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The California Reading and Literature Project: Helping Teachers Raise the Academic Language and Literacy Levels of California's K-5 Student Population

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the California Reading and Literature Project (CRLP-Region 8) Signature Program, RESULTS: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 (RALLI), on students' comprehension of increasingly complex informational texts and on teacher efficacy. The theoretical framework underpinning this research was Shefelbine's (2007) proposed literacy framework for assessment and instruction. This study utilized mixed methods combining qualitative analysis to highlight teachers' perceptions about RALLI training and quantitative methods to measure students' pre- and post-assessment comprehension of informational texts after teachers implemented RALLI strategies. Qualitative data concerned the participants' confidence in teaching comprehension of complex informational texts. Quantitative methods were used to determine the impact that teachers trained through RALLI had on students' comprehension. Upon completion of the program, the researchers found the implementation of RALLI strategies improved students' comprehension of complex informational texts and participating in RALLI positively influenced teacher efficacy.

Key Words: CRLP, RALLI, TEXT & TASK ANALYSIS TEMPLATE (TTAT), Backward Design Process.

Introduction

Research on teaching children to comprehend informational texts in the elementary classroom setting has increased significantly in recent years, stimulated, in part, by the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Framework calling for 50% informational passages by fourth grade, 55% by eighth grade, and 70% by twelfth grade (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013). Previous research in the field of childhood education suggests that early exposure to informational texts is imperative. Calo (2011), for example, found that early exposure to informational texts gave younger students an opportunity to learn about the world around them; while, Hall and Sabey (2007) reported that effective use of informational texts taught elementary students how to navigate through the difficulties associated with informational material. Difficulties associated with informational texts included vocabulary, text structure, and unique text features (Zhihui, 2008; Hall & Sabey, 2007). Because most students will face challenges when encountering informational texts, Cummins and Stallmeyer-Gerard (2011) called for well-defined explicit instruction due to the cognitive demands of informational material. Yopp and Yopp (2012) concluded that exposure to informational texts in the early years is necessary if students want to succeed in a world that required an ability to navigate genres that “dominated the later years of schooling and adulthood” (p. 481). It has become evident that informational texts are here to stay.

In response to the academic literacy requirements for the 21st century, the California Reading and Literature Project in Region 8 (CRLP-Region 8) offered an institute featuring a signature professional development program, RESULTS: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 (RALLI) to elementary school teachers in Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Kern Counties. RALLI is designed to provide teachers with the tools and skills necessary to analyze the academic language and literacy demands of complex informational texts and materials. RALLI supports teachers in designing effective instruction to help their students make meaning from complex grade-level text, whether read aloud to students or read by students with instructional support, and to use evidence from the text to demonstrate their comprehension. The intended outcome of the RALLI institute was to increase the capacity of participants to implement instructional strategies and routines to help make complex informational texts more accessible to all students, to increase students’ use of academic language, and to improve motivation and engagement.

Background

In a previous study, we examined the impact of CRLP-Region 8’s institute, *Reframing Teacher Leadership: Action Research Study Group*, on K-12 teachers’ attitudes and perceptions. This study is available for review (Myers & Dillard, 2013). However, a brief discussion is provided to contextualize the current study. In 2010, CRLP-Region 8 began a two-year longitudinal study to examine the impact that participating in an action research project had on 24 teachers’ leadership attitudes and perceptions about working in a collaborative environment. The theoretical foundation underpinning this study was Reeves’ (2008) *New Framework for Teacher Leadership*. Mixed-methods were used to analyze participants’ feedback through surveys and field notes. In the first year of the study, participants indicated that the CRLP-Region 8 Action Research Group helped them “to identify and apply classroom practices and changes in student learning” and “skills to use when working with teachers.” Of the 10 participants who provided responses to the 2010-11 Reframing Teacher Leadership Response Summary, all expressed that RALLI training improved their confidence in teaching complex informational texts (see Appendix A) and they expressed an interest in participating in the second year of the study.

Twenty-four teachers enrolled in the 2011-12 Action Research Group, including the ten participants from the previous year. Each participant was required to complete a pre-survey. The pre-survey results revealed that about half the participants had little or no direct exposure to action research. Of the 24 participants in the Action Research Group, 54% reported that they had never collaborated with other educators to develop and implement action research in their classroom or school while 45% said they had collaborated with others on action research projects.

Participation in the RALLI Action Research Group appeared to positively affect teacher pedagogy. According to the post-assessment, 54% percent of the participants developed a positive perspective on action research. Several participants described in some detail the beneficial impact that working with others collaboratively had on their pedagogy. After participating in the study, teachers found themselves feeling empowered to improve their pedagogy and student achievement.

The results confirmed the claim made by educational researchers that action research empowers teachers by increasing their sense of having a greater stake in curriculum and instructional decisions. Action research also appears to provide them with a framework to continuously improve their pedagogical practices. And while much has been written about action research and its impact on teachers' perspectives, more research is necessary to determine what affect it had on student achievement and, in particular, student comprehension of informative texts. Thus, our primary intent in conducting this study is to determine the impact of using an action research methodology to implement CRLP's signature RALLI program on students' comprehension of complex informational text and how the implementation of RALLI influenced teacher efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

CRLP-Region 8 used Shefelbine's (2007) proposed literacy framework for assessment and instruction. The five major components of this framework are essential to developing literacy and academic English language proficiency and are the foundation for all of CRLP's signature programs. This framework is the basis for effectively differentiating language and literacy instruction in any content area, which will ultimately help students meet the demands of reading complex text. These five areas of the literacy framework are

- Motivation,
- Word recognition and spelling strategies,
- The automaticity component of fluency,
- Academic language, which includes background or topic knowledge and vocabulary knowledge, and
- Comprehension strategies, which include syntax (grammar), text structure, comprehension monitoring, and reorganizing text.

Students' overall reading ability is a composite of all five of these components working together. In other words, when students fail to comprehend literature, textbooks, and related reading materials, such as primary sources, the actual cause of their difficulties can be any one or combination of these components. By considering these five components, teachers are better able to diagnose areas of weakness and plan lessons to effectively differentiate classroom instruction.

Method

Research Design

This study utilized mixed methods combining qualitative analysis to highlight teachers' perceptions of how RALLI improved their confidence in teaching comprehension of complex informational texts with quantitative methods to determine the effect of RALLI on students' comprehension of informational texts. According to Creswell (2009), a mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem. Creswell (2005) considered a mixed methods design as exploratory and appropriate when a researcher wanted "to explore a phenomenon in-depth and then measure its prevalence" (p.75). This design required the researchers to explore the research topic first from a qualitative stance; the qualitative findings then guided "the development of items and scales for a quantitative survey instrument" (p.77). This study focused on students' pre-assessment and post-assessment results from K-5 classrooms.

Participants

The study participants were five kindergarten teachers, six 1st grade teachers, nine 2nd grade teachers, eleven 3rd grade teachers, one 4th grade teacher, four 5th grade teachers, six 2nd grade teachers, and one 4th/5th grade teacher. There were 43 participants.

Procedures

The study began in January 2013 and concluded six months later. The participants administered a pre-assessment to their students before they began using informational texts from the *Common Core State Standards, Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks*. Since some of the actual texts noted in the *Common Core State Standards, Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks* were not accessible, texts written by authors referenced were used instead. For the pre-assessment, the participants were instructed to conduct a "cold" read in which they did not provide background information, vocabulary instruction, or comprehension monitoring during the reading. The students were not given any instruction to access the text. Kindergarten through second grade teacher participants were asked to read the text orally to their students, while third through fifth grade teacher participants had students read the text independently.

After the reading, the students were required to analyze the passage by determining the main idea and at least three details that supported the main idea in a brief paragraph. This expressive task demonstrated their comprehension of the text. Kindergarten and first grade students had the opportunity to draw or tell the main idea and supporting details to their teacher. The teacher participants then scored the expressive task using the Smarter Balanced Informative Writing Rubric as shown in Figure 1.

Smarter Balanced Informative-Explanatory Writing Rubric (Grades K-5)

Score	Statement of Purpose/Focus	Elaboration of Evidence
4	The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlling idea or main idea of a topic is focused, clearly stated, and strongly maintained Controlling idea or main idea of a topic is introduced and communicated clearly within the context 	The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and relevant Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques
3	The response is adequately sustained and generally focused: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is clear and for the most part maintained, though some loosely related material may be present Some context for the controlling idea or main idea of the topic is adequate 	The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the use of sources, facts, and details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some evidence from sources is integrated, though citations may be general or imprecise Adequate use of some elaborative techniques
2	The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be clearly focused on the controlling or main idea, but is insufficiently sustained Controlling idea or main idea may be unclear and somewhat unfocused 	The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from sources is weakly integrated, and citations, if present, are uneven
1	The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be very brief May have a major drift Focus may be confusing or ambiguous 	The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of evidence from the source material is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant
0	A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to state the main idea and provide supporting details.	

Figure 1: Smarter Balanced Informative Writing Rubric. Note. The Smarter Balanced Informative Writing Rubric is from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2013)

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1.4 – RESULTS Lesson Planning Steps for the Core Routines

Before Reading	
1.	The Background Overview: Assessing Background Knowledge (Think-Pair-Share or Think-Write-Pair-Share)
2a.	The Background Overview: Building Background Knowledge (HGO) Create Hypothetical Graphic Organizer on separate piece of paper
2b.	Describe the logical sequence you will use to construct the HGO with your students
3.	Write the receptive task on the board and read to class
4.	Write the expressive task on the board and read to class
5.	Point out the text structures and features
During Reading	
6a.	Setting and Monitoring the Purpose for Reading
6b.	Self-Checking for Understanding
6c.	Employing Fix-Up Strategies
7.	Vocabulary “Step Asides”
8.	Levels of Organization- Story Grammar and/or Outlining
After Reading	
9.	Structured Language Practice with Functional Language Patterns
10.	Graphic Organizer for the Expressive Task
11.	Content Conversation Linked to the Expressive Task
12.	Provide Feedback to Students

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TAB 1: Introduction, Rationale, and Outcomes

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Figure 2: RESULTS Lesson Planning Steps for the Core Routines. Note. From *Results: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 Teacher's Handbook* (p. 11) by M. Adams and J. Shefelbine. Copyright 2011 by California Reading and Literature Project, University of California. Reprinted with permission.

For the post-assessment, all students were provided direct instruction with the RALLI core instructional routines (see Figure 2) using RALLI strategies that helped teachers analyze the academic text their students will read or that will be read to them.

Participants used the Text & Task Analysis Template (TTAT), an important component of the Backward Design Process (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) for lesson planning (see Figure 3). By employing the TTAT, teachers were alerted to qualitative factors that could contribute to text complexity and appropriateness as they planned their instruction. They learned how to conduct text analysis with an organizing principle that represented the foundational knowledge students had to have in order to meet both receptive and expressive tasks related to the reading. The TTAT supported teachers in establishing: (a) expressive task(s) for their students to demonstrate their comprehension of the reading; (b) the language that students were required to produce to carry out the expressive task(s); and (c) what vocabulary to teach before, during, and after reading.

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4.2 – Lesson Text & Task Analysis Template

Text and Task Analysis Template Integrated Content and Language Focus					
Text Title:		Standard(s)		Reading Assignment – Pages or Passages:	
Organizing Principle (Content Objective) What is the “must know” of this selection of text and/or material? What is the big or main idea of the selection and the enabling knowledge - important ideas, details, and/or examples?					
Receptive Task How will I explain the purpose(s) for reading to help students think about (and meet) the organizing principle?					
Expressive Task How will I explain what students will do to demonstrate their understanding of the organizing principle? (Include information about content and format.) What cognitive levels will I prompt students to use?					
Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (2001) and Corresponding Cognitive Tasks/Language Functions					
Remembering	Understanding	Applying	Analyzing	Evaluating	Creating
List	Interpret	Apply	Analyze/ Deconstruct	Critique	Create
Recall / Retell	Infer	Experiment	Identify Cause & Effect	Evaluate / Judge	Plan/Construct
Sequence	Predict	Calculate	Compare & Contrast	Hypothesize / Formulate Questions	Produce
Describe	Summarize	Classify & Categorize	Identify Main Idea & Supporting Detail	Take & Support a Position	
Language Function(s) What Language Function(s) highlighted above will I take to practice for the Expressive Task?					
Accessing and Developing Background Knowledge Identify important topic-related concepts/vocabulary (mostly Tier 3) taught “Before” reading to achieve organizing principle. (Code NC or DC for New or Developing Concepts and NL for New Labels.)					
Vocabulary Taught “During” Reading (Tier 2 and 1 words taught as “step asides”) (Code “C” for Cognates or “M” for Morphology as appropriate for any words listed above.)					
Text Features That Support Comprehension (Headings, captions, illustrations, charts, graphs, etc.)			Text Structure (Organization of ideas, signal words, grammatical features) that will enhance and/or impede comprehension		

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TAB 4: Purpose and Rationale for Using the Text and Task Analysis Template

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Figure 3: Lesson Text and Task Analysis Template. *Note.* From *Results: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 Teacher’s Handbook* (p. 155) by M. Adams and J. Shefelbine. Copyright 2011 by California Reading and Literature Project, University of California. Reprinted with permission.

Lesson planning followed the text and task analysis. The lesson plans contained core instructional routines and supplemental strategies. In support of the idea that “less is more,” the CRLP-Region 8 Director recommended selecting a number of research-aligned, “core” instructional routines to be used consistently in the “Before,” “During,” and “After” reading stages of instruction as shown in Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7.

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6.2 – Lesson Planner

Subject: _____ Grade: _____ Title/Chapter/Page(s): _____

Preparation from TTAT:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizing Principle	<input type="checkbox"/> Expressive Task(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Receptive Task	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary Taught "During Reading"
DURING READING	
Facilitate Comprehension	
<p>Comprehension Monitoring:</p> <p>6a. Setting and Monitoring the Purpose for Reading How does what you've just read (or heard) relate to your purpose for reading (listening)? (And other open-ended content-focused questions to foster instructional discussions about the topic)</p> <p>6b. Self-Checking for Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you use your own words to say or retell what you just read (heard)? • Can you organize the information that you just read (heard)? • Can you summarize what you just read (heard)? <p>6c. Employing Fix-Up Strategies Which part(s) do you not understand and what fix-up strategies could you use? Teacher selects the fix-up strategy that best fits the problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rereading • Reading ahead • Deconstructing complex syntax • Identifying signal words • Finding out the meanings of key words through marginal glosses, the glossary, dictionary, or through structural analysis (morphology) • Finding a simpler text • Asking for help from teacher/peer <p>7. Vocabulary "Step Asides"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1 and Tier 2 explanations • Text structure signal words • Cognates • Morphology <p>8. Levels of Organization – Story Grammar and /or Optional Scaffolded Outlining for 3-6</p>	
Motivation and Engagement are Influenced by: Success, Pleasure, Relevance, and Purpose	

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TAB 6: During Reading

Figure 5: During Reading Lesson Planner. Note. From *Results: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 Teacher's Handbook* (p. 178) by California Reading and Literature Project. Copyright 2011 by California Reading and Literature Project, University of California. Reprinted with permission.

7.1 – Lesson Planner

Subject: _____ Grade: _____ Title/Chapter/Page(s): _____

Preparation from TTAT: <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive Task(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Language Functions/Cognitive Tasks
AFTER READING
Scaffolding the Expressive Task
9. Structured Language Practice with Functional Language Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What language patterns will you teach or review to scaffold the expressive task(s) linked to the language function? (Use worksheet 7.2) What familiar topic will you use to practice the patterns?
10. Graphic Organizer for the Expressive Task Scaffold the expressive task by adding important information to the original HGO or by constructing a new graphic organizer:
11. Content Conversation Linked to the Expressive Task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post the expressive task from the TTAT and have students practice linking topic-specific vocabulary from the graphic organizer(s) with the functional language patterns they practiced in Step 9, first orally and then in writing (as appropriate) Write out the evaluative criteria you will share with students:
After Completion and Evaluation for the Expressive Task
12. Provide Feedback to Students Evaluate student work and write out the feedback you will give to the class and/or subgroups, with strengths and instructional needs:
Motivation and Engagement are influenced by: Success, Pleasure, Relevance, and Purpose

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TAB 7: After Reading

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Figure 6: After Reading Lesson Planner. Note. From *Results: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 Teacher's Handbook* (p. 185) by California Reading and Literature Project. Copyright 2011 by California Reading and Literature Project, University of California. Reprinted with permission.

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7.2 – Functional Language Patterns Worksheet		
Text:		Target Function:
Comprehension question(s) or other student output expectations – What do you want students to <u>do</u> ?		
DIFFERENTIATED TEACHER PROMPTS		
Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/Advanced
DIFFERENTIATED STUDENT RESPONSES TO TEACHER PROMPTS		
Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/Advanced
LANGUAGE PATTERNS BASED ON DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSES		
Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/Advanced
PRACTICE VOCABULARY TO USE WITH LANGUAGE PATTERNS		

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TAB 7: After Reading

Figure 7: Functional Language Patterns Worksheet. Note. From *Results: Academic Language and Literacy Instruction K-6 Teacher's Handbook* (p. 186) by California Reading and Literature Project. Copyright 2011 by California Reading and Literature Project, University of California. Reprinted with permission.

Results

Qualitative Analysis

The following questions analyzed five qualitative categories of strategies, impact, teacher comprehension, student comprehension, and administrator feedback.

1. What RALLI strategies (S) worked well in your classroom?
2. What impact (I) did participating in RALLI have on student achievement?
3. Did going through the RALLI training improve your confidence in teaching comprehension (TC) of informational text?
4. How did RALLI lessons affect your students' comprehension (StC) of informational text?
5. Administrator (A) feedback (Did you feel, as an administrator, that attending RALLI training with your team was beneficial to the implementation of the RALLI strategies?)

Below is a summary of teachers' qualitative responses that reflect the overall patterns in Table 1 (the complete analysis matrix is in Appendix B). The most frequently mentioned strategies that worked well were using the Hypothetical Graphic Organizer (HGO) and sentence frames. The most frequently mentioned impacts on student achievement were reading comprehension and writing. In the category of teachers' confidence in their comprehension, the participant teachers noted informational text, planning, and vocabulary most frequently. Student comprehension centered on reading comprehension and vocabulary. For administrators, collaboration clearly was the most salient aspect of RALLI.

CATEGORY	Most frequent response	Second most frequent response
Strategies	Hypothetical Graphic Organizer (HGO)	Sentence Frames
Impact	Reading comprehension	Writing
Teacher comprehension	Informational Text	Planning; Vocabulary
Student comprehension	Reading comprehension	Informational Text
Administrator	Collaboration	

Table 1: Analysis of Teachers' Qualitative Data

Quantitative Analysis

The teacher participants used the Smarter Balanced Informative Writing Rubric as shown previously in Figure 1 to assess their students' comprehension of the text. The highest score on the rubric was 4. To earn a score of 4, the student's written response had to include a main idea that was focused, clearly stated, and strongly maintained with evidence from sources that were smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and relevant.

The teacher participants who taught kindergarten had 140 students take the pre-assessment. Only eight students scored 3 of 4 points possible, and four students scored 4 of 4 points possible. After implementing RALLI core instructional routines, the kindergarten teachers saw some improvement in their students' scores on the post-assessment. The kindergarten teachers had 136 students complete the post-assessment. Four students were absent on the day students took the post-assessment. After scoring the post-assessment, 23 kindergarten students scored 3 and 11 kindergarten students scored 4 (see Figure 8).

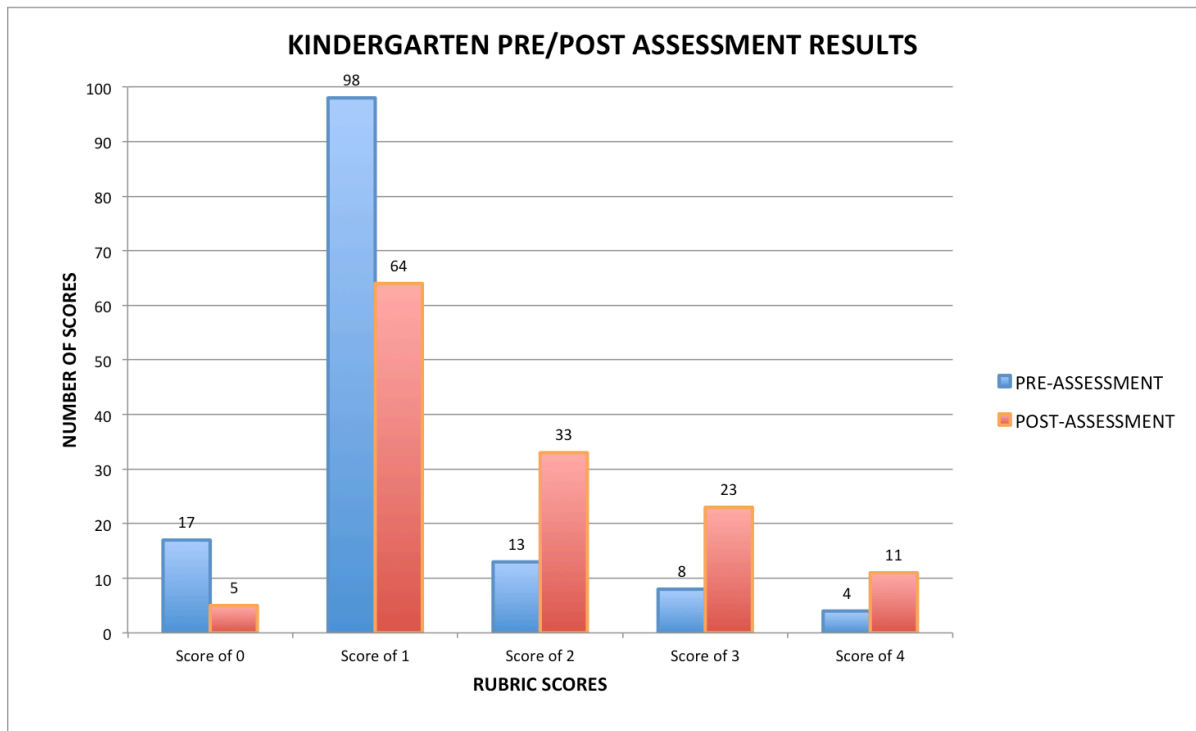


Figure 8: Kindergarten pre- and post-assessment scores.

One hundred twenty-one first grade students completed the pre-assessment. Eight students were absent on the day that students completed the pre-assessment. The pre-assessment results revealed 21 students scored 3 and four students scored 4. One hundred twenty-nine students completed the post-assessment. Forty-one students scored 3 and 10 students scored 4 on the post-assessment (see Figure 9).

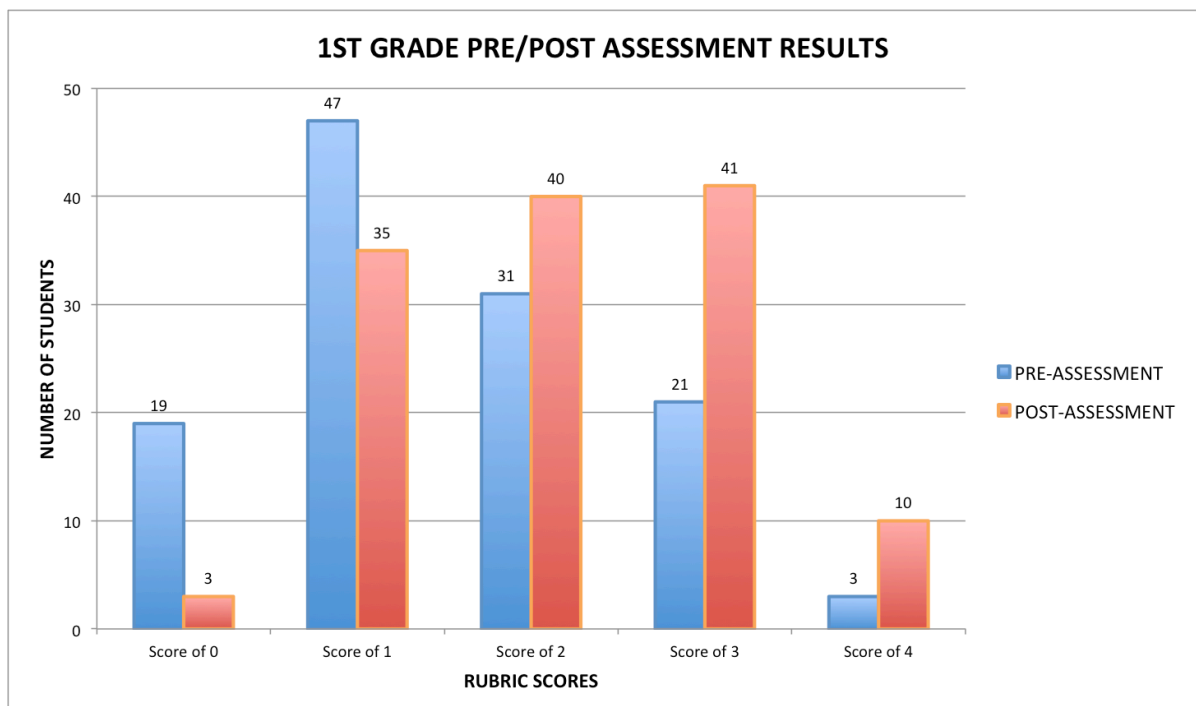


Figure 9: First grade pre- and post-assessment scores.

There were 193 second grade students who completed the pre-assessment. Twenty one students scored 3 on the pre-assessment and no students scored 4. The post-assessment results revealed 58 students scored 3 and 55 students scored 4. All students were present for the pre- and post-assessment (see Figure 10).

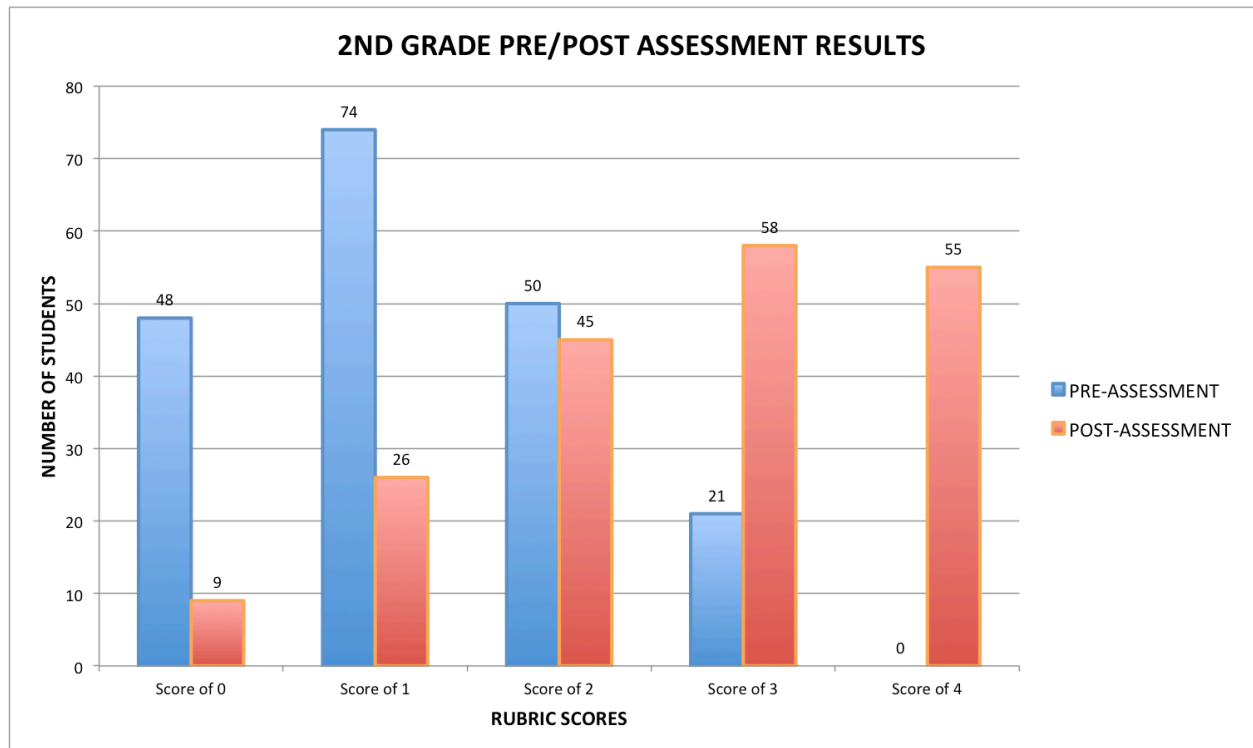


Figure 10: Second grade pre-and post-assessment scores.

Two hundred seventy third grade students completed the pre-assessment. Two students scored 4 and 41 students scored 3 on the pre-assessment. Two hundred fifty-nine third grade students completed the post-assessment. The post-assessment results revealed 94 students scored 3 and 39 students scored 4. Eleven students were absent on the day that students completed the post-assessment (see Figure 11).

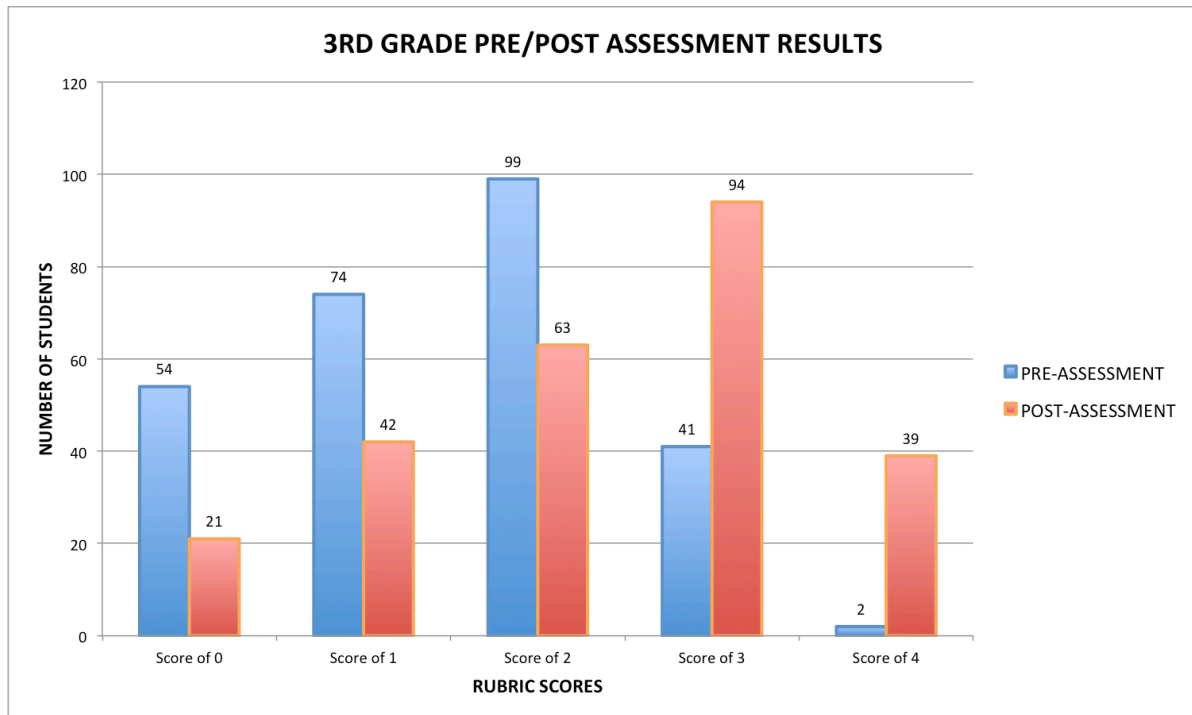


Figure 11: Third grade pre-and post- assessment scores.

One hundred thirty-four fourth and fifth grade students completed the pre-assessment. Two students scored 4 and 23 students scored 3. One hundred twenty-eight students completed the post-assessment. The post-assessment results revealed 36 students scored 3 and 32 students scored 4. Six students were absent on the day that students completed the post-assessment (see Figure 12).

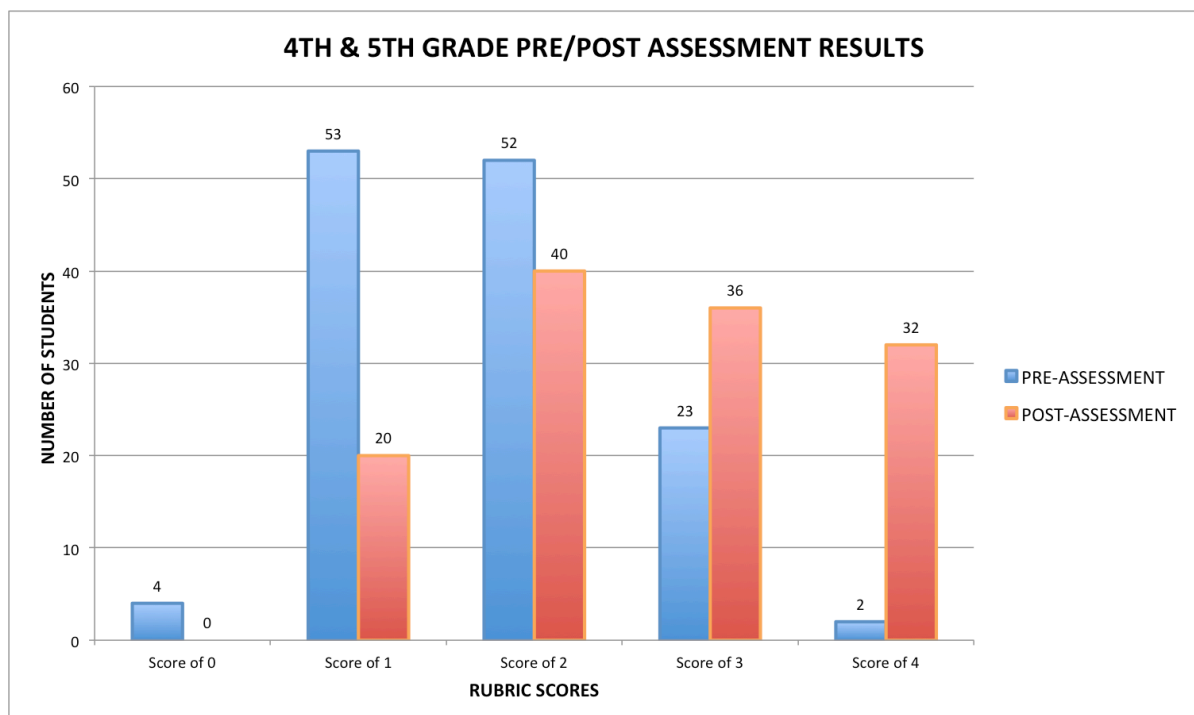


Figure 12: Fourth and Fifth Grade pre-and post-assessment scores.

Discussion

Upon completion of the RALLI institute, CRLP-Region 8 participants revealed through a qualitative survey that RALLI provided them with a comprehensive literacy framework that enabled them to identify specific factors that affected their students' overall literacy. RALLI also showed them how to effectively integrate academic language and literacy instruction throughout the instructional day and how to implement instructional strategies and routines that made complex informational text more accessible to their students. One participant wrote, "RALLI training improved my confidence in teaching comprehension of informational text." Another participant wrote, "RALLI forced me to step back and really analyze and dig deep into the subject matter/grade level material." To sum it up, one participant wrote that she not only "learned new strategies for teaching informational text," but she also "noticed a difference in students' ability to answer questions regarding the text."

In addition, students' post-assessment results show that RALLI strategies improved student's comprehension of complex text. All grade levels showed decreases in scores of 0 and 1 from pre- to post- assessment. Scores of 2 varied across grade levels from pre- to post-assessment. More kindergarten and first grade students scored 2 in the post-assessment compared to the pre-assessment while students in grades two through five showed decreases in scores of 2 from pre- to post- assessment. Furthermore, the improvements in scores of 3 and 4 from pre- to post- assessment are apparent across all grade levels. In all grade levels, more students scored 3 or 4 in post-assessment compared to students' pre-assessment, revealing RALLI strategies had a substantial impact on students' comprehension of complex informational texts.

Based on the participants' responses to the post-survey and students' post-assessment scores, we concluded that the implementation of RALLI strategies improved students' comprehension of complex informational texts and participating in RALLI positively impacted teacher efficacy.

Conclusion

Elementary school teachers in CRLP-Region 8 face many challenges, not the least of which is the diversity of languages and socio-economic backgrounds of their students. This diversity particularly impacts reading and literacy skills, a challenge that is only compounded given the rigorous expectations of California's mandated Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading is one of the key requirements of the CCSS. It states that all students must be able to independently read and comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progressed through school. To address this comprehensive standard, RALLI focuses on routines that participants are able to apply to grade-level text, including literature and content area informational text. Given the beneficial effects on student reading comprehension and teacher empowerment as indicated by this study, CRLP-Region 8 plans to continue to enroll teacher participants in annual Action Research Group cohorts. We believe this program merits institutionalization as a model for sustained teacher collaboration in grade level teams that support the implementation of strategies and routines learned in the RALLI institute.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Did going through RALLI training improve your confidence in teaching complex informational texts?

Teacher's pseudonym	Teacher's grade	Years teaching	Response	Elaboration
Participant 1	1	11	Yes	Learned new strategies for teaching informational text; noticed a difference in students' ability to answer questions regarding the text
Participant 2	1	15	Yes	Forced me to step back and really analyze and dig deep into the subject matter/grade level material
Participant 3	3	5	Yes	Think about my teaching goals and what I wanted my students to learn
Participant 4	5	19	Yes	RALLI training improved my confidence in teaching comprehension of informational text.
Participant 5	3	2	Yes	RALLI training gave me new and effective strategies to engage my students in lessons. I feel that I was able to teach informational texts with more confidence.
Participant 6	3	8	Yes	I feel more confident teaching informational text.
Participant 7	2	23	Yes	RALLI training came at a time when we were looking at the common core standards and it tied well.
Participant 8	3	21	Yes	It gave me techniques I didn't use such as sentence frames.
Participant 9	4/5	23	Yes	Lots of the strategies were ones I've heard before, but it put it all together and gave teaching a more focused and logical process. HGO step gave my students confidence before even reading the text.
Participant 10	3	7	Yes	I liked the idea of using an HGO to preview the lesson.

Appendix B

Coding and Qualitative Data Analysis of Teacher Responses

	I D	What RALLI strategies (S) worked well in your classroom?	Verbatim Responses
S	6	BK	My entire language arts class is basic, below basic, or far below basic in language, and about 45% of my students are ELs, so building background knowledge, discussing vocabulary, using sentence frames, and providing a variety of visual aids was very beneficial for all of my students.
S	1 3	GrOrg	The graphic organizers and the way the lessons were rich with content and vocabulary was really beneficial to my students.
S	1	HGO	I really loved the HGOs. My students referred back to many of them throughout the year.
S	3	HGO	The HGO was very helpful. It sparked their interest, and the vocabulary that was taught increased their understanding of the text.
S	1 2	HGO	The use of the HGO and realia was a great way to introduce vocabulary and generate enthusiasm about the written text. Lots of oral practice within the language function increased academic language. Charting information as we read was helpful as well.
S	1 4	HGO	My students loved the HGO. They really, really appreciated the time that it took me to draw out and uncover what they were going to be learning. After I introduced the HGO for this last RALLI assignment, I had a student come up to me and say, "I'm glad you're my teacher." Kids get excited and love to learn when we are excited and love teaching. The HGO really brings learning to life.
S	1 5	HGO	The HGO was a great resource for my students to be able to refer back to as they progressed through the lesson. Students were much more familiar with the academic vocabulary necessary to complete the lessons.
S	1 6	HGO	The use of HGOs helped to engage my students in the topics I taught. They peaked their interest and kept them wanting to know more. I also noticed that by introducing the topic before reading the story and giving them background knowledge about the story really helped to engage them while they read or I read to them.
S	4	InfTxt	Students were engaged with the informational text. They were able to identify text features and effectively communicate their learning in complete sentences.
S	1 1	LangFun	I really liked the Language Functions. They gave a scaffold for the students to use in their oral conversations. Lots of higher-level discussion going on.
S	7	Lplans	The RALLI lesson plans made me really think about my teaching goals, which was beneficial because it gave my teaching a very specific and meaningful purpose.
S	2	RecEx	I loved the receptive/expressive tasks. My students were

			more engaged in their learning. There were less questions about what we were going to do and a greater focus on what we were reading.
S	6	Sframes	My entire language arts class is basic, below basic, or far below basic in language, and about 45% of my students are ELs, so building background knowledge, discussing vocabulary, using sentence frames, and providing a variety of visual aids was very beneficial for all of my students.
S	8	Sframes	The sentence frames (language patterns) were very beneficial. The students liked using them, and it gave all levels of students' vocabulary to build complex sentences.
S	9	Sframes	Using the language functions section of the binder and displaying sentence frames for our class discussions made all the difference. I think that having a strong purpose for the lesson in the organizing principle was important for me as well.
S	10	Think/Pr/Sh	I liked the opportunity to do Think/Pair/Share. It was a great reminder that our children have to talk about what they are learning. Doing worksheets is just busy work. They were so excited to have the opportunity to talk about what they were learning, and it helped with their comprehension.
S	6	VisAids	My entire language arts class is basic, below basic, or far below basic in language, and about 45% of my students are ELs, so building background knowledge, discussing vocabulary, using sentence frames, and providing a variety of visual aids was very beneficial for all of my students.
S	5	Voc	Building background vocabulary helped my EL students feel more involved in the learning process.
S	6	Voc	My entire language arts class is basic, below basic, or far below basic in language, and about 45% of my students are ELs, so building background knowledge, discussing vocabulary, using sentence frames, and providing a variety of visual aids was very beneficial for all of my students.
I	x	What impact (I) did participating in RALLI have on student achievement?	
I	3	+	All of my students did better with have RALLI instruction.
I	12	+	Students really enjoyed the lessons and were very engaged. I enjoyed presenting the lessons and they got more from that.
I	4	Memory	My students seemed to retain more information after using the RALLI strategies.
I	2	ReadComp	Participating in RALLI made me more aware of what I needed to do to prepare my students for texts that they were going to read or listen to. As a result, their comprehension scores improved.
I	5	ReadComp	I think that my students had a sense of confidence after the lesson. They were able to understanding the text and could talk about it in an intelligent way.
I	1	ReadComp	My students were able to improve in many areas of their

	0		reading comprehension. They were exposed to high level vocabulary, and I felt that I was able to provide them with several opportunities to engage in high level conversations with their peers. With the strategies I learned at RALLI, I hope to continue preparing them to be competent in the 21 st century.
I	11	ReadComp	Students became more active readers, and consciously read for a purpose.
I	7	Reading	I think using these strategies has given the children more confidence as readers.
I	8	Voc	The impact (of RALLI on student achievement) was clearly during the expressive task. The vocabulary and information they were able to dictate to me was very high level.
I	1	Voc	I feel my students have a deeper understanding of vocabulary because now I am more aware of teaching it more specifically.
I	6	Writing	Practicing the language functions orally really improved their writing on the subject.
I	9	Writing	Lots of oral practice embedded the skills and vocabulary, before students started writing. All students made growth with the paragraph assessment.
I	13	Writing	My students truly benefitted from RALLI. I have implemented RALLI strategies in every content area, and it has affected my students' perception of informational text. They love when they see an HGO coming up, are interested in checking out more informational texts (because of positive experiences in class), and it has helped their writing incredibly.
TC	x	Did going through the RALLI training improve your confidence in teaching comprehension (TC) of informational text?	
TC	7	Comcore	I think going through the RALLI training was helpful because it comes at a time when we are looking at the common core standards, and it ties in well.
TC	5	Engage	I feel that RALLI training gave me new and effective strategies to engage my students in lessons.
TC	1	InfoTxt	I learned new strategies for teaching informational text and definitely noticed a difference in my students' ability to answer questions regarding the text. My students were using the correct vocabulary and able to write detailed sentences staying on topic.
TC	4	InfoTxt	RALLI training improved my confidence in teaching comprehension of informational text. I felt better prepared to organize the information that allowed students to comprehend the material to a higher degree. Students were more focused during the reading.
TC	6	InfoTxt	I feel more confident teaching informational text. I do believe my students have a better understanding, and they were more confident with the expressive task.

TC	10	InfoTxt	Going through RALLI training has definitely improved my ability to successfully teach comprehension of informational text. I found that the process of planning for my lessons was really clear, and it allowed me the opportunity to analyze the different components from another angle. The proof was when I saw my students' faces light up when exposed to the new information.
TC	3	Plan	It really made me think about my teaching goals and what I wanted my students to learn. It also gave me a very clear and well prepared format to follow.
TC	9	Plan	I love being able to collaborate and plan with other teachers. The strategies did improve my confidence as a teacher to increase student learning.
TC	12	Purpose	RALLI made me aware of how important a purpose is for the students to have before reading any text.
TC	11	SentFr	RALLI gave me more tools to use in order to make the text more meaningful and interesting for my students. It also gave me a lot of opportunities to check for understanding. The think-pair-shares let me know if my class was on target with understanding the information. The topic focus (as something to keep referring to) helped me stay on track. The HGOs put information in a very easy (visual) way for my kids to understand the vocabulary and text structure. It was also a good tool to check for understanding after the reading. The sentence frames really helped my children use academic language and having different levels of sentence frames helped all of my children feel confident and challenged when discussing (rest did not copy clearly).
TC	2	SubjLevel	It forced me to step back and really analyze and dig deep into the subject matter / grade level material being taught.
TC	8	Voc	Now I can easily point out text features, significant academic vocabulary, etc. during the pre-read. Also, I am sold on the power of the HGO as a teaching / learning tool.
TC	11	Voc	RALLI gave me more tools to use in order to make the text more meaningful and interesting for my students. It also gave me a lot of opportunities to check for understanding. The think-pair-shares let me know if my class was on target with understanding the information. The topic focus (as something to keep referring to) helped me stay on track. The HGOs put information in a very easy (visual) way for my kids to understand the vocabulary and text structure. It was also a good tool to check for understanding after the reading. The sentence frames really helped my children use academic language and having different levels of sentence frames helped all of my children feel confident and challenged when discussing (rest did not copy clearly).
StC	x	How did RALLI lessons affect your students' comprehension (StC) of informational text?	
StC	4	Comp	The lessons helped my EL's organize their ideas, it helped build their vocabulary. It helped all students see that there

			is a purpose for writing.
StC	7	Comp	It improved their comprehension. They were able to orally express their comprehension to me and their classmates, as well as write about it in the expressive task.
StC	9	Comp	The students were more confident and really felt like they knew what they just read. Also, transferring what they read to the writing was easier. The students had all the info that they needed to make for complete paragraphs in their writing.
StC	10	Comp	My students truly benefitted from the RALLI lessons. Their comprehension went up drastically, they were more engaged in the lesson, wanted to learn more after the lesson was complete, and their ability to write about the topic was unparalleled. Their learning truly came out in their writing. They used the key vocabulary, remembered complex information, and overall, wrote more than they typically were able to produce. Also, besides for writing, I also had them draw when they were done. It was amazing, their pictures had detail that reflected the HGO and text that they were now very knowledgeable about.
StC	8	Engage	My students were very engaged throughout all of the lesson. They enjoyed the challenges I provided them with the support.
StC	1	InfoTxt	I feel my students have a greater understanding of informational text after using RALLI strategies. I notice a huge difference when I do not teach with RALLI strategies and when I do.
StC	3	InfoTxt	Doing RALLI lessons with my students gave them a large boost of confidence in discussing and engaging with informational text. I loved seeing their engagement and excitement with the whole group lessons.
StC	5	InfoTxt	My students love informational text. They are always looking for the things we have learned. They share with each other and are always excited for more.
StC	6	InfoTxt	The students approached the informational texts with more tools to help them understand the passage – as in vocabulary, how to use text features, sentences frames.
StC	2	Memory	Overall, my students seemed to retain learning/information better after RALLI strategies were implemented.
A	x	Administrator (A) feedback (did you feel, as an administrator, that attending RALLI training with your team was beneficial to the implementation of the RALLI strategies?)	
A	x	.	Yes, definitely it was beneficial.
A	1	Collab	Teachers need to see that we're learners as well.
A	2	Collab	As an administrator you learn and understand what the teachers are as well so there can be that common understanding and support. This provides the opportunity for good rich conversations.

A	3	Collab	In order to move your faculty in a new direction or new learning, you must have the same knowledge and skills so you need the training.
A	4	Collab	By learning with your teachers, you no longer are just an evaluator. You become a partner in learning and can be a second set of eyes in the classroom for productive feedback.
A	5	Collab	Yes. Attending the training has given me the opportunity to work side by side with my teachers and has provided me with the tools necessary to support them. It is imperative that administrators attend staff development trainings with their staff.
A	x	Administrator feedback (Did you see a boost in confidence in you RALLI Action Research Team after they completed RALLI training?)	
A	6	Collab	Absolutely! They are using what they learned and are sharing with other staff members who didn't have the opportunity to attend the RALLI training. They invite me to their classrooms to see their lessons and are eager to share lesson plans they have created for RALLI.