Improving Reading Comprehension in K-12 Education: Investigating the Impact of the Reading Specialist Credential on the Instructional Decisions of Veteran Teachers

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Research has identified certain comprehension strategies that seem to work in an optimal manner to increase the reading comprehension of K-12 students. However, little evidence exists about whether teachers use identified, research-based strategies when teaching (Rand Research Study Group, 2002). In view of the critical nature of literacy achievement for diverse populations and demographics, research on this topic is critical. The study reported here was conducted with graduate students in San Diego State University's (SDSU) advanced reading specialist credential program, where they are taught reading comprehension strategies as well as observed and evaluated as they teach these strategies during clinical work with students. As Graduate Reading Program Coordinator, the researcher along with her colleagues was interested in determining the impact program instruction and experiences had on the pedagogical practices of our graduates.

Studies by Durkin in the 1970s established that teachers spent a limited time on reading comprehension instruction. This body of work led to an intense study of reading comprehension (see Fitzgerald, 1990; Flood, 1984 a and b; Pearson & Johnson, 1978). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, research on comprehension instruction flourished (Gaffney & Anderson, 2000). However, during the late part of the twentieth century, research into this critical area languished (Pressley, 2002).

Recently there has been a resurgence of research on this topic. For example, the effects of teaching and using a number of reading comprehension strategies on students' reading comprehension has been estab-

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lished by a substantial literature (Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002; Farstrup & Daniels, 2002). Increased literacy demands as well as the changing nature of students in K-12 classrooms make reading instruction far more complex than it was a generation ago and present an imperative in terms of understanding and implementing reading research.

The SDSU Graduate Reading Program is accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and meets the State of California's most recent and exacting standards for effectiveness as an advanced reading program. The International Reading Association has provided additional weight to this accreditation by recognizing the rigor of the program through its own review process, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) also recognizes the effectiveness of the SDSU reading program. Graduate students in the program must take at least thirty semester units of coursework to complete the requirements for the credential. Twelve of the semester units cover assessment, clinic and fieldwork in which teachers learn to assess students' learning needs and apply appropriate learning strategies. The focus of this work is to increase K-12 students' reading achievement and reading comprehension. Eighteen program units include study of children's and adolescent literature, language arts instruction, writing instruction, advanced fieldwork, research methods, and the culminating project for the master's degree.

In this study the researcher examined some particular and critically important outcomes of the Graduate Reading Program, not as an evaluation of the program's effectiveness, but as a beginning look at how we may educate teachers to teach reading comprehension instruction more effectively. The Rand Report on Reading Comprehension (RRSG, 2002) identified a number of research priorities for reading comprehension. In essence, a substantial research knowledge base exists but it is "sketchy, unfocused, and inadequate" (p. xii) as a basis for educational reform.

Method

Data Collection

The research questions consisted of the following:

(1) To what extent does an advanced reading program influence teachers' instructional decisions?

(2) From what knowledge/experience do teachers select and use reading comprehension strategies with their K-12 students?

(3) What kinds of comprehension strategies do teachers report that they use?

This study surveyed a sample of graduates of an advanced reading program to investigate their classroom practices in teaching reading comprehension. Survey research is used to describe situations as they currently exist (Gay & Airasian, 2003). The survey (see Appendix A) was mailed to a convenience sample of graduates of the program (N=109) for whom mailing addresses were available. SASEs were included, along with a cover letter explaining the need for a response within two weeks. A follow up letter was mailed after two weeks as a reminder. A second letter and survey were mailed with SASE after one month to those who had not responded. In several instances, the researcher telephoned graduates to ask them to return the surveys.

Twenty surveys were returned by the postal service as undeliverable. From the remaining sample of 89 surveys, a total of 51 (57%)) were completed and returned. From the completed surveys, 12 teachers were interviewed in order to provide follow up, confirmation, and additional data. The researcher conducted both individual and occasional group interviews of these graduates from volunteers completing a question on the survey indicating their willingness to be interviewed. This source of data provided additional information about teachers' perceptions of their instruction in reading comprehension at the K-12 level (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). The interviews also provided additional in-depth information about teachers' perceptions of their reading comprehension instruction. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

Results of the survey were tabulated where appropriate (closed-ended questions) while open-ended questions were organized by question, read and carefully re-read, then coded using open coding techniques (Creswell, 2005). To minimize bias and increase the credibility of the qualitative data, a research team of literacy professors further refined the categories and themes and searched for disconfirming data.

The element of instruction of greatest interest to the researcher is how teachers select and teach reading comprehension strategies to their students. In the Graduate Reading Program teachers learn a wide variety of assessments that allow them to determine their students' literacy learning needs. In clinical work that they undertake, teachers also are taught to use the assessments to select appropriate teaching sequences, particularly for struggling readers. Teachers in the program

also learn to conduct inquiries about literacy learning in their classrooms that will lead them to make instructional decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions. Thus, quantitative data, such as the reading comprehension instruction strategies that teachers provided in response to survey question 11, were collected and a frequency table was established. Strategies that are most frequently used by teachers were analyzed and sorted by distinguishing characteristics (Ross, 2003). For example, some strategies focus on the structure of the text to be read, while others emphasize the general cognitive processing required to comprehend text. A third category focuses on the intersection of the text structure and cognitive processing. Some strategies are used primarily with narrative texts; other primarily with non-fiction or expository text. Finally, some strategies require little teacher preparation while others require an intense analysis of the text to be read in preparation for the use of the strategy.

Findings

The Rand Report (2002) states, "Regardless of the quantity and quality of research-based knowledge about comprehension, students' reading achievement will not improve unless teachers use that knowledge to improve their instruction." (p. xviii) Teacher expertise matters quite a lot to reading instruction outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1996). In seeking to determine what the graduates of the program internalized about reading comprehension instruction, the study focused on outcomes. While instructors in the program teach reading comprehension strategies, how can they know if teachers take that knowledge and operationalize it in their classrooms? The researcher focused on the perceptions of teachers who graduated from the program. What knowledge did they perceive they took from the program? What elements were most vivid for them? How did they believe their practice changed as a result of the program (and its various features)?

Respondents came from 18 separate school districts, the vast majority of them in the greater San Diego area, but there were also respondents from out of state and from the juvenile court system. The mean for years of teaching experience was 8.9, with 2.5 years as the fewest years of experience and 25 years as the most years of experience. Grade levels taught ranged from Kindergarten through university teaching, but most participants taught at K-12 with the greatest number (38 of 51) at the elementary (K-5) grades.

Influence of An Advanced Reading Program on Teacher's Instructional Decisions

Graduates tended to rate the program highly. When asked to rank the Graduate Reading Program on a Likert-scale from 1 (not useful) to 5 (highly useful), the mean for the responses was 4.39. In fact, only 5 of the 51 respondents rated the program lower than a 4. In terms of those five, the researcher closely examined their comments as non-confirming evidence for the high rating received by the program.

Three themes emerged from both the survey and interview data to indicate that participation in the graduate reading program had been a valued experience for teachers.

Increased Professional Knowledge and Confidence

First, teachers felt they had gained increased professional knowledge and confidence as a direct result of their participation in the university program.

On the survey, one teacher said, "Being involved in the program was the best professional decision I've made. I feel that every primary teacher should go through the program."

Another stated,

> I learned so much! I felt guilty for not knowing about the depths of reading (strategies, etc.) in my undergraduate classes. Every teacher should have the information and understanding that I gained from this graduate program. Best of all, it opened new doors for me with the education field. I feel more confident in my abilities as a teacher, as a result of this program. It also sparked my desire to learn more!

Interview data were similarly positive, as exemplified by the following quote from an elementary level teacher:

> I think for me it was just a wealth of knowledge. It gave substantial credibility to what I thought worked but now I had the research to back it up and in using it in the classroom—in our classroom it had a lot more validity. Now I'm noticing in our support group meetings or [with] other teachers, when I say, 'well, when we did our research' we have the background to back up what we say. I think the program has made me more knowledgeable and more confident, and it has broadened what I know in terms of strategies and ways to teach.

A high school teacher stated:

> [The program had] enormous effect. As a secondary teacher there was very little training all the way through my teacher preparation program about learning to read. Reading comprehension, especially learning to

> read, and it wasn't until I got in the graduate program that I had really any knowledge of that.

Thus data were persuasive that teachers at all levels valued the content and the skills obtained from their coursework and practica in the graduate reading program.

Increased Knowledge about Literacy Processes

A second theme that emerged from the data was that teachers felt they gained increased knowledge of literacy processes. On the survey, comments tended to be positive. One teacher wrote, "In the seminar on research, I did my classroom research report on reading comprehension because it was a concern in my sixth grade classroom. I learned so much about the complexities of teaching reading!" Another teacher wrote:

> The reading program I experienced at SDSU was heavily geared to the upper elementary to middle school child. This provided insight for me in preparation for reading specialist responsibilities due to the fact that my practical experience had been concentrated in the lower grades.

A third teacher wrote,

> In the graduate Reading Program, after the assessment class and the clinic class, I wanted "practice" working as a reading specialist. I was able to tutor during the summer at the Community Reading Center. I found the most pressing need of all my students (even a high school student) was decoding. Now in my own classroom [sixth grade], I find the most pressing need for the majority of my students is reading comprehension.

And a final quote,

> In my previous job in special education, I was prepared for doing many specific skills of reading such as phonics, grammar, capitalization, etc., but I was not trained in comprehension strategies and, being from Michigan and going to school twenty-five years ago, I was not trained in ELD concerns. Through the program and new teaching experiences, I have learned about vocabulary and comprehension problems of second language students.

Interview data confirmed the survey responses, but added greater depth. As one university level teacher noted:

> I was teaching writing before and I actually didn't have much knowledge about teaching reading, so it [program] gave me a lot of good strategies. I kind of understood in general what helped, but the actual strategies along with the theory, really, I think helped me to be a better reading teacher. So, things that I do with students now have really improved

> their reading comprehension and made them more interested in reading before they discuss the reading and write about their reading. And, actually their writing is better now because they understood the reading better.

A male primary teacher compared the reading program to his initial teacher preparation and noted that he was better prepared by his professional teaching experience to understand and apply what he learned.

> I did the clinic class for two semesters, just because I learned and I saw more about comprehension strategies and was able to see and understand and take it into my room. With the preservice, I don't know if I didn't get it, or I think it was just the fact that I didn't have a class yet, and I heard the information coming in like theory-wise, but I couldn't apply it to anything yet. Where, after teaching, I knew what I needed and so I really learned a lot in comparison.

Finally, a Literacy Director in a Title I school stated:

> I think it [program] gave me specific focus on how to teach kids with the strategy and the purpose, and to help kids to think about the process of what proficient readers do. And that there is a thinking process that goes on behind that, and strategies that they use when they know that they're comprehending or know they don't. And it helps first to define what the thinking process is, and help me figure out the strategies that a proficient reader uses, so that then I can focus on the exclusively to students.

A Planful and Strategic Pedagogy

The third theme that arose from the qualitative data was that teachers reported that their pedagogy became more strategic and planful, based upon the perceived needs of their students. One teacher wrote:

> The act of reading is a many-faceted experience. Not only is the child required to decode words and understand what they read, we want them to become lifelong readers, seeing value in the process and gaining enjoyment and knowledge through the experience. In order to do this, a teacher must be able to address the various needs of all the students at the same time. Classroom management and organizational skills of the teacher can determine how the students in the class progress in their reading education, particularly in the early grades.

In addition to the classroom teachers and literacy support personnel, there were also a small number of community college instructors in the program, as well as adjunct university instructors seeking the Master of Arts degree only. One such instructor noted, "a very practical and 'hands-on' program. Although the material is K-12, I was able to focus

on my level in research projects, and apply general concepts in lesson plans." Another teacher noted,

> I think I'm a much more effective teacher in determining their [student] needs and then figuring out how to teach with multiple levels of instructional strategies. And knowing how to access information and access resources, so that if I come up with a problem and I don't know what to do, I know where to find answers.

Teachers' perceptions of program influence were thus almost universally positive. However, there were dissenting voices that should be represented here. Most of the comments that teachers made fell under the guise of helpful or constructive criticism, a lot of which is germane to program planning but not particularly relevant to the topic of this study. There were comments, however, that need to be carefully examined in light of the research questions.

A few comments concerned the relevance of the curriculum in the program. Of particular note was the suggestion that professors should teach more using resources current in districts. At the time of data collection, teachers from one district, in particular, were concerned that not enough attention was paid to two resources in use in their schools—*Mosaic of Thought* (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997) and *Strategies that Work* (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). These teachers felt that both these works should have been required reading for program courses. Apparently, "in-house" professional development heavily relied on these resources. I discuss the implications of this topic in the discussion section of this article.

Closely allied with this set of comments was another set that held that administrative and curricular constraints in their schools made a difference in how much of the learning from the program they could apply. A few stated that they were unable to deviate much from district mandated curriculum and several felt that they were open to sanctions for trying new ideas.

A third group interestingly felt that the program emphasis was focused on a particular grade level (not theirs). These comments came from a few primary teachers who felt that most instruction centered on middle and secondary levels and from a couple of middle and secondary teachers who felt that instruction focused too much on primary levels. An examination of this small corpus of respondents revealed no clear patterns.

Finally, a fourth group of respondents focused on the need for an expanded leadership strand (such as Literacy Coach) in the program.

Selecting and Using Reading Comprehension Strategies

What knowledge or experience base did teachers use to select reading

comprehension strategies to teach their students? Survey and interview data were convergent on this question also. The most frequently quoted response was that teachers based comprehension strategy instruction on student needs. Fully 55% of the respondents (28 of 51) stated directly that they based strategy selection on student needs. Since the program emphasizes basing instruction on assessments to determine individual student strengths and needs, the prevalence of this response may be interpreted as a program influence. Other responses fell into the following categories: (1) genre; (2) whatever shows results (pragmatic); (3) what I know; (4) what is easy.

Typical responses for student needs included:

> "I choose a strategy based on observed student needs and learning style."
>
> "Choice of strategies is adjusted to meet individual needs."
>
> "Based on current student need and assessments done."

Some teachers were thoughtful about the selection of comprehension strategies, tying them to particular genres of literature or expository texts, as was also taught in the program. For example, a number of teachers distinguished between fiction and non-fiction or stated that their choice depended upon the instructional context, such as whole group or small group instructional formats. Fortunately, only a couple of teachers stated that they chose what was easiest to implement. One reading specialist talked about how she made instructional decisions:

> It really depends on my students. For instance, I don't use the Taba with all students, unless they're making excellent progress, until they're really understanding what they read. I try to use structured overviews, prediction of prior knowledge with *everybody,* because it is so helpful to them. If I've got a student who's really excelling, then they're doing it automatically, and of course I don't spend a lot of time on that. But the type of students that I usually work with are mostly second language, and much of the time they don't have the meaning vocabulary, or the big exposure to language experience, or they don't have a lot of prior knowledge, and so I spend a lot of time with my second language students drawing pictures, helping them establish that prior knowledge, so we can build on that.

A literacy coach at a Title I school stated, "Probably the biggest thing I tend to do, is to do an assessment. I get a lot of information from an IRI, to help figure out where the students' needs are." She went on to list a number of strategies that would be used based specifically on the assessment results.

Comprehension Strategies Teachers Reported Using

The sample of 51 teachers reported using 279 different reading comprehension strategies during reading instruction in their classrooms. Figure 1 indicates the type and frequency of reported strategies.

Figure 1
Strategies Teachers Reported Using, Typology, and Incidence in Program

Reading Comprehension Strategy	Times Cited	Type of Strategy (B-Before Reading, D-During Reading, A-After Reading)	Taught in Program (*)
Inferencing/Foreshadowing	15	B, D	
Imagery/Visualize	14	B, D, A	*
Predict	14	B, D	*
Fluency (Repeated Reading)	14	A	*
Characterization Work	13	D, A	*
Summarizing	13	D, A	*
Picture Survey/Text Tour (preview text)	12	B	*
KWL	12	B, D, A	*
Cloze Procedure	11	D	*
DRTA/DLTA	8	B, D, A	*
Think Aloud/Think Along	7	B, D, A	*
Questioning for Clarification	7	D, A	
Drawing Conclusions	7	D, A	
Activate/Build Schema	7	B, D	*
Purpose Setting	6	D, A	*
"W" Words (Why, what, etc)	6	D, A	
Drama/Readers Theatre	5	A	*
Metacognition (Monitor)	5	D	*
Reciprocal Teaching	5	B, D. A	*
Question/Answer (QAR)	5	A	*
Literature Circles	5	B, D. A	*
Teacher Led Discussion	4	B, D, A	
Mapping/Storyboarding	4	A	*
Retelling and/or Lookback	4	A	*
Making Connections (e.g., text to self)	4	B, D, A	*
Text Structure (Cause/Effect)	4	A	*
Synthesizing	3	A	
Determining Importance	3	B, D	
Main Idea/Details	3	D, A	
Sequencing	3	A	*
Making Comparisons	3	A	

Reading Comprehension Strategy	Times Cited	Type of Strategy (B-Before Reading, D-During Reading, A-After Reading)	Taught in Program (*)
Reading Aloud	3	B, D, A	*
Opinion Charts	2	A	*
SQ3R	2	B, D, A	*
Preteach Vocabulary	2	B	*
Venn Diagram	2	A	*
Various Written Responses	2	A	*
Think, Pair, Share	2	B, D, A	
Teaching Words in Context	2	D	
Student Share Favorite Part Orally	2	A	
Story Impressions	2	A	*
Preread, Skim, Scan	2	B, D	*
SPOT (?)	2	B, D	
RAP (Read, Ask, Put in Words)	1	D, A	
Story/Character Webs	1	A	*
Rating Story Characters	1	A	*
Teaching Academic Vocabulary	1	B	*
ReQuest	1	D, A	*
Word Study	1	B	*
Graphic Organizers	1	B, D, A	*
Comprehension Glove (?)	1	?	
Structured Overviews	1	D	*
Taba	1	A	*
Muscle Reading (?)	1	?	
Cunningham 9 Thinking Skills	1	B, D, A	*
Glass Analysis	1	B	*
Homogeneous Grouping	1	B, D, A	*
History as Text for Comparison	1	B, D, A	
KBAR (Kick Back and Read)	1	B, D, A	
Preread Chapter Questions for Key Ideas	1	B	*
Annotate Text	1	D	
Possible Sentences	1	B, D, A	*
Semantic Mapping	1	B, A	*
OWL (observe, wonder, link)	1	B, D, A	
Plot Profile	1	A	*
Anticipation Guide	1	B, A	*
Re-read to Comprehend	1	D	*
Contrast Chart	1	A	
Radio Reading (?)	1	?	
Story/Paragraph Frames	1	A	*

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the strategies listed were taught in the Graduate Reading program over several courses. Some teachers listed strategies that were unknown to the researcher and other colleagues who taught in the program. Other strategies were named differently than the ones we taught, but were nonetheless recognizable from their brief descriptive appellations as being part of the body of research-based strategies taught in the program. These are positive data, as graduates go on to other professional development opportunities and do not always accurately remember where they learned the strategies that they may be using. Survey data reflected that most teachers felt they learned the strategies in the Graduate Reading Program, while a minority gave credit to professional development experiences in their districts and/or to their own professional reading.

However, it should be noted that some of the "strategies" aren't really reading comprehension strategies. For example, Glass Analysis is a word identification strategy rather than a comprehension strategy and questioning techniques are more an assessment of comprehension than a strategy for comprehension. It must also be stated that although teachers did not state they used comprehension strategies that were "easier," the data do seem to indicate that the most frequently used strategies were often the easiest for teachers to implement "on the fly" during reading instruction and ones that do not require extensive planning in terms of texts selected.

Interview data include the following comments, all of which were attributed to strategies learned in the program. One fifth-grade teacher stated,

> Think alouds are a big part of what we model for kids too. It's what my brain is doing when I'm reading this. If my brain isn't doing this then I'm not going to understand what I'm reading so it's really modeling thinking aloud so they hear what my brain is really doing.

A high school teacher contributed, "I do guided reading every day with students, absolutely every day, and it has been the most effective for me because students that I teach don't like to read and won't read on their own." A second grade teacher provided this insight:

> I think one of the first strategies is "directed reading thinking activity." I think I'm doing a lot more guiding than just having them read with me. I think when I first started teaching, I felt like if I had the books and they were second grade level and they were supposed to cover the skills the kids needed, that was enough. Now I think I'm doing a lot more reading and talking about the kids' life strategy, doing a lot more modeling. Also, slowing down when I do reading with my kids. I used to be in a hurry to get through a lot of books and get through the cur-

riculum and that is important, but I'm slowing down more and making sure that the kids are understanding it.

Discussion

This study has allowed program coordinators and other literacy faculty who teach in the program to address questions such as what knowledge base is needed for teachers in order for them to provide effective reading comprehension instruction and has thereby led to refinement and improvement of the program to benefit teachers and their students. While heartened that teachers regard the Graduate Reading Program as valuable to their professional development (see also Carr, 2003) and pleased that so much of what we are teaching is both relevant and useful to teachers, there is a level of concern that much of what gets taught gets left at the university classroom door. Self-report data are always problematic to some extent, and to fully respond to the question that the Rand Report asks direct observation must be employed. While respondents to the survey and to the interviews demonstrated a high level of professionalism and a demonstrable commitment to the students they serve, there remains the troublesome question of their impact on student learning. Direct observation of lessons and collection of student achievement data can assist in answering the remaining questions.

The data do, however, indicate that teachers regard their university education as valuable, relevant, and important to their professional lives. The connection between student needs and teacher decision-making about instructional strategies is also suggested strongly by these data. The majority of teachers responding to the survey and interview questions connected assessment data with their instructional planning to meet the needs of students in their classroom. This is a positive finding about the continuing influence of university-based professional development on teachers' practice. A fair number of students mentioned membership in organizations such as the International Reading Association and the continued reading of professional journals, the commitment to "lifelong learning," and the ongoing quest to learn more to serve their students better. These could also be positive outcomes of the program—although there is no real way for the researcher to know if the teachers who elect to pursue a master's degree in reading are a group in which this disposition already is present.

Most disconfirming data that the researcher examined disparaged the program as being "Ivory Tower." For example, comments about using *Mosaic of Thought* and *Strategies that Work* fall into this category. Both of these books represent teacher-friendly "how to" books based upon a

collected wisdom of (primarily) others' research. In 2007, these books are no longer as prominent as they were when the data were collected for this study. However, the research upon which books like these are based continues to have relevance for teacher professional development. New works for teachers currently are in use in district professional development. Perhaps the strength of a rigorous university professional development program is that what is taught there stands the test of time and is supplanted only when new research findings are brought to bear (Gaffney & Anderson, 2000). In any event, most respondents praised the combination of coursework and practica even as they made constructive suggestions for program improvement, such as increasing the amount of leadership training and providing more writing instruction, both of which have since been implemented.

The question of whether teachers are actually using the reported reading comprehension strategy in the most optimum manner remains to be investigated further. What is known is that the number of strategies named is impressive when compared with a similar report (Gernon & Grisham, 2002) of practicing fourth-grade teachers and strategy use with expository texts. While the Gernon and Grisham report did not report on teachers in a graduate reading program, the participants did come from the same geographical area and so are suggestive that the respondents in the current study are much better informed about reading comprehension strategies available for use with students.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Demographic Information:
1. Name (optional)
2. Position (teacher, reading specialist, etc.)
3. District (optional)
4. Number of Years Teaching:
5. Current Grade Level: Years at this Level:
6. Undergraduate Institution, Major and Year of Graduation:
7. Teacher Preparation Institution and Year
8. SDSU Reading Program Information (check all that apply)
_____Master of Arts Degree _____Reading/Language Arts Credential
_____Reading Certificate Date Completed: _____
9. On a scale from one(not useful) to five (very useful) please rate your overall experience in the Graduate Reading Program at San Diego State University:
10. Comments (optional).
11. Comprehension Strategies. Please list up to 5 of the reading comprehension strategies that you most frequently teach your students and/or ask them to use. (Note: If you use more than 5 very frequently, you may list others on the back of this form.)
12. Generally, what makes you choose a reading comprehension strategy when you use it?
13. How do you know when a reading comprehension strategy is effective with your students?
14. Where did you learn about the five strategies (or more) that you named above?

15. What specifically has helped you become confident at using this or these strategies effectively?
16. Which reading comprehension strategies do you think are particularly useful with second language learners?
17. On a scale from one (not confident) to five (very confident) how confident do you feel about the effectiveness of your reading comprehension instruction?
18. On a scale from one (not useful) to five (very useful) how useful do you feel your preservice education was in reading comprehension instruction?
19. If you would be willing to participate in an interview on this subject, please provide a telephone number where we may reach you:
20. If you have additional comments or suggestions for the improvement of the program, please write them below.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. (Grand Tour Question). Tell me about the effect that the Graduate Reading Program had on your knowledge of reading comprehension instruction. (Probe: difference between preservice and GRP).
2. How do you think your instruction in reading comprehension has changed as a result of the Graduate Reading Program?
3. On the survey you returned, you listed 5 or more reading comprehension strategies that you use with your students on a regular basis. Could you be more specific about how often and under what circumstances you select the reading comprehension strategies you teach?
4. What kinds of information or assessment do you use to decide whether your reading comprehension instruction is effective with your students?
5. Which strategies do you think are particularly useful with second language learners?
6. What variables at your school (e.g., curriculum and/or assessments used, professional development, standards, etc.) influence your decisions with reading comprehension instruction?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?