



**EFFICACY
REPORT**

**Read to Learn:
Social Studies**

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Efficacy Study for Read to Learn: Social Studies

Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* is a social studies program that provides core social studies content built around national and state standards, and correlated to key concepts presented in social studies textbooks. Each student book has a corresponding Teacher Guide that provides instructional support based on research-based practices for teaching reading, writing, and comprehension. In addition, three Resource Big Books—*America’s Landforms; Getting Information from Maps; and Charts, Graphs, and Diagrams*—serve as tools for teaching key skills for understanding social studies literacy.

Purpose

The study was designed to determine if students in low- and high-performing schools within urban and suburban districts showed growth in content comprehension when Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* was used with the district-adopted social studies textbooks.

Research Questions

- Do students whose teachers use the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* program as a supplement to the district-adopted social studies textbook better comprehend social studies content when reading informational texts than students whose teachers do not use the program materials with the adopted social studies textbook?
- Do students whose teachers use the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* program student books and teacher guides with identified research-based instructional practices for reading informational text show significant growth in social studies content comprehension?
- Do students performing below, at, and above grade-level standards for reading and writing in both low- and high-performing schools within urban and suburban districts show growth in content comprehension when the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* program is used as a supplement to the district adopted social studies textbook?

Procedures

Sites and Participants

During the spring of the 2004–2005 academic year, Newbridge Educational Publishing conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* program. The study took place in grade 3, 4, and 5 classrooms in an urban school district and a smaller suburban school district in Connecticut.

A total of 258 students in grades 3, 4, and 5 from fifteen classrooms in four schools in Bridgeport Public Schools and Torrington Public Schools in Connecticut participated in the investigation. The urban and suburban districts provided opportunity to include diverse ethnic groups and socio-economic levels. Students below, at, and above grade-level standards, as determined by state tests, participated in the study. [See Appendix A—Torrington Public School District and Appendix B—Bridgeport Public School District.]

In Torrington, five classrooms served as the Study Group for a total of 175 students. The Control Group consisted of four classrooms for a total of 84 students. The Control classrooms had the same demographic profile as the Study Groups in grades 3, 4, and 5 in that district. In Bridgeport, six classrooms in one elementary school served as a Study Group. There was no Control Group in this school.

A site contact person in each district was identified to serve as a liaison between the district and Newbridge.

Teacher Training: Materials and Research-Based Practices

Each Study Group teacher received classroom sets of three *Read to Learn: Social Studies* student book titles—with corresponding Teacher Guides—that were correlated to Connecticut social studies state standards. Before the classroom application began, teachers attended a workshop that focused on the use of the teacher guide as a resource to

implement research-based practices for reading informational text that included:

- Using graphic organizers before, during, and after reading as tools for note taking
- Prereading strategies to build and activate prior knowledge
- Questioning on varying cognitive levels
- Using Think-Alouds to model vocabulary strategies to learn concepts
- Explicit instruction on informational text features and structures

Pretest/Posttest

The multiple choice Pretest/Posttest was designed to provide information about the students' comprehension of social studies content, use of vocabulary strategies, and understanding of informational text features and structures. The teaching practices supported by the program provide instruction in those areas.

The test consisted of Procedure 1, Parts 1 and 2, during which students read only from the test; and Procedure 2, during which students read from the student books to answer test questions. In Procedure 1, Parts 1 and 2, students were tested on the content of each of the three books. Part 1 consisted of questions to test content knowledge and Part 2 included a passage from the book as it would appear in a standardized test. Part 2 was made up of questions that focused on text structures and the use of vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of words. In Procedure 2, students were directed to specific pages in one of the books and the questions required students to identify, access, and integrate specific informational text features and structures to comprehend. [See Appendix C on page 15.]

Instructional Procedures

Following the administration of the pretests, teachers used the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* program during their designated social studies time throughout a six-week time period. Although the materials were supplemental to their adopted social studies textbooks, some of the teachers abandoned the textbooks and exclusively used *Read to Learn: Social Studies*. Others, who identified the instructional strategies presented in the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* Teacher Guides as effective reading strategies, chose to use *Read to Learn: Social Studies* during their reading block.

During the study, teachers followed the instructional model as presented in the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* Teacher's Guides and had access to a Newbridge consultant through phone calls and e-mail for questions and support. A fidelity check was done mid-study when the consultant visited each site.

Data Collection and Analysis

All students completed pretests and posttests that were administered by their classroom teachers. All tests were collected by the district contacts and sent directly to the office for data collection and analysis.

Results

This report is organized to display the results in the Torrington schools first, and then the Bridgeport school. Torrington results include the comparison of student growth in comprehension in the Study and Control Groups and the percentage of student growth at each grade level. Bridgeport school results indicate the percentage of student growth in comprehension at each grade level.

Torrington Schools Results

Torrington Grade 3 Results

Students in the Grade 3 Study Group improved an average of 20.4% in comprehension. The Control Group for Grade 3 showed a 1.6% average improvement in comprehension for the same period. [Figure 1]

Over 68% of the students in the Study Group showed improvement in the 11%–30% range. Another 15.8% posted results in the 31%–41%+ range. [Figure 2]

Figure 1

% Change/Improvement in Comprehension

Study Group vs. Control Group
Torrington, CT — Grade 3

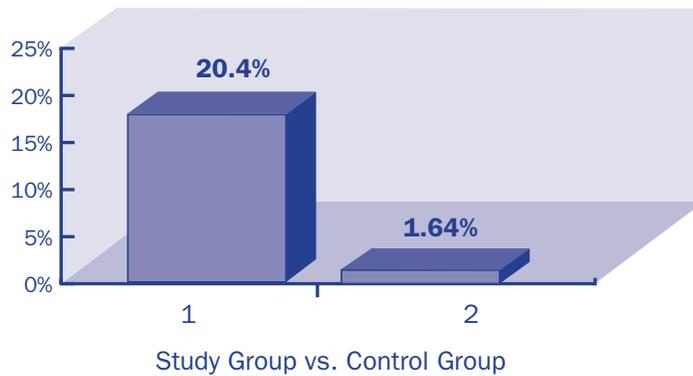
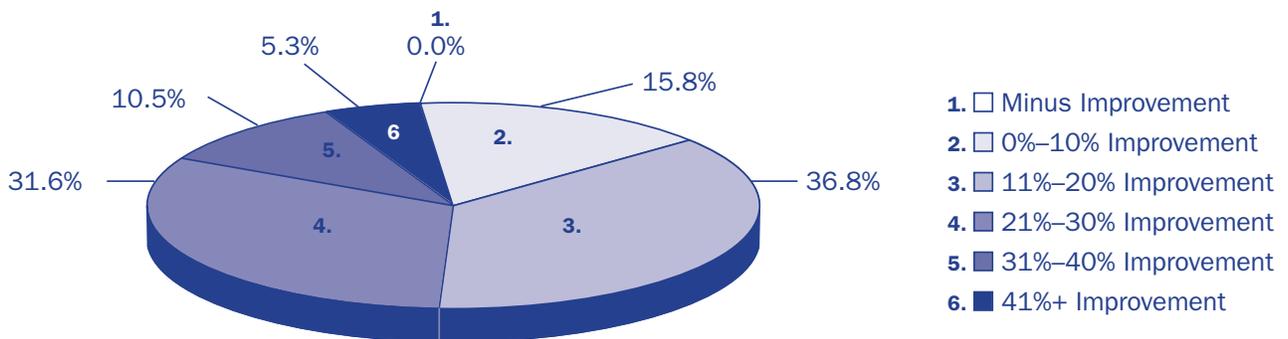


Figure 2

% Change/Improvement in Comprehension

Study Group — Grade 3
Torrington, CT



Torrington Grade 4 Results

The average percentage of improvement in comprehension among students in the Grade 4 Study Group was 24.3%. The Control Group for Grade 4 posted only a 1.2% average improvement in comprehension. [Figure 3]

There was improvement in the range of 11%–30% for 57% of the students and another 22% of the students showed marked improvement in the 31%–40% range. [Figure 4]

Figure 3

% Change/Improvement in Comprehension

Study Group vs. Control Group
Torrington, CT — Grade 4

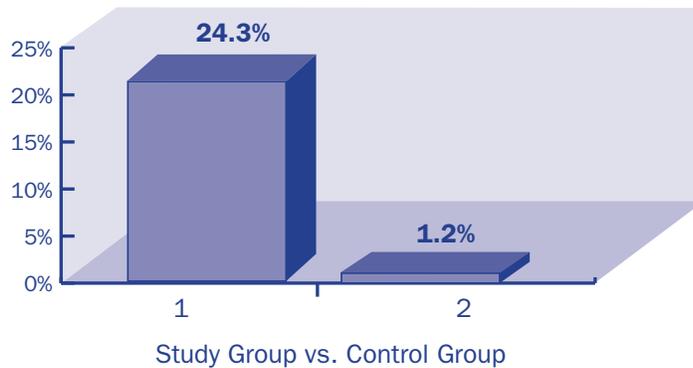
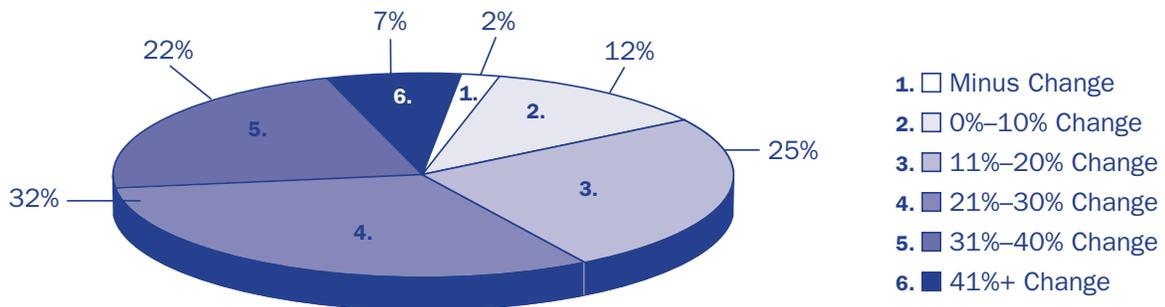


Figure 5

Rates of Improvement in Comprehension

Study Group — Grade 4
Torrington, CT



Torrington Grade 5 Results

Students in the Study Group averaged 17.9% improvement in comprehension. The Control Group posted improvement in test scores of 4.4%. [Figure 5]

Moreover, 53.9% of the students showed improvement in the 11%–30% range with another 13.7% improving 31% or more. [Figure 6]

Figure 5

Comprehension Improvement

Study Group vs. Control Group
Torrington, CT — Grade 5

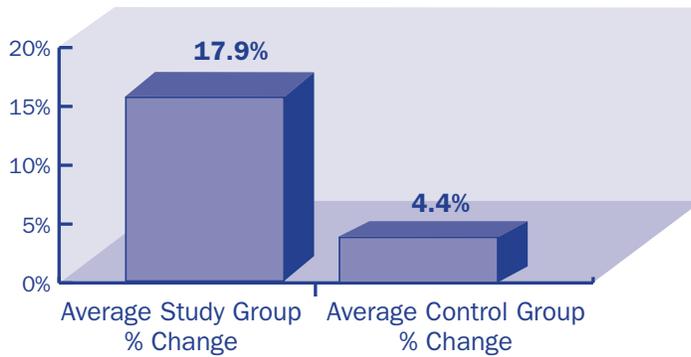
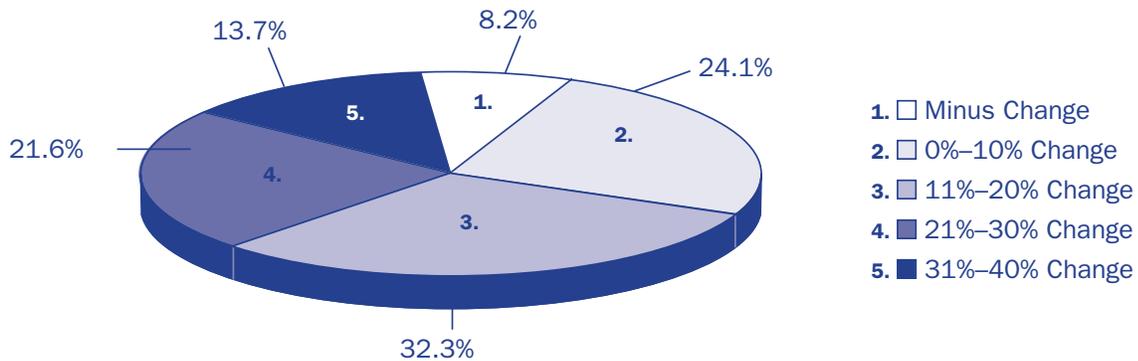


Figure 6

% Change/Improvement in Comprehension

Study Group — Grade 5
Torrington, CT



Torrington Special Education Students

The *Read to Learn: Social Studies* Study in Torrington, Connecticut schools included a number of children who were identified as Special Education students in the classrooms that were designated Study Group and Control Group.

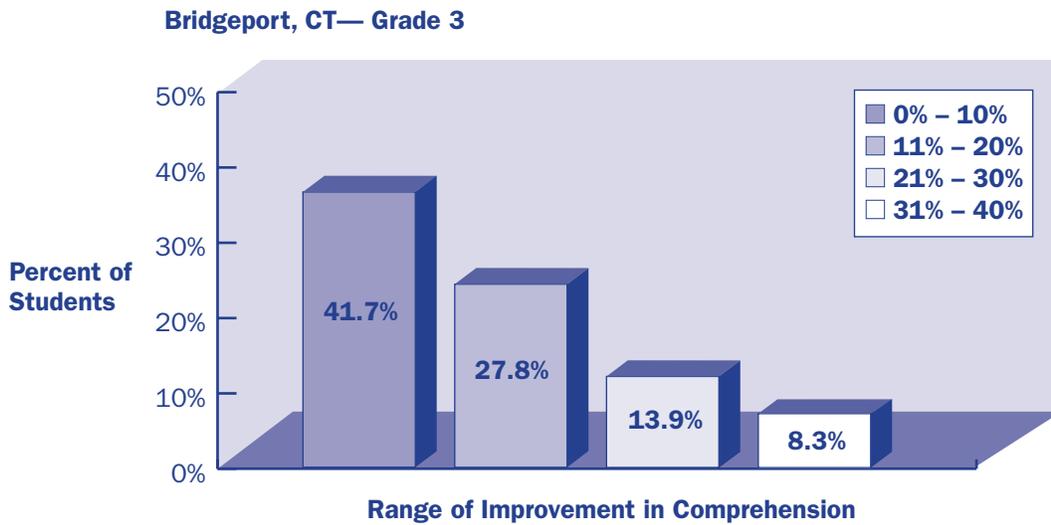
Special Education students in both Study and Control Group classrooms pretested with an average of 10 correct answers out of 30. At the end of the Research Study, those Special Education students in the Study Group answered an average of 22 out of 30 questions correctly on the posttest, Special Education students in the Control Groups answered an average of 7 out of 30 questions correctly in the posttest.

Bridgeport School Results

Bridgeport Grade 3 Results

Student improvement ranged from up to 10% to as much as 40% in the Grade 3 Bridgeport Study Groups. Almost 70% of the students showed up to 20% improvement in comprehension and another 22% showed improvement in the 21% to 40% range. [Figure 7]

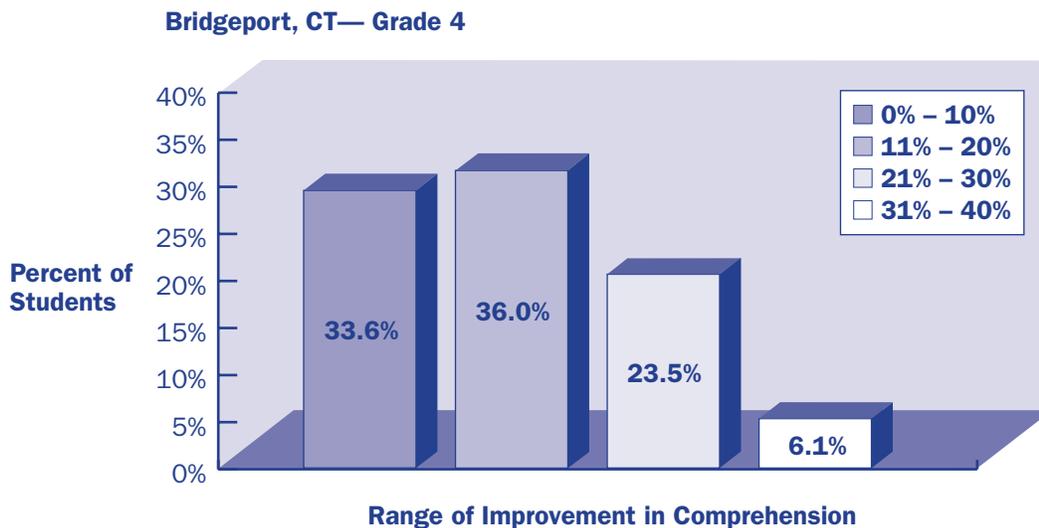
Figure 7



Bridgeport Grade 4 Results

Student improvement ranged from up to 10% to as much as 40% in the Bridgeport Grade 4 Study Groups. In fact, 99.2% of the students fell into this range. Almost 70% of the students showed improvement of up to 20% and 29.6% improved in the 21% to 40% range. [Figure 8]

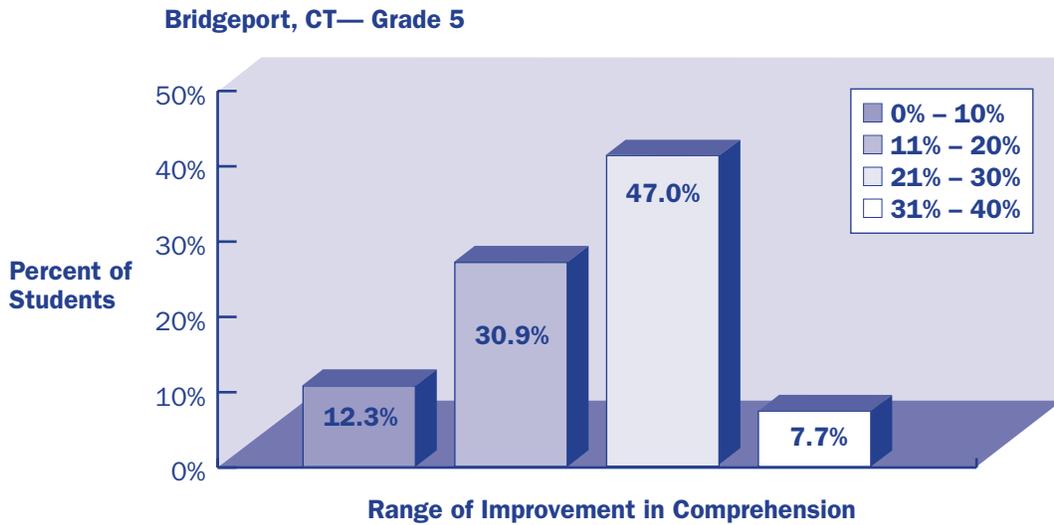
Figure 8



Bridgeport Grade 5 Results

Student improvement ranged from up to 10% to as much as 40% in the Bridgeport Grade 5 Study Groups. The greatest number of students (47.0%) achieved improvement in the 21% to 30% range, followed by 30.9% in the 11%–20% range. Only 2.1% of the students did not improve. That is, a total of 97.9% of the students in Grade 5 showed improvement at the conclusion of the study. [Figure 9]

Figure 9



Summary of Results

- ✓ Students gained significantly in content comprehension in classrooms within urban and suburban districts where *Read to Learn: Social Studies* was used as a supplement to the social studies textbook when compared to classrooms where the program was not implemented.
- ✓ Students gained significantly in reading comprehension of informational texts when the research-based practices in the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* Teacher Guides were followed closely by the teachers.
- ✓ Students performing below, at, and above grade-level standards in reading and writing in both low- and high-performing schools within the urban and suburban districts

gained significantly in content comprehension where *Read to Learn: Social Studies* was implemented.

- ✓ Special education students showed impressive gains in social studies content comprehension in classrooms where Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* was implemented.

Conclusion

Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* serves as an effective supplemental program with district-adopted social studies textbooks to achieve significant growth in content comprehension. The program benefits students who are performing below, at, and above grade level in social studies classrooms within urban and suburban districts.

Appendix A

Torrington Public Schools District Litchfield County, Connecticut

Demographics

As the largest school district in Litchfield County, Torrington enrolls approximately 5,000 students in Grades PreK–12. There are 5 PreK–Grade 5 elementary schools, one middle and one high school. There are 318 teachers in Torrington Public School District.

To compare the ethnic diversion in the district with that of the three individual schools in which we conducted the study, see the chart below:

	African-American	Asian	Hispanic	White
Torringford School	4%	1%	5%	89%
Southwest School	4%	1%	4%	91%
Vogel-Wetmore School	11%	3%	10%	76%
Torrington District	5%	3%	8%	84%
State Average (K–8)	14%	3%	14%	69%

Student-economic levels for the three schools can be measured in part by the percentage of free or reduced-price lunches:

Torringford School	11%
Southwest School	35%
Vogel-Wetmore School	53%
State Average (Gr K–5)	27%

Torringford School and Southwest School have not been designated as Title 1 schools; the NCLB status of the Vogel-Wetmore School is that “it has not been identified as a school in need of improvement.”

Appendix B

Bridgeport Public School District Fairfield County, Connecticut

Demographics

Bridgeport CT Public Schools include 36 buildings with 22,493 students in PreK–Grade 12. There are almost 1,500 teachers in the Bridgeport district, which is located in Fairfield County. The Thomas Hooker School includes Grades K–8 with 492 students.

Thomas Hooker Elementary School

Thomas Hooker School is ethnically diverse, but differs substantially from the state averages by ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Thomas Hooker School	State Average (K–8)
African American	41%	14%
Asian	2%	3%
Hispanic	43%	14%
White	13%	69%

Although Thomas Hooker Elementary is not designated as a Title 1 School, 87% of its students receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Appendix C

Sample Pretest/Posttest Questions

Book: *The Civil War: Life Back Home*

Procedure 1

Part 1—The Emancipation Proclamation was an order given by Abraham Lincoln that _____.

- a. allowed women to vote*
- b. gave slaves freedom*
- c. forced me to fight in the Civil War*
- d. protected children*

Part 2—The author’s purpose for writing this passage was to _____.

- a. describe the South*
- b. compare the North and South*
- c. explain the effects of the blockade on the South*
- d. express an opinion about President Lincoln*

Procedure 2

The purpose of the quotation in the sidebar on page 9 is to help the reader learn _____.

- a. about the events from people who actually lived through them*
- b. a story about war*
- c. that Eliza Andres was a girl who lived in Georgia*
- d. houses were burned down*

Classroom Test Analysis for Read to Learn: Social Studies

A Grade 4 Study Group classroom in Torrington, Connecticut was selected for a pretest/posttest analysis. The teachers implemented research-based instructional practices for reading informational text with Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies* as described in the Study Report. The classroom test analysis was conducted to provide a profile of students'

- growth in social studies content comprehension.

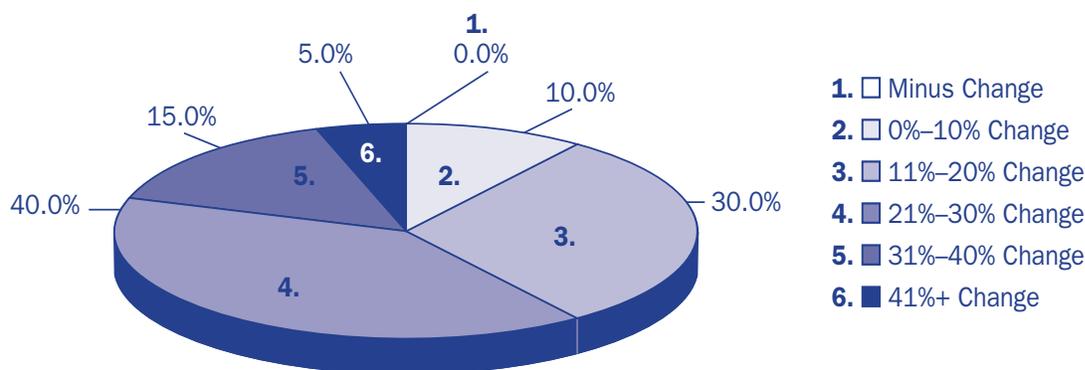
- growth in understanding and use of informational text structures and features to foster comprehension.

Classroom Test Performance

Students in the Grade 4 Study Group classroom showed significant growth in content comprehension. Seventy percent of the students showed improvement in the 11%–30% range, and another 20% showed improvement in the 31%–41%+ range. [See Chart A.]

Chart A

% Change/Improvement in Comprehension



Analysis of Test Results

As described in the Pretest/Posttest section of the Study Report, the test items in Procedures 1 and 2 were categorized under the following instructional areas: Content Comprehension, Informational Text Structures, and Informational Text Features for the test item analysis.

An analysis of the average percentage scores on the pretests and posttests indicated significant student growth in all areas. In Content

Comprehension, the average percentage score for the pretest was 41.33%, and the posttest average percentage score was 73.33%. The average percentage pretest score for Informational Text Structures was 36.67% with the posttest average percentage score at 61.11%. The average percentage pretest score for Informational Text Features was 54% with the posttest average percentage score at 65.83%. [See Charts B, C, D on page 17.]

Chart B

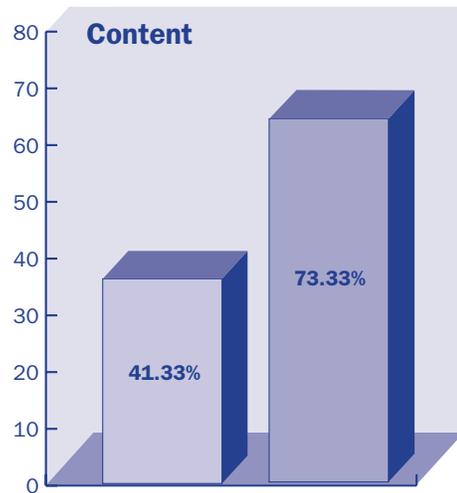


Chart C

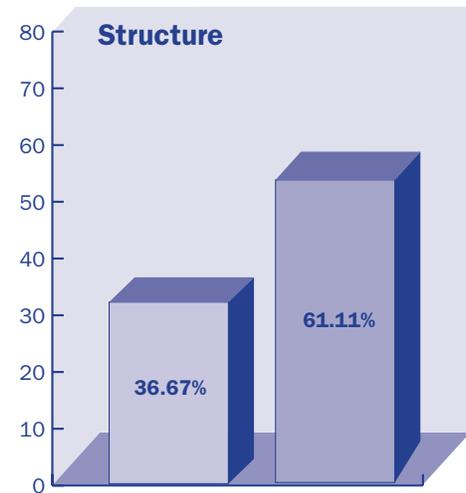
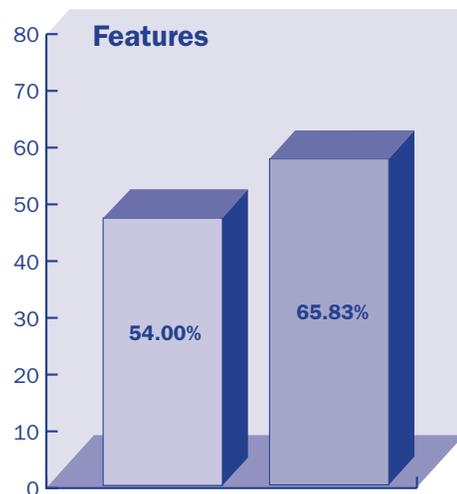


Chart D



Summary and Instructional Implications

Students gained significantly in reading comprehension of informational texts when the research-based practices in the *Read to Learn: Social Studies* Teacher Guides were implemented.

The implementation of research-based practices with quality student text to explicitly teach informational text structures and features fostered content comprehension.

The identified research-based practices that support comprehension include:

- ✓ Using graphic organizers before, during and after reading as tools for note taking

- ✓ Prereading strategies to build and activate prior knowledge
- ✓ Questioning on varying cognitive levels
- ✓ Using Think-Alouds to model vocabulary strategies to learn concepts
- ✓ Explicit instruction on informational text features and structures

The test format served as one tool to measure students' growth of content comprehension. Student work samples provide further evidence of student performance. (See pages 18–20.)

Student Samples from Grade 4 Study Group Classroom

Newbridge *Read to Learn: Social Studies*

Student Book: New England

- Using graphic organizers before, during, and after reading as tools for note taking.

Time Travel Log		Name: _____
		Date: _____
1620	Pilgrims landed in MA, and became a colony.	
1636	Harvard College opened 100 years before independence.	
1650	Pilgrims started to trade even more with England.	
1773	_____	
1775	American Revolution began.	

- Explicit instruction on informational text features and structures.

Problem/Solution Chart		Name: _____
		Date: _____
Problem	Solution	
Pilgrims couldn't plant in sandy soil.	The Wampanoag people taught them how to plant in sandy soil.	
Pilgrims didn't have many clothes.	The Wampanoag people gave them beaver skins for clothes.	

- Test Your Knowledge assesses students' content comprehension.

Test Your Knowledge

Name: _____
 Date: _____

A. Fill in the blanks with words from the word box.

~~democracy~~ ~~colonies~~ ~~revolution~~ ~~representatives~~ ~~Pilgrims~~

1. The Pilgrims landed in what is now Massachusetts.
2. Massachusetts and the other New England states were once colonies ruled by England.
3. The colonists had no representatives in England to speak for them.
4. The revolution against English rule began in Massachusetts.
5. Today, people visit New England to see where democracy began in our country.

B. Answer the questions below with complete sentences. Write on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why did the Pilgrims need help to survive?
2. How did trade with England lead to the American Revolution?
3. How did water power change the way goods were made?
4. Name three different industries or businesses that began in New England between 1780 and 1900. Name the state where each business started.
5. What is special about Harvard University and Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts?

Educational Publishing

1.	The Pilgrims could not grow vegetables on the sandy beaches, couldn't catch fish and didn't have warm clothing for the winter and cold nights.	
2.	The English and the Colonists fought because England wanted the Colonists to pay taxes for supplies and goods such as tea.	
3.	The water wheel was invented which ran by moving water and as the wheel spun other equipment such as cranks and other wheels inside the building helped spin the cotton into thread and wove the thread.	
4.	1.) The mill - Rhode Island. 2.) The Hat making - Danbury, Connecticut. 3.) Flour company - Vermont	
5.	Harvard University was one of the first universities and Mount Holyoke was the first only women college.	

- Performance Assessments help assess students' abilities to apply their learning and synthesize information.

Assessment Tasks: Organizing and recording information graphically; applying information
Writing Prompt: Informational/Persuasive

Name: _____
Date: _____

Performance Assessment

A. Go back to the book to find reasons why New England is a popular place to explore, visit, work, and study. List at least three things people can see or do in New England in each category below.

Visit New England	
Scenery	History
1. Every fall the trees turn beautiful reds, oranges, yellows and browns.	1. In New England the pilgrim's ship the Mayflower landed in Massachusetts.
2. On Patriot's day people dress up and act out the start of the American Revolution.	2. The Boston Tea party took place in New England.
3. Cape Cod Mass. there are oysters, clams, jelly fish, and many other fish.	3. The American Revolution started in Lexington Mass.
Industry	Education
1. Poland spa spring water company started in New England	1. Harvard University started in New England
2. L.L. Bean started in Maine making hunting boots.	2. Mount Holyoke was great in Massachusetts
3. Ben & Jerry's ice cream	3. If you want to learn

