally shortly after her son's death, she said, "Two months ago I had a nice apartment in Chicago. I had a good job. I had a son. When something happened to [blacks] in the South I said, "That's their business, not mine." Now I know how wrong I was. The murder of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of us all."

THE MOTHER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The incident often credited as the official start of the civil rights movement took place on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama. Rosa Parks, a black seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. According to Montgomery law, African-American passengers were required to move to the back of the bus if a white person wanted their seat.

This day, however, Parks refused to move. The white bus driver called the police, and Parks was arrested.

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

Black leaders in Montgomery decided to stage a city-wide bus boycott on the day of Rosa Park's trial, December 5, 1955. The organizers quickly produced 3,500 flyers to alert...
the community. Car pools were organized. African Americans who owned taxi companies agreed to drive African-American passengers that day for the price of bus fare.

The boycott was a spectacularly successful demonstration of African-American unity. A reporter from the Atlanta Journal described the scene like this: “Negroes were on almost every street corner in the downtown area, silent, waiting for rides or moving about to keep warm, but few got on buses ... No one spoke to white people. They exchanged little talk among themselves. It was an almost solemn event.”

It was then decided to continue the boycott. The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was quickly organized to lead the protest. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the new minister at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was picked to head the MIA.

King was an outstanding speaker who believed in the power of nonviolent resistance. He taught his followers to return hate with Christian love. If taunted, the boycotters were to ignore the taunts. If attacked, they were not to fight back. They had to be willing to accept being arrested and jailed for their actions. King said, “If we protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in the future, someone will have to say, ‘There lived a race of people, of black people, of people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights.’”
Appendix H: Reading Selection 4

(Landau, 2003, 21-23)
Little Rock had been slow to integrate its schools. When its all-white Central High School was forced to accept nine African-American students in September 1957, everyone expected trouble. Arkansas governor Orval E. Faubus had the Arkansas National Guard surround the building to keep out the black students.

Elizabeth Eckford, one of the nine African-American students, attempted to enter the school alone. White teenagers casually walked past the Arkansas guardsmen. When Eckford
A soldier helps a young African-American man with his bicycle during the disturbances that marked the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

reached the door, however, the guardsmen glared at her and raised their rifles.

Turned away from the entrance, Eckford now faced an angry white mob that had gathered in front of the school. She tried to make it through the crowd to the bus stop. Furious whites ripped her clothes and clawed at her skin. Someone in the crowd threatened to drag her over to a tree and lynch her. Fortunately two other whites stepped forward and led her to safety.

Finally, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in U.S. troops to protect the black students. Even so, it was never easy for the African Americans at Central High. During the year they were
spat on, insulted, kicked, and hit. But the “Little Rock Nine,” as they came to be called, accomplished an important task. They helped pave the way for school integration throughout the South.

THE SIT-INS
There were other areas of segregation still to be challenged. African Americans could shop at certain stores, such as Woolworth's (a five-and-dime store), but they could not be served or eat at the lunch counter. On February 1, 1960, four African-American students from North Carolina's A&T College sat down at the lunch counter in the Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina. When they were not served, they stayed in their seats until the store closed. This form of protest is known as a sit-in.

ONE OF THE LITTLE ROCK NINE SPEAKS
Melba Pattillo Beals was one of the Little Rock Nine.
She remembers that “the first time... I was able to enter Central High School, what I felt inside was stark raving fear... You see, when you’re fifteen years old and someone’s going to hit you or hurt you, you want to know what you did wrong... I endured parents kicking, parents hitting, parents throwing things. You would get tripped; people would just walk up and hit you in the face.”
Appendix I: Demographic Information Data Collection Form
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Appendix J: Schedule
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